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INSPECTORS OF BURIAL, CREMATION AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND CREATION OF A FUNERAL INDUSTRY INSPECTORATE IN SCOTLAND

I am delighted to announce the appointments of Mr Robert Swanson QPM, as Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors and Professor Gordon Findlater as Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors.

As you will know, Mr Swanson has held the position of Scotland's Inspector of Cremation since March 2015 and his remit is now extended to encompass burial authorities and funeral directors.

Professor Findlater was appointed as HM Inspector of Anatomy for Scotland in June 2018. He will continue to hold that appointment while taking on the additional appointment of Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors.

I am very pleased that both have agreed to accept these appointments. The extension of the appointment of Mr Swanson to Senior Inspector and the addition of Professor Findlater as Inspector will provide support to and oversight of the funeral industry in Scotland. Mr Swanson and Professor Findlater bring a wealth of diverse experience to these roles, and I know they are well prepared to meet the challenges ahead. I look forward to working with them, and I know you will join me in welcoming them to their new roles.

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I am also pleased to announce that the Scottish Government is making progress in the creation of a funeral industry inspectorate with responsibility for working with the sector to ensure best practice standards in Scotland. These appointments are the first step in that process.

It has never been more important to ensure our loved ones receive respectful and dignified care after death. Standards may already be high in many areas of the funeral sector, but by establishing an inspectorate and by introducing regulation for the first time, such as statutory codes of practice, we will ensure bereaved families have complete peace of mind.

The inspectorate will be led by Mr Swanson, as Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors. Mr Swanson and Professor Findlater will use their extensive knowledge and experience of the sector to shape the work of the inspectorate as the funeral sector in Scotland evolves. In addition I can also announce that additional Inspectors of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors will be appointed in 2021. In addition to inspectors, the inspectorate will be supported by a small team of Scottish Government civil servants.

The creation of an inspectorate and the appointment of inspectors are important milestones in the ongoing development of a regulatory regime for the funeral industry and improving standards across Scotland. Doing so also fulfils the recommendations by the National Cremation Investigation, led by Dame Elish Angiolini, and by Lord Bonomy's Infant Cremation Commission.

Many of you have been involved in the development of various parts of the regulatory regime for Scotland, working closely with the Burial and Cremation Team at the Scottish Government in the last few years. While the impact of COVID-19 has necessitated urgent reprioritisation, and important work had to be paused, I hope you will continue to contribute to the development of regulations in the same way going forward.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank you again for the important work that you continue to undertake at this difficult time.



Joe FitzPatrick MSP
Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing