

CPG for Funerals and Bereavement

13 March 2019

Conference Room B

Annual Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Mark Isherwood AM (Chair)	Philip Blatchly (NAFD)	David Beamer (Secretary)
Russell George AM	Kate Edwards (NAFD)	James Tovey (SAIF Charter)
Janette Bourne (Cruse)	Gordon Swan (Golden Charter)	Amir Alsisi (White Rose / Acceptance)
	Morgan Harris (NAFD)	

Item 1: Apologies

Darren Millar AM	Paul Davies AM	Terry Tennens (SAIF)
Janet Finch-Saunders AM	Neil Hamilton AM	Jon Levett (NAFD)
Nigel Lymn Rose (NAFD)	Neil McEvoy AM	Cary's Moseley (EBCPCW)
Martin Birch (Cardiff City Council)	Helen Mary Jones AM	Jean Letton (BASW)
Gemma O'Driscoll (Past President, SAIF)	Kim Bird (About the Funeral)	Tony Curtis (Dreams & Wishes)
	Wendy Hobbs (Dreams & Wishes)	Lorraine Barrett (Humanist Celebrant)

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

Simon Thomas AM should not have been included in the apologies section in the minutes from the last meeting. With this removal, the minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Item 3: Update

The Chair was awaiting a response from the Chief Coroner regarding coroners removals. The Secretary agreed to chase for a response. Other matters were to be tackled in the agenda.

Item 4: 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. The introduction of death certification was expected at primary care level in Wales on a voluntary basis.

It was agreed to write to Vaughan Gething AM to seek an update on the position of the Welsh Government on the roll out of the reforms in Wales. It was also agreed to write to the new National Medical Examiner, Dr Alan Fletcher, to congratulate him on his appointment and seek an update on the latest medical examiner developments in Wales.

Item 5: Social Fund / Funeral Affordability

A discussion was held on the latest developments in Scotland regarding the introduction of the new Funeral Expense Assistance (FEA) to replace the social fund funeral payment.

It was agreed to send a letter to the Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee outlining the Group's support for the FEA that is being introduced in Scotland and steps being taken in Scotland to improve support availability and claim processing. Morgan Harris praised the new form being developed for the FEA in Scotland and highlighted issues with the current form used for social fund funeral payment applications. He also stated that the capped element of the FEA will be linked to inflation unlike the current set-up of the social fund funeral payment.

It was agreed to write to the Minister with responsibility for the Social Fund in the UK Government to highlight the Group's support for the FEA and the benefits it will offer.

Item 6: 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.

Gordon Swan stated that a deadline for responses existed today for a CMA consultation following representations that the scope of its proposed market investigation reference should be extended to include the funeral services supplied by funeral directors in the United Kingdom arising from the redemption of pre-paid funeral plans.

It was agreed to write to HM Treasury stating the Group's continuing support for regulation of the pre-paid funeral planning sector to ensure all providers are effectively covered.

Item 7: Pacemaker re-use

The Secretary provided a background on the uncertainty that exists on the ownership of pacemakers when they are removed from deceased people prior to cremation. Funeral directors present outlined their thoughts on potential options to seek clarification on ownership in order to allow charities to re-use pacemakers. This included writing to a local health board to get written confirmation on ownership.

As a first step, it was agreed that the Chair would send a letter to the Welsh Government Health Minister calling for clarification on the position of the Welsh Government.

Item 8: AOB

Amir Alsisi stated that White Rose supported funeral director regulation in Wales as it would ensure that certain standards existed for funeral directors to abide by.

Morgan Harris stated that the NAFD had reviewed its Code of Practice since the last meeting of the Group. An updated code can be found on the NAFD website at www.nafd.org.uk

Item 9: Date of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to be on 10 July at 6pm. It was agreed to invite Natalie McKail, the Inspector of Funerals Directors in Scotland, to speak at this meeting.