



**Information Governance**  
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[www.coventry.gov.uk](http://www.coventry.gov.uk)

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Please contact Information Governance  
Direct line 024 7697 5408  
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Dear Sir/Madam

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**  
**Request ID: REQ08006**

Thank you for your request for information on funerals during COVID.

Your request and our responses are outlined below:

**1. I would like to receive information regarding the decision-making process that resulted in a limit of 5 people being allowed to attend a funeral in April 2020.**

The Coronavirus Bill 2020 came into force 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. This gave emergency powers to the Local Authority regarding the measures required to ensure COVID safe and secure funeral services during the COVID-19 pandemic. During April 2020 due to the implementation of a 'lockdown the Government' made a statement to reduce attendees at funeral services to close/immediate family only. (On this occasion the Government did not provide a maximum number of attendees as is currently the case). As a result of the need to reduce numbers to comply with Government guidance the reduction was applied accordingly.

A risk assessment was completed which included looking at the venue capacity, the interpretation of immediate family members only, the conditions of the 'lockdown' Public Health England guidance, with input from Public Protection and Health & Safety Officers. Guidance was also obtained from Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management & Federation of Burial & Cremation Authorities. (During this period the Government also implemented the need to reduce social gatherings to no more than 2 people at one stage).

The final conclusion to reduce numbers to 5 was a collaborative decision made by the Senior Management Team, Directors, Local Councillors, Bereavement Services Management Team, Health and Safety officers and the Public Protection Department.

**2. How was this specific number agreed on, what were the justifications and why did Coventry City Council opt for this number, compared to other councils in the UK.**

The specific number was reached taking Government guidance into account regarding immediate family only and the above detailed risk assessment process.

The decisions made as per the rights passed to all Local Authorities as per the Coronavirus Bill 2020.

Each individual Local Authority had to reach a decision regarding appropriate action/ numbers as per their individual circumstances and venue capacity etc. There were limits placed on attendees across the country which varied from some Local Authorities banning all attendance and diverting to direct cremation only to allowing up to 15 attendees. As there was no specific number indicated by Government this created the possibility of disparity on the basis each Local Authority reached a decision depending on their own risk assessment and local interpretation.

The supply of information in response to a freedom of information request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

Should you wish to make any further requests for information, you may find what you are looking for is already published on the Council's web site and in particular its FOI/EIR Disclosure log, Council's Publication Scheme, Open Data and Facts about Coventry.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: [infogov@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@coventry.gov.uk)

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk).

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

**Information Governance**