

# Planning a Muslim Burial?

This document has been prepared by  
Welsh Government and the Welsh Local  
Government Association and endorsed by  
the Faith Communities Forum

**October 2014**

Planning a funeral for a close friend or relative can be a difficult and demanding task for anyone trying to cope with their bereavement. All cemetery and funeral staff understand that and will do their best to make the process as simple and straightforward as possible.

As with any funeral, however, a little advance planning can make all the difference.

This leaflet offers practical advice about the services and facilities which those planning a Muslim burial can expect to find from Welsh burial authorities.

Not all burial authorities in Wales are in a position to offer the same range of services, but all have been encouraged to take into account the needs of all their faith communities as far as possible.

## **When can the burial take place?**

Welsh burial authorities understand the importance attached by Muslims to an early burial. With this in mind, all authorities in Wales have been asked to consider flexible working arrangements so that burials can take place, if they need to, outside their normal working hours, for example at weekends.

Since out-of-hours working will require the authority to make special arrangements with their staff, it will always be helpful to ask in advance, if at all possible, whether an out-of-hours burial can be arranged and to give as much notice as you can if you wish to take advantage of such arrangements.

The adoption of more flexible working arrangements that recognise the importance for Muslims of being able to arrange burials at short notice and if necessary at the

weekends would be widely appreciated by the Muslim Community.

Further information in relation to this particular issue, is available from your local council.

## **How quickly can a burial be arranged?**

Burials need to be properly planned so that they can take place without any delays or inconvenience to the bereaved family or friends. That is why burial authorities need to be given sufficient prior notice that a burial is required.

Welsh burial authorities have been asked to consider the particular needs of their Muslim communities and to discuss any special requirements they may have in advance with their local community representatives.

Any need to arrange a burial within hours of notice being given, or any preferred customs or practice in the course of the funeral should have been raised with the burial authority and procedures agreed and put in place.

Some authorities have publicised, for example, to local Muslim community representatives and funeral directors, particularly any who specialise in providing Muslim burials the minimum length of time it is likely to take from the receipt of instructions before a burial can take place.

If you are unsure, please contact your local council.

This will help avoid any unnecessary misunderstandings as to what may be achievable.

## **What do I need to do in order to ensure a burial can go ahead as soon as possible?**

In most situations the first official piece of paperwork issued is the death certificate. This is generally given by the Doctor who attended the deceased last. Without the Death Certificate the death cannot be registered and no funeral can take place before registration.

The family will need to take the Death Certificate to the local registrars who will register the death and issue a Green Disposal Certificate. This certificate should be handed to the nominated funeral director as soon as possible as he will need this to complete various statutory functions including collection of the body from a hospital or mortuary and to allow the actual funeral to go ahead with the burial authority.

## **What if the Coroner gets involved?**

The Coroner has a lawful duty to inquire into violent or unnatural deaths, sudden deaths of unknown cause and deaths which have occurred in prison.

A coroner's authority to inquire flows from the report of a body being within the coroner's district and not from where the death happened. The coroner's inquiries may take one of several forms and may result in the holding of an inquest.

If the Coroner is involved then there may be a delay in holding the funeral as he or she will only issue a burial order after an inquest is opened and this may need to await a post mortem examination.

## **Can Muslims be buried together?**

All burial authorities recognise that it can be important for different faiths to be buried together, perhaps with graves aligned in a particular direction.

For this reason many burial authorities will set aside separate part of their cemeteries for the use of particular faiths or denominations. Your local burial authority will be able to advise you whether they have separate areas for use by Muslims.

## **Is information available in my native language?**

Welsh burial authorities have been asked to consider the needs of their local communities. If there is a need for information to be made available in languages other than English or Welsh, it may be possible for the burial authority to provide such a service, perhaps with the help of local community representatives.

Remember: if a local cemetery does not have the facilities you would like to see, why not ask, either directly, or through your local community representatives or your local councillor.

It may not be feasible for all requests to be met, but Welsh burial authorities are very willing to consider how they can best meet the needs of their local communities.

## List of contacts for all burial authorities:

### **Blaenau Gwent**

Tel: 01495 355955

### **Bridgend**

Tel: 01656 643469

### **Caerphilly**

Tel: 01495 235404

### **Cardiff**

Tel: 029 2062 3294

### **Carmarthenshire**

Tel: 01267 224543

### **Ceredigion**

Tel: 01970 623145

### **Conwy**

Tel: 01492 577730

### **Denbighshire**

Tel: 01824 712106

### **Flintshire**

Tel: 01352 703360

### **Gwynedd**

Tel: 01248 370500

### **Isle of Anglesey**

Town Councils –

Holyhead Tel: 01407 764608

Baumaris Tel: 01248 810317

Amlwch Tel: 01407 832228

**Merthyr Tydfil**

Tel: 01685 725339

**Monmouthshire**

Tel: 01291 636376

**Neath Port Talbot**

Tel: 01639 686390

**Newport**

Tel: 01633 263864

**Pembrokeshire**

Tel: 01437 775482

**Powys**

Tel: 01874 612252

**Rhondda Cynon Taff**

Tel: 01443 402810

**Swansea**

Tel: 01792 636481

**Torfaen**

Tel: 01633 870553

**Vale of Glamorgan**

Tel 01446 738663

**Wrexham**

Tel: 01978 840068



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