

COVID-19 and funerals: latest information and advice (July 2021)

The Government has updated the guidance for managing a funeral service during COVID-19. Milton Keynes Council policy regarding attendance at funerals is listed below.

Attendance at funerals

From Monday 19 July, most COVID-19 prevention measures such as social distancing and wearing masks will become people's personal responsibility.

What does this mean for funerals?

There will no longer be limits on the number of people who can attend, funerals and other life events. However, the Government does recommend that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public venues. With this in mind, our staff are observing, hands, face and space. Please help us by doing the same.

Cremations

- All the chairs will be placed back in the chapels
- Curtains will no longer be closed in the chapels at the end of each service
- Family may carry in the coffin and will be encouraged to wear a face covering and gloves

Music

Singing or chanting may now take place inside and outside. The playing of instruments that are blown may now take place whilst in the chapels, (e.g., bagpipes and trumpets).

Burials

Restrictions on numbers attending burials has also been removed and numbers are no longer restrictive at the graveside or urn plot area.

The Cemetery Manager will hold off the backfilling of the grave until every mourner has had a chance to pay their respects around the grave side.

General guidance

All those attending must follow the Government [guidance on staying alert and safe](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do)

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If you have any symptoms of Covid-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in your normal sense of taste or smell) you must not attend a funeral.

By arrangement with your funeral director we offer webcasting at both our chapels which would allow those who are unable to attend to follow the funeral service.

Those who are self-isolating or clinically vulnerable

Mourners who are self-isolating or who are clinically, extremely vulnerable (shielding) are now able to attend a funeral, but please make your funeral director aware of this. Your funeral director will liaise with the crematorium so that we can assist with your requirements.

Toilets

Our toilets are open as normal, with the addition of sanitising stations and hygiene wipes.

Waiting rooms

The waiting rooms at the Oak and Willow Chapels are open whilst services are taking place in each chapel.

NHS Test and Trace

We keep records of those who arrange a funeral service and will provide this information to the NHS test and trace service, if requested to do so. If your information is passed to the test and trace service, then you will probably be asked to provide details of attendees at the funeral in order to assist with contact tracing. You should keep a list of the people who attend to help with this process.

Crematorium office

Our offices are closed for the public. We're ready to help you on the phone or online. Here are all the details: 01908 568112 or email crownhill@milton-keynes.gov.uk and we will do our best to help and advise you.

Crematorium Cemetery grounds and chapel of remembrance

Our garden of remembrance memorial areas and cemeteries are open as normal however social distancing guidelines should be followed when you are with anyone not in your household or support bubble. The Book of Remembrance chapel is open for visitors.

Hand sanitisation and extra cleaning

The following measures are being taken to help reduce the risk to our staff and those attending funerals:

- Sanitisation dispensers are situated in our public areas and near the entrance to the chapels.
- Regular additional cleaning is being carried out of the chapels between services and high contact areas including doors, face plates, door handles, taps, toilet flush handles, reception counters, desk and table tops.

We will continue to follow the Government's guidance on Covid-19, and we are doing everything that we can to allow the bereaved to mourn whilst minimising the spread of the virus.

This advice was last updated 19 July 2021