

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 25th November 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 25th November 2021, with representatives from the Scottish Government (SG), Northern Ireland Government (NI), UK Health Security Agency & the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. The Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers' Association chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

1. Ministry of Justice Update

The MoJ representative had no update to give other than information that already exists in the public domain.

Questions were raised regarding any possible regulations being introduced in the wake of rising growth in the Direct Cremation market and, in particular in relation to the care of the deceased. The MOJ responded that present cremation regulations will cover the actual cremation and that the care of the deceased would come under the recent recommendations within the CMA's recent report.

Regulations around Resomation are currently under review.

ICCM asked whether there will be changes in cremation and registration administration when the Coronavirus Act end its term in March 2022. At present this is being reviewed under the Medical Examiner Scheme due to come into force in Summer 2022 so work is being undertaken in making allowance for bridging the gap between the ending of Coronavirus Act and the ME scheme starting.

2. SC Update

Small and medium-sized businesses will be able to claim back costs of up to £2,500 to undertake work such as the installation of carbon dioxide monitors and remedial improvement work to windows and vents. Businesses will be able to fill in a self-assessment form to receive advice on improving their current ventilation systems and identify if they are eligible for financial support from their local authority.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/business-ventilation-fund/>

The Scottish Government are looking to introduce regulation for Water Cremation (Resomation).



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3. NI Update

Rising cases are of concern in NI with a large proportion of the new cases being in those under 40. Face masks are still required to be worn at funerals. There is no update to be given on what will happen with death registration and cremation form requirements after the end of the Coronavirus Act. NI are not as advanced as DHSC in England with the Medical Examiner Scheme.

4. UK Health Security Agency Update

The representative referred to updated Funerals Guidance released on the 23rd November – which now aligns with wider guidance that LFD tests are now taken before a high risk activity rather than twice weekly as before. Advice is given for those that are exempt from isolation to take an LFD test before attending a funeral, as if they are a contact or in quarantine this might change their decision about whether to attend the funeral or not:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

4. Defra Groundwater Review

Consultation on amendments to the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 as applied to groundwater activities and related surface water discharge activities. https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water-quality/amendments-to-the-epr-for-groundwater/supporting_documents/Consultation%20Document.pdf

ICCM have concerns over a change to the proposed larger grave spaces as mentioned in the document and whether this might be an error which MOJ will check on with the relevant persons.

FBCA questioned the lack of scientific evidence which requires such consultation.

APCC asked if the Churches Group had been consulted and ICCM gave assurance they had shared the information with the Group.

It was suggested that Defra representatives be invited to a future DMAG meeting once the consultation period was completed.



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DMAG Closed Meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting.

These will be circulated to DMAG members in the near future

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

Plans need to be drawn up by DMAG in order to re-raise areas such as Lessons Learned in the New Year. Also, DMAG needs to be made aware of what their role will be into the Public Inquiry into the Covid Pandemic and the proposed review and revision of the Coronavirus Act.

3. Proposed One Day Conference organised by DMAG

Discussion took place regarding the one day seminar to be held in February which is being organised by ICCM, FBCA, APCC and the Cremation Society.

After lengthy interaction it was decided that DMAG would look to use the National Funeral Exhibition in June to give presentations on its work over the past twenty months and their plans for going forward. NAFD will look at the feasibility of this.

4. Any other Business

NAFD informed the Group that an approach had been made from the UK Commission on Bereavement for a DMAG member to address them. NAFD/SAIF will make the necessary arrangements.

5. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 16th December at 12.15pm.

SAIF will set up the meeting and circulate the invitation. APCC will chair the meeting.

