

Public Health Funerals



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Public Health Funerals

Under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, Newham Council has a duty to arrange a burial or cremation for a person who dies within the borough where no other funeral arrangements have been made.

This is called a Public Health funeral.

When This Applies

The Council will assume responsibility for funeral arrangements in the following circumstances:

- The person who has passed away left no will and has no known next of kin.
- The next of kin is unable or unwilling to arrange or fund the funeral.
- No other person or organisation is willing or able to take responsibility.

Before Arrangements Are Made

Prior to organising a funeral, the Council will:

- Conduct searches for next of kin using internal records and databases.
- Carry out a property search at the person's last known address to locate a will, financial documents, or contact details.
- Attempt to identify any instructions left by the individual regarding funeral preferences.

What Happens at a Public Health Funeral

- Cremation is the usual arrangement unless burial is requested for religious, cultural, or personal reasons.
- Burials take place in public graves, often shared with other people that have passed away that the Council must bury. The graves are unmarked and may be reused over time.
- A short committal service is provided at the crematorium chapel or graveside.
- If no mourners are present, funeral staff will attend to ensure dignity and respect.
- Services are held Monday to Friday, between 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM, lasting approximately 15 minutes.



Cremation and Burial Locations

- City of London Cemetery & Crematorium
Aldersbrook Road, E12 5DQ
Phone: 020 8530 2151
Email: cemetery@cityoflondon.gov.uk
- West Ham Cemetery (Newham Council)
Cemetery Road, E7 9DG
Phone: 020 3373 1193
Email: westhamcemetery@newham.gov.uk

Ashes

Following cremation, ashes may be returned to the next of kin upon request. If no request is made, the cremated remains will be buried, unmarked in a woodland area.

Deaths in Hospital

If a person dies as an in-patient:

- The hospital bereavement team is responsible for arranging the funeral.
- This applies when relatives cannot be traced or are unable to pay and do not qualify for the Government's Funeral Payment.

If the person who has passed away lived in Newham but died outside of the borough, the local authority where the death occurred will make the arrangements.

Executors of a Will

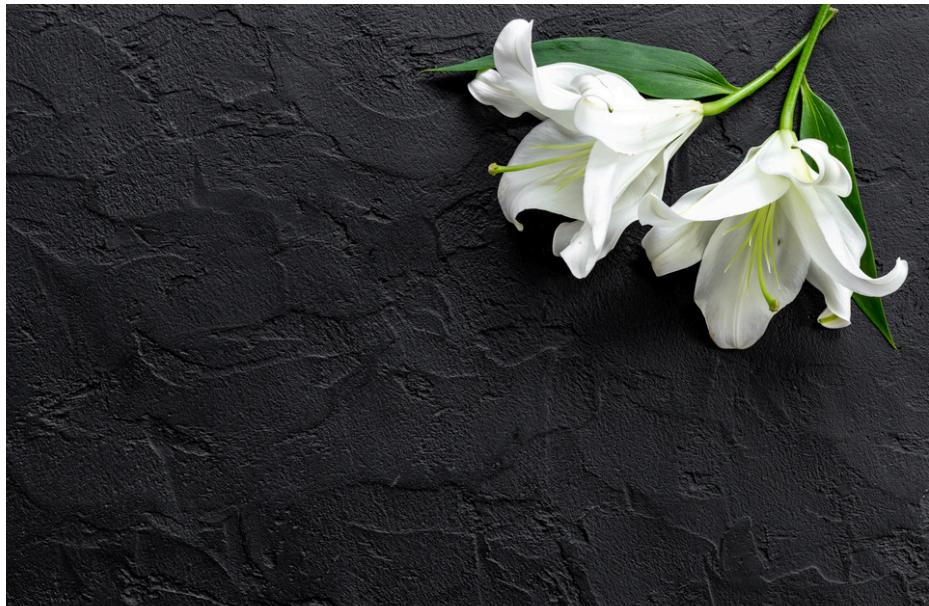
If a will is located and an executor identified, the executor is responsible for arranging the funeral. If they wish to relinquish this responsibility, they must formally renounce the will before the Council can proceed.

Estate Administration and Cost Recovery

- The Council will recover funeral costs from the person's estate where possible.
- If the estate is valued at more than £500 after funeral costs have been covered, the matter will be referred to the Bona Vacantia Division (BVD) of the Government Legal Department. This division is responsible for managing estates where someone has passed away without leaving a will or close relatives.

Guidance on financial assistance with funeral costs, visit:

- www.gov.uk/funeral-payments
- www.newham.gov.uk/advice-support-benefits/hardship-support/2



For online information visit:

- Bereavement support:
www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment
- Coping with bereavement:
www.newham.gov.uk/health-adult-social-care/mental-health-support-services/6
- Making a Will:
www.newham.gov.uk/health-adult-social-care/palliative-end-life-care/3

Contact Newham Council's Client Affairs Team

Email:

Client.affairs@newham.gov.uk

Telephone:

0203 373 1452/0203 373 9346
(Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

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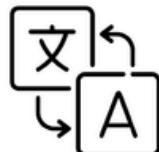
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