

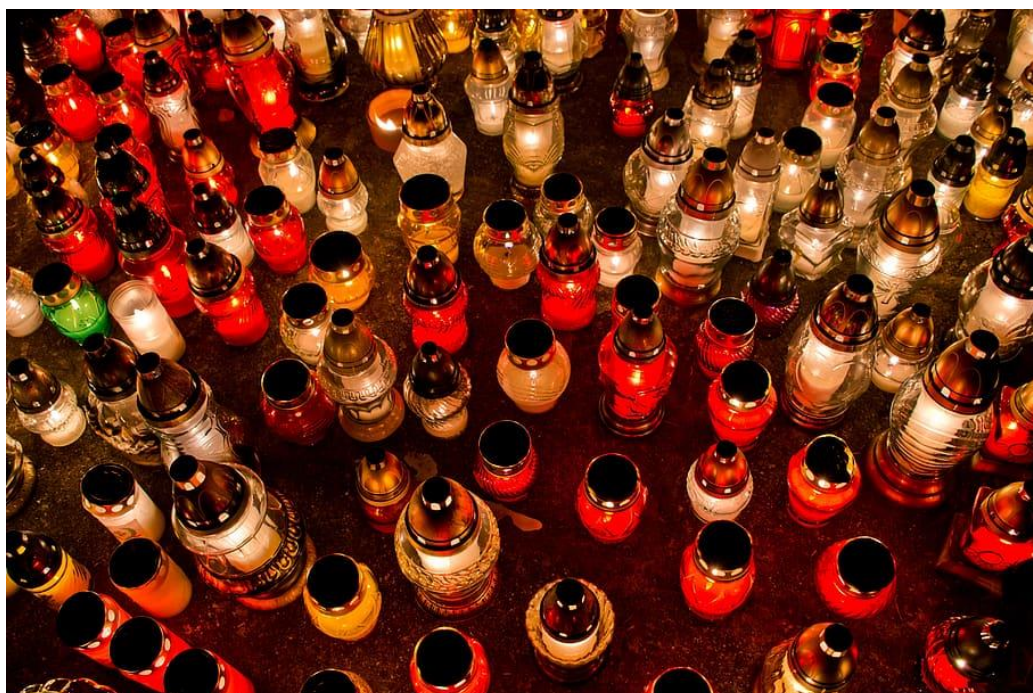


End of Life in Warwickshire

A Guide to End of Life and faith
during the Coronavirus outbreak

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Introduction

The death of a loved one is one of the most difficult things to be faced with and it is even more so during the national emergency. We know that the number of people in the UK who have sadly lost their lives during this period of social distancing and isolation has been particularly heart breaking and poignant. Whether it was due to coronavirus (Covid 19) or not, the advice to Stay Alert, Protect the NHS and Save Lives is particularly difficult when saying goodbye to a loved one whether family or friend.

Even if the Stay Alert advice is being gradually relaxed, the need for social distancing continues and the controls on public gatherings, particularly funerals, continue.

Guidance on social distancing and social isolation, and not attending any large group events, mean that faith congregational acts of worship are strictly reduced. Funerals are particularly affected. Families are unable to grieve or say goodbye to their loved ones in the usual or expected and planned for ways.

Even if shops are beginning to reopen, and rules on leaving the house are relaxing, the UK Government Advice on funerals continues.

The detailed government advice on how funerals, burials and cremations can be undertaken during the period of lockdown are highlighted here:

<https://www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies>

Detailed advice has been collected at a regional and local authority level in Warwickshire. More details are here:

<https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1068-1114>

National Guidance is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

A wide range of emergency legislation affecting all matters relating to Coronavirus was published in March with updates in April and May 2020.

Guidance from Public Health England advised NOT to delay holding funerals:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased>

It includes the guidance translated into key languages including Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Simplified Chinese – Mandarin, Urdu and Welsh.

The key provisions are:

- restricting the number of mourners to be as low as possible to ensure a safe distance of at least 2 metres (6 ft) can be maintained between individuals
- alongside the Funeral Director, Chapel Attendant, and funeral staff only the following should attend:
 - members of the person's household
 - close family members
 - or if the above are unable to attend, close friends
 - attendance of a celebrant of choice, should the bereaved request this

In Warwickshire the number of mourners is limited to 6 to allow for the funeral director and staff to limit all attendees to 10.

Mourners should also follow the advice on social distancing when travelling to and from the funeral gathering.

