



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/05476/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair – Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

3 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Further to my letter to you in August, I have now received further advice on putting such arrangements in place to provide additional financial support to families in order to meet the immediate costs associated with arranging and paying for a funeral for NHS staff who die from or with COVID-19.

I truly value our dedicated workforce and thank them for their hard work, at all times but especially throughout this time. Losing a loved one or treasured colleague is a devastating experience, the emotional and practical implications of which cannot be underestimated.

As such, I have fully considered the practicalities and implications of implementing such a scheme, these considerations have included:

- My officials considered a scheme that would align to the child burial scheme, introduced in 2017, however, in line with the child burial scheme this would in fact not cover the full cost of a funeral. Funeral costs vary significantly due to individual circumstances and family wishes for the funeral. It would be very difficult to put any scheme in place without considering issues of equity, so a cap may be required which may not be seen as an appropriate measure for Welsh Government to take;
- Identifying those who are NHS Workers would be difficult for local authorities in the administration of such a scheme. Unlike the child burial scheme, where their date of expiration and their date of birth is readily available, the person's profession would not be shown on their death certificate. Therefore there will be difficulties in administering the scheme and it would create additional burden on NHS Employers and local authorities at a difficult period;

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- Consideration would have to be given to the eligibility of other front line key workers. It could be deemed unfair to only provide this to one group of front-line workers; and
- The timeframe to set up the scheme would take many weeks/months and consideration would need to be given to how those burial costs already met by families could be reimbursed. Retrospective reimbursement would also create additional administration requirements.

I have carefully considered the balance of resources required to put any such scheme in place against those that would be taken away from other priorities during the pandemic in recognition that we have already made the £60,000 life assurance scheme available to provide additional financial support to those families who have lost a loved one, and have concluded that for the reasons provided we are unable to provide such a scheme. I realise you may be disappointed by this decision but hope you recognise that we have explored this scheme and the associated implications before arriving at this decision.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services