

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01am on SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2020

London's SCG releases COVID-19 Funeral Standards

In support of recently published Government guidance, London's Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) has today [19 April] released a set of Funeral Standards to provide clarity and reassurance to families facing the burial or cremation of a loved one during the current pandemic.

The Standards, which were developed by the Faith and Belief Cell of the SCG for Londoners of all faiths, beliefs and none, respond to the need for families to not delay funerals after someone has died whilst being able to shape some aspects of how they say goodbye. They offer a set of criteria to apply in all circumstances wherever public safety and operational capacity allow.

Funerals in London will remain as normal as possible for as long as possible while observing social distancing regulations and the Standards may evolve according to need as the pandemic continues.

The Venerable Luke Miller, The Archdeacon of London and Chair of the Strategic Coordination Group's Faith Cell, said:

"The Funeral Standards grew from the need to mark the end of a loved one's life with dignity, compassion and respect coupled with the requirement to minimise the spread of infection and to save lives.

"They set out that even funerals without congregation should have a celebrant or minister in accordance with the faith or belief of the one who has died.

No one should journey alone."

The Strategic Coordination Group was set up by the London Resilience Forum to coordinate public services' response to Covid19

London's Funeral Standards:

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 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. As per Government advice, anyone who has had contact with your loved one will need to self-isolate for 14 days from their last time of contact, and anyone who is showing signs of Covid-19 should not attend.
5. Ceremonial words should be said in line with the family's choice 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. Organisations which charge fees (funeral directors, celebrants, crematoria, cemeteries etc) are asked to work together to achieve consistency in what they charge in these circumstances.

LONDON RESILIENCE FORUM

STRATEGIC COORDINATION GROUP

Notes to editors

The Strategic Coordination Group is the central authority coordinating the efforts of public bodies in London to respond to the COVID19 virus.

On Friday 17 April, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Housing (MHCLG) Minister Simon Clarke [wrote to the leaders of local authorities](#) to work with faith groups and funeral directors to develop safe, sensitive and innovative ways for funerals to take place.

For further information

Contact the SCG COVID-19 Comms Hub on:

COVID19CommsHub@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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