- mourners who are self-isolating for 14 days due to someone in their household being unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) but are not symptomatic themselves should be facilitated to attend the funeral in person should they wish to do so, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission
- mourners who are clinically vulnerable or in a shielded group should also be facilitated to attend, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission
- any mourner who is showing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms (a new continuous cough or a high temperature) should NOT attend the funeral as they pose a risk to others; remote participation should be considered.

EQuIP has collated the information in this brief guide to be of particular support to communities of different faiths in Warwickshire, particularly Hindu, Sikh and Muslim as they have specific rituals at end of life that are severely impacted by the Coronavirus measures.

This Guide focuses on religious and spiritual practices of those key faiths in Warwickshire during the virus.

This Guide has been collected on the basis that the coronavirus pandemic has a particularly significant impact on the BME community, many of whom practice the three faiths we focus on in this Guide. However, if you need other faith guidance then please do get in touch. Our contact details are on the final page of this guide.

All regulations are subject to change and we urge you to check with the Registration Office (details on page 5) for the latest advice or your funeral director.



Remember you can arrange a separate memorial ceremony, service or party at a later date when everyone can attend. This can be at any venue, any day of the week, and be in keeping with family, friends and wider community members to remember your loved one.

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death MCCD or Death Certificate

The Death Certificate is usually issued by the family GP if the death takes place at home, or by the attending physician in a hospital or care home setting. The rules have changed under Covid 19 but essentially the GP sends a copy of the certification to the Registrar by electronic means or by telephone and there is no need to sign the Death Certificate. A doctor is not allowed to issue a certificate if they are unsure about the cause of death or if they haven't seen the deceased recently usually within the last 14 days. Under Covid 19 there is a great need to ensure minimal delays. All unnatural, unexplained or suspicious deaths are reported to the Coroner.

In Warwickshire the Coroner's Office is extremely busy but can be contacted on 01926 684228 or email: coronerofficer@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

At this point a Funeral Director should be approached. There are a number in Warwickshire. Details of the National Funeral Directors are on page 7 and can advise on a local choice.

However, no arrangements can be made without Registration of the death, which is issued by the Registrar.

The registration of the death must take place within 5 days.

Registration Services in Warwickshire during Covid 19

All registration of deaths in Warwickshire is by telephone appointment only.

There are two ways to secure an appointment, via the online portal

<https://internal.zipporah.co.uk/Registrars.Warwickshire.Live/DeathBookingProcess>

or by telephone 0300 555 0255

Please do not arrive at a register office in person.

You can still make an appointment at your register office of choice or the system will advise when the next available appointment is at any of the 4 offices in Warwickshire.

It is still the law that a death must be registered within 5 calendar days.

When the Doctor's surgery has informed you that they have completed and scanned the Medical Cause of Death Certificate to the registration service, you then make an appointment as above.

Or

If the death took place at George Eliot Hospital (Nuneaton), Warwick Hospital or Rugby St Cross Hospital, the hospital bereavement teams can forward your contact details to Registration Services and the registrars will contact you directly. In these circumstances an appointment is not necessary.

For more detailed advice then please look online here:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/births-deaths-ceremonies

Registration Offices

Nuneaton Registration Office

Riversley Park
Coton Road
Nuneaton
CV11 5HA

nuneatonro@warwickshire.gov.uk

Rugby Registration Office

5 Bloxam Place
Rugby
CV21 3DS

rugbyro@warwickshire.gov.uk

Stratford Registration Office

12 Henley Street
Stratford upon Avon
CV37 6PZ

warwickro@warwickshire.gov.uk

Warwick Registration Office

Shire Hall
Warwick
CV34 4RL

warwickro@warwickshire.gov.uk

Who can register a death?

- A relative present at the death
- A relative present during the last illness
- A relative living in the same district where the death occurred
- Anyone also present at the death
- The owner/occupier of the building where the death occurred
- The person arranging the funeral but not the funeral director

What do I need to register a death?

- The medical certificate showing the cause of death (which is currently issued electronically)
- The person's medical card (if possible)
- The person's birth and marriage certificates, if you have them
- The date and place the person died
- The date and place of birth (the town and county if born in the UK, if born outside the UK then only the country is needed)
- The full name of the person (including any previous names used or maiden name)
- The person's address
- The person's occupation and the name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner.

Arranging a Funeral

Arranging a funeral in line with religious beliefs

Most funeral directors will be only too happy to discuss and help you with all of the arrangements, across all religions and cultures, no matter what your belief or faith.

