



West Lancashire Crematorium

Policy Statement Relating to the Cremation of Pregnancy loss, Stillborn Babies and very young deceased Babies.

This Cremation Authority wishes it to be known that it considers the interests of the bereaved family and baby in our care to be the central focus of our attention. This will be reflected in all of our administrative and operational practices and procedures.

Definition of Ashes

This is now defined in the Cremation (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. "Ashes" means all the material left in the cremator after a cremation and following

- a) the removal of any metal, and
- b) any subsequent grinding or other process which is applied to the material.

Return of Ashes

All baby cremations must be cremated using the cremation tray which is designed to maximise the recovery of ashes.

Our approach to the cremation of babies and infants is designed to maximise the recovery of ashes. This includes the use of a cremation tray designed to retain ashes where practicable, and the maintenance of operational conditions that will minimise the loss of any ashes during the process of cremation.

We will employ best practice e.g. the use of specialist computer programmes and metal trays and our staff will be vigilant during the cremation process and if appropriate will adjust operational conditions when necessary in order to protect the ashes of babies and infants and maximise their recovery.

We are confident that the equipment and processes adopted for infant cremation at West Lancashire Crematorium maximise the likelihood of recovering ashes. In any rare instance of non-recovery of ashes, we will conduct a review of the cremation process within 48 hours to understand why this is the case. The results of this review will be documented and contain details of any adjustments of our procedure deemed to be necessary, and will be available to next of kin/parent(s) if they wish to view these. We will adhere to our identification procedure that guarantees that the ashes resulting from individual cremations returned to parents are those of their baby.

Shared Cremations

Where a shared cremation has been authorised, and hence ashes are not individually identifiable, we will take the same care throughout the cremation process, including

steps to maximise the recovery of ashes, and will scatter/bury the ashes within the crematorium's designated area. The location will be recorded for future reference

Disposal of Ashes

In relation to the disposal of ashes in the case of a private cremation, West Lancashire Crematorium will only act upon the written instruction of the parent who is acting as the Applicant for Cremation or other person nominated in writing by the parent.

In the case of shared cremations we will only act on the written instruction of the designated person at the relevant hospital, who is acting as the Applicant

Ashes will be held at the crematorium for up to 3 months to await collection by representatives or instructions as to their disposal. Where no further instructions have been received within the 3 month period, a further fourteen days' notice will be given in writing to the Applicant, following which the ashes will be scattered or buried within the grounds of the crematorium should no further instructions have been received.

Disposal of Metals – The applicant should give consent for disposal of metals recovered from an individual cremation and must be provided with information on the options available.

Record Keeping

All cremations of babies and infants will be registered at the crematorium, with all information as contained in forms and certificates being retained indefinitely (This may be in electronic form).

If ashes are scattered or buried within the grounds of the crematorium the final resting place will be recorded. Where ashes are to be collected, the details of any person authorised by the applicant to remove/collect the ashes, and the date on which the ashes were collected will be recorded.

The policy of this Cremation Authority is designed to provide an audit trail from the receipt of initial funeral instructions to the final disposal of ashes, either by collection from the crematorium or by scattering or burial within the confines of the Gardens of Remembrance or other such designated area.

Questions or Queries

If you have any questions or queries about the cremation of your baby, you can speak to:

Steve Glen
Manager – West Lancashire Crematorium

Westerleigh Group

INFANT CREMATION CODE OF PRACTICE 2019

1. The deceased infant, their family and their friends must be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity at all times.
2. The principle of informed choice for next of kin must apply to all decision-making discussions and documentation. This must include transparency as to alternative options and applicable costs, and provide clarity over who may hold future decision-making powers.
3. Communication with, and information available to, family and friends of the deceased must be consistent across all involved organisations and institutions.
4. Next of kin must be allowed some time to reflect and, if necessary, make changes to their initial decisions.
5. Next of kin must be provided with a copy of any documentation signed by them.
6. “Ashes” means all the material left in the cremator after a cremation and following –
 - a) The removal of any metal, and
 - b) The subsequent grinding or other process which is applied to the material.
7. All organisations and institutions involved in infant cremations must adhere to the principle of maximising the recovery of ashes when agreeing contracts, arranging and/or conducting infant cremations.
8. Arrangements relating to any hospital-arranged infant cremations must be set out in a contract/be agreed in writing between NHS, funeral director, cremation authority and/or burial authority, as applicable.
9. All organisations and institutions involved in infant cremations must regularly review their own procedures and policies to ensure best practice is maintained.
10. All organisations and institutions involved in infant cremations must establish regular sharing and learning of multi-agency and cross-country best practice.
11. All relevant staff must successfully complete relevant, available training before their involvement in discussing, organising or conducting infant cremations.
12. Records must be accurate, clear, accessible and maintained electronically where possible.
13. All organisations and institutions involved in infant cremations must allow and assist with regular inspection of their premises, personnel, policies, procedures and/or records etc. by the individuals or bodies designated by statute for this purpose.
14. All organisations involved in infant cremations, and all their existing or new infant cremation policies, codes of practice, guidance, procedures and processes must ensure they adhere to this national Code of Practice, including its Supplementary Guidelines and any accompanying explanatory Notes.
15. All organisations involved in infant cremations must ensure they are and continue to be fully compliant with the law in Scotland, England and Wales.