



### **Scottish Government Updates**

The Scottish Government has issued the following updates:

#### **Update 1:**

Please note that as posted on our [Funeral Industry News blog](#) on Monday 6 April 2020, Scottish Ministers have from 8 April relaxed arrangements around who can arrange a funeral, as well as suspended the duties in relation to handling ashes that are normally placed on funeral directors, cremation authorities and local authorities. To read about this important change in more detail, please do go to our blog post [here](#).

#### **Update 2:**

Information has been posted on our blog about the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, which came into effect from 26 March 2020.

These regulations set out temporary restrictions on the opening to the public of crematoriums and also restrictions around funeral services. Information is available [here](#).

### **Closure of Crematoria and Cemeteries in England**

The Government has acknowledged there is some confusion around the closure of crematoria and cemeteries in England and have stated:

Burial ground managers are currently making their own decisions on the opening of burial grounds. However, as outlined in the Regulations, we committed to reviewing the formal regulations and will provide further clarity shortly.

The ICCM will provide an update as soon as regulations have been reviewed and clarity provided.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

It has been reported that there have been difficulties in some areas in sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE). We have been advised to inform members that they should contact their Local Resilience Forum (LRF) if this is the case. PPE is being delivered to LRFs, who will then organise distribution to key workers. Funeral services are included in the list of those who can receive PPE. Contact details for LRFs can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-resilience-forums-contact-details>.

### **Changes to DWP Funeral Payment**

From Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April the element of Funeral Expenses Payment that helps families meet the costs of funeral expenses such as coffins, flowers and funeral directors' fees increased from £700 to £1,000. This will apply to claims where deaths occur on or after the 8<sup>th</sup> April.

The DWP are also working with their operations team to meet increased demand. The internal claim process has been streamlined in order to be able to make payments more quickly, with further streamlining options being pursued. Funeral directors should note that it is not necessary for a final invoice to be issued or a date of a funeral to be known for a claim to be made – a signed contract can be accepted.

## **Cremator Technicians Training Scheme (CTTS)**

To assist cremation authorities and companies the ICCM has streamlined the process for candidates undertaking the CTTS. On application to enrol on the scheme, the study pack, workbooks and associated documents are emailed to the candidate. Once completed, the workbook is emailed to the National Office and will be marked within three working days of receipt. If the candidate has passed this element of the CTTS, and the mentor states that the candidate is ready, a practical examination will be arranged using video conferencing technology or a similar app. The examination can be arranged quickly, usually within three days of the application. If the candidate also passes this element of the examination, they will achieve their BTEC accredited CTTS qualification. There will be no requirement for further examinations once the pandemic crisis is over. This methodology complies with the Government's advice on restricting travel and maintaining social distancing. It has been approved by our training partner, the Stratford Business School, and enables us to maintain the BTEC accreditation for this important qualification.

## **Maintaining Standards**

In these unprecedented times it is vital that bereaved people can have confidence in the services we are delivering, especially if they are unable to attend a funeral. We would urge members to be creative in their approach to helping bereaved families at this difficult time, but within Government guidelines and best practice guidance, and whilst taking necessary steps to protect themselves and their teams. Many families will have been in situations where they have very little or no control and may not have been able to see their loved ones before or after they died. The funeral may be the only chance they have to exercise some control over the situation, whether they can attend in person or via a webcast or recording. Choosing music, poems or readings, or contributing to the eulogy could be vitally important to families and members should enable this as much as possible. We would like to share best practice so please let us know of any innovative ways you are helping bereaved families – please email Julie Dunk at [jdunk@institutecemandcrem.com](mailto:jdunk@institutecemandcrem.com).

As the number of burials and cremations continues to rise, it is important that the [ICCM Guiding Principles for Burial and Cremation](#) and the FBCA Codes of [Burial](#) and [Cremation](#) Practices are adhered to. Members are also reminded of the [ICCM Guidance on the Use of Auto-shutdown](#) that was issued to members last year.

For those that are providing live webcasting of funeral services, please be aware that streaming may not stop when the mourners leave the chapel, and that images and sound will continue to be broadcast. This means that people will witness and hear any activities in the chapel in real time, so beware of anything that may cause upset to viewers.

## **ICCM Support**

Officers are now working from home, but are continuing to provide advice and guidance via updates on the website at [www.iccm-uk.com](http://www.iccm-uk.com), and via phone and email. Contact details for the officers can be found [here](#).

*Please continue to follow Government guidance and stay safe.*