

Death of an Employee

POLICY & PROCEDURE

OFFICIAL

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Policy

National Context

Authorised Professional Practice (APP) is produced by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. All officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. Essentially, our “policy” is to comply with APP as it develops to cover all areas of policing.

Statement

Merseyside Police Force is committed to providing an appropriate response following the death of a serving or retired Police Officer or member of Police Staff. We acknowledge that in many instances, the deceased’s family and colleagues can take some comfort and pride in the Force’s representation and support for the funeral.

We will always try to provide practical and appropriate support in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin.

Aims

This policy aims to provide clarity, consistency and guidance for Managers who are faced with the death of a member of their department.

It outlines the support that is available to help with planning and conducting of police funerals. This includes the type of support available to the member’s family and colleagues, immediately following the death, and how that support can be continued for a period of time after the death.

- The policy is underpinned by practical guidance covering:
- Reporting the Death
- Role of the Trade Unions/Staff Associations
- Planning a Funeral including Role of Liaison Officer
- Types of Funeral
- Key Roles at Funeral

Objectives

The main objective is to ensure that the Force responds appropriately to the death of an employee of Merseyside Police.

Associated objectives are to:

- a) Provide practical support and assistance to the deceased’s next of kin and colleagues.

- b) Provide guidance for managers to assist them to prepare and plan for the funeral.
- c) Mitigate the impact of the bereavement.

Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This is a non-statutory policy that sets out the principles to help guide decision making. It provides guidance that, on occasions, officers and staff may depart from based on the circumstances they encounter. On such occasions, officers and staff will be supported provided they can demonstrate a clear rationale which can be objectively justified for why they have departed from the policy.

Police involvement in any funeral of a member of the Force, will only be provided when requested by, or at the behest of the next of kin or their nominee. The arrangements will be agreed with the next of kin / nominee and no additional measures will be taken regarding the conduct of the funeral without the consent of the next of kin or nominee.

Escorts on roads and policing activities associated with the funeral will be risk assessed and only those measures taken that are necessary, proportionate, legitimate and justified will be used to meet these aims.

The Chief Officer lead for this policy is ACC People Services.

All references in this document to 'funeral service location' are intended to relate to all places of worship for all religious denominations and alternative venues for atheists and humanists.

Outcome Evaluation

The Head of People Operations and Service Delivery will delegate responsibility for periodic review. Measurement will involve consideration of qualitative information mainly consisting of comment from family and colleagues.

Procedure

Version History

Version Number	Date	Detailed rational behind amending/updating policy or procedure.	Policy Owner Details	Policy Author Details
2.5	10/07/20	Updated in response to Covid pandemic		
2.6	19/05/26	Update to naming conventions and formatting refresh only (full review pending)	Head of PO&SD	People Policy Advisor

1. Notification

1.1 Initial Notification

1.1.1 (See [Appendix A](#) – Primary Tasks Checklist for Death in Service)

1.1.2 When the death of a serving member of the Force occurs, the information will come from a variety of sources, and it is therefore imperative that the BCU Commander/Head of Dept or a member of Command Team on call and the Chief Constable's Office are informed immediately.

1.1.3 Upon notification of a death in service, the BCU Commander/Head of Dept / Command Team member will appoint an appropriate person to act as the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) / Welfare Officer.

People Services must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

1.2 People Services

1.2.1 People Services must ensure that Payroll Services, the relevant Staff Association, Trade Union, Force Chaplaincy Service and Funeral Society are notified. In the case of a retired member of staff People Services must ensure that the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO) and Comrades Association are informed.

1.2.2 People Services must ensure that the Chief Constable's Office have been informed and must liaise with the Head of People Operations and Service Delivery to publish relevant details in People and Policy Matters.

1.3 Death in Service

- 1.3.1 If the death relates to a retired Officer or member of Police Staff the Chief Constable or their representative must write to the next of kin. It will be at the discretion of the Chief Constable / Chief Officers if a visit to the next of kin is required.

1.4 Death in Retirement

- 1.4.1 If the death relates to a retired Officer or member of Police Staff the Chief Constable or their representative must write to the next of kin. It will be at the discretion of the Chief Constable / Chief Officers if a visit to the next of kin is required.

1.5 Death on Duty

- 1.5.1 In the case of a Police Officer or member of Police Staff killed on duty, the Chief Constable's Office must report the death to the Home Secretary and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC). In such cases, a Gold Commander should be appointed. (This procedural document excludes any Senior Investigating Officer's responsibilities, such as notification of Health & Safety Executive etc.)
- 1.5.2 The Chief Constable will write to the next of kin and if appropriate, the Chief Constable or their representative will also visit the family. The Chief Constable or their representative will attend the funeral and will read a lesson or give a homily if requested.
- 1.5.3 Where the death of the Police Officer / or Police Staff member is a duty related incident, it will be either as a result of a declared critical or major incident and as such, internal communication and family liaison should form part of the Gold / Silver briefings.
- 1.5.4 If a Police officer or Police Staff Member dies on duty as the result of a RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) reportable incident then the Force Health and Safety Manager and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) should also be contacted.
- 1.5.5 If the circumstances surrounding the death require police investigation the investigating officer must liaise with the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and SPOC / Welfare Officer. The FLO must ensure that People Services are informed immediately of the circumstances and any legal determination in relation to whether or not the individual was considered on duty at the time of their death, i.e. off duty but performing their role. Where there is no FLO appointed, the investigating officer must ensure that People Services receive the necessary updates.

2. Roles & Responsibilities**2.1 Single Point of Contact (SPOC) / Welfare Officer**

- 2.1.2 The role of the SPOC / Welfare Officer is outlined in Section 3.

2.2 Merseyside Police Federation

- 2.2.1 The Police Federation are the Staff Association for all Constables, Sergeants, Inspectors and Chief Inspectors. The SPOC / Welfare Officer should notify the Federation of the death of a serving federated rank Police Officer without delay.
- 2.2.2 The Federation can provide practical advice, including legal and financial, and in many cases can assist with logistical support for the SPOC / Welfare Officer. It can help the next of kin to secure financial assistance if the deceased was a member of the Group Insurance Schemes.

2.3 Police Superintendent's Association

- 2.3.1 As above, the Superintendents' Association can offer practical support for Association members of the rank of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent.
- 2.3.2 The SPOC / Welfare Officer should notify the Association of a death of a member of the Superintendent ranks without delay. The Association can offer advice and support to the SPOC / Welfare Officer.

2.4 Unison & GMB

- 2.4.1 These are the two largest Unions for Police Staff in the UK. As with the Police Federation and the Police Superintendent's Association they can offer practical advice and support for their members. The SPOC / Welfare Officer should notify Unison and / or GMB of the death of a member of Police Staff without delay.

3. Planning Funeral Arrangements - Single Point of Contact (SPOC)/ Welfare Officer

(See [Appendix B](#) – Funeral Arrangements and [Appendix C](#) – SPOC/Welfare officer Checklist, pages 18 - 20)

- 3.1.1 When the BCU Commander, Head of Dept or Command Team member is notified of the death of a serving member of their staff, they should appoint a SPOC / Welfare Officer. Ideally, this individual should know the deceased and be willing to undertake this role.
- 3.1.2 The facility to offer a Police input to the funeral of a retired Police Officer or Police Staff member will be at the discretion of Chief Officers.
- 3.1.3 The SPOC / Welfare Officer will be the point of contact for the next of kin of the deceased and will act as the single point of contact for funeral arrangements. This individual will liaise with the family, the relevant Staff Association / Trade Union and People Services. They can make arrangements for Senior Officers / Managers to visit the family.

- 3.1.4 If the deceased has been murdered or killed in a road traffic collision, the SPOC / Welfare Officer will act in partnership with, but will not replace, the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) appointed by the Senior Investigating Officer for the investigation.
- 3.1.5 The SPOC / Welfare Officer will clarify the wishes of the next of kin, in relation to funeral arrangements and the SPOC / Welfare Officer should be familiar with the services that can be offered by Merseyside Police and the Staff Associations / Trade Union, before visiting the next of kin / family.
- 3.1.6 The wishes of the next of kin will be final, and the SPOC / Welfare Officer will convey these (e.g. no person to visit the home address, attend in police uniform or no flowers to be sent etc).
- 3.1.7 In cases where there will be a formal Police funeral, the SPOC / Welfare Officer must inform Force Operations where the funeral is to take place and, if the deceased resided in, or is to be buried in, another Force Area.
- 3.1.8 The SPOC / Welfare Officer, after visiting the next of kin, will visit the undertaker, the funeral service location, and also the cemetery or crematorium. This will be necessary to arrange seating and parking etc.
- 3.1.9 The SPOC / Welfare Officer must provide a timeline for the funeral, including what time staff, colleagues and senior representatives need to be at the place of service. This must be published together with any transport arrangements. If deemed appropriate, coaches can be arranged to collect from various locations via Vehicle Fleet Management.
- 3.1.10 The SPOC / Welfare Officer will determine the level of contact needed after the funeral, and the OHU can provide valuable contacts for bereavement counsellors or groups.
- 3.1.11 In instances of death as a result of murder or road traffic collision, the SIO appointed Family Liaison Officer (FLO) will continue until the trial / inquest and then formulate an exit strategy. The FLO will liaise with the SPOC / Welfare Officer and ensure that People Services are made aware of any legal determination in relation to whether or not the individual was considered on duty at the time of their death i.e. off duty but performing their role.

4. Types of Funerals

- 4.1.1 As stated above, the decision regarding police involvement at any funeral will be a matter for the next of kin or their nominee. At any stage they can elect to have a private funeral without any police involvement or only close friends / colleagues.
- 4.1.2 The types of funeral are detailed below, and mirror those headings contained within the NPIA Guidance.

- 4.1.3 **Full-Service Funeral** will be offered to the next of kin where the officer / member of staff was killed on duty or died as a result of injuries sustained in the execution of their duty. (This will include those occasions when the member of staff was off duty but performing their role, for example an off-duty arrest.)

Service Funeral will be offered to the next of kin where the officer / member of staff died on or off duty and the death was not connected with their duties.

Small Service Funeral can be offered to the next of kin of a serving / retired Officer / member of Police Staff who request a reduced involvement from the Force.

Private Funeral can be stipulated by the family. This may be limited to family and close friends only with no visible reference to police involvement. There may be a request that Officers / colleagues do not attend in uniform, or if in uniform then not formal (no forming up or salutes etc)

- 4.1.4 In the case of suicide, this should make no difference to the offer of a police funeral.
- 4.1.5 Where the member of staff was suspended from duty at the time, or was facing criminal proceedings then any request for a police funeral must be authorised by the Deputy Chief Constable
- 4.1.6 In the case of a request for a Service Funeral, full consideration will be given to the facts surrounding the death, and whether a Small Service Funeral is more appropriate. The Director of Resources will determine the appropriate funeral provision.
- 4.1.7 The following paragraphs will explain the difference in the funerals, and it will help the SPOC / Welfare Officer and Planning Officers to organise the arrangements.
- 4.1.8 The types of funerals should be considered a menu of options that the next of kin can consider and decide to remove any of the elements offered.

4.2 Full-Service Funeral

- 4.2.1 This will involve the official funeral cortege being escorted by motorcycle outriders from the Matrix Department. It will include both pilot formation and outriders and will be from the Undertakers to Home Address, the funeral service location and place of interment, concluding back at the home address or reception. Arrangements are:
- a) Only official vehicles will be escorted, and for reasons of safety other vehicles should be excluded, and other family members asked to not to join the cortege.
 - b) A bearer party of Officers will be offered but only volunteers will carry out this function.
 - c) The coffin / casket will be adorned with the Force drape, and in the case of a uniformed police officer their service cap / bowler.

- d) Officers should attend in uniform and will be lined up outside the funeral service location, and for this a purpose a Police Officer will be required to act as Parade Officer. There may be an opportunity to slow walk behind the cortege.
- e) At least four Mounted Officers can attend at the funeral service location. Dependent on location they can provide a slow parade in front of the cortege for the final approach to the funeral service location.
- f) At least one usher will be made available to facilitate seating arrangements, and distribution of orders of service.
- g) If the Officer was killed on duty, it may be appropriate to invite neighbouring forces to provide Officers to take part in the lineup.
- h) An order of service can be provided and printed by the Force.
- i) Upon arrival at the funeral service location, the Senior Officer present will salute the coffin (police officers only) when it is removed from the hearse and when it is returned.
- j) Subject to the next of kin's wishes, a further guard of honour can be located for the interment.
- k) If required, the services of a photographer can be sought, and any press involvement can be co-ordinated through the Communication and Marketing Department.
- l) Flags on police stations across the Force will fly at half-mast for the duration of the funeral.

4.3 Service Funeral

4.3.1 This will involve the official funeral cortege being escorted by motorcycle outriders from the Matrix Department. This will include a pilot and outriders and will be from the Undertakers to Home Address, the funeral service location and place of interment, concluding back at the home address or reception. Arrangements are:

- a) Only official vehicles will be escorted, and for reasons of safety other vehicles should be excluded, and other family members asked to not to join the cortege.
- b) A bearer party of Officers will be offered but only volunteers will carry out this function.
- c) The coffin / casket will be adorned with the Force drape, and in the case of a uniformed police officer their service cap / bowler.
- d) Officers should attend in uniform and will be lined up outside the funeral service location, and for this a purpose a Police Officer will be required to act as Parade Officer.
- e) Two Mounted Officers will attend at the funeral service location.
- f) At least one usher will be made available to facilitate seating arrangements, and distribution of orders of service.
- g) Upon arrival at the funeral service location, the Senior Officer present will salute the coffin (police officers only) when it is removed from the hearse and when it is returned.
- h) Flags on police stations on the route of the cortege, at HQ and the deceased's parade station, will fly at half-mast for the duration of the funeral.

4.4 Small Service Funeral

4.4.1 Arrangements are:

- a) There will be no motorcycle escort.
- b) If requested the coffin / casket will be adorned with the Force drape.
- c) Officers should attend in uniform and will be lined up outside the funeral service location, and for this a purpose a Police Officer will be required to act as Parade Officer.
- d) If requested two mounted Officers will attend at the funeral service location.
- e) At least one usher will be made available to facilitate seating arrangements, and distribution of orders of service.
- f) Upon arrival at the funeral service location, the Senior Officer present will salute the coffin when it is removed from the hearse and when it is returned.
- g) Flags on police stations on the route of the cortege, at HQ and the deceased's parade station, will fly at half-mast for the duration of the funeral.

4.5 Private Funeral

4.5.1 At the request of the deceased's family and their wishes must be followed. For example:

- a) It is a private service for family and close friends.
- b) Officers attending should wear plain clothes or civilian jacket over their uniform.
- c) The next of kin / nominee may wish to use the drape but have no other identifiable police involvement. The wishes of the next of kin / nominee must be respected.

5. Key Roles and Protocols at Funerals

5.1 SPOC / Welfare Officer

5.1.1 The role of the SPOC / Welfare Officer is outlined in Section 3 above.

5.2 Parade Officer

5.2.1 This Officer will ideally be experienced in military drill. It is desirable that the individual is ex-armed forces or territorial reservist. This will ensure familiarity with drill and commands for attention etc.

5.2.2 The Parade Officer will form up uniformed Officers outside the funeral service location and will bring them to attention and stand them at ease.

5.2.3 The line-up will be brought to attention upon arrival of the cortege and prior to it passing the first officer of the line up.

