

Arranging funeral services in North Yorkshire during the pandemic

*Information, advice
and support*

Funerals are difficult occasions for families and friends of loved ones and we understand that this is a very distressing time for you.

There have been some significant changes to the funeral process during the coronavirus pandemic.

We know these changes can be upsetting but we need to make you aware of restrictions which may be in place.

These measures have been introduced to protect everyone involved in the funeral process, while laying your loved ones to rest respectfully.



We will give you as much information as possible through your funeral director

Why are there changes to funeral arrangements?

Due to the current crisis there has been an increase in the number of funerals, burials and cremations. Staff may have also been affected by illness, self-isolating and shielding.

It is also important to avoid spreading infection and people are being advised not to gather together. This has affected our normal way of holding funerals for the time being.

The wishes of the person who has died, as well as yours, will be respected as far as possible. However, it may not be possible for you to hold the funeral exactly as you would wish at this time and we apologise for the distress this may cause.

What you can do

Talk to the funeral director about what will happen concerning your loved one's funeral arrangements. Please remember that the funeral director can only offer what is possible in the present circumstances. The arrangements should be within the guidelines issued by national and local government. If you wish, contact your minister of religion or faith leader, especially about what they can do to support you at the time of the burial or cremation.

Changes to death registrations

The registration of a death is now done by telephone. The medical certificate issued by the doctor will be emailed to the registrar instead of being handed to yourself. Once the doctor has confirmed to you that the medical certificate has been emailed to us, please either book an appointment online for the registrar to ring you, at www.northyorks.gov.uk/registering-death, or phone 01609 780780 and the North Yorkshire County Council Customer Service Centre will make an appointment for you.

If you live in York, please call 01904 654477 or email registrar@york.gov.uk leaving your name, number, the name of the person who has died and the date and place of death, and a registrar will call you.

What changes have been made to funeral arrangements?

The arrangements may vary depending on where you live and your specific circumstances. However, changes may include:

- You may not have as much choice as would normally be the case. This may affect the date or place of your loved one's burial or cremation or the type of coffin used. If the burial or cremation is delayed, your loved one will be cared for in a sensitive and reverent way, which will be explained to you.
- Every effort will be made to give you the normal opportunity to view your loved one in a chapel of rest, if you wish to do so. However, some funeral directors may be unable to offer this facility.
- If you would like a religious or secular ceremony when your loved one is buried or cremated, this can still happen. Attendance at many funerals is being restricted. Some venues have stopped attendance indoors entirely and some are stipulating a maximum number. This will vary and you should check with your funeral director or crematorium. Mourners from different households are asked to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Some venues may offer the option to live stream the funeral on the internet or to have a recording of the service.
- Every effort will be made to respect the wishes of those who wanted a cremation. However, if this is impossible, a burial will be necessary.
- If you wish to hold a memorial service or event at a later time, you can discuss this with a minister, faith or community leader, celebrant, funeral director, or anyone else you choose.

Health professionals, religious and voluntary groups, funeral directors and the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum are working together to give you the best possible help and support in these difficult circumstances.

Your own health and wellbeing is important. Contact your GP surgery if you need advice or treatment.

Other organisations that can be contacted for further support include:

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Tel: 0808 8081677

Compassionate Friends

(for parents of a child who has died)

www.tcf.org.uk

Tel: 0845 123 2304

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

Tel: 116 123

NYLRF Major Incident Response Team

Email: mirt@northyorks.gov.uk

