

Memo

A.W. Lymn
The Family Funeral Service Ltd

To: All Staff
From: NLR
Cc: MLR, JLR, PDC
Date: 24/03/2020
Re: COVID-19 Coronavirus

Following the change in government guidance last night we felt it was important to issue an update to this memo today. Rob is also posting a link to the most up to date version on the website each time we release it should you need to refer to this or suggest it to a family.

There has been a lot of guidance issued by the local crematoria and this, only with the guidance from both the Church of England and Catholic Church has been saved on the public server so please refer to this when making any bookings.

Public / Disbursement Pricing Information / Crematorium Information / *select crematorium* / Information

Homeworking and Vulnerable Staff

Wherever possible we have instructed staff to work from home and have closed any of our divisions which could be consider retail. All vulnerable staff have also been individually contacted with regards to their work commitments at this time. Should you have any further concerns please contact the Operations Manager to discuss these.

Below is a summary of the procedural updates included in Nigel's e-mail of this morning, along with a few extra points at the end so please ensure you do still read this through in full.

Nottingham City Council Daily Update – Parking Charges

The following information was included in the daily updated e-mail sent by Nottingham City Council this evening. *From today, we will **no longer charge for on-street parking** in our city centre, so that key workers are not only able to park close to their workplaces, but people are able to get essential supplies.*

Arranging Funerals

Contact with the client must be kept to a minimum to protect both you and the client and so you need to try to arrange on the phone. I am assured by the MoJ

that Crematoria (and Cemeteries) must accept electronic transmission of forms and that these can be:

- Electronically completed forms
- Scans, including certificates
- Photos of documents

I had thought that the electronic signature was the issue but I am advised by MoJ that that is not a problem provided the form is sent from the email address of the person who would normally sign. So for example a form 1 with my typed name in the box as the applicant if then sent as an attachment direct to the crematorium from my email address must be accepted by the crematorium in the same way as the forms that we currently send.

This is very good advice and so it gives us the opportunity to arrange a funeral completely on the phone and by email and the process should therefore be as follows:

1. Ensure the family have a brochure, either in hard copy (which we can deliver if one was not left on removal) or from the website.
2. Warn the family that some of our services during this very difficult time will not be available.
3. Advise that we can make all the arrangements on the telephone and via e-mail without the need to meet face to face, and that this is our preferred way to protect both families and our staff.
4. When considering the funeral please remember that the government advice is that just the immediate family should attend and that some crematoria are limiting the numbers.
5. If the funeral is for someone thought to have died either of or with COVID-19, or even if it is not a COVID-19 related death but one of the immediate family is self-isolating then advise that the funeral should still be booked but for a date as soon as possible after the isolation period ends.
6. Complete;
 - a. All the forms for burial or cremation as you would normally with the exception of Cremation Form 1.
 - b. An editable version of Form 1 is saved on the server Public / AWL Forms / Cremation Form 1 Editable. Complete the whole form, a question at a time, whilst discussing with the applicant and save to an appropriate file in your branch folders.
 - c. All AWL forms.
7. Explain to the client that you will
 - a. scan and forward all the forms in 6 a and c above to them to check and that you would like an e-mail reply confirming that they are in accordance with their instructions.
 - b. Forward the electronic version of Cremation Form 1 (where applicable) together with the e-mail address of the Crematorium and that the client MUST forward that form the crematorium, copying you as the Funeral Director in. This is because the e-mail from the client to the Crematorium replaces the need for them to

sign the declaration at the end. **The body of the e-mail must also state “*please accept this e-mail from me as the applicant for cremation in place of my signature on the attached form and as confirmation that the answers contained therein are my own*”**

- c. Green forms – at the moment I think most families will be able to get it to either us or the crematorium, but legally they can take on the day provided they either photograph or scan it and send it electronically to the crematorium by the cut-off date in the same way as I have explained in regard to the Form 1. The MoJ have confirmed that this can happen.
8. If these procedures are followed we in effect have a contract and the Crematorium has an application so the funeral can go ahead without us meeting face to face with the family.

