
West Berkshire Council

Information sheet

Managing or organising funerals

Public Health England have recently (19 April) issued further guidance for those managing or organising funerals during the coronavirus pandemic. The guidance aims to ensure that bereaved people are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect, while protecting individuals, communities and those in the funeral industry from the risk of infection.

Communities, organisations and individuals are strongly advised to take action to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus (COVID-19) infection among mourners who are gathered to pay their respects, with a particular focus on protecting people who are clinically vulnerable and more likely to develop severe illness.

As an overview, the advice includes that:

- Those who have symptoms of coronavirus COVID-19 must not attend and must stay at home.
- The numbers in attendance should be limited to ensure safe social distancing, and be as low as possible (taking into account the size of the venue).
- Social distancing guidance should be observed across all aspects of attending a funeral.
- People who are extremely clinically vulnerable (shielded) can attend provided that measures are put in place to reduce their risk.
- People self-isolating because someone in their household is ill may attend if they do not have symptoms themselves.

More detailed actions include:

- Restricting the number of mourners to be as low as possible to ensure a safe distance of at least two metres (six feet) can be maintained between individuals.
- Ensuring that, alongside the Funeral Director, Chapel Attendant, and funeral staff, only the following attend:
 - members of the deceased's household; and
 - close family members; or
 - (if the above are unable to attend) close friends;
 - a celebrant of choice, should the bereaved request this.
- Ensuring that mourners follow the advice on social distancing when travelling to and from the funeral gathering.

For the announcement please go to www.gov.uk/government/news/guidance-updated-to-support-the-safe-management-of-funerals and for the guidance please go to www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic

