



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport Cemetery and Crematorium **Final resting place of unclaimed ashes V2**

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Final resting place of unclaimed ashes

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures for the respectful and dignified handling of unclaimed ashes, ensuring they are laid to rest in a designated Garden of Remembrance.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff involved in the cremation process and the management of ashes at our crematorium.

3. Policy statement

It is the wish of the crematorium management that ashes that are not claimed by either a funeral director or an applicant/applicant representative are sensitively handled and scattered in the garden of remembrance to avoid a build-up of ashes in our care.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Senior Managers (Heads of Service and above)

Senior managers are responsible for supporting all staff in ensuring that the policy is carried out fairly and accurately.

4.2 Managers, supervisors, and team leaders

Managers, supervisors, and team leaders are responsible for ensuring that:

- In all cases, a robust checking process and monitoring policy must be adopted.

4.3 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they understand and follow the guidance in this policy.
- That all contact and actions are recorded on the Epitaph system for all to see.

5. Links with other policies and procedures

This policy should be read in line with the Policy for the management of unclaimed ashes.

6. Definitions

Unclaimed Ashes: Ashes that have not been collected within 12 months from the date of cremation. This definition is for the purpose of the audit. Ashes for which no applicant or applicant nominee can be traced will become in our care within 90 days (maximum) following the introduction of the policy.

Applicant: The person who applied for the cremation.

Applicant Representative: A person deemed responsible for the ashes if the original applicant is deceased or uncontactable.

Garden of Remembrance: Unclaimed ashes will be respectfully laid to rest in a designated Garden of Remembrance.

7. Collection policy

- 7.1 Unclaimed ashes should be collected within 30 days of contact being made. First contact will be made by telephone where possible to establish the applicants wishes and where possible arrange for collection. Where no contact is established by telephone or email the letter process in section 7.2 may be brought forward.
- 7.2 For historical unclaimed ashes following steps will be taken to contact the applicant or their representative:
- Day 0:** First letter sent via Govmail post or email contact
 - Day 30:** Final letter sent, indicating that the ashes will be laid to rest according to the crematorium's policy if not collected.
 - Day 60:** Press notification published seeking relatives to come forward asking them to collect ashes and allowing 60 days for people to respond.
 - Day 120:** Ashes come into the care of the crematorium and are laid to rest shortly after. Details are recorded on the computer system
- 7.3 For ashes created since 1st February 2024 the collection policy is a 150-day period as follows:
- Day 0** – Cremation takes place and no instructions are left
 - Day 30** – Courtesy Call /First letter sent
 - Day 60** – Second letter sent indicating that the ashes will be laid to rest according to the crematorium's policy if not collected in the next 30 days
 - Day 90:** Press notification published seeking relatives to come forward asking them to collect ashes and allowing 60 days for people to respond.
 - Day 150:** Ashes come into the care of the crematorium and are laid to rest shortly after. Details are recorded on the computer system

8. Responsibility for Ashes

- 8.1 The initial applicant is responsible for collecting the ashes.

- 8.2 If the applicant is deceased or uncontactable, the applicant representative (e.g., a family member) will be contacted.
- 8.3 In cases where the funeral director is the applicant, they will be contacted to understand the family's wishes.
- 8.4 When initial attempts have been made to contact applicants/nominees/family members or Funeral Directors with no response then a notice shall be placed in the local paper (Manchester Evening News) seeking any known relatives of the deceased.
- 8.5 After 60 days from the notice in the papers the ashes are deemed to be in the care of the crematorium to lay to rest in an appropriate manner. The Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, Section 30 section 4 this action is deemed to demonstrate that we have made 'reasonable attempts' to contact the applicant.
- 8.6 When relatives/friends do come forward following a press notification they will be asked to swear an oath and take it to a solicitor to get it ratified.

9. Final resting place for unclaimed ashes

- 9.1 The Garden of Remembrance is a serene and beautifully maintained area within the crematorium grounds, dedicated to the memory of those whose ashes remain unclaimed.
- 9.2 Ashes will be scattered in a manner that ensures dignity and respect, with each individual scattering recorded in the crematorium's records. This is in accordance with the section 30 paragraph 3 of The Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008.

10. Documentation and record Keeping

- 10.1 All correspondence with the applicant or their representative must be recorded in the system.
- 10.2 All correspondence will be sent via Govmail, the Council's online mail portal. The details of sent mail are recorded in this system.
- 10.3 The scattering of unclaimed ashes in the Garden of Remembrance will be documented, including the date and location of scattering.

11. Communication of Policy

The policy will be displayed in-house and included in the particulars form with a disclaimer about uncollected ashes.

12. Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary to ensure compliance with local authority regulations and best practices.

Appendix A - Document revision schedule

Revision No.	Revision Date	Purpose of Revision & Paragraph Number	Revised by
V2	December 2025	Changes to paragraph 7.1 and 7.2 to remove recorded delivery and reduce the number of letters sent. Add in the use of printed media to reach out for deceased family.	Alison Mumford
V2	September 2025	Paragraph 8.3 added to determine what to do about ashes where no representative is available.	Alison Mumford
V2	September 2025	Paragraph 10.2 – remove reference to recorded delivery and add in Govmail usage.	Alison Mumford
V2	November 2025	Paragraph 7.1 and 7.2 Timescales amended in line with procedures	Alison Mumford
V2	December 2025	Paragraph 9.2 addition of reference to legal regulations.	Alison Mumford
V2	December 2025	Paragraph 8.5 addition of reference to legal regulations.	Alison Mumford
V2	December 2025	Paragraph 8.4 – add reference to reasonable attempts to contact using the press.	Alison Mumford