

Tameside Muslims COVID-19

Burial Response Plan & Guidelines

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

The purpose of this group is to provide support and guidance only with matters relating to COVID-19 deaths within Tameside. Any non COVID-19 deaths will follow the usual arrangements that are already in place with the local Mosques and funeral services, however ensuring national governments social distancing and other relevant guidelines are adhered to.

In order to ensure that we (The Tameside Muslim Community) are prepared best as possible to deal with COVID-19 deaths during these unprecedented and challenging times, it is absolutely essential that a **co-ordinated, joined up, collaborative and consistent approach** is adopted across Tameside Muslim organisations and supporting services involved to ensure the issues are tackled effectively and efficiently.

To help us achieve this, we have set out the guidelines below: -

Reliance on Allah (SWT): First and foremost, we must wholeheartedly accept that nothing happens without the decree (Qadr) of Allah SWT. In these unprecedented and challenging times, we must turn to our Lord at every opportunity to ask for His forgiveness and guidance.

Normal circumstances, dictate for the deceased to be given a full ritual Ghusl (bath), Kafn (shroud), Janazah Salah (prayer) to be offered and burial. But, in such circumstances as COVID-19, the Divine Law permits certain relaxations of these rites:

'So fear Allah as much as you are able' (64:16)
'Allah does not burden a soul except within its capacity' (2:286)
'There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm' (Ibn Majah)

Furthermore, the concept of washing the deceased is a 'ritual'. The main objective is not to necessarily 'clean' the deceased – rather, to continue the ritual carried out by our Prophet Muhammad (saw) in ritually washing the body, when possible. The deceased's body is not considered 'impure', whereby it has to be scrubbed and cleaned to remove impurity, rather, it is similar to the concept of wudhu - a ritual cleansing.

When taking into consideration that of which is mentioned by Allah SWT and the Prophet Muhammad (saw), recommendations from the Local Authority, various other Muslim Organisations and the lead Tameside Muslim COVID-19 Team, we have come to a decision in implementation of the following process for the deceased of Muslims in Tameside who may sadly pass away from Coronavirus.

PATHWAY ONE:

Ghusl (Ritual Wash)

1. Ghusl will be offered if the following criteria are met:

- Volunteers are available*
- The appropriate PPE is available for everyone involved in the ghusl
- The performance of ghusl must be done in a safe and dignified manner, managing any risks and in compliance with Public Health England (PHE) guidance

2. Household family members will not be allowed to carry out any funeral rituals as they should be in self-isolation during this task.

3. However, members of the wider family who are not in self-isolation and are not in the exclusion criteria maybe permitted to help in the funeral rituals.

4. The risk of infection after death is lower than during life but is still present. If ghusl cannot take place for example, there is no adequate PPE available; lack of volunteers or any other valid reason then PATHWAY TWO will be followed.

PATHWAY TWO:

1. The Body will remain in a sealed body bag throughout the process.

2. Tayammum (Dry Rituals) will be carried out.

3. If for any reason Tayammum (Dry Ritual) cannot take place, then the obligation of ghusl is lifted and the body will be given a martyr burial.

4. The body will be placed in the coffin in 1 piece of kafan.

5. Again, no household family members will be allowed to carry out any funeral rituals as they should be in self-isolation during this task.

6. However, members of the wider family who are not in self-isolation and are not in the exclusion criteria may be permitted to help with the funeral rituals.

* **Volunteers**- must be aged between 20-60 years with **NO** underlying health conditions.

Process/Guidance:

- The family of the deceased **MUST** inform their local **COVID-19 Team Reps** when a death occurs in order to receive full support and guidance.
- **HYDE COVID-19 Team Reps:** Hafiz Shahin Ahmed 07545537260 | Ahmed Ali 07947612479
Shamshed Ali 07475628494 | Shain Miah 07850355153
- **ASHTON-U-LYNE COVID-19 Team Reps:** Jangir Yunis 07909090283 | Ruhel Ahmed 07966594313
Ali Kader 07954333378 | Mohammed Tahir 07939531111
- Your local COVID-19 team will then liaise with your nominated Funeral Director who will make the necessary preparations for the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), Registration and transportation of the deceased.
- The local COVID-19 Team will maintain communication with the bereaved family to advise them of the process for the COVID-19 death and will act as a link between the family and the Funeral Director.
- To control the spread of infection, it will **NOT** be possible for family members who had direct contact to view the deceased. Family wishing to view the deceased must make their own arrangements with the Hospital Mortuary and End of Life Team.
- Handling of the deceased at any point of the process, including at the burial, shall only be undertaken by equipped personnel with the correct Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**).
- In order to reduce the risk of spreading infection, your local **COVID-19 Team** will provide the required **PPE** items to be used in the funeral process and this **MUST** be disposed safely as per guidance.
- No shrouded burials without a coffin will be permitted.
- The Janazah (funeral) congregational prayer shall only take place with casket placed at the cemetery.
- There will be limits of 10 people that can attend the cemetery for burial.
- Those who attend the burial (cemetery) **MUST** be in essential PPE e.g. gloves, mask, etc.
- All in attendance **MUST** take an essential shower and change of clothes upon return to home.
- If family members of the deceased are in self- isolation, they will **NOT** be permitted to attend the burial (cemetery)

Appendix A

The diagram below of PPE is for illustration purpose for Ghusl only

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)



Source: Lighthouse Medical Supplies

**This document will be reviewed regularly and will evolve to ensure it is updated and continues to serve the needs of the Tameside Muslim Community, Subject to change at a short notice according to UK Government's guidelines.

Important: Charges and payment methods may vary between the funeral directors so please make sure you are familiarised with payments due in advance.