

COVID-19

INFLUENCING POLICY THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC

How NAFD members have helped shape Government thinking
By Morgan Harris, NAFD Policy and Legislation Manager

Since April 2020, NAFD and SAIF, as representatives of the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG), have been monitoring funeral sector capacity levels at the request of the UK Cabinet Office. With the help of member firms across the UK, we have been closely tracking:

- **the availability of deceased storage capacity**
This has fluctuated in areas throughout the pandemic, with some areas coming dangerously close to full capacity at times. Our input has enabled government to take steps to ease problems and ensure emergency support is in place to be used if necessary.
- **the average time between death and burial/cremation**
Funeral delays have been a key concern throughout the pandemic, with isolating families

understandably opting to push the date back in order that they can attend in person. Our data has helped inform government policy making around funeral restrictions, which has led to funerals being subject to fewer restrictions than any other type of event.

- **staff absence levels in particular areas**

This was particularly important during the first wave, when testing wasn't widely available. Tracking staff absence and the reasons for that absence showed how could impact the funeral workforce, which will have informed the government decision to allow funeral staff in England to access the tier 1 assessment appeal process if required to isolate by an official contact tracer.

- **PPE availability**

NAFD's supplier members have provided incredibly helpful information about stock levels of essential PPE, which has given government advanced notice of shortages that could place the safe operation of the sector at risk.

Each week, NAFD Chief Executive Jon Levett has handed the data, anonymised and collated to preserve confidentiality, over to the Government and presented key findings and analysis to government colleagues from all of the four UK nations, in his capacity as DMAG spokesperson at the weekly Government/sector meeting.

Cabinet Office colleagues have access to much better data than we can ever provide, but official data often takes a long time to collate. The value we bring is that we are able to report much more quickly, giving Government valuable insight into where problems are likely to occur next.

Although our sample size has been modest compared to that used by Public Health England and the Office for National Statistics, Government colleagues have repeatedly commented on how useful and accurate an early indication it has provided.

“NAFD'S INPUT THROUGH BOTH RAISING ISSUES, SHARING EXPERTISE AND PROVIDING RELIABLE ADVICE HAS BEEN CRUCIAL TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT.”

Who represents you in Government meetings?

In addition to this, the NAFD, through DMAG, has presented a list of issues to the Cabinet Office each week, ensuring that key concerns of our members are understood by those responsible for making key decisions within government.

In the summer, the NAFD asked some of the key government departments to provide feedback on how useful the Association has been in supporting Government during the pandemic.

One responded that we were “an excellent source of informed and considered advice on the impact of the pandemic on the sector and potential mitigations,” while another said: “NAFD’s input through both raising issues, sharing expertise and providing reliable advice has been crucial to policy development on various aspects of death management.” Every single contact who responded to the survey confirmed that they would have no hesitation in continuing to reach out to the Association on policy development issues but also, importantly, that they saw us as a trusted contact when it came to communicating sensitive or confidential information.

Article continues on page 16



Jon Levett, acting as primary
DMAG spokesperson



Past President Jeremy Field,
representing NAFD members

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Seasons Greetings

From all the team here at Allsops!



Thank you to the members who are supporting us

We would like to extend our special thanks to those members who have taken the time to feed into this important work each week:



Funeral Directors

- D G Attwell Ltd
- Arthur Cambrey Ltd Funeral Directors
- E C Thomas & Son
- H I and E Piper
- Robert D Johnson Funeral Directors Ltd
- Arthur Peake & Sons (Funeral Service) Ltd incorporating Lyndon Bassett FS
- Tovey Bros
- Richards Funeral Services Ltd
- Coles Funeral Directors
- Carpenter & Quinn
- Tamworth Coop
- Mortons Funeral Directors
- S Webb & Son Ltd
- Brain & Waldron Ltd
- H. Porter & Sons
- A J Lloyd Funeral Directors Ltd
- F.P. Gaunt & Sons Ltd
- Mid Counties Coop
- Celina Crawford
- Malone & Fox Family Funerals Ltd
- Sturrock Comb and Davidson
- McGillivray Funeral Directors Ltd
- J & D Lawson Ltd
- Anderson Maguire Ltd
- Clydebank Co-operative Society Ltd
- Alex Black Funeral Care
- Kenneth Keegan Funeral Services Ltd
- Birrell Corrance Independent Funeral Directors
- Thomas Cuthell & Sons Ltd
- Brodies Funeral Services Ltd
- James Cockburn Limited
- Andrew Anderson and Sons Funeral Directors
- Thomas Grieve & Son Limited
- Little's Funeral Service Ltd
- Rowland Brothers
- W G Miller Ltd
- A France & Son (Holborn) Ltd
- Stanley Clare
- W Sherry & Sons
- Andrew D Crowley Independent Funeral Director
- W Uden & Sons
- Valentine & Turner
- Alan Greenwood
- F A Albins and Sons
- W A Truelove & Son
- P Loftus & Son Ltd
- John W Griffith & Son Ltd
- McCallum & Tritton & Sons
- Silletts Funeral Service
- Barrington's Funeral Service
- Ian Dallinger Funeral Services
- Unique Funerals
- Charles Stephens
- Pride Funeral Care
- Thomas McMullan Funeral Services
- MLS Independent Funeral Directors
- Quinns Funeral Directors

Suppliers

- Allsops
- Premier Health
- Clarke and Strong
- Flexmort / Roftec
- Leslie R Tipping
- Mazwell Group
- Rose House

The NAFD is in the process of setting up a page on the NAFD COVID website listing key PPE suppliers.

Thanks also go to Office Administrator Rochelle Taylor, Senior Standards & Quality Manager Nigel Cooper and Standards & Quality Managers Mark Cowan, Natalie Thomas and Gary O'Hara, who have liaised with members, analysed the data and ensured accurate and timely information has been available each week ready for the Cabinet Office meetings.

If you're interested in helping us in the months ahead,
please contact us at info@nafd.org.uk.