



**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 10.30am – 1pm**

**AGENDA:**

1. Welcome and apologies
  - i. Present:  
Ruth Mendel, Chair  
James Blackburn, NAFD  
Karen Dickson, Humanist Society Scotland  
Jane Matheson, Scottish Bereavement Benchmarking Group  
Richard Meade, Marie Curie (on telephone)  
Stuart Murdoch, Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains (AHPCC)  
Caroline Pretty, NHSS Bereavement Coordinators
  - ii. Apologies:  
John Birrell, Bereavement consultant  
Eleri Birkhead, Church of Scotland  
Kate Clark, Pushing up the Daisies  
Joy Elliott, Association of Bereavement Service Coordinators (ABSCO)  
Rebecca Patterson, Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care (SPPC) and Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief  
David Robertson, Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau
  - iii. In attendance:  
Darren Gunn, Scotmid Funerals  
Dr Maya Mayblin, University of Edinburgh
2. Agenda
3. Minute of meeting held on 4 December 2018
  - i. Ruth Mendel summarised the minutes of the last meeting
  - ii. Minutes were agreed to
4. Matters arising from 04.12.18
  - i. David Robertson volunteered to take on the role of secretary, this was welcomed within the room.

5. Action points from 04.12.18

- i. Application from Caledonian Cremations to be discussed at the May meeting.

**Action: Members to send any questions/queries regarding application to Ruth Mendel. These will be anonymised.**

- ii. The issue of stillbirth and what local authorities provide is still a postcode lottery.

**Action: More information to be gathered by Caroline and Jane.**

6. Terms of Reference

- i. There was a discussion around the current wording and whether changes were necessary

**Action: Change to be made to make it clear membership is by application**

**Action: Ruth Mendel to draft wording to indicate the group's view towards commercial interests and/or organisations**

**Action: Ruth Mendel to draft workplan for next meeting**

7. Funeral Expense Assistance Update

- i. Annual increase of the £700 other costs element. When asked the Cabinet Secretary confirmed she was willing to continue the conversation on this but highlighted that the Scottish Government are working with a limited budget
- ii. A concern was raised that coffins are not included in the variable part of the benefit
- iii. John Birrell and Ruth Mendel have contacted Richard Lyle MSP regarding a meeting
- iv. The group discussed: how will the new form look; how easy will it be to complete; who will help fill it out; and where would the claimant find it.
- v. The group highlighted their hope that: there will be lots of publicity around the time that the system goes live; and there would also be a hope that training for people who would help complete this form, such as Funeral Directors, would run in conjunction with the new application forms
- vi. The options for claimants who would be eligible for assistance to be communicated to the individual direct, so that they would know that they

- would be eligible and would not have to wait to they have a death and go to the register office and see a poster which would make them aware of the ways to claim and they try and find out they do not qualify were discussed
- vii. The possibly of local government sending information to the Job Centre Plus/DWP was mentioned, although there may be data sharing issues with this

#### 8. AOCB

- i. Dr Mayblin provided details of the project she is working on
- ii. This will be looking at National Assistance Funerals and Funeral Poverty
- iii. In particular, she is interested in the rituals around funerals and what is seen as dignified
- iv. This project will look to produce a report and explore benchmarking

**Action: Ruth Mendel to send details of the project to all group members**

- v. It was highlighted to members that Keeping up the Daisies will be screening 'Dead Good' at the Glasgow Film Festival

**Action: Ruth Mendel to send details of this screening to all group members**

- vi. Ruth Mendel informed the group that the next meeting will be the last she will be chairing for some time as she will be going on maternity leave in June.

#### 9. Dates of Future Meeting (all at 1030 -1300)

14 May 2019

3 September 2019

3 December 2019