

### **Guidance regarding Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

Given the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, we recognise that this is an especially difficult time for our clients and the bereaved.

The wellbeing of all those who interact with our teams and our funeral homes remains our key concern, along with continuing to provide the highest standards to loved ones in our care.

We understand that you may have questions regarding the impact to your loved one's funeral arrangements and the services we currently provide. Below, we provide guidance to Frequently Asked Questions which we hope will be helpful to you at this time.

We remain committed to doing everything we possibly can to support you to meet your wishes and those of your loved one.

Please call your local funeral home at any time for help and advice. Our telephone service is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. We are here to help. For the contact details of your local funeral home, please [click here](#).

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## **Arranging a funeral**

### **Can funerals still take place?**

Yes. Funerals can still be arranged and are still taking place. Those in the funeral profession are classed as key workers and we remain able to provide you with our highest standards of care and support at this time.

### **How should I get in touch with you if I need your services?**

Our branches are open to serve all our clients. We would suggest you call us before you visit in order for us to understand how best we can support you.

If your local funeral home is unoccupied due to team member absence, our services can still be provided through our network of neighbouring funeral homes who offer the same high service standards at this time. We can also support you remotely to carry out as much of the funeral arrangement as possible over the telephone and via email or postal services.

**Are you still able to come to my home to carry out funeral arrangements?**

We are able to come and visit you in your home to support if you live in an area which is either Stage 0 or Stage 1 and assuming no-one in your household either has symptoms of Covid-19 nor a positive diagnosis of Covid-19 in the last ten days.

**How do I arrange a funeral if I am self-isolating?**

We will support you in arranging the funeral as much as possible by carrying out the majority of the arrangement over the telephone, email and via postal services. In addition, we may be able to support you using video conference facilities.

If you are not self-isolating and you do visit our premises, we will always practise social distancing with you. In addition, please familiarise yourself with our visitor guidelines (see below).

**If I do arrange an appointment to visit your premises, is there a limit on the amount of people who can visit?**

Yes. There are limits in place concerning maximum occupancy. It is therefore important that you call us before visiting so that we can co-ordinate any visits to our premises and ensure that we can support social distancing.

**Will you still be offering limousines?**

Yes. However, wherever possible, funeral service attendees should travel to the venue in a car by themselves or with people from their household group. If this is not possible and funeral transport (e.g. provision of cars or limousines) is required or chosen then the advice from [Transport Scotland](#) on how to travel safely should be followed. In particular, see the sections on private hire vehicles and car sharing.

**Are there any other considerations to be aware of if I visit your premises?**

Please do not visit our premises if you are required to self-isolate in line with wider government guidelines e.g. you are showing symptoms of Covid-19 or you are required to self-isolate as a result of being told to self-isolate by a 'testing and tracing' authority. Please call us instead for help.

In line with wider government advice, for all those who do visit our premises, we would encourage hand hygiene upon entering and exiting, and we would encourage the use of our supplies of such things as tissues and hand washing facilities/hand sanitisers as and when required. In line with government instructions, you are required to wear a face covering whilst on our premises. Please also familiarise yourself with our visitor guidance (see below).

**Will donation facilities be available at the funeral home?**

In order to minimise the need to handle monies and collection boxes, we are unable to take donations at funerals and we are unable to accept cash donations at our homes.

We do, however, have an online donation facility via our charity partner, MuchLoved. The MuchLoved service offers clients and mourners a way to leave messages and donations online for a wide range of UK charities.

The service can be set up by any of our Funeral Arrangers and the online link can be shared with family and friends.

Donations are sent directly to the nominated charity with a small administration fee deducted by MuchLoved.

### **Can I still have an obituary and publish details about the funeral?**

Obituaries are still available. However, we would please request that the day and time of the funeral are not advertised in the public domain. This is in order to limit the numbers of potentially unexpected guests arriving at the funeral service, which in turn may prevent the venue from practising social distancing measures.

