

CPG for Funerals and Bereavement

24 October 2018

Conference Room A

Annual Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

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| Mark Isherwood AM (Chair) | Philip Blatchly (NAFD) | David Beamer (Secretary) |
| Darren Millar AM | Kim Bird (About the Funeral) | Lorraine Barrett (Humanist) |
| Janette Bourne (Cruse) | Gordon Swan (Golden Celebrant) | |
| Jon Levett (NAFD) | Charter) | Ahmed Alsisi (White Rose / |
| Paul Harding (Marie Curie) | Morgan Harris (NAFD) | Acceptance) |

Item 1: Apologies

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| Janet Finch-Saunders AM | Simon Thomas AM | Neil McEvoy AM |
| Russell George AM | Paul Davies AM | Cary's Moseley (EBCPCW) |
| Nigel Lymn Rose (NAFD) | Neil Hamilton AM | Jean Letton (BASW) |
| Martin Birch (Cardiff City Council) | Helen Mary Jones AM | Tony Curtis (Dreams & Wishes) |
| Gemma O'Driscoll (Past President, SAIF) | Kate Edwards (NAFD) | James Tovey (SAIF Charter) |
| | Wendy Hobbs (Dreams & Wishes) | |

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Item 3: Election of Officers

Mark Isherwood AM was re-elected as Chair of the Group.

David Beamer was re-elected Secretary of the Group.

Item 4: Update

The Secretary shared correspondence received from Andrew Bailey (FCA).

The Chair was awaiting a response from the Chief Coroner regarding coroners removals.

On Social Fund funeral payments, Gordon Swan raised recent developments in Scotland re Funeral Expense Assistance and the need for reform in Wales. It was agreed to write to Justin Tomlinson to call for the capped element to be increased by inflation on an annual basis.

Item 5: Presentation: Janette Bourne, Cruse Bereavement Care

Janette Bourne, Cruse Bereavement Care, delivered a presentation on Bereaved People First Strategy 2019-2024 and their plans to transform the way Cruse supported bereaved people.

Darren Millar AM welcomed the work of Cruse and the insight provided on dealing with training gaps. His roles on other Cross Party Groups was highlighted, and in particular, the impact of bereavement on families with military personnel who had lost their lives.

The issue of resourcing bereavement support services was discussed and Janette Bourne highlighted the gap in available resources. She offered to provide the Group with more data to identify the gaps that exist.

Ahmed Alsisy talked about his work at Acceptance and the high demand for bereavement support services. Philip Blatchly highlighted the work of funeral directors and how they provide information to their clients on bereavement support charities.

Mark Isherwood AM raised the training given to bereavement counsellors on how to assist bereaved people who suffer from mental or physical disabilities. Janette Bourne outlined the additional training Cruse offered to volunteers to ensure support could be provided to people regardless of their disabilities.

Item 6: Code of Practice presentation from the NAFD

Mark Isherwood AM outlined the previous work of the Group and its interest in ensuring that funeral directors should adhere to a Code of Practice.

Morgan Harris discussed the history of the NAFD and the background to its Code of Practice. He detailed the complaints process and the various steps taken as complaints are escalated. This included the role of the Funeral Arbitration Scheme.

A discussion was then held on why funeral directors were currently unregulated. Morgan Harris outlined developments on regulation in Scotland and how the NAFD was awaiting recommendations from Natalie McKail, Scotland's Inspector of Funeral Directors, on how she sees the sector being regulated in Scotland. This will be submitted for approval by the Scottish Government.

Kim Bird discussed her company, the different models that exist for price comparison sites in the funeral services marketplace and the need for clarity on the Code of Practices that exist in the sector. Jon Levett stated that the NAFD was awaiting the publication of the Scottish Government's Code before updating its own Code of Practice and recognised the importance of providing clarity.

Item 7: Death Certification Reforms

The Group discussed death certification reforms planned for England and Wales, and the publication of the UK Government's response to the consultation on death certification.

It was agreed to write to Vaughan Gething AM to seek clarity on the position of the Welsh Government including the fees that will be charged. The Group would also write to Lord O'Shaughnessy to welcome the publication of the response and request that the Group is kept updated on developments.

Item 8: Social Fund / Funeral Affordability

Item 8 was discussed in the update and no further discussion was needed.

Item 9: CMA Funerals Market Study / HM Treasury Pre-Paid Funeral Plans consultation

A discussion was held on the CMA Funerals Market Study and an HM Treasury Pre-Paid Funeral Plan consultation that were published on 1 June 2018.

Gordon Swan outlined the publication of the responses to the Funeral Market Study consultation.

It was agreed to write to HM Treasury stating the Group's support for regulation of the pre-paid funeral planning sector to ensure all providers are effectively covered and that their clients are protected in the event of plan provider failure.

Item 10: AOB

No items.

Item 11: Date of next meeting

To be agreed for next year.