

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 deceased people in our care.

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

We recognise how unfortunate but how necessary the government guidance is. 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. The UK government and the devolved administrations are clear that funerals must continue, without delay. 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?

Some of our branches may be providing an appointment-only service. It is essential that you call us before you visit, so that we can provide you with the most appropriate guidance regarding next steps.

Are funeral homes open or are they required to close?

Most of our funeral homes remain open. Funeral homes are not required to close. However, before any visit to our premises, please call us so that we can provide you with the most appropriate guidance and help.

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?

Given the current requirements around social distancing and to help keep our funeral homes open at this time, we regret that we are currently unable to carry out funeral arrangements at your home. We can still provide all the support you may need over the telephone, via email and post, as well as face-to-face in our funeral homes which remain open.

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.

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 at any point in time. It is therefore vital 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 for all visitors.

Will you still be offering limousines?

Wherever possible, mourners should travel to the venue by themselves or with people from their household/social bubble. If this is not possible and funeral transport is required then we can provide limousines. Additional safety measures are in place to support drivers and passengers at this time, and we will explain these fully to you.

Are there other considerations around transport to/from the funeral I need to be aware of?

Yes. Only those people who are in the same household/social bubble should travel together in the same vehicle. This is to ensure wider social distancing requirements are maintained.

Are there any delays relating to carrying out funerals?

It remains government guidance to avoid delays to funeral services. We will therefore encourage you to arrange the funeral as soon as practically possible. We appreciate your support and understanding at this time.

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 a household member having Covid-19 or 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 the building, 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 advice, we request that you wear a face covering during your visit, given that you will be in an enclosed space with others that you do not ordinarily meet. 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 us 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.

It is with regret but it is understandable that anyone showing symptoms of Covid-19 should not attend any 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, 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 relation to the number of mourners who can attend a funeral, the government guidance by geography is below:

England

- A maximum of 30 mourners can attend a funeral. This can include members of the deceased person's household, family members and close friends of the deceased
- Social distancing must still be in operation at funerals, and this may limit the maximum amount of people who can attend a funeral to be less than 30
- With the exception of those mourners who are in the same household or social bubble, all other mourners should socially distance from each other in order to limit the risk of transmission of Covid-19

The following groups can still attend funeral services:

- Vulnerable groups (such as those who are pregnant, those over 70 and those with an underlying health condition)
- Those who are extremely vulnerable and currently shielding
- Individuals who are self-isolating for 14 days (due to someone in their household being unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 or as a result of other contact e.g. through contact tracing)

We will work with you to ensure additional precautions are in place for those mourners who may belong to the above groups, in order to protect them and minimise risk to others. For example, this may include preventing extremely vulnerable mourners attending, should an individual in self-isolation also wish to attend the funeral, and vice-versa.

Northern Ireland

- The number of mourners will be determined by the size of each venue following local risk assessments. A maximum of 30 are permitted to gather for the committal at the graveside or at the front of the City of Belfast Crematorium
- Whilst more than 30 people may be permitted inside the place of worship or funeral home for the service, only a maximum of 30 (excluding clergy/officiant, Funeral Director staff and cemetery/crematorium staff) can attend the committal at the graveside or the front of the City of Belfast crematorium

Scotland

Those who are organising a funeral are advised that in-person attendance at funeral services should continue to be kept to a small number of people and will be subject to physical distancing and wider public health measures. In person attendance at a funeral service is limited to a maximum of 20 people, but will depend on the capacity of local venues to accommodate this number, whilst also respecting social distancing measures.

Scottish guidance states that higher risk groups should seriously consider whether they should attend a funeral in person. This is also the case for those mourners who may be in a household/social bubble with someone who has Covid-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for Covid-19.

Please also be aware of the below guidance for all parts of the UK:

- All mourners should follow the advice on hand and respiratory hygiene and practise social distancing when travelling to and from the funeral gathering. This includes whilst travelling in any vehicle to/from the service
- At the service, all mourners must be able to practise social distancing guidelines and keep a minimum of 2 metres apart (except for those mourners who live in the same household/social bubble). Your Funeral Director will also assist you on the day
- It is appropriate for mourners to wear face coverings, particularly given funeral services are indoors and social distancing may be harder to achieve
- Different funeral venues may have introduced certain measures to capture attendees at funerals, in order to support 'testing and tracing'. We will work with you to advise you if this is the case and any local protocols

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 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?

Please follow the requirements above regarding who can attend a funeral. In addition, we would ask all mourners attending a funeral to practise the government's guidelines relating to social distancing. This requires maintaining a two-metre distance wherever possible at all times between others not in your own household or wider social bubble.

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 still view my loved one?

Please speak to your local funeral home who will give you all the guidance you need. We will endeavour to support your wishes concerning viewing and spending time with the deceased, aligned to government advice. Under Public Health England guidelines, it is still possible to view a deceased who is suspected or confirmed to have been infected with Covid-19, and embalming is also permitted.

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 12 months to 48 months. Funeral Safe can be contacted on **0330 002 0875** and applications for credit can be made online at www.funeralsafe.co.uk

Prepaid funeral plans

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 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) and Irish Association of Funeral Directors (IAFD). Representatives of both the NAFD and IAFD 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](#).

The wellbeing of all those who interact with us is a key concern, [read more](#) about how we are keeping our clients and teams safe.

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 very 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 be aware that we may ask you some questions upon your arrival in order to allow us to complete our visitor logs on your behalf. This also supports 'test and trace' activities across the country. We recognise your privacy is hugely important and we will use any details we capture about you in accordance with data protection obligations and our [privacy policy](#)
- Please rest assured that we have rigorous hygiene standards in place in all premises

During your visit

- We would kindly request 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 face coverings are not always required for everyone, based on wider government exemptions
- 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
- Remain a 2 metre distance from others in the funeral home, at all times wherever possible
- 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!