

Information on Infant Cremations at Aberdeen Crematorium Dated 5/11/14

Following Lord Bonomy's Infant Cremation Commission review of national cremation practices during 2013 and 2014, Aberdeen City Council reviewed its own processes and procedures to ensure that the City Council was following best practice and meeting the subsequent findings and advice arising from the national review and recommended changes in crematoria regulation and legislation.

Aberdeen City Council is committed to the sensitive treatment of babies and their cremations. Our aim is to recover ashes from all cremations of infants, babies, stillborn children and non-viable foetuses/babies using best practice techniques.

The following is a summary of the procedure used at Aberdeen Crematorium for the cremation of small infants, babies, stillborn children and non-viable foetuses/babies using a metal cremation tray:-

- All coffins of babies, stillborn children and non-viable foetuses/babies are placed on the Chapel's catafalque prior to cremation.
- The coffin is then taken to the cremating area and placed within a specially made metal cremation tray and inserted into the cremator. Re-positioning of the cremation tray may be carried out throughout the process and adjustments made to the cremator burners with the aim to aid the recovery of ashes from the process.
- Aberdeen Crematorium's cremators can be described as "double ended" cremators. This means that coffins are inserted in at one end and ashes are raked out at the other end. The ashes end has only a small opening that is too small to remove the cremation tray therefore the tray is removed from the insertion end. As the metal tray is red hot, safety precautions will be adhered to at all times including the wearing of Personal Protection Equipment. At the end of the cremation the tray is carefully removed from the cremators onto a trolley and covered with a specially designed metal lid and allowed to cool. Ash within the metal tray is delicately collected and placed in a small ash urn.
- These cremations are carried out individually ie one coffin per tray per cremation procedure except in the case of non-viable babies where parents have an additional choice of shared cremation ie along with other non-viable babies. This option is provided in conjunction with NHS Grampian who inform parents that if ashes are recovered from shared cremations they will be scattered in Aberdeen Crematorium's Garden of Remembrance with all due reverence.

Parents/families should be aware that it is possible that ashes may not always be recovered following a cremation and that there is also the option of burial available to them.

However, Aberdeen Crematorium currently has a 100% success rate in recovering ashes using a metal cremation tray. It should be noted that for very young babies/foetuses we are unable to guarantee that these ashes contain human remains.