**Staff Funerals and loan of ceremonial uniform during COVID**

Before March 2020, the pre-COVID HMPPS policy on dress uniform stated that the family of a member of staff who had died in service could request a “full dress” service, where all uniformed staff attend wearing full ceremonial uniform obtained via a central store. Due to COVID restrictions this policy had to be revisited in March 2020 and a temporary instruction was issued stating that ceremonial uniform would not be available during the pandemic. Following Government restrictions on funerals, the issue of dress uniform for this purpose could not be supported due to concerns about multiple staff using uniform at a time when extra safeguards were required for the safe laundering, delivery and collection of these items.

**In response to feedback that a dress uniform presence can bring significant comfort to bereaved families and colleagues we have revisited and rescinded the temporary policy position**. Staff/establishments are asked to ensure that any requests for attendance at events in dress uniform comply with HMPPS policy but also wider Government restrictions during COVID. Up-to-date information on community restrictions including funerals and other public events can be found on the GOV.UK website. While this is naturally a sensitive and important matter, HMPPS staff should follow the community guidelines which means that numbers of staff participating in funerals can be very limited.

HMPPS has received assurance that the hiring of Barreathea dress uniform can be facilitated safely at this time. To order this uniform, establishments should contact the central store based at HMP Risley at BarreathaRisley@justice.gov.uk. Store colleagues will provide further guidance on delivery, maintenance and laundering arrangements. Please note that those uniforms dispatched are dry cleaned and protected by plastic covers. Care should be taken when removing the plastic covers by hand sanitising before and after touching them. Items should be quarantined for at least 72hrs before and after use where possible and returned in a plastic cover if possible, but don’t need to be cleaned by the user at this point as they will be quarantined for at least 72hrs before being dry cleaned on return.

As per Government guidelines (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic> ), use of dress uniform is permitted however, there are currently limits on numbers attending funerals. As these are subject to change, staff should check what they are and only plan on attending funerals - and requesting uniform hire - if doing so complies with the restrictions in force at the time. For this reason, staff/establishments should also liaise with the Funeral Director and family to discuss any specific arrangements. In particular, the Funeral Director will be able to advise in detail on the current government rules. Please note that if staff are lining up in front of the place where funeral is to take place, then this would normally count towards the numbers limit. This is also consistent with wider restrictions where gatherings are forbidden, even if for a very important reason.

Due to current restrictions, the majority of staff will sadly not be able to attend a colleague’s funeral. The chaplaincy team in the relevant establishment will be able to find alternative ways for staff to commemorate the death of a colleague as well as to support staff who are affected in any way.  Staff can also use the support of care teams in this difficult time.