Arranging without e-mail – Our forms can be completed over the telephone, agreed verbally, marked as agreed over the telephone as no e-mail access and a copy sent in the post. With regards the Cremation Form 1 we can put in part 4, question 1, NO and detail below that *“we were making the application as the funeral director, having discussed every question on the phone with (and state who), and due to social distancing and people self-isolating have completed the form on their behalf.”* We have been advised by the MoJ that whenever possible the preferred course would be electronic transmission but if a crematorium or Medical Referee refused to accept a form completed on this basis they would have to give good reason for so refusing.

Additional Notes

1. **Viewing** – This should ideally be done prior to the deceased being moved from the hospital or home. If this is not possible and you still wish to view the deceased person by visiting the Chapel of Rest, please make arrangements with your funeral director for specific times and limit the numbers attending at any one time to those living in the same household, At-risk groups are strongly urged not to visit.

Embalming & Preparation – All COVID-19 deceased will be in a body bag with a green tag and the bags must remain sealed therefore no preparation. If own clothes they must be laid neatly on top of the bag.

Face masks on bodies – it is our belief that very little air is expelled from a body when dressing. As you know our universal protection dictates that all bodies will have a face masks on and these must only be removed once the body is in place in the coffin and on cases of no viewing will be left in situ. We are told that as the virus transmits via droplets the masks we use should be sufficient.

2. **Limousines** - Due to the space available within the Limousines social distancing guidance cannot be followed and so these will no longer be provided.
3. **Coffins** – we will endeavour to give a choice but cannot guarantee availability
4. **Flowers** – these can no longer be sourced so are not available on funerals from Thursday 26th March onwards. However we are try to arrange for enough silk coffin sprays to use during the service on each coffin to break the starkness. There will be no charge for these but they will be reused.
5. **Services** - These should be restricted to the smallest possible number of attendees – the advice being immediate family only - and at-risk groups are urged not to attend. Some crematoria have already issued their own guidance on this so please refer on a case by case basis so families are aware. Please don't publicly advertise the funeral details to reduce the risk of other, well-meaning mourners arriving unexpectedly. They may be turned away at the door, which could be distressing for them and the bereaved family. It will also place funeral key workers at unnecessary risk of harm.
6. **Donations** – These should be online whenever possible and by post. As only immediate family are allowed to attend the service I would not have thought many would want to donate at the time but the FD should have envelopes in his pocket just in case anyone wants to.
7. **Listing** – This has been stopped as only immediate family are allowed to attend services.
8. **Bearers** – We are no longer shoulder bearing coffins, they must now be moved on a wheeled bier with the minimum number of staff to adhere to social distancing.

Family Bearers – yes this is OK but we will not want to assist as usual so suggest that we recommend the bier. Some crematoria are now implementing their own regulations in regards to this so we must adhere to this.
9. **Funeral Guide** – It is very important that we go on funeral guide to give people the opportunity to notify people of the death and interact with the family but the specific details of the funeral must remain confidential.
10. **Newspaper notices** – Again these can still carry on where publishing, and in the case of the Nottingham Post and Derby Telegraph that will of course generate another web announcement, but again the details must remain confidential

11. **Orders of Service** – yes we can still do these as they are handed out and taken away.
12. **Doves** – these are OK for funerals but rather the new system will be either the family open the cage and take them out individually and release them or the funeral director opens the cage and simply lets them fly.
13. **Listing and Ushers** – As only immediate family are now permitted to attend the service listing will no longer be required and ushers will not be attending.
14. **Interments and Scattering of Ashes** – The government guidance only allows for funeral services and so services for the interment or scattering of ashes are no longer allowed.
15. **Repatriations** – Please refer these on a case by case basis to Jackie Lymn Rose.