5.2.4 The line-up will remain at attention until the coffin / casket is taken into funeral service location.

5.3 Bearer Party

- 5.3.1 The carrying of a coffin / casket can be both an emotional and physical strain on the bearer party. This procedure should be practiced in private with the appointed undertakers.
- 5.3.2 The bearer party must be volunteers, with six required for a coffin and possibly eight for a casket. In addition, consideration of additional bearer(s) should be considered to provide resilience for absence or injury etc. The bearer party should be similar in height.
- 5.3.3 Correctly following the words of command during this duty are critical to prevent injury and mishap. These will take the form of 'prepare to lift' and then 'lift'. The order to move off will not come until the bearer party are ready.
- 5.3.4 The guidance of the undertaker will prove invaluable.
- 5.3.5 Additional and separate transport will be required for the bearer party. The driver of this vehicle should not be used to carry the coffin/casket.
- 5.3.6 If collection of the deceased is from the home address, this should be left to the undertakers as a bearer party will not pass through a house door.

5.4 Saluting Officer

- 5.4.1 Only one person will salute on the parade. Upon arrival it will be the Senior Officer present (in uniform only) or his/her representative. This Officer needs to be positioned near to the entrance of the funeral service location and where they can see the coffin being removed from the hearse.
- 5.4.2 The salute will commence as the coffin is extracted and will be held until the coffin has passed the saluting officer.
- 5.4.3 The salute is carried out whilst at attention and is always with the right hand. It should be carried out so that the fingers are just touching the cap peak, and the palm of the hand is shown towards the coffin.

5.5 Usher

- 5.5.1 The appointment of Ushers is to act as a point of contact at the funeral service location and to assist with seating. In addition, this individual can assist in the placing or handing out of orders of service.
- 5.5.2 Dependent on the size of funeral service location, it may prove prudent to provide two Ushers.
- 5.5.3 The Usher(s) should visit the funeral service location and agree seating with the person conducting the service. The seating reservations should show family to one side and senior officers and Police & Crime Commissioner and/or staff to the other.

- 5.5.4 Seating will need to be secured for the bearer party.
- 5.5.5 The Usher should ascertain from the person conducting the service if the drape (and where applicable the cap) should be removed from the coffin before entering the funeral service location.
- 5.5.6 At Full-Service Funerals, the Usher should request non-uniformed mourners to take their seats prior to the arrival of the cortege.

5.6 Motorcycle Pilot

- 5.6.1 The SPOC / Welfare Officer must notify the Motorcycle Pilot of the timings of the funeral.
- 5.6.2 The location of the undertakers, the home address, the funeral service location, the crematorium or cemetery and the location of any reception or whether the family are to be returned home, must be provided to the Motorcycle Pilot.
- 5.6.3 The Pilot will undertake route planning to enable the cortege to arrive on time, at each venue.
- 5.6.4 The Pilot will ensure that motorcycles and rear-marked vehicle are cleaned, and that Officers are well turned out.
- 5.6.5 The Pilot immediately in front of the hearse will wear leathers with no high visibility jacket. The outriders will wear high visibility jackets.
- 5.6.6 For a Full-Service Funeral, the Pilot will be accompanied by two riders off their shoulder in formation in front of the hearse. These Officers will also wear leathers without high visibility jackets.
- 5.6.7 It is the Motorcycle Pilot's responsibility to brief the cortege drivers in relation to travelling information and the hazards posed by motorcycle outriders passing the cortege.
- 5.6.8 No escort should take place without the provision of a rear marked police vehicle, driven by an advanced driver from Matrix, Roads Policing Unit.

5.7 Additional Protocols

- 5.7.1 The Force drape must be delivered to the undertakers prior to the funeral. The drape should be collected from and returned to Matrix, Roads Policing Unit at the Operational command Centre (OCC).
- 5.7.2 The Force drape must be collected after the interment and returned to Matrix, Roads Policing Unit.
- 5.7.3 If a cap is to be placed on top of the coffin this must be attached securely – undertakers will assist with this.

