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Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for funerals and

commemorative events during the coronavirus pandemic

Updated 29 October 2021

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This publication is available at <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>

Who this guidance is for:

This guidance is for:

- members of the public who may be attending a funeral or commemorative event
- members of the public who may be involved in arranging a funeral or commemorative event
- professionals who may be involved in arranging or managing a funeral or commemorative event

For the purposes of this guidance, the phrase 'commemorative event' includes events and rituals such as stone setting ceremonies, the scattering of ashes, and wakes. Such events may take place before or following the funeral.

There are no legal limits on the number of people who can attend funerals or commemorative events. Those attending, arranging or managing such events should consider that it may be harder to manage the risk of spreading COVID-19 if spaces are crowded, and venue operators may set their own limits. Those involved in arranging or managing such events should see the [working safely guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19).

It is important to take steps to protect yourselves and others from COVID-19. This is particularly true for funerals, where the risk of COVID-19 may be higher due to the attendance of people who have a legal exemption to attend a funeral during self-isolation or quarantine, and who either have or are at higher risk of having COVID-19. For further information on these exemptions, see the section on [attending a funeral if you are in self-isolation, or in quarantine following international travel](#).

Anyone who has 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), should not attend a funeral unless an [exemption](#) applies. You should immediately self-isolate, follow the [stay at home guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection), and [request a test online \(https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test), or by contacting NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access.

For further information and the actions to take to reduce the chance of spreading COVID-19, refer to the guidance on [how to stay safe and help prevent the spread \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread).

Key actions for those attending, arranging or managing a funeral or commemorative event

There is [government guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread#keeping-yourself-and-others-safe\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread#keeping-yourself-and-others-safe) that advises:

- washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser throughout the day
- where possible, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. If you do need to touch your face (for example to put on or take off your face covering), wash or sanitise your hands before and after
- covering your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze
- if you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand
- dispose of tissues into a rubbish bag and immediately wash your hands
- taking part in twice weekly lateral flow device ([LFD](#)) testing (<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>) even if you don't have symptoms

- letting fresh air in. You may want to consider if you can have the funeral or commemorative event outdoors. Follow the [guidance on ventilation of indoor spaces to stop the spread of COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus/ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus/ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19>)
- using the NHS COVID-19 app
- wearing a face covering in enclosed and crowded areas.

If you have been overseas in the last 10 days, follow the guidance on international travel for testing requirements before attending a funeral.

There may be additional risks to consider when attending a funeral. The guidance below outlines actions to take when attending, arranging or managing a funeral, or commemorative event.

Stay at home if you have COVID-19 symptoms, are self-isolating, or are in quarantine

Due to the risk you may pose to others, you should not attend if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate immediately, follow the [stay at home guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>), and [get a PCR test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>), even if your symptoms are mild. You are legally required to self-isolate if you test positive or are notified to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

If you have been notified that you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 but are not legally required to self-isolate (for example, because you are fully vaccinated), consider taking additional precautions when attending a funeral. Follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>). Follow separate [guidance if you have had contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 but do not currently live in the same household as them](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>).

Some individuals have [a legal exemption to briefly leave self-isolation or quarantine following recent international travel in order to attend a funeral](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/19-july-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funerals-and-commemorative-events-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic#exempt) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/19-july-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funerals-and-commemorative-events-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic#exempt>). These exemptions do not apply to attending a commemorative event.

Unless an exemption applies, you must not attend a funeral if any of the following apply:

- you are self-isolating due to a positive test result
- you have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
- you are in quarantine after recently arriving into England from [non-red list country and you are not fully vaccinated](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19>)
- you are in a managed quarantine facility after arriving into England from [a red list country](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories>)

For further information see the section below on [attending a funeral if you are in self-isolation or in quarantine following international travel](#).

Consider limiting close contact

Social distancing measures no longer apply and you do not need to stay 2 metres apart (or 1 metre plus mitigations) at a funeral or commemorative event. However, limiting close contact reduces the risk of catching or passing on COVID-19.

Given the exemption for some people to briefly leave self-isolation or quarantine to attend funerals, you may choose to limit the close contact you have with people you do not live with. You may also choose to take an LFD test before attending the funeral to help manage the risk of close contact.

