

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee
<b>DATE</b>	9 May 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Inspection Report of Aberdeen Crematorium by the Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors (Scotland)
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CR&E/24/123
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Mark Reilly
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Graham Keith
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	6.4

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At its meeting on 1 November 2016, the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee resolved to present resulting reports of audits of Aberdeen Crematorium to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee for assurance purposes. This report provides the Committee with the Inspection Report of Aberdeen Crematorium carried out by the Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors on 6 December 2023.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 notes the inspection report

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 On 1 November 2016, the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee approved a suite of compliance measures with the aim of improving arrangements at the Aberdeen Crematorium. One of these assurance measures was that the Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors' annual inspection report be presented to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors' Inspection Report is attached as Appendix 1.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### 7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	None identified	N/A	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	None identified	N/A	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	None identified	N/A	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	None identified	N/A	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	None identified	N/A	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	None identified	N/A	L	<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>  <u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u>	This report supports the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the delivery of vital local services on which people depend</li><li>• to ensure that the widest possible range of quality support is given where, and when, it is needed.</li></ul>
<u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</a></u>	
No direct link to one of the stretch outcomes.	

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Mark Reilly Chief Officer, Operations on 17 April 2024.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	Not required

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Aberdeen City Council Report to Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee Aberdeen Crematorium Performance Indicators (CHI/16/251)  
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=503&MId=3877&Ver=4>

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - Inspection Report - Aberdeen Crematorium (December 2023)

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Graham Keith
<b>Title</b>	Performance and Development Manager
<b>Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:gkeith@aberdeencity.gov.uk">gkeith@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Tel</b>	01224 053287

Appendix 1 - Inspection Report - Aberdeen Crematorium (December 2023)

Robert Swanson QPM  
Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors

Tel : 07721 110 655  
Email : [robert.swanson@gov.scot](mailto:robert.swanson@gov.scot)

### Inspection of Crematoria

<b>Name and Address of Crematorium:</b> Aberdeen Crematorium Skene Road Aberdeen AB15 8PT	
<b>Name of Cremation Authority:</b> Aberdeen City Council	<b>Date of Inspection:</b> Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Undertaken by:</b> Robert Swanson QPM Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors (Scotland)	<b>In the presence of:</b> Graham Keith Performance and Development Manager  Angus Beacom Crematorium Manager

<b>1. Cremation Fees (as advertised) (Resident of Aberdeen)</b>
Full Cremation Fee (with chapel service) ..... £753.00 Cremation (no chapel service) .....£595.00 Cremation (no chapel service – early morning slot) ..... £420.00.... Children (up to the age of 18 years) .....No Charge

## 2. Staffing levels

### **Staff certificated to carry out cremations:**

6 members of staff qualified to carry out cremations with 1 other undergoing training

## 3. Office Management

### **Administration Procedure:**

There has been no change to procedure since the date of the last inspection.

Aberdeen Crematorium is one of very few crematoria in Scotland who only hold and retain documentation electronically, this being one of the provisions of the Cremation (Scotland) Regulations 2019.

The majority of documentation is received electronically, either by email, or the on-line booking service, which all funeral directors have access to.

Those which are received in hard copy are then scanned onto computer.

The administration procedure was examined from point of first intimation to dispersal of the ashes with checks carried out on a random selection of documentation held on computer.

All were found to be of a high standard with a number of safeguards in place to ensure total compliance with the instructions of the applicant.

### **Computer System:**

BACAS

#### 4. Total Number of Cremations Carried Out (2022)

<b>Breakdown by category</b>	
<b>Adult:</b>	1981
<b>Infant (aged under 1 yr)</b>	8
<b>Child (aged 1 – 17 yrs)</b>	3
<b>Stillbirth:</b>	6
<b>Pregnancy Loss:</b>	
<b>Individual:</b>	157
<b>Shared:</b>	663
<b>Body Parts:</b>	17
<b>Total:</b>	2835

#### 5. Cremation / Identity Card Process

There has been no change to policy or procedure since the date of the last inspection.

The process and all related documentation was examined from point of arrival of the coffin throughout all stages including cremation, cooling, cremulation, storage and dispersal of the ashes, and subsequent updating of computer records.

