

From: [Foi Enquiries](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI-15-0314 - Infant Cremations
Date: 31 March 2015 16:04:07
Attachments: [ACC Policy Statement Relating to the Cremation of Babies and Infants.docx](#)
[Further Information - Right to Review & Appeal.pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your clarified information request of 3 March 2015. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has completed the necessary search for the information requested.

All my questions relate to the last 40 years.

Preterm in this case related to 24 week gestation and beyond.

Can I also ask for this information from both the daily schedule and the cremation register?

1. Do ACC return the ashes of preterm babies, stillborn babies and infants up to 18 months old?

Yes, where ashes have been recovered, ACC carries out the wishes of the applicant of the cremation with regard to the disposal of ashes including the return of ashes if the applicant wishes this to happen.

2. If so please indicate how much were returned, and how many cremations there were of each preterm, stillborn and infants for the last 40 years.

Please refer to the table below. This information is from ACC's Register of Cremations and the figures provided are for infants/babies under 18 months, preterm and stillborn babies (i.e. babies born dead over 24 weeks gestation).

With regards to "how much were returned" this information is not held in this way. Information held is whether ashes were scattered in the Garden of Remembrance (by ACC or next of kin), or whether ashes were collected (by Family or Funeral Directors). That information is provided:

Cremations of Infants under 18 months not including Stillborn babies in Register of Cremations

	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F
			Number of Occasions Ashes recorded as Scattered in Garden of Remembrance	Number of Occasions Ashes recorded as collected by Family /Representative /Funeral Director	Number of occasions the Ashes entry contains a score through	Number of occasions Ashes recorded as No Remains
Year	Number of Cremations	Sum of Column C + D				
1975	9	9	8	1	0	0
1976	24	24	20	4	0	0
1977	23	23	20	3	0	0
1978	21	21	15	6	0	0
1979	20	20	17	3	0	0
1980	28	28	22	6	0	0
1981	23	23	13	10	0	0
1982	27	27	17	10	0	0
1983	20	20	16	4	0	0

1984	27	27	18	9	0	0
1985	24	24	15	9	0	0
1986	21	21	15	6	0	0
1987	18	18	14	4	0	0
1988	23	23	12	11	0	0
1989	7	7	2	5	0	0
1990	12	12	5	7	0	0
1991	8	8	5	3	0	0
1992	14	14	12	2	0	0
1993	7	7	7	0	0	0
1994	6	4	3	1	2	0
1995	4	3	3	0	1	0
1996	5	2	2	0	1	2
1997	5	2	1	1	0	3
1998	8	0	0	0	0	8
1999	6	1	0	1	0	5
2000	9	2	0	2	0	7
2001	2	0	0	0	0	2
2002	2	0	0	0	0	2
2003	2	0	0	0	0	2
2004	2	0	0	0	0	2
2005	3	0	0	0	0	3
2006	5	1	0	1	0	4
2007	4	0	0	0	0	4
2008	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	1	0	0	0	0	1
2010	1	1	0	1	0	0
2011	4	0	0	0	0	4
2012	2	0	0	0	0	2
2013	4	2	0	2	0	2
2014	10	10	1	9	0	0

Cremations of Stillborn babies in Register of Cremations

	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F
			Number of Occasions Ashes recorded as Scattered in Garden of Remembrance	Number of Occasions Ashes recorded as collected by Family /Representative /Funeral Director	Number of occasions the Ashes entry contains a score through	Number of occasions Ashes recorded as No Remains
Year	Number of Cremations	Sum of Column C + D				
1975	8	8	7	1	0	0
1976	6	6	5	1	0	0
1977	0	0	0	0	0	0
1978	5	5	4	1	0	0
1979	0	0	0	0	0	0
1980	3	3	2	1	0	0
1981	2	2	0	2	0	0
1982	1	1	1	0	0	0

1983	3	3	1	2	0	0
1984	3	3	2	1	0	0
1985	1	1	0	1	0	0
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	6	6	3	3	0	0
1988	4	4	4	0	0	0
1989	4	4	0	4	0	0
1990	3	3	3	0	0	0
1991	2	2	2	0	0	0
1992	9	9	7	2	0	0
1993	5	5	5	0	0	0
1994	15	14	14	0	1	0
1995	8	7	7	0	1	0
1996	5	4	4	0	0	1
1997	3	1	1	0	0	2
1998	7	0	0	0	0	7
1999	5	1	1	0	0	4
2000	7	0	0	0	0	7
2001	6	0	0	0	0	6
2002	3	0	0	0	0	3
2003	4	0	0	0	0	4
2004	6	0	0	0	0	6
2005	5	0	0	0	0	5
2006	9	0	0	0	0	9
2007	7	0	0	0	0	7
2008	1	0	0	0	0	1
2009	9	0	0	0	0	9
2010	6	0	0	0	0	6
2011	4	0	0	0	0	4
2012	4	0	0	0	0	4
2013	11	2	0	2	0	9
2014	11	11	1	10	0	0

ACC is unable to provide you with information on **how much were returned** as it is not held by ACC. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Section 17 of the FOISA, ACC hereby gives notice that this information is not held by it.

