

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 12 April 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 12 April 2021, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Scottish Government (SG) and Northern Ireland Government (NI) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. NAFD chaired the meeting.

Apologies were received from Welsh Government.

DMAG meeting with MOJ on its response to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) market investigation

MOJ briefed DMAG members on the background to its response to the CMA market investigation. MOJ explained that it had consulted with the sector, LRFs and government departments before reaching the conclusion that now was not a good time to introduce wholesale statutory regulation of funeral directors. Rather, MOJ wanted to explore a co-regulatory model, where government would work with the sector to build regulatory frameworks.

MOJ reported that it wanted to take some time to gain a better understanding of the sector, before presenting a package of options to Ministers. It was hoped that agreement could be reached on a Code of Practice by mid-late Autumn 2021. If a workable co-regulatory model could not be found, the MOJ would move to full statutory regulation.

In discussion on the response, FFMA raised the importance of a regulatory system tackling the level of qualification of individual funeral directors and other workers, and NAFD highlighted the work undertaken on the Funeral Services Consumer Standards Review (FSCSR) Code.

APCC asked whether MOJ would like to set a Code for crematoria and cemeteries, as well as funeral directors. MOJ confirmed that as the CMA recommendation to government was about funeral director regulation, this would be the current extent of their work.

MOJ confirmed that they would be working closely with Welsh Government and the Northern Irish Government on this matter, as it was a complex legal matter as to whether this was a topic reserved for Westminster or whether it was devolved.



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DMAG Wider Consultation

1. MOJ

- a. The MOJ reported that new Public Health England (PHE) guidance on managing a funeral would be issued shortly.
- b. With respect to an enquiry from FBCA as to whether crematoria still needed to submit data to MHCLG every two weeks, MOJ confirmed that this was currently the case.
- c. With respect to an enquiry regarding coronial delays in Bradford raised by SAIF, MOJ reported that this was being investigated.

2. Scottish Government (SG)

SG reported that the First Minister would be issuing a statement on 13 April about the further easing of restrictions.

3. Northern Ireland (NI)

NI reported that the maximum limit of 25 mourners attending a funeral had been rescinded, and that attendance would now be determined by a risk assessment of the capacity of the venue. Revised guidance was awaiting Ministerial clearance.

DMAG Closed Meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting.

These were approved for publication.

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

It was noted that the next meeting with the Cabinet Office was not until 29 April.

3. Improved co-ordination of resources for the future

DMAG members discussed the issues which needed to be included in an updated 'lessons learned' document, to be shared at the next Cabinet Office meeting. Members were asked to submit comments to APCC by close of play on 15 April



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4. AOB Round robin

SAIF reminded members that the Cabinet Office had invited evidence to support the view that sector staff should be listed as Category 2 Responders in the Civil Contingencies Act.

It was agreed that DMAG would meet fortnightly going forward, with the next meeting on 26 April.

