

## The Government Advice for Funerals

The [guidance for funerals](#) has been updated. The guidance now includes additional information for communities managing a death.

During this unprecedented period, many lives will sadly be lost. To ensure organisations managing funerals are able to cope with the increased number of deaths, it is important that people do not delay funerals. We understand how difficult this will be for the families and friends of lost loved ones, however, the current guidance will be in place for the foreseeable future for public safety reasons.

Those organising a funeral should adhere to the following:

- restrict the number of mourners who attend so that a safe distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) can be maintained between individuals

only the following should attend:

- members of the person's household
  - close family members
  - if the deceased has neither household or family members in attendance, then it is possible for a modest number of friends to attend
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- at no point should mourners mix closer than 2 metres apart from each other
  - mourners should follow the advice on social distancing when travelling to and from the funeral gathering
  - mourners should avoid any direct face-to-face or physical contact, for example, hugging each other unless they are part of the same household, that is, they have already been living in the same house as each other
  - mourners in attendance, should follow the general advice on hand hygiene and preventing the spread of infection
  - before and after each service, clean and disinfect the area in which the service has taken place, as well as frequently touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people
  - mourners who are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus, or are part of a household with possible coronavirus infection, should not attend any gatherings
  - in many situations the household members of the deceased person will be the next of kin; they may be having to self-isolate in line with household guidance. Where the funeral is scheduled to take place before the period of household isolation has been completed (14 days from the first case in that household), there should be no mixing between mourners who are self-isolating and those who are not
  - mourners who are symptomatic should not attend in any circumstance

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>

Last updated 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Funeral/Funeral Directors

### **Q: Will there be a quick process for DWP payments for funerals?**

**A:** Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payments are there to provide help towards the cost of a funeral where there are insufficient funds available, from, for example, the assets of the deceased, insurance policies or contributions from family or elsewhere.

The Funeral Expenses Payment can help to pay for the following:

- burial fees
- cremation fees, including the cost of the doctor's certificate
- travel to arrange or go to the funeral
- the costs of moving the body within the UK if more than 50 miles
- death certificates or other documents

From 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020, you can also get up to £1000 towards any other funeral expenses, such as funeral director's fees, flowers or a coffin. This is for all deaths occurring from and including the 8<sup>th</sup> April."

To be eligible the person making the claim must be the person responsible for the funeral and be a partner, parent, close relative or close friend of the deceased. The person making the claim must also be in receipt of a qualifying benefit or tax credit and must claim within six months of the funeral. If there's a close relative of the deceased who is not in receipt of a qualifying benefit the responsible person may not be eligible for a Funeral Expenses Payment.

An application for a Funeral Expenses Payment can be processed without the need for a final invoice or even needing to know the date of the funeral. Instead, DWP can accept a signed contract.

### **COVID 19 measures**

In order to meet increased demand, the internal claim process has been streamlined in order to be able to make payments more quickly, with further streamlining options being pursued. Any changes that arise from this on-going work will be communicated. Funeral Directors can also help by submitting signed contracts or invoices promptly.

### **Q: Is there any intention for Government to influence a set price across Funeral Directors to avoid delay and prevent families sourcing based on price?**

**A:** Awaiting lines from BEIS.

### **Q: What measures are being undertaken with funeral directors / families of bereaved we are seeing families delaying burials / FDs refusing to collect bodies?**

**A:** Awaiting lines from BEIS.

### **Q: Can we get some clarity on what PPE Funeral directors and undertakers absolutely need to wear?**

**A:** Guidance for those managing the deceased is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>. AAPT and RCPATH in consultation with PHE have also published [guidance](#) on the PPE requirements for care of the deceased during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Note: The above information is collated by Julie Clayton and Aftab Khan on behalf of Cumbria LRF Managing Excess Deaths –Subgroup for the benefit of all involved in the management of excess deaths across Cumbria. The information is correct on the day of its publication. Please regularly visit Government website on the subject matter for the latest updates. Last updated 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020