

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 9 September 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 9 September 2021, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Scottish Government (SG), Welsh Government (SC) and Northern Ireland Government (NI) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. The Cremation Society chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

1. Northern Ireland (NI)

There is some concern over increased hospitalisation rates. Schools have returned and this is having a negative impact on rates. The Executive met on Monday and further easements will be introduced, including an increase to the numbers at funeral services at private dwellings. Revised guidance will be issued. There will also be a revision to the guidance on embalming which will allow embalming of COVID positive deceased but with limits and subject to funeral directors' risk-assessment procedures. Revised guidance will be issued in due course.

2. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

There is no update beyond that provided at the Cabinet Office meeting. APCC queried whether there had been any date given by the Law Commission for starting their 14th Programme. MOJ confirmed that whilst they were not aware of any date, they were in discussions with the Law Commission and would provide an update as soon as there was anything new to report.

3. Welsh Government (SC)

SC confirmed that the website link for the Action Card covering funeral arrangements, would be taken down from the website intermittently. This is due to the Action Card covering other ceremonies so whenever a change is made to other gatherings, the Action Card webpage is taken down. SC confirmed they would notify DMAG if there is a change specifically to funerals.



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4. Scottish Government (SG)

SG had circulated details of communications to highlight SG's new 'Stop the Spike' campaign which is aimed at reinforcing the message around compliance with remaining restrictions [post-meeting this was subsequently put on hold pending new communications being provided]. SG confirmed that they would be following JCVI recommendations on booster vaccinations and would be providing an online booking system where appropriate. There were ongoing discussions concerning taking a chord at funeral services. There are no restrictions in place at present and this is currently down to funeral directors' discretion and part of their risk assessment but SG would be keeping this under review.

DMAG Closed Meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting.

APCC had circulated minutes and requested any amendments be sent for incorporation.

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

APCC felt that there were a number of issues coming to the fore that would require close discussion with government colleagues. APCC were concerned there was no mention of the National Resilience Strategy review at the latest Cabinet Office meeting. NAFD confirmed that they would be working on a response and would incorporate a DMAG response which would be circulated for DMAG approval.

3. Digitilisation of death registration

NAFD had had a response from Kevin Foster MP who had confirmed that he was pushing this issue back to Parliament via a Private Member's Bill. NAFD will raise this with JBP to ensure the APPG highlight this.

4. Vaccination requirements for care homes

NAFD explained that there is concern on the impact that this will have on funeral director operations. NAFD confirmed they were waiting for the guidance to be issued, covering mandatory vaccination but no firm date had still been provided as to when this would be provided. It is currently uncertain as to how people would prove exemption from



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mandatory vaccination, or what the implications would be if people refused to be vaccinated – both issues could have a serious impact on care homes. SAIF confirmed that they had raised this 4/5 weeks ago. It was agreed that SAIF and NAFD would contact Helen Braithwaite separately as she had confirmed she would take ownership on this. There also continues to be uncertainty around booster vaccination eligibility and more was awaited on that.

5. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7. Meeting with the CMA

APCC felt that the meeting with the CMA had been useful and they had agreed that a sub-meeting could be arranged to discuss reporting requirements going forward. APCC expressed that they did not agree with the reasons given by the CMA for the six monthly reporting falling on April/October each year. SAIF explained that they had requested those dates as it was felt by their members that this was a sensible timetable and smaller funeral director businesses would struggle with complying with quarterly reporting. It was agreed



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that APCC would draft a response to CMA following the meeting and circulate for prior approval.

8. Revision of the Process Guidance Notes

APCC queried whether anyone involved with the Process Guidance Notes review had heard anything further from Simon Holbrook. FBCA confirmed they had not heard anything and would contact Simon Holbrook.

9. AOB

There were no other matters to discuss.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 12:15pm with FBCA chairing the meeting.

