



Headstone inspection programme

We are currently inspecting all the headstones in our 17 cemeteries as part of our duties to ensure each site is a safe environment for both visitors and staff.

Please note, although we have a duty of care to provide this safe environment the headstone itself is owned by, and is therefore the responsibility of, the lair holder.

In line with other councils across Scotland we are carrying out the following list of actions. An initial inspection will be carried out by a suitably trained officer. This involves looking for any movement of the memorial headstone and this is done by hand with one of the following actions taken:

- If the headstone shows no movement then no action is taken other than to record that an inspection has taken place and that the headstone was found to be safe
- If the headstone shows some movement although not sufficient to be of an immediate concern this is recorded and no physical action is taken.
- If the headstone shows significant movement and is deemed unsafe the headstone is photographed and immediately made safe by laying flat. Efforts will be made to trace and make contact with the lair holder requesting that they engage with their memorial mason and arrange a repair.

We acknowledge that families may attend the lair without the full knowledge of the process and we would apologise in advance for any distress caused.

If we are unable to contact the lair holder we may revisit the headstone and trench it into the ground (digging a hole about a third of the size of the headstone). This “trenching in” method is carried out in front of the plinth or at the head of the lair to secure the headstone until such times as the lair holder makes contact.

It is our intention to inspect all headstones on a five-yearly basis as identified in the Health & Safety Executive’s Guidelines on Headstone Inspection.

Signs are displayed at the entrance to each cemetery advising of these inspections.

For further information please call 01224 522770 or email burials@aberdeencity.gov.uk