

NEWSLETTER

Welcome

We are especially proud to present our fifth newsletter this winter. As always, we aim to provide our readers with the latest news, updates and information on important aspects of our work as a leading funeral service provider.

We are now in the middle of the winter period which brings with it cold and wet weather with prolonged periods of rain, resulting in a build up of surface water and water logged graves. Such conditions can be treacherous for cemetery staff and cemetery visitors alike, so please take special care when visiting the cemetery or attending funerals.

The winter months also bring shorter daylight hours, meaning fewer burial slots available on any given day. Although every effort is made to provide swift same day burials, deferring a burial to the following day, is on occasion, unavoidable. We sympathise with families that have been in this situation and admire their patience and understanding during such instances.

We have mentioned in previous newsletters how at Crescent Funerals we place “responsibility and contribution to society” at the core of our values. We evidence this by actively supporting, promoting and providing presentations, training and awareness sessions around Muslim bereavement, our area of speciality. Our objective is to support and educate our communities, more importantly, support frontline service providers such as the NHS, to help them improve in the delivery of their services.



UHL Bereavement Maternity Team

We are therefore deeply grateful to Rebecca Crook, UHL Bereavement Midwife, for taking advantage of this provision and inviting us to speak at her department’s study event, which was held in early October at St Martins House in Leicester.

The aim of the event was to increase awareness and improve the way in which the department’s bereavement midwives approach bereavement. Our presentation on the Muslim perspective provided an insight into how Muslims approach bereavement in general and more specifically, how we as Muslims deal with infant deaths.

The various presentations on the day all focused on

making the day’s theme as tangible and as real as possible. More importantly for us, having a presentation around a faith perspective was a crucial element to the day’s itinerary.

We are pleased to say that our presentation was extremely well received with many approaching us after the event to comment, provide feedback and more importantly, ask questions and speak further about their personal experiences.

Over a hundred front line staff and students were in attendance.



Our participation at the event led to a further invitation to take part in an educational event with the department's clinical psychology team. On this occasion we were asked to provide an insight into Muslim beliefs and practices connected to the perinatal period and baby loss.



MBCOL hosted its AGM towards the end of October. The previous board stepped down allowing elections to take place. New Trustees were elected, taking this long serving local organisation into a new era. The incoming Board is committed and tasked with revitalising MBCOL by forging new working relationships and strengthening existing ones.

Crescent Funerals is working closely with MBCOL and we hope to see great things from this long standing local organisation.

Arranging a funeral is always a difficult task to undertake. There are many obstacles to overcome, especially for community based deaths where the GP practice has to issue the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD).

As practices are closed on weekends and Bank Holidays and with families not being able to contact off duty GP's, getting the MCCD issued out of hours can often become a challenge. Such situations often resulting in families having to wait until the next working day before any progress can be made with certification. We have worked hard over the years to try and find a solution to this problem, but have only enjoyed partial success through signing up a small number of local Muslim GP's who have been willing to be contacted out of office hours.

With a Muslim community that is ever growing, coupled with an increase in deaths over the last year or two, we felt a need to, once again, review this aspect of the funeral process. Reaching out to more GP's and encouraging them to sign on to being contacted for out of hours certification has led to further progress in this area.



Willows Health is a constitution of eleven medical practices across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. They are the largest provider of NHS primary care services in Leicestershire, providing care to 65,000 patients across their eleven locations.

Professor Tariq Kapasi is the Medical Director at Willows Health. He is a forward thinking GP who was actively involved with the Covid-19 Leicestershire Muslim Funeral Support group during the pandemic.

Professor Kapasi is sympathetic to the needs of the Muslim community and acknowledges the system could be better, and that more could be done to make the process easier for bereaved families. As a medical Director, he is also aware that GP's generally work long demanding hours and their personal off-duty time is also precious. In trying to find a balance he has taken bold steps to work with us and be part of what we are trying to accomplish.

Although this continues to be work in progress, Professor Kapasi has facilitated a trial process of contacting practices run under Willows Health in an out of hours setting, strictly for the purpose of out of hours certification and only when all the conditions set by the process are met. This process, to be managed by Crescent Funerals, will soon be introduced to local funeral arrangers, which we hope will alleviate many of the difficulties they currently encounter in securing MCCD's.



**Department
of Health &
Social Care**

The death certification process in England and Wales has been under reform for some years. As of April 2024 all deaths in England and Wales will be subject to independent scrutiny by the Medical Examiner (ME).

A ME is a senior medical practitioner who is assigned to provide independent scrutiny of a cause of death. They are trained in the legal and clinical elements of the death certification

processes and are commissioned to carry out a review of the deceased's medical records, assisting other doctors determine the cause of death.

As part of the process and with consideration to the needs of bereaved families, the ME will also contact the next of kin to discuss the death. The ME will offer them the opportunity to ask questions and or raise concerns (if they have any), regarding the death and care of their loved one.

The ME process has been in place for hospital based deaths for several years. Since its introduction within our hospitals, the ME's involvement has not significantly delayed the funeral process for Muslim families, for whom urgent release and burial is an important faith based requirement.



As of April 2024 the ME process will be rolled out to also then include community based deaths. These are deaths that take place at home or care home and where the GP will be required to issue the MCCD. The main change with this introduction will be that the GP will have to share the MCCD and proposed cause of death with the ME, who will scrutinise these before submission to the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

We have been communicating with our Lead Medical Examiner on this process and expressed our concerns on potential delays this new layer may bring.

Deaths that take place in the summer months are often not so problematic. This is due to longer daylight hours and the availability of burial slots. Such conditions allow funeral arrangers to deal with obstacles or difficulties that bring about delays, and still be able to provide same day burials.

During the winter months however, with shorter daylight hours and reduced burial slots, any obstacles or delays will most likely mean that the burial would have to be deferred to the following day.

Issues such as these need to be factored into the ME system, especially where funeral arrangers are dealing with burials out of normal working hours and where such burials are to take place during the difficult winter months.

Our Lead Medical Examiner feels confident that with the years of experience in providing urgent out of hours scrutiny for Muslim deaths in hospitals, he and his team are up to the challenge.

In the coming weeks and months we hope to continue liaising with our Lead Medical Examiner and other stake holders to provide updates on both, out of hours certification and the ME process leading up to its roll out in April 2024.



It has become customary to appeal for volunteers. Volunteering in bereavement services can give an individual a profound sense of purpose and community and a life changing experience being one of the most revered and rewarding acts of our faith. Please contact Br Ahmed Kasu (07973 344341) to register.

In closing we would like to remind our readers that Crescent Funerals remains dedicated to supporting local funeral arrangers and families alike, in arranging and managing funerals for their loved ones; a service we continue to provide to the community on a voluntary basis.

Contact details are provided should you need to arrange a funeral during normal working hours or out of hours (weekends and Bank Holidays).

A call handler will always be happy to advise and assist you with the entire process. You can also get assistance and advice from the burial committee based at your local Mosque or community centre or through your local Funeral Director or Funeral Arranger.

To arrange a funeral please call

07999 776593

Email: bookings@crescent-funerals.com

www.crescent-funerals.com