It is important to consider that others may wish to take a more cautious approach. We should all be considerate of this and provide the opportunity and space for others to reduce close contacts if they wish.

Although not required to do so by law, you should wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed areas. This is because face coverings reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, especially when there is close contact between people in enclosed and crowded spaces.

People who are at higher risk of severe COVID-19

If you were previously identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, you are advised to continue to follow the guidance contained in [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do). Some people are still at higher risk of severe illness if they were infected with COVID-19, and may have been advised by their health professional to consider taking additional precautions.

If you are at higher risk of severe illness if you were infected with COVID-19, you may wish to think carefully about the particular risks associated with attending a funeral.

For those arranging or managing a funeral or commemorative event, if you become aware that someone who is at higher risk of severe COVID-19 will be attending, you should:

- try and enable them to participate remotely where this is possible (for example by live-streaming) should they wish to do so
- consider reminding other attendees that there are individuals who may choose or need to maintain distancing. It is important that you don't identify, or single anyone out, or release personal or confidential information

Religious or other belief-based practices that may involve close contact with the deceased

Where it is not possible to determine if COVID-19 was suspected or confirmed at the time of death, you are not advised to take part in rituals or practices that bring you in close contact with the deceased. There is likely to be a continuing risk of infection from body fluids and tissues where COVID-19 infection is suspected or confirmed.

If aspects of faith or beliefs include close contact with the deceased, you should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) under the supervision of someone who is trained in the appropriate use of PPE and follow the [guidance on care of the deceased \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19).

Because of the increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness, it is not advisable for people who may be at higher risk of severe COVID-19 to have any contact at all with the body of the deceased, regardless of whether PPE is worn.

Venue considerations if you are arranging or managing a funeral or commemorative event

Social distancing measures no longer apply. This means that you do not need to implement social distancing (2 metres or 1 metre plus with mitigations) at a funeral or a commemorative event. You may wish to consider how to facilitate attendees who wish to keep a safe distance, with particular consideration of people attending from self-isolation or quarantine.

All businesses and venues should follow the principles set out in the [working safely guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19).

Employers will still have a legal duty to manage risks. They should do this by undertaking a health and safety risk assessment, including the risk of COVID-19, and to take reasonable steps to mitigate these risks.

If you are informed that someone is leaving self-isolation or quarantine to attend a funeral, this must be factored into the risk assessment. Those attending a funeral during their self-isolation or quarantine should maintain at least 2 metres distance from all other attendees at all times. You should follow advice in the section on attending a funeral if you are in self-isolation or in quarantine following international travel to see additional mitigations that should be taken.

The [working safely guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19) sets out a range of mitigations that should be considered, including:

- cleaning surfaces that people touch regularly
- identifying poorly ventilated areas in the venue and [taking steps to improve air flow \(https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm).
It is always worth considering whether you can have the funeral or commemorative event outdoors
- ensuring that staff and customers who are unwell do not attend the workplace or venue
- communicating to staff and customers the measures you have put in place

Collection of contact details

You are no longer required by law to collect contact details, or keep a record of your staff and visitors.

However, you are encouraged to continue to display an NHS QR code for anyone wishing to check in using the app, as this will help to reduce the spread of the virus and protect your visitors and staff. You do not have to ask visitors to check in, or turn them away if they refuse.

If you display an NHS QR code, you should also have a system to collect (and securely store) names and contact details for those who ask to check-in but do not have access to a smartphone or prefer not to use the app.

Please see the [guidance on maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace).

Attending a funeral if you are in self-isolation, or in quarantine following international travel

If you qualify under the fully vaccinated rules for travel to England and you are arriving from a non-red list country, you do not need to quarantine at home or in the place you are staying for 10 days.

There are also legal exemptions that permit you to briefly leave self-isolation, or quarantine following international travel to England, in order to attend a funeral.

