

P-05-960 Fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 04.05.20

Dear Petitions committee

First let me thank you for taking the time to hear this petition. Our request is short and simple but it relates to a huge social issue.

‘Fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19

They gave their lives to save ours. We call on the Welsh Government to fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19. The average simple funeral costs £4000. We ask the Welsh Government to ensure that bereaved families immediately have access to the funds to pay for funeral costs.’

Further details:

When we attend the hospital we hope for, and indeed expect, equal care from everyone we meet whether we are being helped out of a chair or placed on a respirator. As a society we have realised more than ever that we need and appreciate the staff who keep the NHS working. A compassionate, educated and committed NHS staff is more critical now than ever. If we ask for this service, we as a society must in turn meet our responsibilities.

This petition was prompted by a personal loss where a friend and mum to my son’s friend died of covid-19. It was only when the local fundraising started that I discovered that funeral costs were not being covered by government, leaving families without at their weakest moment. It seems obvious that as NHS staff are public servants this is a cost we should all share. As Carolyn Harris MP for Swansea successfully campaigned to alleviate the financial cost of losing a child we ask that you consider showing a similar responsibility to those who die in what is today’s modern national service.

Just as we are treated equally when we enter the hospital we believe that those who care for us should be treated equally. We ask therefore that any such benefit is offered to locum and agency staff dying of Covid-19 following a period of working in the NHS. We also note that it is discriminatory to withhold any benefits from non-British citizens working in the NHS. They give service and pay tax like all other NHS staff. Tragically they sometimes also die from the pandemic so we ask that all such support is offered equally (see attached letter from Albany Solicitors Cardiff).

We note the money that the governments of the UK are offering to NHS staff but know how many financial demands there will be for the families and as such we request that this specific cost from a death in work is covered by the state, distinct from any lump sum.

As this request represents an urgent and immediate support for families, we ask that the money is not deducted from other payments nor made the subject of any disclaimer or legal

waiver, simply that these costs are made available on application to those NHS staff in Wales who have given everything for all of us.

Thank you again for your consideration

Jane Henderson

Source for funeral cost <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/help-paying-for-a-funeral>