



## The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement

Meeting: Tuesday 26th January 2021, 2-3pm

Chair: Sir John Hayes

Officers in attendance: Robert Goodwill MP

Officer apologies: Mark Pawsey MP and Dame Diana Johnson

### Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG):

Jon Levett, CEO, National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD); Julie Dunk, CEO, Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM); Terry Tennens, CEO, Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF); Brendan Day, Secretary, Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA); Alun Tucker, CEO, Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers' Association (FFMA); Richard Barradell, Secretary and Treasurer, Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries (APCC); and Wendy Buchan, The Cremation Society (TCS)

JBP:

Jennifer Bryant-Pearson, Director and Founder; Marc Pooler, Director of Public Affairs; Sam Webber, Senior Account Manager; Archie Ratcliffe, Senior Account Executive; and Charlie Souster, Account Executive

### **Sir John Hayes' Article**

Sir John Hayes has written in local paper *'Spalding Today'* about the work undertaken by those operating in the funerals sector, as well as the challenges they face. Sir John asked that each of the DMAG organisations write to the paper in support of this article and that they encourage their respective members operating in the area to do the same. The article will also be shared with neighbouring local papers and be sent to the House Magazine. Sir John is hopeful that Officers of the APPG will write something similar in their local papers.

### **Letters to Minister**

Letters recently submitted to Government Ministers concerning PPE VAT and vaccinations for those employed within the funerals sector are being chased for a response. The next steps will be more robust, with Sir John Hayes offering to submit written Parliamentary questions.

### **Defining 'Frontline Operatives' for Vaccinations**

There is much confusion on the definition of 'frontline operatives' when vaccinating the industry. The definition changes at different local authorities and it is often the case that Crematoria and Cemetery staff are being omitted. The definition should cover all of those who may come in direct contact with the virus. The omission of Crematoria and Cemetery staff can have a severe impact on the wider industry, particularly if employees are self-isolating.

## **Compliance with Government Guidance**

DMAG members have experienced difficulties in ensuring that funeral attendance is strictly limited to 30 and is compliant with Government guidance. It is often the case that additional mourners arrive for the service, some of which have been known to be positive with Covid-19. Some groups have also been known to establish wakes in crematoria and cemetery carparks. Funeral sector employees are facing verbal abuse when asking families to observe Government guidance. It was recently reported that a funeral director was served a fixed notice penalty when one of their services breached Covid-19 rules, despite outlining the rules to the family lead.

Legal advice was suggested as the best course of action to define where liability lies. The funeral organiser would need to sign a document accepting liability for any legal breaches. The NAFD has written to every Chief Constable on this matter. Sir John Hayes and the APPG will write to Kit Malthouse MP, the Minister for Police at the Home Office. Parliamentary Questions will also be submitted on this issue.

## **Industry Minister**

The group discussed the possibility for a dedicated Government Minister for the sector. Currently the industry works with various Government departments. It was agreed that a Ministerial working group could be established, as opposed to the appointment of a dedicated Minister. A potential lead for the group was discussed in the Minister for bereavement Nadine Dorries. An article for national media will be drafted to reflect this proposal and parliamentary questions will be submitted. An article for The House Magazine will also be drafted.

The Ministry of Justice are expected to send a representative to DMAG's internal meeting on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

Marc Pooler outline the direction for engagement with Parliamentarians. A stakeholder map has also been created for the group to help identify possible advocates. A letter with constituency statistics will be sent to Parliamentarians with a copy of the APPG's brochure.

## **APPG Inclusivity Inquiry**

The APPG will look to hold evidence sessions into diversity and inclusivity in the funeral sector over the coming months, with a report set to be launched in September 2021. A yearly annual report will be created containing the latest evidence. The inquiry will look at different minority groups, gender diversity, skills and apprenticeships. Sir John Hayes will look to invite apprenticeship Minister Gillian Keegan MP to the next APPG meeting.