

FUNERAL STANDARDS

30 April 2020

As updated by Faith and Belief Cell 30.04.2020 (v3)

From: London Resilience Strategic Coordination Group – Faith and Belief Cell

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For use by: families, London Funeral Directors, Cemeteries, Crematoria, Faith and Belief Celebrants, Faith and Belief Leaders, Local Authorities, NHS Bereavement Teams, GPs and all those involved in the death management process.

Overview

It is recognised that in these hugely challenging times it may not be possible to conduct funerals and cremations in the usual way. This situation impacts on Londoners of all and no faith and belief.

It is important to stress that the Standards below:

- reflect the advice of the Faith Cell of the Mortality Management Group, on behalf of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG), as to how to apply Government guidance in London and are specific to London at the point of issue.
- may evolve on the basis of feedback from the Faith and Belief Cell Advisory Panel and Contact Group

They offer a set of criteria to apply in all circumstances wherever public safety and operational capacity allow. **All those involved in the funeral process are kindly asked to take note of them.**

Standards

Funerals should remain as normal as possible for as long as possible in line with social distancing regulations. When this cannot be sustained the following minimum standards should be maintained:

1. The family's choice of burial or cremation for their loved one should be respected, in line with the requirements and conditions set out in the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#).
2. A celebrant (minister) of the family's choice of faith/belief should always be present if the family wish at the funeral even if there is no congregation at all, recognising that this may not be the individual of their choice.
3. As far as possible, name and contact details for the family should be given to the celebrant by the funeral director a minimum of one day before the funeral to allow contact with the family.
4. Attendance at funerals should be limited to those from within the household or close family of the loved one – their partner, children, parents and siblings. This includes deaths which do not arise from Covid-19. Individuals who are from a household that is self-isolating should not attend a funeral gathering if they have any symptoms of any kind, even if these are very mild. [Updated guidance](#) issued by government on April 19 details where exceptions can be made to the 'stay at home advice' that is currently in place to allow families and friends to attend funerals and say goodbye to loved ones. This includes those who are self-isolating or who have been defined as extremely clinically vulnerable, should they wish to attend. However, attendance at funerals should be agreed in consultation with the appointed funeral director.
5. Ceremonial words should be said in line with the family's choice of faith or belief but these may be truncated from usual funeral rites.
6. An offer to facilitate livestream via social media should be made. However it is recognised that not all Crematoria /Cemeteries have adequate WiFi/signal to achieve this. Where this is known to be the case (and where it is not), the family may prefer the funeral to be filmed so that it can be shared afterwards.
7. Faith and belief communities should, within their understanding of what is possible, offer memorial services and subsequent commemorations to bereaved families.

8. Bereavement support should be offered. This [Covid-19 toolkit from Thrive LDN](#) [may be helpful](#) in this regard.
9. When organisations charge fees (funeral directors, celebrants, crematoria, cemeteries etc), they are asked to work together to achieve transparency in what they charge in these circumstances.