

## CPG for Funerals and Bereavement

20 June 2017

Conference Room C

### Minutes

#### In Attendance:

Mark Isherwood AM (Chair)	Martin Birch (Cardiff City Council)	Simon Wilkinson (WLGA)
Jeremy Field (NAFD)	James Tovey (SAIF Charter)	David Beamer (Secretary)
Mandie Lavin (NAFD)	Gordon Swan (Golden Charter)	Philip Blatchly (NAFD)

#### Item 1: Apologies

Russell George AM	Simon Thomas AM	Kim Bird (About the Funeral)
Darren Millar AM	Paul Davies AM	Janette Bourne (Cruse)
Janet Finch-Saunders AM	Neil Hamilton AM	Paul Harding (Marie Curie)
Nigel Lymn Rose (NAFD)	Roy Folland (NAFD)	Andrew Davies (Dignity)
Lorraine Barrett (Humanist Celebrant)	Jean Letton (BASW)	
	Carys Moseley (EBCPCW)	

#### Item 2: Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved with one correction to Jean Letton's surname that was incorrectly spelt in the draft minutes.

#### Item 3: Update

All updates were covered in the agenda items.

#### Item 4: WLGA Representatives to address Group

Martin Birch and Simon Wilkinson addressed the Group on the following issues:

- Variations in Local Authority funeral and cremation charges
- Child funeral costs
- Training of local authority staff dealing with bereaved people

On local authority charges, Jeremy Field called for greater transparency of local authority costs. This was welcomed by Martin Birch. The Chair requested that the WLGA examine what can be done to improve transparency. Mr Birch offered to examine what national figures were available to compare costs.

The Chair agreed to send a letter to Mark Drakeford AM requesting comparative data on local authority charges in Wales. More clarity on support for child funeral costs by the Welsh Government would also be requested in the letter.

**Item 5: Death Certification Reforms**

The Group reviewed a letter from Vaughan Gething AM on the topic of death certification reforms.

Following the UK General Election, the Group was interested in the Welsh Government's response to its consultation launched on 7 November 2016 entitled: "Changes to death certification and the introduction of medical examiners proposed in Wales".

Philip Blatchly raised concerns about delays in the release of bodies and offered to provide further information to the Secretary. It was agreed that the Chair would write to Vaughan Gething AM to request an update on death certification reforms and include concerns about the Green Form.

**Item 6: Social Fund / Funeral Affordability**

The Group discussed latest developments on social fund support to pay for a funeral including Scottish Government proposals.

The Chair also agreed to write to the new minister, Caroline Dinenage MP, to seek an update on the new Government's plans. Jeremy Field stated that the ministerial roundtables were useful and the Chair agreed to include a comment about this in the letter.

**Item 7: Bereavement Benefits**

The Group discussed the introduction of the Bereavement Support Payment (BSP). The Chair asked the Secretary to contact Janette Bourne to seek her views on the BSP for discussion at the next meeting.

**Item 8: Coroners' Provision in Wales**

At previous meetings of the Group, concerns have been raised at the level of Coroners support in Wales. The Chair agreed to send a letter to the Chief Coroner to request detail on boundary changes and their impact on provision in Wales.

**Item 9: Coroners' removals – use of zero based tenders**

Concerns have been raised at past meetings of the Group about the use by Coroners of zero based tenders for the removal of deceased people on behalf of the Coroner. In the letter to the Chief Coroner, the Chair asked for zero based tenders to be included.

**Item 10: AOB**

Mandie Lavin raised the issue of Child Funeral costs. Martin Birch outlined the position of local authorities in the South Wales area.

**Item 11: Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.