ONLINE – TRY TO GET ALL FUNERALS ONLINE – SUGGEST TO FAMILIES THEY PUT RESTRICTED TO FAMILY ONLY DUE TO THE CURRENT GOVERNEMENT SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDANCE. THIS WILL GIVE FRIENDS AN OPORTUNITY TO POST MESSAGES, LIGHT CANDLES, SEND CONDOLENCES, MAKE DONATIONS, ETC.

Text messages sent by the NHS today

You may have received a text message from your Doctors today stating

“You must follow Government advice and stay at home. You may receive more detailed advice re your health condition soon. Visit www.nhs.uk”

From speaking to others it has become clear that this has been sent to everyone who has a mobile number registered with their GP. You may well be someone who does have an underlying health condition, but receipt of this text message does not mean that the NHS think that you definitely do.

Below are the previous memo of 13th, 18th & 20th March which have been updated today, 19th March, in accordance with current guidance. Any additions are show in yellow.

Memo of 20th March 2020

Much of the information contained in this update has been provided by third parties who work alongside us but I have attempted to pull it all together so that you just have the one document to refer to. Any specific information released by Crematoria has been saved in the “information” section for the relevant place in the Disbursement Pricing Information folder on the public server.

Please always ensure to read the entire document as I am amending advice in the earlier releases to reflect updates in the guidance and am **highlighting this yellow** so that it is obvious where the changes are.

I would also draw your attention to the “Removals” section of the memo of the 13th March which now has a procedure included for attending house removals where the household are in self-isolation.

COVID-19

It has not been mentioned before but it is important to know that from 12th March 2020 COVID-19 was confirmed as a notifiable disease which means that by law medical professionals are required to advise the funeral director if a deceased has it.

Our Offices

As the availability of funeral venues begins to decrease remember that we have small chapels at our Mansfield Woodhouse, Nottingham and Radcliffe offices which can be used for small services. Some families may also wish to use the chapel or rest in any of our other offices for this.

All Fleet

1. Each vehicle has a small bottle of hand gel and this must be used by each driver before driving. Gary has a large container of hand gel so when the small bottles run low you must return the bottle to him to refill. If you have a small bottle of hand gel in your branch this can also be sent to Gary for refilling when empty. Please **do not** throw any of these empty bottles away.
2. Each vehicle must have an internal deep clean each evening.

Key Workers

It has been confirmed that those “responsible for the management of the deceased” are classified as key workers and so their children are able to remain in school. If this applies to you then please speak with your school to make the

necessary arrangements but remember, if your household are required to self-isolate then your child will still have to remain at home with the rest of the family for this period.

Catholic & Church of England Services

Please refer to the individual statements issued by each of these and saved on the server.

Public / Disbursement Pricing Information / Church and Minister Information / *CATHOLIC or CHURCH OF ENGLAND* / Information

Wesley

Wesley Media has implemented an emergency contingency plan to maintain service to their customers whilst also ensuring the continued welfare of their employees who will be working remotely from their homes until further notice.

Please be aware that some services will be slightly restricted through this period:

Webcasts

As available services and processes differ at each crematorium we are advising you to contact the intended crematorium for confirmation before placing your orders.

Music Service

We will only be supplying music already available in our library or music that can be sourced as a digital download. To assist in this we ask that music be chosen from our existing library where possible.

Visual Tributes

We will only be supplying the four most popular Visual Tribute options:

1. A Single Hold Image
2. Photo Loop
3. Visual Tribute with Music
4. Family Video (pre-made slideshow or family video)

We ask that these be requested via the Client Portal where possible.

If crematoria cease to hold services, Visual Tributes may be hosted and accessed online rather than sent to site.

As the situation develops we will update you of any necessary changes to services via email, social media and our website.

Memo of 18th March 2020

We have updated the guidance issued last week and made a number of decisions on measures which are aimed to protect both yourselves and the families that we serve.

