

For Publication

Impact of Covid-19 Update

Meeting: Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium
Committee

Date: 20 September 2021

Report by: Bereavement Services Manager

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1.0 Purpose of Report

Reports have been presented to the Committee at each meeting since June 2020 on the Impact of Covid-19 and the response from Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium.

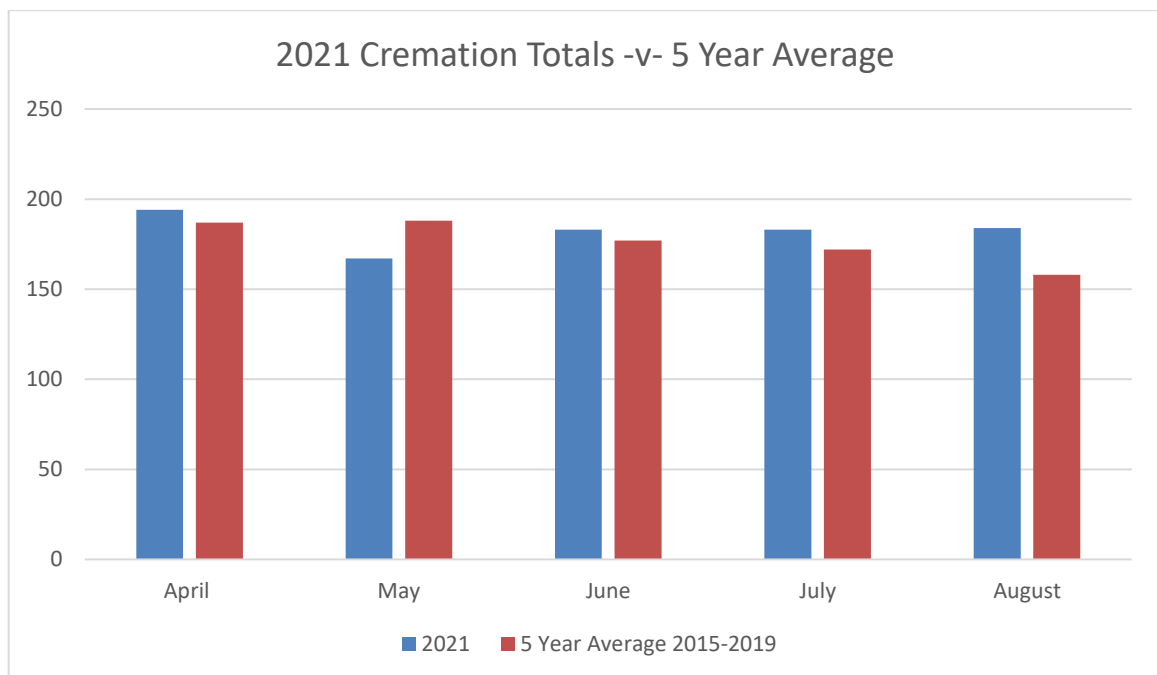
This report will update and inform Members on the current position with any key updates since the last meeting of the Committee.

2.0 Cremation Services after the Second Wave

Following the second wave of the Pandemic earlier in 2021, the number of cremation services that took place from 1st April 2021 to 31st August 2021 was 911.

This figure is 3.5% higher than the average number of cremations taking place in the same period over the 5 years (2015-2019). The average for those years was 880.

The table below shows the number of cremations by month in 2021 compared to the 5 year average in red.



3.0 Current Government Guidance

From Monday 12th July, all restrictions on funeral events were removed as the Government proceeded to Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown in England. The key points from the current Government Guidance for funerals during the coronavirus pandemic are;

- There are currently no legal limits on the number of people who can attend funerals or commemorative events.
- Social distancing measures no longer apply and mourners do not need to stay 2 metres apart at a funeral or commemorative event.

- Although not required to do so by law, the government expects and recommends that face coverings are worn in crowded areas.

A link to the current guidance, last updated on 27 August 2021 can be found here;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

4.0 **Funeral Services and Chapel from 12th July 2021**

The Manager can report a return to a near normal service resuming following the lifting of restrictions. For information, Members will note that;

- Chapel Capacity was increased from 38 to 98 from Monday 12th July 2021. All seating rows can now be used, however the rows have been spaced 1.1m apart, taking the length of the Chapel with no standing room available.
- The Waiting Room, with overspill facility, including screen and speakers was re-opened on 1st September 2021 with 18 seated capacity.
- Webcasting remained free of charge until 1st September 2021 as the service transitioned back to usual service. Since the beginning of the Pandemic, 1820 services have been broadcast.
- Outside speakers remain in operation for those who do not feel comfortable to enter a crowded space or if capacity is reached.
- The Public Toilets and Book of Remembrance Room reopened at weekends from 4th September 2021 with a member of staff on site. Arrangements with the Security Company to carry out weekend patrols has ended.
- Services are currently running at the usual 40 minute interval.

- Additional building cleaning support ended in July 2021, however Chapel Attendants continue to disinfect touch points and seating on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Hand sanitiser remains in place on entrance to public areas.
- Signage remains in place encouraging mourners to wear face coverings.
- Risk Assessments remain in place for staff to continue with caution. The latest risk assessment includes working from home where possible, instructs staff to continue wearing a face covering whilst moving around buildings, continue with good hygiene/hand washing/cleaning equipment and continue to maintain social distancing wherever possible (including staggered breaks, leaving chapel once services commences, and no sharing of maintenance vehicles).

5.0 **Staffing – Positive Cases and Isolation**

Since the beginning of the Pandemic, one member of staff has tested positive for Covid-19. This occurred in August 2021, whilst on annual leave, and had no major implications on the service.

There have been 6 isolations due to close contact with someone who has tested positive since the beginning of the Pandemic. Although support was available from the Lead Authority, each case was manageable due to the flexibility and multi skilled nature of the Team.

6.0 **Recommendations**

6.1 That the report is noted.

7.0 **Reason for Recommendation**

7.1 To inform members on the current situation at the Crematorium, the changes from 12th July 2021 and for

reassurance that services continue to be delivered in a Covid Secure manner for staff in line with Government Guidance.

Ross Fawbert
Bereavement Services Manager