

02nd May 2024

Mike Freer MP
Minister for Courts and Legal Services
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Simon Hoare MP
Minister for Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Ministers Freer and Hoare,

Response to Joint MoJ and DLUHC Letter Regarding Funeral Home Inspections

As the chartered membership body for Environmental Health professionals, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) have been made aware by our members of your correspondence dated 26 April 2024 concerning the distressing incidents at Legacy Independent Funeral Directors. We acknowledge the gravity of the situation and appreciate the Government's proactive steps in addressing potential issues within the funeral sector.

We welcome the recognition from central government of the pivotal role that Environmental Health (EH) professionals play in rapidly responding to emergent crises. The redeployment of Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted their capacity and dedication to safeguarding public health under challenging circumstances.

While the profession stands ready to assist in ensuring that funeral homes comply with the highest standards, it is crucial to note the current resource constraints faced by local authority EH teams. We gratefully note your readiness to discuss any further support they may require. Therefore, we strongly advocate that any request for additional support and resources to effectively manage any new responsibilities tasked to EH professionals be made available.

Furthermore, we appreciate the Government's acknowledgment of the need for specialised training for EHOs who may have limited experience in this specific area. We are eager to participate in the upcoming webinars and request that CIEH be included in these sessions. Our extensive experience in designing and delivering educational programs positions us ideally to collaborate on developing and implementing training that ensures our members are well-prepared to meet and exceed government expectations.

CIEH has a long-standing history of productive partnerships with government departments, regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders. We are keen to offer our expertise in contributing to the development of a robust regulatory framework for the funeral sector. To this end, we request inclusion in ongoing discussions and correspondence related to this matter, ensuring that the voice of the environmental health profession is heard and integrated into future strategies.

We look forward to your response and to setting a course of action that safeguards public trust in the funeral sector while acknowledging and addressing the challenges faced by environmental health professionals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'FM' in a stylized, cursive font.

Fran McCloskey
Acting CEO, CIEH

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