

Updated guidelines re burials at council sites – 16/4/2020

- It will be essential going forward that there is good communication between funeral directors and local burial authorities
- These guidelines will be communicated to all funeral directors and pastoral/faith representatives in advance
- Burials should continue in existing family plots where this remains operationally possible
- Where new plots need to be purchased, they can only be purchased singly i.e. double plots should not be sold at this time
- In line with current guidance in Northern Ireland, only the following should attend committals up to a recommended maximum of 10 people (not including the funeral directors and a pastoral/faith representative):
 - o Members of the person's household
 - o Close family members; and
 - o If the deceased has neither household nor family members in attendance, then it is possible for a modest number of friends to attend.
- In many situations the household members of the deceased person will be the next of kin; they may be having to self-isolate in line with household guidance. Where the funeral is scheduled to take place before the period of household isolation has been completed (14 days from the first case in that household), there should be no mixing between mourners who are self-isolating and those who are not.
- Any individual displaying symptoms of COVID-19 disease or awaiting test results should not attend.
- Those who do attend need to adhere to social distancing; a safe distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) must be maintained between individuals at all times. This includes when travelling to and from the funeral/committal.
- If the family wish to live stream the burial, they may do so provided the funeral director and pastoral/faith representative is in agreement with this
- Upon arriving on site there will be notices in place to direct the funeral director/family to the location for the burial
- Cemetery operatives will have prepared the grave and will then move away from the immediate area
- Family members will be asked to stay 5m from the grave for safety reasons
- Committals will be limited to 15 minutes
- Funeral directors should bring the coffin to the grave on a trolley or where this is not possible it should be carried at waist height using slings or another secure mechanism where necessary (if the funeral director is unable to do this, this should be communicated to the burial authority in advance so that assistance can be provided)
- Following the committal, the coffin will be lowered following normal local practice i.e. by the funeral director and/or cemetery operatives
- Facemasks and gloves are the minimum PPE required for cemetery operatives/funeral directors when lowering the body and at any time during the burial process when social distancing can't be adhered to
- Slings will be reused but should be disinfected after each burial
- Following the lowering, funeral directors/families must then leave the cemetery.