

# ***A Guide to Self Help Funerals - Cremation***

## ***Introduction***

The details provided in this document are intended to advise those that want to make cremation arrangements without the assistance of a funeral director. Please note that such a decision is entirely the choice of the individual and Brighton & Hove City Council do not promote this choice over that to use a funeral director.

For further queries please contact Bereavement Services: (01273) 604020  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bereavement](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bereavement)

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## ***When a death occurs***

If a death occurs at home, then the General Practitioner who attended the deceased during their last illness must be quickly contacted in order to confirm the death and issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. This certificate may be issued immediately or made available later for collection from the doctor's surgery.

If a death occurs in a hospital, then it is normally the doctor attending the patient who would issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. The Hospital Administrator will advise of where and when the certificate will be made available for collection.

If a death occurs and the doctor attending the deceased is unable to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, then the Coroner will be advised of these circumstances, by the doctor.

The Coroner will investigate the death and decide whether to allow the doctor to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death or, alternatively, request a post-mortem to take place to establish the cause of death.

It is sometimes necessary for the Coroner to request an Inquest to be held as part of their inquiries. If an Inquest is required, then either a Coroner's Order for Burial or a Coroner's Certificate 'Form 6' for cremation will be issued from the Coroners Office, as soon as possible, to enable the funeral to proceed.

## Registering a death

The death must be registered at the Register Office in the district where it occurred. If it happened in the City of Brighton & Hove, then the death needs to be registered at the Brighton & Hove Register Office.

If the person who registers the death does not live locally and finds it difficult to attend the local Register Office, then it is possible to register the death by 'declaration' at any Register Office in England and Wales. However, the funeral arrangements could be delayed if this option is chosen.

It is normally a relative who registers the death, although other people are allowed to do so. If in any doubt, contact the Registrar of Births and Deaths for advice.

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, issued by a General Practitioner or a Hospital Doctor, who attended the deceased during their last illness, must be handed to the Registrar of Births and Deaths, before the death is registered.

If the circumstances of the death involve the Coroner and an Inquest has been requested, then the Coroner will register the death. If an Inquest is not necessary, then the death can be registered by a relative, in the normal manner, but only after the Coroner has established the cause of death and notified the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

Her Majesty's Coroner for the City of Brighton & Hove will always keep the family informed if they become involved in the death of a person.

The following leaflets are freely available from the Woodvale Lodge and provide information about the Coroner's Service:

- The Coroner's Charter
- When a Death is Reported to the Coroner – Helpful Information
- Brighton & Hove City Coroner's Court – Local Information for People Attending Court

Useful telephone numbers:

- Brighton & Hove Register Office: (01273) 292016

- HM Coroner for the City of Brighton and Hove: (01273) 292046

## Arranging the cremation

Woodvale Crematorium can offer either a simple cremation only service (with no use of the chapels and the coffin required by 8.30 am) or facilities at the chapels for a service prior to the coffin being taken for cremation. For more information on the chapels and current fees, go to:

[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/woodvale](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/woodvale)

It is the applicant's responsibility to:

- *Ensure the deceased is kept at a place of safe storage* until a funeral takes place - If the deceased is at a hospital, or the Brighton City Mortuary, then it is normally possible for the deceased person to be retained at those places, prior to the funeral. In other circumstances, this will not be possible and you may need to involve a funeral director in a limited capacity for removal of the deceased and storage.
- *Arrange a date and time for the cremation* by contacting the Woodvale Lodge office and pay any fees before the date of the funeral. Failure to do this could cause the funeral to be cancelled.
- *Complete and bring all required statutory and non-statutory paperwork* to the office at least two working days before the funeral. Information on paperwork required is below.
- *Inform the crematorium office what music is to be used*, if there is any. A small library of music available at Woodvale can be seen on the website. Alternatively; one should provide any music in the form of either original CDs or MP3 players. Use of the North and South Chapel includes a chapel attendant to play the music.
- *Appoint a minister*, if required, and pay any fees they require directly. A minister is not compulsory; sometimes a family member or friend may choose to take the service instead.
- *Obtain a suitable coffin* in line with cremation guidelines. Bereavement Services are able to provide, at a cost, a cardboard coffin but other suppliers are available. The applicant should liaise with wherever the deceased is being kept about the date of the funeral and collecting the deceased.
- *Arrange transportation* of the deceased in the coffin to the crematorium on the day of the funeral. The deceased cannot be brought to the crematorium before the day of the cremation.
- *Arrange a suitable amount of bearers* (at least four) to carry the coffin, from whatever transportation is used, into the chapel. The crematorium staff cannot assist with this.
- *Ensure that the service begins and ends in appropriate time* and that the chapel and outside area is vacated for the next service. On average a service in the chapels at Woodvale should last no longer than 30 minutes to allow time for mourners to enter and leave the chapel. If more time is required, a double chapel-time booking should be asked for.

## Forms required for a cremation

There are two slightly different lists which apply respectively depending on what extent the coroner is involved (see above). All forms are available at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/woodvaleforms](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/woodvaleforms)

If a natural death occurs and does not involve the coroner then the following forms will be required:

- A green Certificate for Burial or Cremation issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths.
- Form 1 – Application for Cremation. This form must be completed by an executor, near relative or person authorised to act in that capacity.
- Form 4 – Certificate of Medical Attendant. A Registered Medical Practitioner who attended the deceased during their last illness will complete this certificate. A fee is payable to the Doctor who prepared this certificate.
- Form 5 – Confirmatory Medical Certificate. Another Registered Medical Practitioner of at least five years standing, who is not a relative of the deceased or a partner of the Doctor who completed Form 4, will complete this certificate. A fee is payable to the Doctor who prepared this certificate.
- A Notice of Cremation and Confirmation of Music and Hymns – confirming the date and time arranged and other details
- Directions for Disposal of Cremated Remains – asks for your instructions on what you wish to happen with the cremated remains

If the Coroner is involved in the circumstances relating to the death and a post mortem or sometimes an Inquest is requested, then the following forms will be required:

- Form 6 – Coroners Form for Cremation. The Coroner will issue this Certificate in the district in which the death occurred
- Form 1 – Application for Cremation. This form must be completed by an executor, near relative or person authorised to act in that capacity
- A Notice of cremation sheet – confirming the date and time arranged and other details of the arrangements
- Directions for Disposal of Cremated Remains – asks for your instructions on what the applicant for cremation wishes to happen with the cremated remains