National Association of Funeral Directors

The National Association of Funeral Directors has a dedicated Covid 19 website and its main website has a great deal of useful information. Alternatively you can get in touch by email:

info@nafd.org.uk

<https://www.nafd.org.uk>

<https://www.nafdcovid19.org.uk>

There are strict rules on the running of funeral services, cremations and burials during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The cemeteries and cremations department of your local council can advise on what is available. Most are now arranging for a streaming service or webcam of the service for families and loved ones. This is particularly helpful when the numbers of mourners able to attend are restricted.

North Warwickshire

Nuneaton Cemeteries Officer (Nuneaton and Bedworth Council)

Telephone: 02476 376357

Heart of England Crematorium

<https://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/crematoria-and-cemeteries/crematoria/find-a-crematorium/heart-of-england-crematorium/>

Telephone: 02476 350646 / 02476 354425

Heart of England Crematorium is run privately by Dignity Funerals. Their detailed advice and support during Covid 19 is here: <https://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/crematoria-and-cemeteries/about-us/covid-19/>

They offer a webcasting facility, which is chargeable at a reduced rate to families at this time of £25.

South Warwickshire

Bereavement Officer, Warwick District Council, Oakley Wood Cemetery and Crematorium

Telephone: 01926 651418

https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20645/oakley_wood_crematorium

Email: oakley.wood@warwickdc.gov.uk

Free wifi is available to stream funeral services to the platform of your choice

Rugby

Rainsbrook Cemetery and Crematorium

Telephone: 01788 533715

<http://www.rainsbrookcrematorium.co.uk/>

Email: rainsbrook@rugby.gov.uk

Webcast via password protected links are available via Orbitus website and is available up to 30 days after the funeral.

DVD (audio-visual) and CD (audio) recordings are also available if ordered in advance.



Different Faiths

This Guide focuses on three major faiths celebrated in Warwickshire. All have particular traditions and rituals at end of life that are particularly affected by the lockdown measures imposed by the Covid outbreak. Other faiths are of course still running funerals, but this is additional information.

Hinduism



Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world but unlike other religions, it has no single founder, no commonly agreed set of teachings or unified code of conduct. Freedom of thought offers faith and worship in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth governed by the law of Karma.

In Hinduism the journey of life is marked by 16 sacraments 'sanskars'. The final is Antyaishti and is performed after death. Death is not only the end of the physical body but a natural progression of the soul into the next state of existence.

There are a number of prayers and rituals that take place at end of life of a loved one by their family, music is important and so too is jewellery and flowers. Funeral rites vary according to sect, family tradition and are usually cremated within 24 hours. However, during Covid 19 much of them have had to be abandoned. Funeral Directors will give clear advice on funeral arrangements but they have to be in strict adherence to the Government regulations of a closed coffin, only up to 6 members of family in attendance at the cremation, no gatherings of friends, family or community members from different homes. Webcams of the funeral can be shared online and most crematoria in Warwickshire now allow for a webcam facility.

Social distancing also means that mourners from different houses cannot travel together even if the same family and must respect social distancing during the funeral.

Typically, the bereaved mourn for 13 days after a Hindu funeral. Traditionally ashes are scattered in the River Ganges, which is considered sacred by Hindus. Alternatively, many Hindus are choosing to scatter ashes at a preferred place of importance nearby.

For more information please visit the National Council of Hindu temples www.nchtuk.org or email: info@nchtuk.org

For more information please contact the funeral director or members of the Hindu community in Warwickshire.

Hindu temples in Warwickshire are closed but have other points of contact:

Shree Krishna Mandir

10B High Street
Leamington Spa
CV31 3AN
01926 452247
Facebook @shreekrishnamandirlspa

Kalyan Mandal

4 Kimberley Road
Rugby
CV21 2SU

Shri Hindu Gujarati Samaj

45 Upper Abbey Street
Nuneaton
CV11 5DH
02476 320834

Islam

According to Islamic law, the body should be buried as soon as possible from the time of death.

To prepare for burial, the body must be washed (*ghusl*) and shrouded.

When a Muslim dies it is the responsibility of their family or other Muslims within the local community to wash them according to Islamic rites of washing the deceased.

At least 3 to 4 people will be involved in the actual *ghusl*.

Usually, funeral prayers are performed by all members of the community.

