



National Association of Funeral Directors

In response to a request for views about the benefits of the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill, on behalf of the National Association of Funeral Directors.

Power to Approve Electronic Means.

The Association strongly backs this proposal and has long since campaigned for its permanent inclusion in law. We have written and engaged with Executive Ministers around this matter since its conception as a temporary measure during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The powers allowing for the remote registration of deaths and still-births, and the electronic exchange of documentation among stakeholders involved in the death management and registration process have been overwhelmingly positive for all parties involved.

They have created a system that has proven efficient, modern, and compassionate by streamlining and speeding up a process that benefits bereaved people by minimising the time between death and funeral and preventing them from the often-upsetting procedure of attending in person death and still-birth registrations.

They have also relieved significant time and cost pressures on an already overburdened deathcare system and, importantly, provide a 21st-century death registration service - one that is effective, compassionate, and reflective of the digital age.

Conversely, reverting to pre-pandemic processes would be a significant step backward. It would reintroduce inefficiencies, delays, and additional emotional strain for bereaved families. In practical terms, this would mean registrars would once again be required to conduct face-to-face registrations, and electronic document exchange between healthcare providers, registrars, and funeral directors would cease—placing further pressure on already stretched services. It would add to the stress for grieving families at an already vulnerable time.

It is also worth noting that similar legislative practices have already been adopted as standard within the other UK devolved administrations and through Westminster.

We appreciate the Department's commitment to securing a permanent framework and sincerely hope the Assembly will act to preserve and make permanent the progress made thus far.

Giving certificate of cause of death directly.

While some concerns have been raised about a family's inability to question the cause of death if they do not have a cause of death medical certificate ahead of death registration, streamlining the process by electronic transfer directly to the registrar cuts down on delays between death and funeral and brings the process into line as used elsewhere in the United Kingdom.



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Certificates recognising the loss of a baby during pregnancy.

The NAFD fully supports the proposed introduction of Baby Loss Certificates. They have proved extremely popular in England and have demonstrated that they provide comfort and support to families, as well as the vital formal acknowledgement that their baby existed.

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