Please note: the Crematorium's Daily Schedules are the office reception's list of services scheduled for each day. It is ACC's understanding that codes referring to the wishes of the applicant for the disposal of ashes were often added to this service schedule and on occasion what appears to be notes referring to the ashes were also added. However, this information is not the official record for how ashes were disposed of. The Register of Cremations contains the official record and this is updated from the "Instruction Card". The Instruction Card contains the relevant information on the cremation and accompanies the coffin and the subsequent ashes until final disposal. The final disposal is recorded on the Instruction Card which is then used to update the Register of Cremations. Prior to 6 June 2014, Instruction cards were destroyed after the information contained on them was transferred/input into the Register of Cremations. ACC now keep and file all instruction cards.

The following table shows the information held on the Daily Schedules. The figures provided are for infants/babies under 18 months, preterm and stillborn babies (i.e. babies born dead over 24 weeks

gestation).

Please note that this information cannot determine “how much were returned”. Column 6 includes the number of cremations where the Code R is written on its own without further information. There is no documentation that describes what R means but it is understood that this means Retain to await further instructions.

Information on the Daily Schedule with regard to the Ashes of Infants under 18 months not including Stillborn babies

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
Year	Number of Cremations	Number of occasions the code DB, D or S is entered (all understood to mean applicant's wishes is to scatter)	Number of occasions a description of given to or to be collected by Family /Representative /Funeral Director is written	Number of occasions there is no entry or forward slash or dash is written	Number of occasions No Ashes or No Remains is written	Number of occasions the code R is written (understood to mean Retain for further instruction) or 'small amount' is written
1975	9	8	1	0	0	0
1976	24	19	1	0	0	4
1977	23	20	1	0	0	2
1978	21	15	5	0	0	1
1979	20	17	3	0	0	0
1980	28	22	6	0	0	0
1981	23	13	9	0	0	1
1982	27	17	10	0	0	0
1983	20	16	4	0	0	0
1984	27	18	9	0	0	0
1985	24	15	9	0	0	0
1986	21	15	6	0	0	0
1987	18	14	4	0	0	0
1988	23	12	11	0	0	0
1989	7	2	5	0	0	0
1990	12	5	0	0	0	7
1991	8	4	2	0	0	2
1992	14	11	2	0	1	0
1993	7	7	0	0	0	0
1994	6	6	0	0	0	0
1995	4	4	0	0	0	0
1996	5	4	0	1	0	0
1997	5	0	0	0	4	1
1998	8	0	0	0	8	0
1999	6	0	0	0	5	1
2000	9	0	0	0	7	2
2001	2	0	0	0	2	0
2002	2	0	0	0	2	0

2003	2	0	0	0	2	0
2004	2	0	0	0	2	0
2005	3	0	0	0	3	0
2006	5	0	0	0	4	1
2007	4	0	0	0	4	0
2008	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	1	0	0	0	1	0
2010	1	0	0	0	1	0
2011	4	0	0	0	4	0
2012	2	0	0	0	2	0
2013	4	0	0	0	2	2
2014	10	0	0	0	0	10

Information on the Daily Schedule with regard to the Ashes of Stillborn babies

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
Year	Number of Cremations	Number of occasions the code DB, D or S is entered (all understood to mean applicant's wishes is to scatter)	Number of occasions a description of given to or to be collected by Family /Representative /Funeral Director is written	Number of occasions there is no entry or forward slash or dash is written	Number of occasions No Ashes or No Remains is written	Number of occasions the code R is written (understood to mean Retain for further instruction) or 'small amount' is written
1975	8	6	1	1	0	0
1976	6	5	1	0	0	0
1977	0	0	0	0	0	0
1978	5	4	0	0	0	1
1979	0	0	0	0	0	0
1980	3	2	1	0	0	0
1981	2	0	2	0	0	0
1982	1	1	0	0	0	0
1983	3	1	2	0	0	0
1984	3	2	1	0	0	0
1985	1	0	1	0	0	0
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	6	2	3	0	0	1
1988	4	4	0	0	0	0
1989	4	0	4	0	0	0
1990	3	3	0	0	0	0
1991	2	2	0	0	0	0
1992	9	6	2	0	1	0
1993	5	5	0	0	0	0
1994	15	15	0	0	0	0
1995	8	8	0	0	0	0
1996	5	4	0	0	1	0

1997	3	0	0	0	3	0
1998	7	0	0	0	7	0
1999	5	1	0	0	4	0
2000	7	0	0	0	7	0
2001	6	0	0	0	6	0
2002	3	0	0	0	3	0
2003	4	0	0	0	4	0
2004	6	0	0	0	6	0
2005	5	0	0	0	5	0
2006	9	0	0	0	9	0
2007	7	0	0	0	6	1
2008	1	0	0	0	1	0
2009	9	0	0	0	9	0
2010	6	0	0	0	6	0
2011	4	0	0	1	3	0
2012	4	0	0	1	3	0
2013	11	0	0	2	7	2
2014	11	0	0	0	0	11

ACC is unable to provide you with information on **how much were returned** as it is not held by ACC. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Section 17 of the FOISA, ACC hereby gives notice that this information is not held by it.

