

CPG for Funerals and Bereavement

9 May 2018

Conference Room 4

Minutes

In Attendance:

Mark Isherwood AM (Chair)
Russell George AM
James Tovey (SAIF Charter)
Graeme McAusland (FPA)

Philip Blatchly (NAFD)
Kate Edwards (NAFD)
Kim Bird (About the Funeral)
Gordon Swan (Golden Charter)

Wendy Hobbs (Dreams & Wishes)
Tony Curtis (Dreams & Wishes)
David Beamer (Secretary)

Item 1: Apologies

Darren Millar AM
Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Nigel Lymn Rose (NAFD)
Martin Birch (Cardiff City Council)
Gemma O'Driscoll (Past President, SAIF)

Simon Thomas AM
Paul Davies AM
Neil Hamilton AM
Janette Bourne (Cruse)
Jeremy Field (NAFD)

Cary's Moseley (EBCPCW)
Paul Harding (Marie Curie)
Jean Letton (BASW)
Lorraine Barrett (Humanist Celebrant)

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Item 3: Update

All items were to be covered in the main agenda.

Item 4: Presentation: Graeme McAusland, Chief Executive, Funeral Planning Authority

Graeme McAusland, Chief Executive of the Funeral Planning Authority, delivered a presentation on the work of the FPA and examined regulation of the pre-paid funeral plan sector.

Item 5: Review of Correspondence

The members of the Group reviewed correspondence from:

- a) Lord O'Shaughnessy – his response was noted. The Group decided to await publication of the UK Government's response to the consultation on death certification that should bring greater clarity on proposals for England and Wales.
- b) Chief Coroner – it was agreed that the Chair would respond to the Chief Coroner's letter to seek further information on coroners removal contracts. The Secretary was asked to draft a letter.
- c) Responsible Finance – it was agreed that the Secretary would seek the attendance of a representative from the organisation at the next meeting of the Group.

Item 6: Death Certification Reforms

The Group discussed death certification reforms planned for England and Wales, and the response from Lord O'Shaughnessy. As outlined in Item 5, it was agreed that the Group would await the publication of the UK Government's response to the consultation on death certification that was expected over the coming weeks.

Item 7: Cremation Regulations

Janette Bourne requested this item be placed on the agenda.

A discussion was held on the new cremation application forms and updated guidance that were published on 6 April 2018 along with updated versions of the other cremation forms that can now be filled in electronically. The Chair asked attendees if they could alert him to any issues faced by the funeral sector or bereaved families as a result of the new forms and updated guidance.

Item 8: Social Fund Support

The Group noted the decision of 25 April 2018 when the Scottish Parliament voted to amend the Social Security (Scotland) Bill so that the capped £700 element in Scotland would increase annually in line with inflation.

Item 9: Acts of Memorials

A discussion was held about the use of balloons, sky lanterns and fireworks that are often used as an act of memorial or to mark somebody's passing. The Group noted the position of Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) who had raised their concerns with the Chair.

Funeral Directors present discussed the release of doves and butterflies as alternative act of memorials. The Chair asked funeral directors present if they could publicise alternatives in their magazines/literature. The Chair requested that the Secretary draft a letter to be sent to KWT to inform the organisation that the issue had been discussed at a Cross Party meeting and to outline views on alternatives expressed by Group members.

Item 10: AOB

Kim Bird raised the NAFD Code of Practice. The Chair agreed to write to the NAFD to seek a representative to attend the next meeting of the Group who could address Ms Bird's questions.

Russell George AM recommended that non-AM members attending meetings should contact their local AM to encourage them to attend the meetings of the Group.

Item 11: Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 24 October at 6pm. The meeting scheduled for 6 June was to be cancelled due to the close proximity to this meeting.