

Guidance regarding Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Given the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, Funeral Partners recognises that this is an especially difficult time for our clients and the bereaved.

The well-being of all those who interact with the Funeral Partners teams and funeral homes remains our key concern, along with continuing to provide the highest standards of care to the deceased. We understand that you may have questions regarding the impact to your funeral arrangements and the services we provide, here is some guidance to frequently asked questions below which we hope will be helpful to you at this time.

We recognise how unfortunate but also how necessary the new government guidance is. We remain committed to doing everything we possibly can to support you. Please call your local funeral home for help and advice. Our telephone service is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. We are here to help.

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Arranging a funeral

Can funerals still take place?

Yes, funeral 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 high 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 will be providing an appointment only service. It is essential that you call us before you visit any of our premises, 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 unmanned 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 to carry out as much of the funeral arrangement as possible over the telephone, email and via postal services.

Are you still able to offer home 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 provide home arrangements.

How do I arrange a funeral if I am self-isolating or social distancing?

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 maintain a two metre distance with visitors in order to follow government guidelines regarding social distancing.

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

Yes. We are limiting visitors to our premises to a maximum of two people at any one time. It is therefore vital you call us before visiting so we can co-ordinate any visits to our premises.

Will you still be offering limousines?

In order to support social distancing measures, we are regrettably unable to provide limousines for funerals at this time. We very much appreciate that this may be disappointing, and we would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Are there any delays relating to carrying out funerals?

We will endeavour to be as flexible as possible to support your preferences. We would advise that it may be the case that choices of date and time of funerals and the availability of specific services may become more constrained over time. We would therefore encourage you to arrange the funeral as soon as practically possible.

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 share a household with someone who has symptoms of Covid-19. Please call us for help instead.

In line with wider government advice, for all those who do visit our premises, we would encourage usage of our washroom facilities for handwashing upon entering and exiting the building, and we would encourage the use of our supplies of such things as tissues and hand sanitisers when required.

Will donation facilities be available at the funeral home?

In order to minimise the need to handle monies and collection boxes at this time, we are unable to handle donations at funerals.

We do, however, have an online donation facility via our MuchLoved charity partner that is available and offers clients and mourners a way to leave messages and donations for a wide range of UK charities. The page can be set up by one of our funeral arrangers and the link shared by yourself with family & 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. We would please request that the day and time of the funeral are not advertised in the public domain. This is in order to for us to limit the numbers of potentially unexpected guests arriving at the funeral service, which in turn may prevent us from practicing social distancing measures.

Our free Online Funeral Notice, Donations and Tribute Service via Much-loved is available and 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 page can be set up by one of our funeral arrangers and the link shared by yourself with family & friends

Attending a funeral

Are there restrictions on the numbers of people attending funerals at this time?

Yes. Funeral services can still take place (this is still the case following the government guidance on 23rd March 2020).

However, most crematoria, cemeteries, and other funeral locations have imposed limits on the number of mourners allowed to attend. We will let you know the latest advice for the specific funeral location you have chosen.

We would encourage our clients to restrict the number of mourners attending the funeral service and at this stage consider permitting only immediate family to attend the funeral, in order to minimise social contact.

In line with wider guidance, those in self-isolation must continue to self-isolate and not attend a 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 you with requirements around social distancing.



If I am able to limit attendees at the funeral to immediate family only, who would this cover?

- Spouse/Partner
- Parents/carers
- Brothers/Sisters
- Children (and partners)

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 crematoria?

Both burial services and crematoria 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?

We would encourage our clients to restrict the number of mourners attending the funeral service and at this stage consider permitting only immediate family to attend the funeral, in order to minimise social contact.

We would ask all mourners attending a funeral to practice the government's guidelines relating to social distancing. This requires maintaining a minimum of a two-metre distance between others not in your household.

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 and your funeral director will support you on the day.

Caring for and visiting the deceased

Can I still view my loved one?

We will endeavour to support your wishes concerning viewing and spending time with the deceased. We will advise you on any restrictions in this regard. Please speak to your local funeral home who will give you the guidance you need.

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 daily 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 an 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.

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 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 requirements. We are also able to guide you carefully on the government support that may be available to you to pay for funeral services.

In addition, we work with a third party called **Funeral Safe** who may be able to provide credit facilities to our clients 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 prepaid funeral plan.

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 following all the latest guidance from the UK Government, the NHS and Public Health England. 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.