Our free online memorial service offered through a charity called MuchLoved is available and the MuchLoved service offers clients and mourners a way to leave messages, donations, as well as having the option for third party video streaming links to be added, so that those who cannot attend the funeral are still able to be involved in the day.

The service can be set up by any of our Funeral Arrangers and the online link can be shared with family and friends.

## **Attending a funeral**

### **Are there restrictions on attending funerals at this time?**

Mourners are permitted at services and a celebrant can attend the service, should you request this.

In line with government guidance, anyone showing symptoms of Covid-19 or who has tested positive for Covid-19 and is still required to self-isolate should not attend a funeral service. We will work with you to establish the possible ways these mourners can still participate in the service, for example, through remote viewing.

In order to carry out social distancing measures, most crematoria, cemeteries, places of worship and other funeral service locations have imposed limits on the number of mourners allowed to attend at this time, taking into consideration wider government guidance. We will let you know the latest advice for the specific funeral location you have chosen. In any event, the maximum numbers able to attend funeral services in Scotland by level area as follows:

- Level 4 – funeral services 20; no post-funeral gatherings
- Level 3 – funeral services 50; post-funeral gatherings 50
- Level 2 – funeral services 50; post-funeral gatherings 50
- Level 1 – funeral services 100; post-funeral gatherings 100
- Level 0 – funeral services 200; post-funeral gatherings 200

Note: Children of all ages are counted in the maximum number

The precise numbers attending a funeral service or committal will be determined by how many people the venue or outdoor space can safely accommodate with social distancing measures in place. The maximum numbers:

### **Are face coverings required?**

Everyone attending an indoor funeral service is required by law to wear a face covering. This includes funeral services in crematoriums, funeral directors' premises and places of worship.

There are some exceptions to wearing a face covering during funeral services. The person leading the funeral service, or providing the eulogy, can remove a face covering when carrying out their role in the service, but must remain at least 2 metres away from others or have a protective screen between them and others, and wear a face covering before and after carrying out their role in the service.

If it is not possible for the person leading the funeral service or providing the eulogy to remain at least 2 metres away from others or to use a protective screen, they must wear a face covering.

### **Can vulnerable people attend funerals?**

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable should attend a funeral remotely, where this is possible. If they do choose to attend in person, other mourners should be advised that a clinically extremely vulnerable person(s) is attending, to be respectful of the need to avoid close contact at any point, and to adhere to social distancing measures.

We will work closely with you to understand the mourners you envisage attending the service and we will discuss the size of the venues for your services, so that we can support you with requirements such as around such things as social distancing, face coverings and transport options.

### **Can I view funeral services remotely if I am unable to attend the funeral itself?**

We will advise you of the options available to you at this time regarding remote viewing of funeral services.

### **Are there any considerations relating to burial services and cremations?**

Both burial services and cremations are available at this time. Places of worship, cemeteries, crematoriums and other funeral venues may be imposing restrictions locally on the numbers of mourners allowed to attend a service, along with potential changes to opening hours and service lengths and local practices. Your local funeral home will guide you at all times.

### **How do I maintain social distance at a funeral?**

Prior to the funeral, we will work closely with you to understand the number of mourners you envisage attending the service and the size of the venues for your services, so that we can support requirements around social distancing. Your Funeral Director will also support you on the day.

## Caring for and visiting the deceased

### **Can I view my loved one, and is embalming permitted?**

Viewing and embalming are permitted. We will talk to you about the precautions we are taking to keep everyone safe when viewing your loved one.

### **Are there any differences in relation to hygiene standards at this time?**

We would like to reassure all our clients that Funeral Partners already has rigorous hygiene controls in place when it comes to cleaning and disinfecting routines. We have extremely high standards when it comes to handling any deceased person in our care, and this includes any deceased who may have died with any infection.

These controls include the use of specialised health and safety equipment, along with specific ways of working so that we are able to maintain clinical levels of hygiene and safe working environments.

