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## Deceased Management Advisory Group

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30 August 2021

Dear Deceased Management Advisory Group member,

In October 2020 Joe Fitzpatrick, then Minister for Public Health and Sport, wrote to you to express his thanks for the way in which the funeral sector in Scotland was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then you and your colleagues have continued to work tirelessly to serve those in Scotland who have sadly lost a loved one during the most difficult of times. I too would like to add my appreciation and thanks to all of those working in the funeral sector, for all they have done and continue to do.

As you are aware, new cases of COVID-19 in Scotland have more than doubled during the last week. This is one of the sharpest rises we have seen during the pandemic and while we anticipated that cases were likely to rise as restrictions eased, the scale of the increase is concerning.

Vaccination has significantly weakened the link between new cases and serious health harms, however, it has not broken it completely. Scotland's health and care service is under considerable pressure and there is a risk that if the surge continues or accelerates, with increasing pressure on hospital beds and ICU admissions we cannot rule out having to re-impose some restrictions.

We, of course, do not want to return to more stringent measures, but this is yet another fragile and potentially very pivotal moment in our journey through the pandemic. You and

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your colleagues have already contributed so much to helping Scotland, and I am asking that you continue your efforts to reduce the spread of the virus.

Please do take all possible proactive steps to promote and reinforce the baseline measures and advisory precautionary measures.

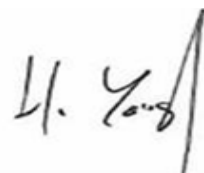
There are four areas that are still required by law:

1. face coverings must be worn in all the same indoor settings and continue to be required on public transport (unless exempt);
2. hospitality and entertainment venues are required to collect the contact details of customers so that Test and Protect can continue to contact-trace positive cases;
3. as before, businesses, services providers and places of worship must have regard to Scottish Government guidance about measures to minimise risk of exposure to COVID-19 relating to their business, service or premises; and
4. organisers of outdoor events of more than 5,000 people outdoors and 2,000 people indoors will still require local authority permission before they can go ahead, as this will allow us and local authorities simply to be assured of the arrangements in place to reduce the risk of large scale gatherings.

For the funeral sector this means promoting the legal requirement to wear a face covering, unless exempt, continuing to promote Test and Protect adherence and following the best practice COVID-19 guidance.

Thank you again for the fundamental work that you continue to do, and please share my gratitude with all your members for their vital contributions. Again, my thanks goes to everyone who works in the funeral sector.

Yours faithfully,



**HUMZA YOUSAF**

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