

WHAT TO DO AFTER A DEATH

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

FOR MUSLIMS

Gardens of Peace Muslim Cemetery is a Registered Charity. It operates a cemetery for all sections of the Muslim community and has prepared this guide for distribution free of charge.

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Gardens of Peace Muslim Cemetery Trust

Correspondence Address: 77 Vaughan Gardens, Ilford Essex IG1 3PB

Cemetery Address: Elmbridge Road, Hainault, Essex IG6 3SW

Cemetery Tel Numbers: 020 8502 6000 and 07729 707 013

Website: www.gardens-of-peace.org.uk

WHAT TO DO AFTER A DEATH

1. Introduction

The death of someone in the family or of close relatives or friends is often a time of great stress and emotion.

Quite often people are not familiar with what to do, either from a religious point of view or in terms of the practical steps that need to be completed to bury one's loved ones.

This booklet is intended to address the above needs.

The practical steps that are covered relate to the paperwork which needs to be completed to meet legal requirements, and to organizing the funeral itself.

What is most important to realize is that if you are unsure about any aspect, or if you need help and support, members of the extended family, close friends and your local mosque are always available to help and consult.

It is usual, on hearing of a death of a fellow Muslim, to recite the following brief prayer:

Innaa lilayhi Wa Innaa Ilayhi Raaji'oon

(Verily we belong to Allah and will return to Allah)

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2. Expected death

If the death was expected, contact the doctor who attended the deceased during their final illness.

If the doctor can certify the cause of death he or she will give you the following:

- A Formal Notice that states that the doctor has signed the Medical Certificate and tells you how to get the death registered and
- A Medical Certificate that shows the cause of death (this is free of charge and will be in a sealed envelope addressed to the Registrar of Deaths).

If the doctor treating the deceased had not seen him or her either after the death or within 14 days before the death, the death must be reported to the coroner, as explained later in section 5 of this guide.

See later sections in this guide on what to do next.

3. Expected death in hospital

If the death occurs in hospital, the hospital staff will contact the person named by the deceased as next of kin.

If close family or friends are in hospital, it is important that you make sure that hospital staff are aware of and have recorded details of the next of kin in case of emergency.

A doctor will issue a Formal Notice and Medical Certificate, as in 2, above. See later sections in this guide on what to do next.

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The hospital will keep the body in the hospital mortuary until the next of kin arranges for it to be taken away. Please note that the hospital will not normally release the body until the Green Form is obtained from the Registrar of Deaths. The process for obtaining the Green Form is explained below in section 12 of this guide.

Hospital staff will also arrange for the next of kin to collect the deceased's possessions.

If you are asked for permission to do a post-mortem then please do not agree to this. As it is an expected death, doctors will only ask for research purposes. Islam does not permit post-mortems if they are not required by the law.

4. Unexpected death

If you discover a body or the death is sudden or unexpected, you should contact the following people:

- The family doctor
- The deceased's next of kin
- The local mosque

If necessary, the police will help find the people listed above.

If the cause of death is quite clear the doctor will be able to certify the cause of death and he or she will give you the following:

- A Formal Notice that states that a doctor has signed the Medical Certificate and tells you how the death can be registered and
- A Medical Certificate that shows the cause of death (this is free of charge and will be given in a sealed envelope addressed to the Registrar of Deaths).

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If the doctor treating the deceased had not seen him or her either after the death or within 14 days before the death, the death must be reported to the coroner as explained in the next section of this guide.

5. Unexpected death - reporting to the coroner

The coroner is a doctor or lawyer responsible for investigating deaths. In any of the following circumstances the doctor may report the death to the coroner:

- If the cause of death is unknown or uncertain
- The death was sudden and unexplained, e.g. a sudden infant death (cot death)
- The death occurred in prison or in police custody
- The death was caused by an accident or injury
- The death was caused by an industrial disease
- The death occurred while the patient was undergoing an operation or did not recover from the anesthetic.

Also as noted above, if the doctor treating the deceased had not seen him or her either after the death or within 14 days before the death, the death must also be reported to the coroner.

The coroner is likely to be the only person to certify the cause of death under the above circumstances.

6. Unexpected death - coroner's post-mortem

The coroner may arrange for a post-mortem examination of the body to determine the cause of death if not known. The consent of relatives is not needed but they are entitled to be represented at the examination. When relatives have told the coroner they wish to be represented the coroner will, if at all practicable, tell them when and where the examination will be.

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If the post-mortem shows that death was due to natural causes, the coroner may issue a notification known as the Pink Form (Form 100), which gives the cause of death so that the death can be registered. The coroner usually sends the form direct to the Registrar of Deaths but may give it to you to deliver.

7. Unexpected death - inquest

An inquest is an enquiry into the medical cause and circumstances of a death. It is held in public, sometimes with a jury. It is up to the coroner how to organise the enquiry in a way which best serves the public interest and the interests of the relatives.

The coroner will hold an inquest if the death was:

- Violent or unnatural or
- Caused by an industrial disease or
- The death occurred in prison or
- If the cause of death remains uncertain after post-mortem examination.

The coroner may give you an Order for Burial (form 101) so that the funeral can take place.

This may be done before the inquest is completed, provided the body is not required for further examination.

The coroner will also send a Certificate After Inquest (form 99 [rev]), stating the cause of death, to the Registrar of Deaths. This allows the death to be registered.

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8. Stillborn babies

If a baby is stillborn (born dead after 24 weeks of pregnancy) you will be given a Medical Certificate of Stillbirth signed by the midwife or doctor, which should be given to the Registrar of Deaths.

If no doctor or midwife was present and no doctor or midwife examined the body, you will not be given a Medical Certificate of Stillbirth. You must however sign a form (form 35) which the Registrar of Deaths will give to you when you go to register the death.

If a baby is stillborn before 24 weeks of pregnancy it is treated as a "non-viable foetus". You will be given a form by the midwife or doctor recording the details of the non-viable foetus.

You do not however need to register the death of a non-viable foetus with the Registrar of Deaths; no other paperwork is involved.

Islamic perspective

In Islam a foetus is defined as a morsel of flesh/blood/water if less than 120 days (17 weeks) inside a mother's womb. It becomes human after 120 days (17 weeks or more).

A birth given after 120 days (17 weeks) of pregnancy that is stillborn must be given a name.

If it is difficult to determine the sex of the child then a neutral name suitable for both boys and girls must be given.

Both a foetus and stillborn must be buried. It is important that you do this promptly, especially for "non-viable foetuses", because if you do not then the hospital will make

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arrangements for disposal/burial in a multi-faith mass grave and your baby will be denied a Muslim burial.

Appendix A includes a table that explains the requirements regarding the funeral of a foetus and stillborn.

9. Organ donations

In Islam, there are different schools of thought regarding organ donation. Consult the learned scholars (*Ulamā*) you are happy with and act according to their ruling.

10. Summary of paperwork needed for burial

	<u>Doctor/Coroner gives:</u>	<u>Registrar gives:</u>
Expected death and Unexpected death not referred to Coroner	Formal Notice and Medical Certificate on Cause of Death	Certificate for Burial (known as the Green Form)
Unexpected death referred to Coroner	Form 100 (Pink Form) or Form 101, Order for Burial	Certificate for Burial (known as the Green Form) if Form 100 given. Nothing further needed for burial if Form 101 given
Stillborn below 24 th week of pregnancy	Form giving details of stillbirth	Nothing further needed for burial
Stillborn in the 24 th or higher week of pregnancy	Medical Certificate of Stillbirth	Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth

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The paperwork needed for burial is shown in bold above.

Details on the registration process for burial are given below.

11. How a death is registered

To avoid delay, the death must be registered by the Registrar of Deaths for the sub-district in which the death occurred.

You can find the address in the phone book under REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS & MARRIAGES, or from the doctor, local council, post office or police station.

You should go to the Registrar as soon as possible if you need the Certificate for Burial or the Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth shown above.

Please note that the Registrar is not normally available during weekends and bank holidays but can usually be contacted at certain times to make an emergency appointment to register a death and to obtain the paperwork to allow a burial to proceed.

Appendix B includes details on how to contact the Registrar, including emergency contact details where available, covering those London areas which have significant Muslim communities

12. What happens at the register office

When you go to the Registrar you should take all these:

- The Medical Certificate of the cause of the death given by the doctor **or** the Pink Form (form 100) given to you by the Coroner
- The deceased's medical card, if possible
- The deceased's birth and marriage certificates, if available

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You should tell the Registrar:

- The date and place of death
- The deceased's last (usual) address
- The deceased's first names and surname (and the maiden name where appropriate)
- The deceased's date and place of birth (town and country if born in the UK, and country if born abroad)
- The deceased's occupation and the name and occupation of their spouse
- Whether the deceased was getting a pension or allowance from public funds
- If the deceased was married, the date of birth of the surviving widow or widower.

The Registrar who registers the death will give you the Certificate for Burial (known as the Green Form), unless the Coroner has already given you an Order for Burial (form 101). For a stillbirth, you will instead be given a Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth.

The above forms (only one of them is required, not both) give permission for the body to be buried. No burial can take place at the cemetery without presenting one of these forms to cemetery staff.

In addition, certain other paperwork including the Death Certificate is obtained at the same time as the death is registered.

13. Funeral arrangements

As soon as you have the right documents for burial, or are sure of getting the documents by a particular time, you must plan the funeral.

You must have a Certificate for Burial (known as the Green Form) or Order for Burial (form 101) that a coroner has issued

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otherwise a burial cannot take place. The process for obtaining these documents is explained above.

There are five main points for the preparation of a Muslim's body for burial as listed below:

- Body Washing or Ghusul
- Shrouding the body - Kafn
- Funeral Prayers (Janāzah Salāh)
- Funeral procession (carrying the funeral bier to the grave)
- Burial

The practical aspects of arranging funerals cover:

- Making arrangements for Ghusul
- Arranging transport of the body (from wherever it is being kept to the place where Ghusul is to take place, to the home of the family if required, to the mosque if Janāzah Salāh is to take place there and then finally to the cemetery)
- Making arrangements with the cemetery

You can arrange all or any of the above either through your local mosque or through a Muslim funeral director. You can if you have the knowledge do any or all of the above yourself with help from friends and family.

A listing of some of the funeral directors operating in the London area is included as an Appendix to this guide.

Also find out if the person who died had already made arrangements for burial in a particular cemetery by checking their will and/or looking through their documents.

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14. The religious importance of burying quickly

In accordance with Sharee'ah, burial should not be delayed on any account or for the arrival of family members or for any other reason.

Rasulullah (s.a.w.) has emphasised:

"Make haste in burying the deceased (mayyit): because if it is the Janāzah of a pious servant, then enjoin this goodness with its station quickly; and if it is the Janāzah of an evil person then quickly dispose of such a load from your shoulders." (Bukhari, Muslim, Aboo Dawood, Tirmizi, Nasa'ee, Ibne Maajah)

Islamic scholars have stated:

"If a person dies on a Friday, it is better to make all arrangements and bury the deceased before the Jumu'ah congregational Salāh. Delaying funeral with the thought that there will be many more participants in the Janāzah Salāh after Jumu'ah is undesirable (makrooh)."

Moreover, the blessings and forgiveness for the deceased that will be acquired in a few (even though it be a handful) attending the funeral prayers before Jumu'ah in accordance with the command of Rasulullah (s.a.w) is more worthy then delaying the funeral prayers for later, notwithstanding the greater number of participants likely to attend.

15. How to perform the funeral prayers (Janāzah Salāh)

The Janāzah Salāh consists of FOUR TAKBEERS, THANA, DUROOD, a DUA for the deceased and TWO SALAAMS.

All these are said SILENTLY by both the Imam and the congregation. Just the Imam should call out the Takbeers and Salaams aloud.

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There are two compulsory acts in the Janāzah Salāh: to stand and perform the Salāh and to recite all the FOUR Takbeers.

NIYYAT (intention) should be made as follows: "I am performing this Janāzah Salāh for Allah behind this Imam" (The Salāh being a prayer for the deceased). After the Niyyat the hands should be raised up to the ears and the Imam will give the first takbeer by saying "Allahu Akbar" loudly and the congregation will repeat this softly. Then fold your arms under the navel similar to all daily Salāh.

Then recite THANA softly:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ وَ
وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ وَجَلَّ ثَنَاءُكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ.

Glory be to You Oh Allah, and praise be to You, and blessed is Your name, and exalted is Your Majesty, and there is none to be served besides You.

The Imam will then recite the Takbeer aloud and the congregation softly for the second time. The hands should NOT be raised when saying this and all subsequent Takbeers. The Durood Ibrahim should now be read:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ
مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ
اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ

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Oh Allah! Shower Your mercy upon Muhammad (s.a.w.) and the followers of Muhammad (s.a.w.), as You showered Your mercy upon Ibrahim and the followers of Ibrahim. Behold, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious. Oh Allah! Shower Your blessing upon Muhammad (s.a.w.), and the followers of Muhammad (s.a.w.) as You showered Your blessings upon Ibrahim and the followers of Ibrahim. Behold, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

Thereafter, the Takbeer should be said for the THIRD time and the following Dua be recited for an adult male or female:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا وَشَاهِدِنَا وَعَجَائِدِنَا
وَصَغِيرَتِنَا وَكِبِيرَتِنَا وَذَكَرَتِنَا وَأُنْثَانَا اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ
أَحْيَيْتَنِي مِنْكَ فَأَخْبِئْ عَنِّي الْإِسْلَامَ وَمَنْ
تَوَفَّيْتَنِي مِنْكَ فَتَوَفَّ عَنِّي الْإِسْلَامَ ۞

Oh Allah! Forgive those of us that are alive and those of us that are dead; those of us that are present and those of us who are absent; those of us who are young and those of us who are adults; our males and our females. Oh Allah! Whomsoever You keep alive, let him live as a follower of Islam and whomsoever You cause to die, let him die a Believer.

For a child who has not reached the age of puberty the following Dua should be recited after the THIRD Takbeer:

Dua for boy:-

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ لَنَا قَرِطًا وَاجْعَلْهُ لَنَا أَبْجَرًا
وَذُنُورًا وَاجْعَلْهُ لَنَا شَافِعًا وَمُسْتَفْعًا

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Dua for girl:-

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا لَنَا قَرِطًا وَاجْعَلْهَا لَنَا إِخْرًا
وَوَيْعًا وَاجْعَلْهَا لَنَا شَافِعَةً وَمُسْتَفْعَةً

Oh Allah! Make him/her (this child) a source for our salvation and make him/her a source of reward and treasure for us and make him/her an intercessor for us and one whose intercession is accepted.

The Imam should say the FOURTH Takbeer and thereafter recite the Salaam aloud TWICE while turning his face first towards the RIGHT shoulder and then once again while turning his face towards the left. The congregation should follow by saying the Takbeer and Salaam softly.

16. Prayer in the cemetery

Rasulullah (s.a.w.) taught these words as salutation to the people of the graves and to pray for their forgiveness:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَأَنَّا إِنَّمَا لِلَّهِ بِكُمْ رَجُوعٌ نَتَكَلَّمُ عَلَيْكُمْ الْغَائِبِينَ

Peace be upon you, O you of the believers and Muslims dwelling in these abodes. Behold, if Allah wills, we shall meet you. We beseech Oh Allah safety for us and for you.