In addition, we have provided our team members with additional guidance at this time relating specifically to cleaning and disinfecting routines and taking additional Covid-19-guidance and related precautions into account.

## Payment for our services

### **Are there any considerations relating to payment for your services?**

We recognise that this may be a very difficult time when it comes to financial circumstances. Please be assured that we will be as flexible as we can to support your circumstances. Funeral Partners has a wide range of products and services available to accommodate different budget requirements. We are also able to guide you carefully on the government support that may be available for funeral services.

In addition, we work with a third party called **Funeral Safe** who may be able to provide you with credit facilities in order to cover the costs of funeral services over a period of months. Funeral Safe can be contacted on **0330 002 0875** and applications for credit can be made online at [www.funeralsafe.co.uk](http://www.funeralsafe.co.uk)

### **Can I still purchase prepaid funeral plans at this time?**

Yes. Funeral Partners offer a funeral plan called Choice. Choice funeral plans can be purchased online at [www.choiceplan.co.uk](http://www.choiceplan.co.uk) or by calling **01803 298 243**.

Alternatively, please contact your local funeral home who can assist you in purchasing a Choice prepaid funeral plan over the telephone, or socially distanced at our funeral homes.

### **If there are restrictions on funeral services, how does this impact my funeral plan?**

We will give you the specific guidance you need in relation to any elements that may be impacted. Any funeral service restrictions are currently temporary, and we do not yet know the impact on future funerals.

If any restrictions will impact a current funeral being arranged using a pre-paid funeral plan, we will discuss this with you at the time of the arrangement.

### Expert advice

Funeral Partners is monitoring all the latest guidance from the UK government and devolved administrations as well as health agencies. We are also involved in supporting local resilience forums and other groups which are working on specific Coronavirus-related activities.

In addition, Funeral Partners is a member of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD). Representatives of the NAFD are continuing to liaise directly with government authorities in order to ensure that all members (including Funeral Partners) adhere to the latest government advice.

### 24-hour telephone support

We recognise that this is an unprecedented time and that some of our guidance may be particularly unfortunate at what is already an extremely challenging time for our clients.

We remain available to support you at any time with any questions or queries you may have. Please call your local funeral home at any time.

**Our telephone support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

**We are here to help. For the contact details of your local funeral home, please [click here](#).**

### **Guidance for visitors to our premises during the Covid-19 pandemic**

We take the safety of visitors to our premises, along with the safety of our colleagues, very seriously. For everyone's safety, we would kindly ask you to follow the below guidance. If you have any questions ahead of your visit, please don't hesitate to let us know.

#### **Before your visit**

- If you want to avoid visiting our premises and still use our services, then this is possible, and we will do everything we can to support you remotely
- Contact us before your visit, so that we can plan to support your arrival
- Be aware that there is a maximum number of visitors allowed at any one time
- Please bring your own face covering for use in our premises
- It is with regret that we are not providing refreshments at this time, given the potential cross-contamination risk
- Please use the posters in our funeral home to log your attendance with 'test and trace' apps in order to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- Please rest assured that we have rigorous hygiene standards in place in all premises

#### **During your visit**

- In line with government requirements, we require that you wear a face covering for the duration of your visit. You will be offered a disposable face mask if you arrive without a face covering. We recognise that certain individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. If this is the case, please bring your exemption badge so we can best support your visit
- Please familiarise yourself with the social distancing measures in operation at our premises, including following any instructions on posters or signage/markings. Please follow any other guidance as instructed from our colleagues
- Please maintain social distance from our colleagues whilst in our funeral home, in order to best protect our teams at this time
- Use our washroom facilities whenever they are required
- If you cough/sneeze, please use the tissues available and wash your hands as soon as possible afterwards. Use your sleeve if you do not have a tissue to hand
- Avoid touching items in the funeral home, unless absolutely necessary
- Use our hand sanitiser facilities as often as you require, and practise hand hygiene measures upon entry and exit of our premises as a minimum, and as required thereafter

*Thank you in advance for helping us all to stay safe!*