

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 25th February 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on Thursday 25th February, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Welsh Government (SC); and Northern Ireland Government (NI) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. The ICCM tendered their apologies. SAIF chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

The Chair advised the MOJ and devolved administrations that DMAG will meet weekly from 1st March, usually on a Monday at 4pm. If ad hoc meetings need to occur these can be agreed on a case by case basis. The next meeting will, however, be Thursday 4th March at 4pm. The NAFD will send out an early invite to all and the FFMA will chair the meeting.

1. Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

The MOJ response to the CMA final report is due at the end of March and their preferred option is self-regulation by the sector, on trial for 18 months. The APCC asked whether a preview of the report to DMAG was possible. The representative intends to discuss the MOJ report before the end of March with DMAG Members at a separate meeting.

2. Welsh Government (SC)

There was a question of whether graveside mourners were creating delays by overstaying due to chatting with fellow mourners. DMAG was not aware of an acute problem with this.

Another issue was the upcoming first anniversary dates of death from the coronavirus. The FBCA mentioned Palm Sunday and Mothers Day are dates for visiting graves.

The NAFD expressed concern that funeral directors had not heard about vaccination appointments from the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. The SC representative would take this up.

3. Northern Ireland (NI)

The NI Executive were meeting to discuss the roadmap out of lockdown and when post-funeral events would be permitted.

Also, The Covid Taskforce was meeting to plan public messaging on deterring excess mourner numbers.

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DMAG Closed Meeting

1. Notes from the Previous Meetings.

The notes with the amendments were agreed upon.

2. Items for future meetings with Cabinet Office/Devolved Governments.

A) After a review of today's Cabinet Office meeting, DMAG would table the roadmap for funerals out of lockdown to avoid congestion with a graduated approach near the current forecast date of unlocking on the 21st June.

B) The NAFD tabled the Coronavirus Act 2020 and future statutory instruments ? as examples of where we need to ensure the benefits are kept, for instance, death registration by telephone and electronically messaged documents.

C) The APCC tabled that in preparations for any Autumn surge in the coronavirus that all deceased care staff be included in the early phase of booster vaccinations. The FBCA mentioned the Welsh Health Board had included touching a coffin as an additional risk if DMAG entered further correspondence with JCVI.

3. The Police Crime Commissioners and policing policy for excess mourners

The APCC proposed to modify the draft letter previously intended for the Cabinet Office, to be sent instead to the PCC for a common policy on policing during funerals with excess mourners and lines of collaboration and accountability as has been secured with Hertfordshire Police.

4. The APPG for Funerals and Bereavement

The APCC thought the meeting was positive but was disappointed with the low number of MPs who attended. The NAFD is pleased that new members are asking Parliamentary Questions for our sector. SAIF thought that Sir John Hayes lead the meeting very efficiently.

There is a question of how we agenda each organisation's concerns over the remainder of this year. SAIF proposed a calendar with key items, for example, the FBCA mentioned the cremation summer review and when could that be tabled? The FFMA mentioned the environmental issues and manufacturing of coffins.

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In March, DMAG members to list their agenda priorities which are to be discussed and settled among the group.

5. AOB Round Robin

The APCC agreed to draft a paper on the future of DMAG and a list of subjects and themes to be considered going forward.