

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 5 January 2022

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 5 January 2022, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Scottish Government (SG), Northern Ireland Government (NI) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. The ICCM chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

Attendees wished each other a happy new year.

1. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

A new MoJ representative was introduced to DMAG.

There was no update beyond that provided at the Cabinet Office meeting.

DMAG expressed their disappointment that funeral sector workers are not included in the 100000 critical workers identified by Government as to be subjected to daily lateral flow tests from 11th January.

DMAG also expressed their concern about the difficulties involved in getting lateral flow tests.

NAFD stated that 43% of their members had reported issues with delays due to Coroner's investigations prior to Christmas. The MoJ requested that they are informed of any ongoing and persistent issues relating to Coroners or Registrars. Detailed localised information would be particularly useful. The NAFD are surveying their members each week and will report the information.

The MoJ reported that they are looking at ways of bridging the gap between the end of the Coronavirus Act and the introduction of the Medical Examiner system so that Cremation Form 5 would not need to be reintroduced. DMAG welcomed this.

Unfortunately it won't be possible to retain registration of death by telephone as primary legislation is required for this and there is currently no vehicle to achieve this.



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The NAFD asked for as long a lead-in time as possible if there are to be any changes regarding care home vaccination requirements. Clarification is required on whether a booster jab must have been received to be considered fully vaccinated.

2. Scottish Government (SG)

SG advised that the First Minister was due to make a statement at 2pm this afternoon. If required, a funeral blog post will be posted later this week.

3. Northern Ireland (NI)

There has been an explosion of infections in the last 7 days, although this hasn't yet translated into hospitalisations or deaths. Those with a positive PCR test must self-isolate, unless they test negative on day 6 and 7, or on any two consecutive days after day 6. Close contacts of those testing positive who are vaccinated don't have to self-isolate if they test negative on a lateral flow test for ten days. If they are not vaccinated, they must self-isolate for ten days.

4. UK Health Security Agency

The problems with the distribution of lateral flow tests are not surprising given the increasing infection rate and the holiday period. There are plenty of tests in the system and the issues should resolve themselves in the next couple of weeks. 350 million further tests have been ordered. In the meantime people can keep trying to order through the Gov website, or check their local authority website.

If tests are not available, a precautionary principle should be adopted; if there are symptoms, self-isolate if it is not possible to be tested.

A formal announcement is to be made shortly regarding the temporary lifting of the requirement to have a PCR test if a lateral flow test is positive. This will take effect from 11 January.

There has been no official line on the new French variant as yet. The WHO are aware of it. Variations are to be expected as the virus mutates.



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DMAG Closed Meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting.

The notes of the previous meeting are still to be circulated.

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

DMAG agreed that the following topics are of concern:

- a. The transitional arrangements for the end of the Coronavirus Act.
- b. The timetable for implementation of the Medical Examiner system. The APCC will contact the MoJ and copy the CO in.

3. Proposed future meeting with Cabinet Office representative

At the next meeting DMAG would discuss the questions and topics to discuss with the CO rep, eg things DMAG have not yet received answers to; Nightingale hospitals; central; management of death issues. A meeting with the CO rep can then be arranged.

4. AOB Round Robin

The APCC raised the issue of advertising for Direct Cremation services, and the impact this may be having on costs and competition.

SAIF queried if there is any way that telephone death registrations can be maintained. DMAG doesn't believe there is.

NAFD asked if there is any pressure to restrict the number of people attending a funeral. So far this has not been requested by DMAG's respective members. Some crematoria in Wales have restricted their numbers to comply with social distancing rules.

The lack of information on the placing of Nightingale Hospitals was discussed.

The Health and Social Care Bill is currently at the Committee stage in the House of Lords. The Bill will allow NHS Trusts to appoint medical examiners instead of local authorities. Any other



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relevant legislation, eg the Cremation Regulations, will need amending once the Bill has been passed.

DMAG discussed their disappointment that funeral sector members are not classed as critical workers for the purposes of testing. The MoJ are to feed this back to the Cabinet Office. A question will also be asked in Parliament via the APPG. NAFD will ask JBP to raise this. The Cremation Society will follow up with the MoJ.

The next meeting will be held following the next Cabinet Office meeting; SAIF will send an invite when this is confirmed. The NAFD will chair the next meeting.

