

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 7 June 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 7 June 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. The Cremation Society chaired the meeting.

Apologies were received from the Welsh Government representative.

DMAG Wider Consultation

1. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

There was no update from the MOJ.

2. Scottish Government (SG)

The SG representative advised that the CMA had published the Scottish Government's response to their final report, as part of the funeral markets investigation, and provided the link to the CMA website.

3. Northern Ireland (NI)

The last update to the funeral guidance was on 24 May 2021. The Northern Ireland Executive are due to meet later this week but no change to funeral guidance is expected.

4. Removal of Implants Update

FBCA provided an update following discussions with Medtronic – the manufacturers of the Micra pacemaker - together with the ICCM and Ben Whitworth of The Dodge Company. Two areas need consideration:

- a. Tests have been carried out by cremator manufacturers on the Micra pacemaker that have concluded that the pacemakers do not pose a threat when cremated. However, crematoria are currently acting reactively rather than proactively, to deal with this issue. FBCA and ICCM have therefore agreed to prepare a letter that crematoria should send to their cremator manufacturer – seeking prior approval to the pacemakers being cremated in their particular cremator – so that the approval is already in place. APCC asked if a copy of the letter could be provided to them for circulation to their members – FBCA agreed this would be provided when finalised.



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- b. It appears there are many new devices entering the market, which crematoria are not familiar with and for which no guidance, to cover cremation, is given. FBCA queried with the MOJ whether the Department of Health & Social Care ought to be involved. MOJ agreed to speak with DHSC. NAFD queried whether the MHRA might be the right department to approach – as they might be able to provide guidance when issuing a licence for a new product. MOJ agreed as DHSC may not necessarily be aware of products that are on the private market. MOJ agreed to approach DHSC in the first instance.

5. Proposals for Future Pandemics update

APCC had prepared and circulated a note to prompt further discussion – and stressed the importance of the need to reflect on this whilst there was opportunity to do so, rather than letting the moment pass. The main points that were highlighted in the note were:

- a. The inconsistent approach of LRFs
- b. The need for a more efficient method of stocking and monitoring PPE

FBCA queried whether the need for funeral sector workers to be classified as category 2 for vaccination purposes, ought to also be included.

It was agreed that DMAG members would provide APCC with their thoughts for inclusion in the note.

MOJ encouraged DMAG members to provide their thoughts as this would be welcomed.

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 agreed no list would be provided for the forthcoming Cabinet Office meeting but APCC would make it clear that DMAG were still working on their reflections on lessons learned.



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3. Cost of coffins materials

FFMA explained that the Press had picked up on a story that the price of MDF/chipboard had increased and that there was a potential shortage. FFMA explained that it did not appear this was anything to be concerned about and the members they had approached had explained they would simply be absorbing the increased cost. FFMA had wanted DMAG members to be aware that it might appear in more news stories. NAFD confirmed they had already been approached.

4. Re-use of graves

JBP Associates joined the meeting to update DMAG members on the work they have been carrying out with the ICCM, on behalf of the APPG for Funerals and Bereavement, on the issue of the re-use of graves.

ICCM gave a summary of the issues surrounding the need for the re-use of graves and the importance for a need in a change in the law to enable this to take place.

JBP explained that:-

- a. there were potentially two routes to achieve this change, from a Parliamentary perspective:
 - Amendment to primary legislation
 - The use of a statutory instrument

It was felt that the statutory instrument route was most likely to be more successful and JBP explained that it was first important to spend some time building a solid base of support for this, over the next six months. The fact that the Law Commission had identified this as an issue would help to build that support. The pandemic had also highlighted this as a relevant issue.

- b. It would be useful to commission a YouGov poll to seek the public's views on the issue as that would also assist in providing evidence of support for the change in legislation.

ICCM explained that it was hoped that a change would be a simplified version of the powers that already exist in London and via Faculty, and would apply equally to public and private sector cemeteries. The fact that there is already power under Scottish legislation would also be a positive contribution.



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APCC emphasised the importance of keeping the MOJ informed. It was also felt that it would be sensible to seek the support of the Local Government Association as this would impact local authorities.

8. AOB



The next meeting will be held on Monday 21 June 2021 with FBCA chairing the meeting.