Branch offices

1. All offices should display in the window the poster asking clients whether a face to face meeting is necessary and giving their telephone and e-mail details
2. All offices should now perform a deep clean each evening. Remember this is a virus not a bacteria and so anti-bacterial wipes are not necessary. In the same way that washing your hands is recommend, usual cleaning products and hot water should be used to clean all surfaces. Please ensure you have one spare of any products that you use, and replace these locally from your petty cash.
3. Regularly clean any areas that are touched frequently such as door handles, taps, desks, etc.
4. Remove all paper literature from public areas. The only exception to this are our brochures which are picked up and taken away rather than reused.
5. Flower cards should remain on display for clients to select from but they should be asked to only touch the card they select to avoid unnecessary contact.
6. Replace tissues with white paper towels to avoid cross infection from tissue boxes.
7. Ensure each client toilet has hand soap and paper towels available. Remember that frequent hand washing for 20 seconds with soap and warm water is the best means of keeping hands clean. All sinks in your office must now have one of the hand washing posters displayed above it, this includes kitchens, mortuaries and client toilets.
8. Wash your own hands after meeting with any family.
9. Stop offering drinks to visitors to reduce the risk of infection from mugs and glasses.
10. **All staff in all locations should now only make drinks for themselves and not others.**
11. If you can find a way to work using fewer rooms then please implement this as it will reduce the areas that need cleaning each day.

Funeral Arrangements

See the updated guidance given in the memo of 24th March.

Each family should be asked to consider the following points in regards to the service;

1. Who should attend the funeral as only immediate family are now permitted to attend.

2. If a webcasting system could be used to allow people to remotely access the service. Many of the Crematoria have their own webcasting services and Nav.co.uk are able to offer live streaming at other locations via 4G a cost of £780.00 per service.
3. If Funeral Guide could be used to allow family and friends to light candles, post messages, upload photographs and make donations without needing to attend the service.
4. Whether families want to provide orders of service as many locations have now removed all hymn books to prevent transmission of the virus.
5. Whether viewing in the Chapel of Rest is necessary or if viewing could be done at the home prior to the removal.

Funeral Services

1. If someone is self-isolating then they must **NOT** break this to attend a funeral service.
2. The front Mourners and Officiant must be at least 3 metres apart.
3. All physical contact must stop such as hand shaking, hugging, kissing, touching the coffin at the end of the service, etc.
4. In line with the retail sector physical donations should be discouraged and instead mourners should be directed to make donations online via Funeral Guide. If donations are made at the service then hands must be washed immediately after counting these.

Please remember that the biggest risk of infection comes from the living and not the dead as the virus is spread by coughing and sneezing or touching infected surfaces.

Memo of 13th March 2020.

The number of COVID-19 infections in the UK is on the rise and we therefore thought it would be appropriate to issue guidance to staff in regards to your work with A W Lymn.

Personal Hygiene

The best way to prevent the spread of the virus is by good personal hygiene.

1. Wash hands frequently with soap and warm (not hot) water for 20 seconds or use a sanitiser if a sink is unavailable.
2. Catch coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues and throw them away immediately after use.
3. If you do not have a tissue use the inside of your elbow rather than hand to catch a cough or sneeze.
4. Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
6. Take sips of room temperature or warmer water every 15 minutes to keep the mouth and throat moist. This transfers any virus in the mouth into the stomach where the acid kills it rather than allowing it to be inhaled into the lungs and airways.

Transmission

If someone is a carrier of the virus but does not show any symptoms then the likelihood of them transmitting it from one person to another is very low. Furthermore those with no or mild symptoms would have a smaller virus count and would also be engaging in less behaviour that lends itself to easy transmission such as coughing.

Transmission is therefore likely to come from people who are already beginning to feel unwell and so quarantining at this stage is not “too late.”

Sickness

Please follow the guidance in the staff handbook if you are feeling unwell. Please do not attend for work if you have a high temperature and a new persistent dry cough. Your manager will know how long you need to be symptom-free before returning to work.

