

# Deceased Management Advisory Group

**Update 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

The members of DMAG held a video conference on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Welsh Government (SC); Scottish Government (SG); Northern Ireland Government (NI) and Public Health England (PHE) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. APCC chaired the meeting.

## **DMAG Wider Consultation**

### **1. Ministry of Justice (MOJ)**

The representative reported that although the Law Commission had now requested subjects for their 14<sup>th</sup> Programme of Law Reform, they had undertaken to carry over the programmes which have yet to commence from the 13<sup>th</sup> Programme. However, as yet no Terms of Reference have been issued nor has a commencement date for the 'Reform of Burial and Cremation Law' programme been announced.

The private member's bill for Highgate Cemetery was due to come forward but that does not mean that there will be an automatic debate.

Manor Park Cemetery, who are intending to re-mound areas of the cemetery in order to create more burial space are in dispute with the relatives of one of the employees involved in the Bryant and Match Girls Dispute of 1888 who died in 1946 and who was buried in a common grave. Remounging is not believed to be illegal but the MOJ are continuing to investigate the matter.

### **2. Welsh Government (SC)**

New copies of revised guidance were due to be published the next day on May 25<sup>th</sup> and these were likely to include a revision to the number of people who can attend a wake.

### **3. Scottish Government (SG)**

It was stated that Maree Todd MSP, previously Minister for Children and Young People had been appointed as Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport.

A review of physical distancing rules is currently taking place, including those applying to funerals. A representative group of funeral businesses has now been formed to implement the Code of Practice. The NAFD asked if Scottish Government had responded to the CMA's proposed regulation and a check will be made on the situation.



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## 4. Northern Ireland Government (NI)

New regulations had come into effect that very day. As far as funerals are concerned, limousines can be used again but services still cannot be held in private dwellings although up to 6 people from two households can now meet inside.

## 5. Proposals for Future Pandemics

APCC had asked that this item be put on the agenda as it was felt that advantage should be taken of what appears to be at least a brief lull in the intensity of the pandemic to review both the original 'Lessons Learned' paper compiled by the FBCA and the APCC's draft paper entitled 'Reflections of a Year of Covid 19 and Proposals for Future Pandemics' which is based on recent experience in order to identify and define the priority issues for attention. Those present approved the proposal and APCC agreed to outline potential subjects for consideration and to circulate them prior to the next DMAG meeting.

The representative from Wales said that he very much hoped that DMAG meetings would continue as he had found them to be very helpful, particularly in respect of the exchange of information and his devolved administration colleagues echoed this sentiment.

## 6. Other Matters

The representative from Public Health England (PHE) reminded those present that the Cabinet Office needed to receive any comments on the updated 'short' and 'long' guidance on funerals by close of business the next day - May 25<sup>th</sup>. The ICCM noted that no new information on 'Social Distancing' had been received and PHE stated that the current requirements remain firmly in place for the time being.

### DMAG Closed Meeting

#### 1. Notes from the previous meeting

The notes with the amendments tabled had previously been agreed, and placed on the DMAG website by the Cremation Society.

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

The NAFD did not currently believe that there was much benefit to be gained from submitting a list of priority issues given the format of the current meetings and the ICCM was concerned that the Cabinet Office as opposed to those working in the sector, were the real beneficiaries of these meetings at present. APCC thought we should turn our attention to defining and progressing the topics that need attention in preparation for third wave and/or a future pandemic. While in agreement, the FBCA believed that our initial emphasis should be to research the selected issues possibly via a questionnaire(s). The NAFD thought it important to establish what research might already exist in relation to each of the chosen subjects.



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In respect of regular feedback on vaccination progress, the ICCM felt that LRF's were suffering from research and reporting fatigue and that it might be worth contacting the Local Government Association (LGA) to see what they might be able to help us with.

### 3. Direct Cremation

The letter in response to the proposal that there should be a separate 'trade association' for 'Direct Cremation', drafted by APCC, was approved unanimously.

### 4.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### 5. AOB Round Robin

No items were raised under this heading.

**The next meeting will be on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 4 p.m. and it is understood that the Cremation Society will now chair the next meeting.**



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