

## Crematoria and Cemeteries

### Easing of Coronavirus Lockdown in England

#### Circumstances in which easing beyond stage 1 (current stage) can be considered:

1. The R value is at a level that the threat to cemetery and crematorium teams is now manageable. This is likely to be determined by the Government. Movement beyond stage 1 for individual cemeteries and crematoria would have to be on the basis of an updated risk assessment; following all social distancing at work requirements; following PHE and other any other Government guidance on managing funerals, and correct use of appropriate PPE, and
2. Numbers of deaths fall to normal seasonal levels for a sustained period, ie 11,000 deaths per week for a four consecutive week period. This would mean that extra capacity at cemeteries and crematoria would not be required and teams could begin to carry out other duties.

#### Stages

##### Stage 1 (Current)

Legislation and guidance in force:

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#) still in place – crematoria must remain closed except for funerals.

Revised [Managing a Funeral during the Coronavirus Pandemic](#) guidance issued on 18 May 2020 – as previous guidance but including new Covid-19 symptoms and advice to mourners travelling to funerals.

Government guidance – [Our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#) – published 11 May, updated 12 May 2020 – some easing of lockdown measures, people can exercise more than once a day and can drive any distance to exercise; people can meet one person from outside their household in an open space whilst maintaining social distancing; unless they can work from home they should return to work, but must maintain social distancing at work where possible, and should avoid using public transport where possible.

Updated 28 May – from 1 June up to 6 people able to meet outside whilst social distancing; some schools will reopen from 1 June and others on 15 June; non-essential shops can open from 15 June; places of worship to reopen from 4 July.

As the number of services declines, cemeteries and crematoria should consider the following options:

Review staffing requirements/working arrangements, taking account of annual leave/sickness and need to maintain social distancing in the workplace (teams may be exhausted after dealing with high numbers of services at the peak of the virus and may need time off to recover)

Consider counselling/support for teams

Reinstate normal service length (if this had been shortened to provide for more services per day)

Remove extra service times – weekends, weekdays (if these had been introduced)

Review number of mourners allowed using revised risk assessment

Allow memorial masons to erect memorials – subject to social distancing

Reopen cemeteries and crematorium grounds to normal opening hours

Reinstate scattering/burial/placing of ashes where no witnesses are to be present

Reinstate fees to usual amount (if these had been reduced to reflect reduced services)

Liaise with local faith groups over plans to reopen places of worship

## **Stage 2**

When the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 are rescinded:

Review staffing requirements/working arrangements, taking account of annual leave/sickness and need to maintain social distancing in the workplace

Consider counselling/support for teams

Reopen Books of Remembrance rooms with social distancing notices and access to hand washing facilities/hand sanitisers

Reopen cemetery chapels for burial services with social distancing notices and access to hand washing facilities/hand sanitisers, and subject to cleaning between services

Resume witnessed disposal of ashes with number of attendees limited to comply with social distancing rules

Review number of mourners allowed using revised risk assessment

## **Stage 3**

Review staffing requirements/working arrangements, taking account of annual leave/sickness and need to maintain social distancing in the workplace

Consider counselling/support for teams

Reopen offices – install screens in reception areas. Ensure social distancing is maintained. Provide hand washing facilities/hand sanitisers

Resume memorial sales

Allow collection of ashes by the applicant

Reinstate other suspended services (genealogy, memorial renewals, memorial inspections etc)

Review number of mourners allowed using revised risk assessment

## **Stage 4**

Normal service resumes – remove screens, social distancing notices etc

Unlimited number of mourners allowed

Instigate provision of memorial services for those that were unable to have a full funeral

Consider lessons learned and review pandemic/excess death plans accordingly