- 5.7.4 Inspectors and ranks above will wear gloves.
- 5.7.5 Medals will not be worn at a funeral service – but they will be at a memorial service. (National Police Memorial Day / Remembrance Sunday etc)
- 5.7.6 Females may wear headdress in funeral service location, males will remove headdress. This should be clarified with the person conducting the service.
- 5.7.7 Officers will be needed for duty in the vicinity of the funeral service location (traffic control etc). They should be identified by wearing high visibility jackets. A supervisor from the local policing department should oversee these arrangements.
- 5.7.8 BCU Commanders and Heads of Depts should allow Officers and Police Staff who would normally be on duty facilities to attend the funeral subject to the exigencies of duty in the Department. If operational commitments permit the Officers and Police Staff to attend, they should not be asked to give up time in lieu or alter their duty hours.
- 5.7.9 Where members act as bearer party or ushers etc this should be treated as duty time.
- 5.7.10 If invited or requested by the family, the bearer party may attend the reception afterwards. If they do attend the reception, once at the reception their duty is over.
- 5.7.11 Once the cortege has been escorted to either the home address or the venue of any reception their duty is over. The Escort Team will not be expected to remain until the reception is over.

Appendices

Appendix A - Primary Tasks Checklist for Death in Service

(Remember: The order of these tasks does not indicate priority, and this list is not exhaustive)

Primary Tasks	Allocated to (including role/ role/contact number)	Completion confirmed by
Select a Liaison Officer		
Research next of kin details		
Arrange briefing of immediate colleagues, ensuring that support is in place (consider TRIM)		
Prepare Force wide information		
Inform People Services and Payroll and Pensions Unit		
Inform the Police Federation / Police Staff Trade Unions (Unison & GMB) / Superintendents Association		
Inform Health and Safety Manager and the health and Safety Executive (HSE) if applicable		
Liaise with Chief Constable's Staff Officer re condolence letter		
Nominate Funeral Co-ordinator, where required		
Notify of funeral arrangements prepare force-wide e-mail		

Appendix B - Funeral Arrangements Checklist

Primary tasks	Allocated to (including role/ role/contact number)	Completion confirmed by
Appoint Single Point of Contact / Welfare Officer		
Discuss information regarding funeral arrangements, and the type of funeral with the family. If formal police funeral inform Force ops.		
Single Point of Contact / Welfare Officer to produce timeline for funeral after consultation with the family and following liaison with the funeral director		
Consider special request(s), for example: - special faith/cultural issues to be respected - venues and religious aspects - Force drape - Bearer parties - guards of honour - Set up a fund account for donations - code of dress (NB: please refer to policy and procedure)		
Confirm attendance of senior officers (if required)		

Arrange notification using a Force-wide email and on the intranet		
Purchase a Wreath and Condolence card (if required)		
Print order of service		
Adjust Local Flags		
Operational provisions, for example: - liaising with funeral director - ushers - venues - traffic arrangements - transport - escorts - street liners - mounted officers - attendance of press - rehearsals - general police arrangements		

Appendix C - Single Point of Contact/Welfare Officer Checklist

CONTACT	Completion confirmed by
Staff associations (Federation/ Unison / GMB / Superintendents Association)	
People Services	
Payroll and Pensions Unit	
NARPO	
Family Liaison Officer	
Inform Health and Safety Manager and the health and Safety Executive (HSE) if applicable	
PMAS	
Contact banks	
Probate	
Maintain contact after funeral if required	
Arrange support for colleagues: • Trim • Chaplaincy • Red Arc • Bereavement Counselling • OHU Services	

Appendix D – Death of Serving Officer / Staff Member during a Pandemic

‘On duty’ or ‘In service’ deaths should be treated in line with existing policies and guidance whilst recognising the modifications and restrictions needed due to the present state of National Emergency and the government and operational restrictions that apply.

Deaths due to a pandemic whilst untimely could be viewed as a death by unusual but ‘natural causes’ and ought to be treated as such in line with other in-service death protocols.

The Service may wish to recognise these unusual circumstances but also that infection may have arisen due to exposure to the virus whilst on duty.

NPCC offer the following as appropriate and useful guidance to supplement individual Force Policy and practice and achieve a good measure of consistency across the UK.

Notification of Death

This should be done internally in the usual manner following normal force protocols.

