

**P-05-960 Fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19, Correspondence – petitioner to Committee 07.05.20**

It was when [REDACTED] a nurse in [REDACTED], died that myself and Prof Wahl-Jorgenson were inspired to start this petition. Our sons have known her son through school and sport. We saw her family having to rely on the kindness of friends and family to fund the funeral at such an awful time. None of us minded helping such a wonderful family but these costs and the decisions as to how to manage them are yet another burden to a family in the throes of grief.

The generosity of people giving to the too many health and social care workers we are losing is amazing, and a real sign that the public accept our collective duty in these cases, and families shouldn't have to rely on being able to set up crowdfunding.

Funeral costs are sudden, and are coming to families who have never thought about having to hold funerals for their loved ones. While the financial support payment is welcome, the reason we set up the petition was to take some of the emotional cost as well as the financial cost off people. We think that an announcement that all funerals are financially covered, so that everyone knows this is the case, would make a big difference to peace of mind, not just at the time when families are faced with this, but to NHS staff who must be worrying every day what would happen to their families if they died: in the same way that everyone knows about children's funerals. The 60k benefit will be stretched in many families to cover costs of supporting dependents, some of whom are very young and vulnerable. It is our view that a funeral cost arising from covid is a work related cost and as such should be covered in addition to death in service benefits.

We also note that BMA Cymru Wales\* has expressed its disappointment in the rejection of their call for families of doctors to receive full death in service benefits. To also refuse the relatively modest funeral costs seems to us to be undervaluing the risk taken by our health and social care staff, especially when in some cases they have worked without suitable PPE.

However, if the Minister is determined that the financial support payment covers this, then we would accept this as fulfilling the petition if the financial support is made, at least in part, within a day of the death to make sure that funerals can take place in accordance with any religious observance or other reason; arrangements are made to help vulnerable people to deal with those costs, for example people without access to suitable banking services, little understanding of English, bereaved children; and the payments are going to all workers regardless of their nationality; tax free and without any detriment to benefits.

<https://www.bma.org.uk/news-and-opinion/bma-cymru-wales-says-welsh-government-s-death-in-service-benefit-for-families-of-healthcare-workers-may-not-go-far-enough>

with thanks

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