There are many supplications that may be read at the grave side, the best being the recital of the Holy Quraan.

Stand facing the grave (back towards the Qiblah) and recite as much of the Quraan as possible and make Dua for the forgiveness of the deceased.

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A few other ways of praying for the dead are given below:

- In a Hadith it is reported that you should recite Surah IKHLAAS 11 times

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝

- In a Hadith it is reported that if a person recites Surah YASEEN in the cemetery, the punishment of the dead will be eased and the reciter will be rewarded just as much as the deceased.

يَسَّ ۝

- In a Hadith it is reported that whoever visits the cemetery and recites the following Surahs and then prays for the dead, the people of the grave will also ask Allah for such a person's forgiveness.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

FAATIHAH (ALHAMDU)

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝

IKHLAAS (QULHUWALLAH)

الْهُكْمُ التَّكَاتُّرُ ۝

TAKAASUR (ALHAKUMUT TAKAASUR)

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APPENDIX A – TABLE EXPLAINING GHUSUL, KAFN AND JANĀZAH SALĀH REQUIREMENTS FOR STILLBORN BABIES

	<i>Ghusul</i>	<i>Kafn</i>	Name	<i>Janāzah Salāh</i>
120 days and under (foetus)	No	No, wrap in a piece of cloth	No	No
120 days and under but signs of limb formations visible (hands, legs, feet, nose, mouth etc)	Yes	No, wrap in a piece of cloth	Yes	No
From 120 days and up to stillbirth	Yes	No, wrap in a piece of cloth	Yes	No
At time of birth should only the head emerge and signs of life were noticeable before death	Yes	No, wrap in a piece of cloth	Yes	No
At time of birth if more than half the body emerges and the child lives before dying *	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
* Half the body implies emergence of the top torso up to the chest if a head first delivery and up to the naval if feet first delivery.				

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APPENDIX B – REGISTRAR OF DEATHS

London Borough of Redbridge	
Queen Victoria House, 794 Cranbrook Road Barkingside, Ilford Essex IG6 1JS 020 8708 7160 or 020 8708 7210	
Redbridge Council	020 8554 5000
Out of hours services	020 8478 3020
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 4:00pm	
Saturday: 9:00am to 10:30am. Telephone for appointment; open possibly until 11.30am	
Sunday + Bank Holidays: 9:00am to 10:00am by appointment only Telephone at 9.00am 020 8554 5000 Ask for Dave Roberts	
Good Friday & Christmas Day: No service but try 'out of hours' services	
London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	
198 Longbridge Road Barking Essex IG11 9QP 020 8270 4744	
Barking & Dagenham Council	020 8592 4500
Emergency out of hours	020 8594 8356
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 3:30pm. Telephone, possible until 4.00pm	
Saturday: 9:00am to 10:00am. By appointment only. Emergency 020 8594 8356	
Sunday + Bank Holidays: 9:00am to 10:00am. By appointment only. Emergency 020 8594 8356	
Good Friday & Xmas Day: No service but try Emergency Number	

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APPENDIX B – REGISTRAR OF DEATHS (contd)