- If the death is a result of a pandemic, please notify national operations so an appropriate record can be maintained for future use.
- Force flags should be flown at half-mast in line with force policies. In the case of death due to the pandemic it should be dealt with as a death ‘in service’.
- Offer support to families and colleagues in such circumstances, but whilst in the period governed by strict regulations relating to social distancing, this should be done using telephone, email and other electronic means rather than by home visits. If extreme circumstances mean that a home visit must take place, then the guidance issued in respect of hygiene and social distancing must be followed.
- It would be appropriate to appoint an FLO/SPOC to assist families.
- The Force arrangements in terms of welfare and wellbeing provision, OHU and People Services provision to deal with practical matters including finances and subsequent pension payments.
- The Force has a chaplaincy service, which will offer support to family, friends and colleagues, as well as being available for guidance. Chaplaincies maybe working remotely but remain fully available.
- At a time of heightened press interest, families may need additional help, support and guidance in dealing with the media. Force communications teams should be consulted for this additional help.

Funerals

The wishes of the family are paramount, and it would be inappropriate to be prescriptive. However, if governmental restrictions are in place alongside public health guidance. Limitations may also apply due to operational resources and resilience.

Large gatherings of mourners may not be feasible for funeral services. Funerals may only happen at the Crematorium or at the graveside. Only immediate family members can attend if the Crematorium allows that is, spouse or partner, parents and children, all keeping their distance in the prescribed way.

[If excess deaths are experienced then this may be further restricted with the possibility of body storage until such time disposal can be made. Cremations may not take place locally]

The more usual 'Police funeral' cannot take place due to the significant risks both to those attending and the potential impact on operational resilience. The provision of any motorcycle escort, pall bearers, guard of honour, may be also considered inappropriate. Such a public display of groups of people when the public has been restricted would be unwise.

The use of coffin drapes is not recommended at the time of a pandemic due to the need for unnecessary travel and also, albeit minimal, risk of infection being spread.

As appropriate, offer and explain to families the alternatives available. The family may not have begun to think about this and may not know the alternatives. These include:

- Small number of essential attendees – that is, spouse or partner, parents and children, keeping their distance in a prescribed way.
- A 'streamed' online ceremony that people can attend in real time.
- Recording of the ceremony on video and audio to provide for dissemination at the family and force discretion.
- Direct cremation with a memorial ceremony at a future date. Cremated remains could be retained and interred at a future date. Either of these events could well be a considerable time forward. [To manage expectation, it would be wise to discuss an 'anniversary event' in 12 months' time]. A Memorial Service may be for an individual or at a wider Force level if several colleagues are to be remembered.
- Depending on the number of such deaths special provision could be made in the context of the next National Police Memorial Day to remember those who died during this time of National Emergency.

At the time of a funeral, it may be appropriate to facilitate a 'two-minute silence' at a local or Force level.

Any decisions on memorials and memorial services to personnel who have died as a result of Pandemic should be postponed until the full extent of the impact is known.

Should there be a request to place memorials to officers who have died as a result of a pandemic it would seem wise to postpone any decision on this to some future date when the full extent of the impact of the virus is known. At that stage a corporate 'group' memorial rather than an individual memorial could be more fitting.

Memorial Services, in lieu of a force funeral may be appropriate at some future date. Decisions on this should similarly be postponed until the emergency is fully over as it may be more fitting to hold a Force wide service at a later date.

The use of a physical memorial book in police stations or offices is not advised. An internal book of condolence can be opened 'online' and supplied to the family at an appropriate time.

To facilitate 'corporate mourning' consideration should be given to making any entries made visible to all so colleagues unable to attend a formal service or ceremony can still be aware of their shared loss and grief.

In the case of a death on duty due to hostile circumstances forces should consider an online recorded tribute and act of corporate mourning led by a senior officer and, if appropriate, the force chaplain. This will assist in acknowledging the sense of shared loss across the Service. In difficult times it recognises and honours a fallen colleague. It would also address the particular circumstances of such a tragedy.