During Covid 19 the British Islamic Medical Association has issued guidance on the performance of *ghusl* for deceased persons with suspected or confirmed Covid 19. Their guidance is aimed at highlighting the medical considerations that should help inform decision making for those responsible for administering religious burials for deceased Muslims.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

There is a low risk of contracting Covid 19 from a deceased person, however it is important to take adequate precautions when carrying out a *ghusl*.

There is a small risk of contracting the infection from infected droplets or formites (e.g. hair or clothes) on the body and possibly from bodily fluids from the mouth, eyes and back passage. Spread via faecal transmission is something that also may be possible in a *ghusl* setting.

A room with good ventilation that can be washed down and disinfected thoroughly after each usage is essential.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) is needed for each person, which includes full sleeve plastic gown, gloves, fluid resistant surgical mask and visor. If the body isn't exposed to human contact after *ghusl* (e.g. in a body bag covered by a shroud) then PPE may not be necessary at burial site.

Without proper training in putting on and removing PPE the performer of *ghusl* puts themselves at risk of infection. Ideally a PPE trainer should train volunteers in each masjid/locality/funeral setting.

In view of the worldwide shortage of PPE, local resilience forums and local authorities should be able to advise on the availability of PPE in each locality.

Anyone over the age of 70 or with a significant health condition should not be involved in *ghusl* or handling body. Therefore, local masjid and funeral directors should begin training volunteers on how to perform *ghusl* and how to correctly don and doff PPE.

Further information is available from covid@britishima.org

Warwickshire's Mosques are closed but please contact for further advice:

Rugby Mosque Society

Tel: 01788 543680

Website: www.rugby-mosque.org

Email: info@rugby-mosque.org

Nuneaton Muslim Society

Tel: 02476 382372

Website: www.nmsuk.org

Twitter: [@nuneatonmasjid](https://twitter.com/nuneatonmasjid)

Baital Ehsan Mosque

Leamington Spa

Website: <https://www.loveforallthatredfornone.org/>

Email: leamingtonspa@amadiyya.org.uk

Masjid and Muslim Community Centre

Leamington Spa

Tel: 01926 429100

Facebook: @LeamingtonMasjid

Chand Mubarak 07962 075947

Sikhism

There are a number of traditions in the Sikh faith to uphold the dignity and respect of the deceased and provide solace and closure for the bereaved.

The Sikh Council UK has issued guidance to help Gurdwaras, funeral directors and bereaved families to find practical solutions for applying the teachings and traditions of the Sikh Faith at this difficult time that adhere to the Government Guidance on care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed Covid 19 and for respecting social isolation and social distancing.



Sehaj Paath

After a Sikh individual passes away, it is traditional to begin a Sehaj Paath (prayers) on the same or following day. In normal circumstances, this would usually happen at the home of the deceased, but it is not uncommon or incorrect for the *Paath* to occur (take place) at the Gurdwara. **During this period, we strongly suggest that all *Sehaj Paaths* should be commended and continued at the Gurdwara Sahib only.** This means that the *Saroop* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and Granthi Singhs should not be brought home as they would be in a normal circumstance. **This is for the safety of both the Granthi Singhs and the family.**

If the Gurdwara Sahib can provide or arrange a live stream, then this would be most beneficial. If this is not possible, then we encourage the family of the deceased to simultaneously pray by listening or reading Paath/Kirtan/Katha and Simran at home. A limited amount of individuals can attend the Gurdwara Sahib from the immediate family of the deceased if they wish to for the *Arambh* of the Sehaj Paath if they are well (and according to social distancing rules agreed in Warwickshire which is a maximum of 6 members of the immediate family). They may also arrange a set time with the Gurdwara Committee, for a few members to listen to the paath for a limited time at the Gurdwara

(observing social distancing). They should not do this if they are self-isolating and especially if they are symptomatic of coronavirus i.e. have a cough or temperature.

Sikh Maryada states that the *Sehaj Paath* following the death of an individual should be completed in or around the ten days. Sometimes, it is not possible to arrange a funeral in this period, so it is possible to hold the *Bhog* of the Paath on an earlier or later date to the funeral. Traditionally, funerals would happen on the days following the death and the Paath would carry on in the ten days.

Additionally, during this period, Gurdwaras should request the family to provide information relating to the cause of death. In the event of a Covid 19 death, this will allow the Gurdwara to make suitable arrangements. If the deceased was diagnosed with corona virus, this should be recorded. Once this information is collated, it will help us understand the impact of the disease in our community.