3. Please indicate how practices and training have changed in the last 40 years.

ACC does not have documentation of practices prior to 2013. On 25 November 2013, Aberdeen Crematorium implemented new processes including the use of a cremation tray for stillborn, small infants and non-viable foetuses in a wooden coffin.

Although ACC does not have documentary evidence, it is ACC's understanding that the training of cremator operators has been provided and certified for the last 40 years by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA). ACC does not hold old training documents.

ACC is unable to provide you with information on **documentation of practices prior to 2013 or documentation on training and how practices and training have changed in the last 40 years** as it is not held by ACC. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Section 17 of the FOISA, ACC hereby gives notice that this information is not held by it.

4. Is there an area where ACC dispose of preterm, stillborn or infants up to 18 months old?

There is no specific area for the scattering of preterm, stillborn or infants under 18 months old. Ashes can and have been scattered at both Kaimhill or Hazlehead Garden of Remembrance as per the wishes of the applicant.

5. Please enclose any relevant policy relating to cremation of any infant, stillborn or preterm baby, and how that has changed over the last 40 years.

ACC has not had a documented policy relating to the cremation of any infant, stillborn or preterm baby prior to 18 March 2015.

ACC is unable to provide you with information on **any relevant policy relating to cremation of any infant, stillborn or preterm baby, and how that has changed over the last 40 years** as it is not held by ACC. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Section 17 of the FOISA, ACC hereby gives notice that this information is not held by it.

However, the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on 18 March 2015 recommended approval of a policy statement relating to the cremation of babies and infants. This policy statement is attached.

6. In the last 40 years have ACC disposed of any infant, preterm or still born baby without permission of the parent?

ACC has no evidence that ashes of infants or stillborn babies have been disposed of that was contrary to the wishes of the applicant of cremation.

ACC is unable to provide you with information on **evidence that ashes have been disposed of contrary to the wishes of the applicant of cremation** as it is not held by ACC. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Section 17 of the FOISA, ACC hereby gives notice that this information is not held by it.

We hope this helps with your request.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Webster
Information Compliance Officer

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Policy Statement Relating to the Cremation of Babies and Infants.

Aberdeen City Council, as the Cremation Authority for Aberdeen Crematorium wishes it to be known that it considers the interests of the bereaved family and the baby or infant left in our care to be the central focus of our attention. This will be reflected in all of our administrative and operational practices and procedures.

Definition of 'ashes'

Whilst our employees might use the terms 'ashes' and 'cremated remains' we deem these to be one and the same and defined as '*all that is left in the cremator at the end of the cremation process and following the removal of any metal*'. There might be a small number of cases where there are no ashes remaining at the end of the cremation process. If this is the case our staff will contact the Applicant for Cremation and advise them of this.

Minimising the loss of ashes during cremation

We have developed an approach to the cremation of babies and infants that is designed to minimise the loss of ashes. This includes the use of a cremation tray designed to retain ashes where practicable, and the maintenance of operational conditions that will minimise the loss of any ashes during the process of cremation.

Our staff will be vigilant during the cremation process and adjust operational conditions when necessary in order to protect the ashes of babies and infants and minimise any loss. We will adhere to our identification procedure that guarantees that the ashes resulting from individual cremations returned to parents are those of their babies.

Shared cremations

Where a shared cremation has been chosen by parents, and hence ashes are not individually identifiable, we will take the same care throughout the cremation process and will scatter/bury the ashes within the garden of remembrance. The location will be recorded for future reference.

Disposal of Ashes

In relation to the disposal of ashes in the case of a private cremation, this Cremation Authority will only act upon the written instruction of the parent who is acting as the Applicant for Cremation.

In the case of shared cremations we will only act on the written instruction of the designated person at the relevant hospital, who is acting as the Applicant.

Record-Keeping

All cremations of babies and infants will be registered at the crematorium, with all forms and documents being retained for a minimum of 50 years as per the guidance provided in the ICC report of 17 June 2014.

If ashes are scattered or buried within the grounds of the crematorium the final resting place will be registered along with any details of any person authorised by the applicant to remove/collect the ashes.

The policy of this Cremation Authority is designed to provide an audit trail from the receipt of initial funeral instructions to the final disposal of ashes, either by collection from the crematorium or by scattering or burial within the confines of the Gardens of Remembrance.

Questions or Queries

If you have any questions or queries about the cremation of your baby, you can speak to the Crematorium Manager on Tel: 01224 740722

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeen Crematorium

Date: 18 March 2015