These legal exemptions allow you to:

- briefly leave self-isolation (if you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace) for the purpose of attending the funeral of a close family member (for example a partner, parent, sibling, child or grandparent)
- briefly leave home quarantine after arrival from [a non-red list country](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) for the purpose of attending the funeral of a close family member (as defined above) or a household member, or a friend (if neither a close family member nor household member can attend).
- request permission to briefly leave managed quarantine after arrival from [a red list country](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories>) for the purpose of attending the funeral of a close family member (as defined above) or a household member only. This will include agreeing a specific time with the hotel for returning to your room. There is more information about this exemption in the [managed quarantine hotels guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/booking-and-staying-in-a-quarantine-hotel-when-you-arrive-in-england#quarantining-in-a-managed-quarantine-hotel) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/booking-and-staying-in-a-quarantine-hotel-when-you-arrive-in-england#quarantining-in-a-managed-quarantine-hotel>)

These legal exemptions only apply for the purpose of attending a funeral. You must not break your isolation or quarantine to attend a commemorative event under any circumstances. This would be a legal offence and you may be fined. You must otherwise continue to self-isolate unless there are other circumstances present that legally allow you not to.

Exemption rules for attending a funeral also apply to other household members who are required to isolate because a member of their household is home quarantining after arriving from a red list country.

Even if a legal exemption to briefly leave self-isolation or quarantine applies to you for the purpose of attending a funeral, you are strongly advised to consider arrangements to participate remotely, for example through video link, in order to avoid attending in person. This will help reduce the risk to others present at the funeral and will play a direct role in stopping the spread of the virus.

If after very careful consideration of the risk, you choose to briefly leave self-isolation or quarantine to attend a funeral in person, it is essential that you take all of the following precautions, and that those involved in arranging or managing the funeral facilitate people to take these precautions as far as possible.

Advise the funeral venue manager, organisers and other attendees in advance that you are in your self-isolation or quarantine period. Other people need to be aware of this prior to attending. Informing the venue manager will help ensure they have factored this into their risk assessment. Event organisers must factor this into their risk assessment.

Maintain a distance of at least 2 metres at all times between yourself and other people, including when travelling to and from the funeral. Some people attending the funeral may be at higher risk of severe illness if they were infected with COVID-19. Event organisers must factor this into their risk assessment.

Wear a properly fitting surgical-grade fluid repellent (Type IIR) face mask. If a respirator mask is used (for example N95), this should be non-valved. These masks are widely available from pharmacies, supermarkets and online retailers. You are advised to bring your own face mask. Event organisers and those organising the funeral may also want to ensure they have some in stock.

Avoid singing or raising your voice, as this generates more particles containing COVID-19. The risk is greatest where these activities take place indoors.

Wash your hands more often than usual with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue that is thrown away after coughing or sneezing, or use the crook of your elbow (not hands) to cough or sneeze into.

Avoid using public transport and avoid sharing transport, if possible.

Taking all of these actions will help you to protect others from COVID-19.

Event organisers should support those attending a funeral from self-isolation or quarantine to follow the steps outlined above.

Experiencing grief or bereavement

The loss of a friend or loved one can be an extremely difficult and challenging time. This may be even more difficult if you have experienced bereavement and grief during the COVID-19 pandemic. Grief affects everyone in different ways, the important thing is to allow yourself to grieve, and to have the right support to help with this.

There is a range of support available, including through the NHS, [Cruse Bereavement Care](https://www.cruse.org.uk/) (<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>), and [AtaLoss](https://www.ataloss.org/) (<https://www.ataloss.org/>), which provides signposting and services across the UK.

If you are supporting a bereaved child or young person, the [Childhood Bereavement Network](https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/) (<https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>) has information and links to national and local organisations.

Related Guidance and Regulations

This guidance applies in England only. Guidance on funerals and commemorative events is also available for [Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funeral-services/) (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funeral-services/>), [Wales](https://gov.wales/guidance-funerals-covid-19) (<https://gov.wales/guidance-funerals-covid-19>) and [Northern Ireland](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you#toc-16) (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you#toc-16>).

There is [guidance on care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>).

The Health Protection Regulations

This document is guidance. The law is contained in the following Health Protection Regulations for England in 2020:

- [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Self-Isolation\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1045/made) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1045/made>)
 - [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) Regulations 2021](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/582/contents) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/582/contents>)
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