Avsos

In our community it is common for non-immediate family and friends to visit the home of the deceased to express their grief. **During this period, there should be no such activity. Expressions of grief (*avsos*) should be limited to on the phone or postponed.**

Ishnaan and Preparing the Body

Government guidelines discourage the washing (*ishnaan*) of a Covid 19 patient that has deceased after suffering from Covid 19 by non-professionals, i.e. family members. Given the very significant risk for vulnerable and extremely vulnerable people who come into contact with the virus, it is strongly advised that they have no contact with the body – this includes the over 65 and otherwise unwell.

There are many Sikh funeral directors that may be able to suitably and appropriately prepare the body in the light of Sikh traditions which may mean that the family do not need to attend. However, it may be possible to arrange with funeral directors to provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for a small number of relatives wishing to participate in this.

Funeral and Bhog of Sehaj Paath

Families should limit visitation to immediate family only. If the family is self-isolating, then they should avoid allowing any other visitors. It is essential to maintain a safe distance in this time of at least 3 steps or 2 metres between individuals. The body should not be unnecessarily touched.

Although some families feel strongly about this, the body of the deceased should not be taken to the Gurdwara. As an alternative, the body of the deceased can be driven past the Gurdwara. However, it should remain closed in the coffin, and it should not leave the hearse (funeral vehicle).

Only young and healthy Granthis should attend the funeral service at the Crematorium. Elderly Granthis and those with underlying health problems should follow Government

advice and self-isolate. No Gurdwara should force Granthis against their wishes to attend the funeral service.

In the Sikh faith the concept of mourning and attending as a mourner is contrary to the principles of Gurmat. Attendees of a Sikh funeral are addressed as Saadh Sangat. In the above the term 'mourners' has been used generically to refer to attendees by the Government.

Sikh Gurdwaras in Warwickshire are closed but additional contact numbers are available:

Shri Guru Teg Bahadar Gurdwara
Sikh Mission
Malborough Road
Nuneaton
CV11 5PG
02476 353442

Guru Nanak Gurdwara
63 Park Avenue
Nuneaton
CV11 4PG
02476 386524

Guru Nanak Gurdwara
6 Craven Road
Rugby
CV21 3HY
01788 333396

Gurdwara Sahib Leamington and Warwick
Tachbrook Park Drive
Warwick
CV34 6RH
www.gurdwara-leamingtonandwarwick.com
01926 424297
Email: info@gurdwara-leamingtonandwarwick.com

Bereavement Support

In this era of Covid 19 lockdown measures, there is support available both online and via national and local helplines.

Bereavement Advice Centre

The National Bereavement Advice Centre has a range of practical advice and detailed How To guides on everything connected to the loss of a loved one.

National Helpline 0800 634 9494

<https://www.bereavementadvice.org/>

Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse Bereavement Care has a dedicated national helpline 0808 808 1677 and a dedicated information on Covid19 on its website at:

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-bereavement-and-grief>

or email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

It has local offices in Coventry and Warwickshire:

Coventry and North Warwickshire: Tel: 02476 670714

Rugby: Tel: 07730 216 700 (NB No new referrals for one to one support being accepted currently but other services may be available)

South Warwickshire: Tel: 07730 216 700

Child Bereavement

<https://www.childbereavement.org/coronavirus-covid-19-information>

on supporting families affected by the loss of a child.

Winston's Wish

A child bereavement specialist on supporting children and young people during bereavement

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus>

Age UK

Age UK has a dedicated website page:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/bereavement>

and a useful booklet:

<https://d.docs.live.net/884ee27e6b529c4b/Desktop/Faith%20and%20Covid%2019/ageuk%20bereavement%20guide%20Nov19.pdf>

A brief Government Advice Leaflet on bereavement during Covid 19 is downloadable from the EQUIP website:

www.equipequality.org.uk/resources

Financial Support

Every circumstance is different, so please take time to review whether you are eligible for the financial support available to assist with funeral expenses. Find out more here:

<https://www.gov.uk/funeral-payments>

You may be able to receive a Bereavement Support Payment if your husband, wife or civil partner has died. Find out more here:

<https://www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment>

If you are bringing up a child whose parents have died, you may be eligible for Guardian's Allowance. You may also be eligible if there's one surviving parent. For more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/guardians-allowance>



Contact Us

Email: advice@equipequality.org.uk

Telephone: 07377 431997

Website: www.equipequality.org.uk

To sign up to our regular e-bulletins email: advice@equipequality.org.uk

Or follow us on social media

Facebook: @Equipequality.org

Twitter: @EquipEquality1