At present if you live alone then you must self-isolate for 7 days, but if you live with others the entire household must self-isolate for 14 days. There is no need to provide a fit note for this period, however you must ensure that your timesheet shows that your absence is due to COVID-19 and not just sickness.

The government has agreed that SSP will be paid for those showing symptoms or self-isolating from the first day of absence to help support individuals.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A dry cough with no runny nose
- A sore throat
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

However these symptoms do not necessarily mean that you have the illness as they are similar to other more common illnesses such as a cold or the flu.

The BBC have produced this short video to help with the symptoms and diagnosis.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51934576>

Self-check

It is recommended to perform the following simple self-check every morning.

1. Be in an environment with clean air
2. Take a deep breath
3. Hold for a minimum of 10 seconds
4. If you complete this without coughing, discomfort, stiffness or tightness then the lungs are clear and they should be free from infection.

Travel

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) have now [advised British people against all non-essential travel](#) worldwide. This advice takes effect immediately and applies initially for a period of 30 days.

If you have any upcoming travel plans we would also ask you to consider whether travelling is sensible, not least because you may find it difficult to return home. This would potentially lead to a period of unpaid absence from work. If you do intend to travel to a high-risk area soon, please inform your line manager immediately.

First Calls

For both private and HM Coroner removals the Funeral Director taking the first call **must** now ask all of the three questions below:

1. ***Has the person who has died or anyone present or any of their friends and family recently had contact with anybody affected by COVID-19?***

If the answer is “**yes**” then ask

Please could you make sure that only one person is present to meet our staff when they arrive, and that that person is not showing any signs of being infectious.

2. Had the deceased person been experiencing any cough, cold, flu or fever symptoms?

If the answer is “**yes**” then you must assume that the deceased has COVID-19 and take suitable precautions as detailed below and ask.

Please could you makes sure that only one person is present to meet our staff when they arrive, and that that person is not showing any signs of being infectious.

3. Is your household in self-isolation?

If the answer is “**yes**” then you must assume that the family have COVID-19 and take suitable precautions as detailed below.

For the protection of our staff please could you makes sure that only one person is present to meet with them when they arrive. We will request that that person wears a facemask and has minimal interaction with us. Please also make sure that you have all said your goodbyes prior to our arrival.

Regardless of whether the deceased has COVID-19 please now suggest that the family say their final goodbye at the home prior to the removal to try and reduce viewing in our branches.

Community Removals

At the location of the Removal

On **all removals**, regardless of whether or not the deceased or any person present may have COVID-19, you must now:

- Ensure that all the standard procedures in relation to identify, jewellery, clothing, personal effects, etc are still adhered to.
- Ensure you are wearing the appropriate size disposable gloves before entering the house.
- Introduce yourselves as usual but apologise for not being able to shake hands at this time.
- Avoid touching surfaces (where-ever possible) in and around the house.
- **Ask the family if it is possible to use the top sheet from the bed to wrap the around the deceased.**
- Place a mask* or cover over the mouth and nose of the deceased to prevent air being expelled from the lungs on moving.
- Whenever possible avoid lifting by the wrists and try to lift by the shoulders to minimise the amount of air being expelled from the lungs. If you need extra assistance to do this then inform the family and telephone for help.
- After the deceased is placed in the ambulance, and with gloves still on use a sanitiser wipe to clean any parts of the ambulance you have touched

with gloves on, then place the wipe in the bio-hazard waste bag , remove your gloves and put them in the same bag.

- Apply hand sanitiser at the rear of the ambulance before entering the cab to drive away.
- Without entering the property again return to say your usual goodbye to those present. Again do not shake hands.

