

Dear Colleagues,



ICCM Response to Covid-19 and ongoing support to members

The Board of Directors and Officers of the ICCM wish to reassure you that we understand the very difficult position you are in with the current Covid-19 situation and the government guidance. During the crisis there will be a lot of pressure and scrutiny on your services, so we want you to know you're not alone. The ICCM have taken steps to protect Officers and enable them to work from home, where they can provide telephone and email support. That support is not just technical; there will be a lot of pressure on members, so we are here for emotional support too. It is vital that you protect your own physical and emotional health during these difficult and uncertain times, so please know that you are not alone.

Our contact details are available on the ICCM website - <https://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/contact/>

Please use us.

In line with Government advice the ICCM has taken the regrettable but necessary decision to postpone all non-urgent training, meetings and appointments until the end of April. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. We will keep the situation under review and continue to follow Government guidance as the situation progresses.

If you have urgent training or support needs, please contact us to discuss how we may be able to help.

Statement from representatives of the British funeral sector (The National Association of Funeral Directors, Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors, Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management, Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, Cremation Society of Great Britain and the Association of Private Cemeteries and Crematoria)

On Tuesday 17th March the government met with representative bodies from the funeral, crematoria and burial sector regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Requests for support with access to equipment that is in scarce supply, and the need for additional advice and support as the situation develops, were taken on board. As a result of that meeting, the signatories to this statement have decided to offer the following advice.

The key outcome is that funerals should continue, as normally as possible, for now - but take into account all of the guidelines issued by government for minimising the risk of transmission. This includes the need to protect at-risk groups, to avoid large gatherings of people, for good hand hygiene and the avoidance of unnecessary physical contact. This is not only for the benefit of those attending funerals, it also supports the urgent need to protect funeral home, crematorium and cemetery employees, who need to remain healthy and able to support bereaved families at this critical time.

In consultation with their local crematoria and cemeteries, Funeral homes and families should assess each funeral individually and consider whether it might mean smaller numbers of people and organising a celebration of life or memorial service planned for a later date. Alternatives such as webcasting may enable other mourners to participate. This is a fast evolving situation and guidance

may well need to change again in the near future. The focus for day-to-day communication will be local resilience forums, with which funeral, crematoria and burial organisations are working closely, across the country.

We will be sending a guidance document to you shortly to support you in assessing any changes you may need to make during the Covid-19 outbreak.

This is a fast evolving situation and guidance may well need to change again in the near future. Much of the Government's day-to-day focus for communication will be local resilience forums and you are urged to make contact with your local resilience forum to ensure there is a good flow of information coming out to you that is relevant to your local area. If you are already involved in your local resilience forum, make sure you are sharing information with other providers in your area, local funeral firms and with the ICCM through the Chief Executive at jdunk@institutecemandcrem.com. This will help us to ensure all UK cemetery and crematorium operators have a consistent flow of operational information.

Proposed legislation

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has identified that to effectively manage a coronavirus outbreak in the UK, they need to introduce new fast-tracked legislation. This will provide them with the legal measures to be able to implement their phased response. Details of the proposed legislation, which will be heard in parliament on Thursday, can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-what-it-will-do>

Please continue to follow Government guidance and stay safe.