London Borough of Newham 207 Plashet Grove Eastham E6 1BT 020 8430 3617	
Newham Council	020 8430 2000
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 4:00pm (10.30am on Wednesday)	
Weekends and public holidays: Open am only, by appointment. Arrange via hospital or Telephone at 9:00am 020 8430 2000.	
London Borough of Waltham Forest 106 Grove Road Walthamstow E17 9BY 020 8496 2716	
Waltham Forest Council	020 8527 5544 or 020 8496 3000
Mon, Tues: 9:00am to 4:00pm	
Wed, Thurs, Friday: 9:00am to 12:30pm and 2:00am to 4:00pm	
Saturday: by appointment only, 9:00am to 12:30pm	
Sunday + Bank Holidays: am only by appointment. Telephone at 9:00am - 020 8527 5544	
Good Friday & Christmas Day: No service but try 'on call service'	
London Borough of Tower Hamlets Bromley Public Hall Bow Road E3 3AH 020 7364 7880	
Tower Hamlets - on call	020 7364 5000
Mon, Tues, Thur, Friday: 9:30am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 4:00pm	
Wednesday: 9:30am to 11:30am and 2:00pm to 4:00pm	
Weekends & Holidays: On call service: Tel at 9:00am 020 7364 5000	
Good Friday & Christmas Day: 9:00am to 10:00am	

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APPENDIX B – REGISTRAR OF DEATHS (contd)

London Borough of Hackney Hackney Town Hall Mare Street, Hackney E8 1EA 020 8356 3493 020 8356 3365		
Hackney Council -on call service		020 8356 5000 020 8356 3000
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 3:30pm Saturdays, Sundays & Bank Holidays: On call service by appt, 9:00am to 10:30am. Telephone at 9:00am 020 8356 3310		
Good Friday & Christmas Day : No service but try 'on call service'		
London Borough of Haringey Haringey Civic Centre High Road, Wood Green N22 8LE 020 8489 2605		
Haringey Council – emergency service (24 hrs)		020 8489 0000 020 8348 3148
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 12:30pm, 2:00pm to 4:00pm Saturday: Call emergency service, am appt only 020 8348 3148 Sunday & Bank Holidays: Call emergency service		
Good Friday: am appointment only. Xmas Day possible: 020 8348 3148		
London Borough of Camden Camden Town Hall Judd Street, WC1H 9JE 020 7974 1900		
Council -on call service		020 7278 4444/020 7974 4444
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 3:30pm, 12 Noon to 2:00pm closed		
Weekends & Bank Holidays: On call service by appt, am only		
Good Friday & Christmas Day: On call service by appt		

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APPENDIX B – REGISTRAR OF DEATHS (contd)

London Borough of Islington		
Town Hall Upper Street, N1V 2UD 020 7527 6350		
Islington Council - on call service	020 7527 2000 020 7527 5000	
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 4:00pm		
Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays (incl. Good Friday and Xmas Day): On call service by apt, am only		
Corporation of London (City)		
P.O. Box 270 Guildhall, EC2P 2EJ 020 7332 1049		
Arrange with Bartholomew's Hospital	020 7606 3030	
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 1:30pm		
Saturdays, Sundays + Bank Holidays: 020 7527 5000 Islington Council		
Good Friday & Christmas Day: 020 7527 5000 Islington Council		

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APPENDIX C – FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Haji Taslim Funerals East London Mosque 45 Fieldgate Street Whitechapel E1 1JU Office is staffed Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm however contact by phone can be made 7 days a week. Telephone 0207 247 2625 Telephone 0207 247 9583
Al Bir Islamic Trust (Funeral Services) – 24 Hour Funeral Service (in affiliation with Greenwich Islamic Centre) Contact: Br Abu Atiyah: 0794 4017334 / 0793 1598081 Br.Yahya : 020 8550 3775 Br Ahmed : 0776 666 2508 Br Raouf : 0790 480 5464
Anjuman-E-Islamia Jamia Mosque 266-268 High Street North Manor Park, London E12 Contact: Br Raja Mohammed Iqbal Tel: 020 8472 5663
Hendon Mosque & Islamic Centre Brentview Road, off West Hendon Broadway, London NW9 7EL Tel: 020 8202 3236
Waltham Forest Islamic Association- Jamia Masjid Ghosia 439- 451 Lea Bridge Road Leyton, London E10 Tel: 020 8539 4282
Noor-ul-Islam Mosque and Centre (Mauritian Islamic Welfare Association) 715 High Road Leyton, London E10 Tel: 020 8923 7860