If you attend to remove a deceased who is **thought to or likely to have COVID-19** or from a **household who are in self isolation** then you must now:

- Follow the procedures set out above for “all removals”
- Place a face mask on the door step of the house.
- Telephone the household to advise them of your arrival. Remind them that they must all say their goodbyes prior to you entering and request that all but one person remain in another room. Ask the one person that you are meeting to put on the face mask that you have placed on the doormat.
- Put on your protective gloves.
- Knock on the door and introduce yourselves.
- Ask the one person in the home to accompany you to the deceased and immediately position a face mask over their mouth and nose.
- Check the identity and personal effects of the deceased then ask the person accompanying you to leave the room.
- Fit two **green** identity tags to the deceased. This colour immediately denotes that the deceased may be infected with COVID-19.
- Place the deceased in a body bag and seal the bag immediately. A third **green** identity tag must be completed and attached to the closure of the bag at this time to ensure that all identity checks can be safely made throughout the rest of the funeral process.
- A red sticker must be applied to the identity tag on the outside of the bag to immediately identify the deceased as a possible COVID-19 case.
- Wipe gloves and the exterior of the body bag where necessary, with a sanitiser wipe and tuck underneath one of the stretcher straps and then transfer the deceased to the ambulance.
- As detailed above place the deceased in the ambulance, clean everything that is touched and dispose of any wipes and PPE appropriately.
- Do not return to the house but telephone them again to say that you have left.

* The current advice on general face masks is that they do not protect the person that wears them. However they do prevent the dispersal of the virus exhaled from the lung when exhaled by the infected person. It is for this reason that we recommended placing the facemask on the deceased person rather than on the staff.

In summary we are now instructing that a face mask be placed on every deceased person at the time of removal other than from a hospital mortuary.

On arrival at the Mortuary

When delivering a deceased person who may have COVID-19 you must:

- Ensure that all the standard procedures in relation to identify, jewellery, clothing, personal effects, etc. are still adhered to.
- Ensure that the mortuary register is complete, this **must** include in bold capital letters that the deceased person may have COVID-19.
- Ensure you are wearing the appropriate size disposable gloves.
- Transfer the deceased to the cold room / mortuary tray.
- Disinfect your gloves
- Disinfect any manual handling aids used for the transfer.
- Disinfect the stretcher used for the transfer.
- Remove gloves and place in the clinical waste bag already used on the ambulance.

If there has been any spillage then this must be thoroughly cleaned.

Meeting with Clients

See additional guidance in the memo issues 24th & 18th March 2020.

We should be recommending to all families that face to face meetings do not take place. If a face to face appointment is the only available option then this must be in our office and not at the home address as we are responsible for leaning our premises so know that this has been done to a high enough standard.

Has anyone in the household or any of their friends or family recently had contact with anyone affected by COVID-19.

If the answer is yes then we should ask if it would be possible to deliver a brochure, or if the client has access to the internet to view it online, and establish if the arrangements could be dealt with over the telephone and by e-mail.

Client toilets

Each branch will shortly receive a supply of white paper towels. On receipt, these should be put in your client toilets in place of the current fabric hand towels. You must also ensure there is soap available.

Future measures

We will closely monitor the situation including any guidance from the Department of Health and the NAFD and issue further instructions should these be necessary.

This may include measures such as:

- Closing some offices.
- Designating specific cold rooms for COVID-19 cases only.

Emergency dependant leave

If you are unable to attend work because you need to arrange care for a dependant (for example, if your child's school or nursery is closed), our usual emergency time off for dependent leave policy will apply. As a reminder, you are permitted unpaid emergency leave to make alternative care arrangements, rather than to actually take care of the dependant. As such, any period of emergency leave is normally fairly short in duration (24-48hrs for example) although each instance will be judged on a case by case basis.

Temporary business closure

As the situation develops, it may be that we are no longer able to operate. If we are forced to close part or all of the business temporarily, it may be necessary to lay you off or agree a period of lay off or short time working. Please rest assured that we will do all that is possible to avoid this. However, if that becomes necessary we will discuss with you further in that regard at the relevant time. The government have produced a very informative guide and the link to this is below should you wish to read it.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>