All were found to be of a high standard with noted safeguards in place to minimise the risk of human error resulting in the mislabelling of ashes, and to ensure continuity of identification throughout the different stages.

## 6. Recovery of Ashes

Ashes have been recovered from all cremations.

## 7. Ashes Policy

There has been no change to policy since the date of the last inspection.

Ashes are dispersed in accordance with the instructions of the applicant.

Ashes can be retained for a period pending an instruction from the applicant, collected by the applicant, a nominated representative or the funeral director, scattered in the Garden of Remembrance or interred in the cemetery.

There is provision for a change of instruction by the applicant prior to dispersal.

A check on the disposal instructions on a random selection of application forms held on computer was found to accurately reflect the disposal outcome.

Ashes awaiting dispersal are stored in a secure room with clear identification and instruction labels affixed.

## 8. Cremators

**Number of cremators:** 4

**Make (s):** All FT3

**Size:** Large



## 9. Sample of Cremation Register

<p><b>Category:</b> Adult</p> <p><b>Cremation number:</b> 160990</p> <p><b>Result:</b> All documentation and records held on computer examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023 with the ashes collected by the funeral director on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2023.</p>	<p><b>Category:</b> Pregnancy Loss (Individual)</p> <p><b>Cremation number:</b> 9517</p> <p><b>Result:</b> All documentation and records held on computer examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with the ashes collected by the applicant on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023.</p>
<p><b>Category:</b> Pregnancy Loss (shared)</p> <p><b>Cremation number:</b> 9519</p> <p><b>Result:</b> All documentation and records held on computer examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with the ashes scattered in the Garden of Remembrance on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023.</p>	<p><b>Category:</b> Adult</p> <p><b>Cremation number:</b> 161179</p> <p><b>Result:</b> All documentation and records held on computer examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 with the ashes collected by the funeral director on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023.</p>
<p><b>Category:</b> Adult</p> <p><b>Cremation number:</b> 161209</p> <p><b>Result:</b> All documentation and records held on computer examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 with the ashes collected by the applicant on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023.</p>	

## 10. Use of Baby Tray

**Number / Source:**

5 x FT

## 11. Pregnancy Loss Policy / Procedure

**NHS / Shared:**

There has been no change to policy since the date of the last inspection,

The Cremation Authority have a Service Level Agreement with NHS Grampian for the cremation of shared and individual pregnancy loss.

Transportation is provided by NHS staff, with the cremation carried out on the same day.

Ashes from cremation of shared pregnancy loss are scattered within the Garden of Remembrance the following week.

Ashes from cremation of individual pregnancy loss are dispersed in accordance with the instructions of the applicant.

**Individual :**

The policy and procedure for cremation of individual pregnancy loss does not differ from that of an infant.

A Baby Tray is used for all cremation of pregnancy loss.

## 12. Metal Extraction

**Policy:**

Metal Extracts are dispersed in accordance with the instructions of the applicant.

There has been no change to procedure since the dated of the last inspection.

Unless otherwise instructed by the applicant metal extracts are sensitively recycled by Orthometals, as part of the ICCM scheme.

The monies accrued from the recycling programme are donated to nominated local charities.

A recent donation of £14,000 was made to a local bereavement charity.

## 13. Crematorium Management Plan

Implementation of the Cremation (Scotland) Regulations 2019 on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019 required Cremation Authorities to prepare and maintain a Crematorium Management Plan to be made available for inspection by Inspectors of Cremation and members of the public.

The Regulations list a number of matters to be included within the Plan.

These are, as follows:

a) Name, address, and business hours of crematorium

b) Procedures for:

1. The carrying out of cremations
2. Dealing with any unexpected increase in number of cremations
3. The operation and servicing of all equipment used in cremation process
4. The disposal of cremation residue
5. The disposal of ashes
6. Contingency arrangements for unexpected disruption or loss of services

c) Review of the Plan

These are the minimum, allowing Cremation Authorities to also include other matters they consider worthy of inclusion.

The Aberdeen Crematorium Management Plan was seen to be of the highest of standards and one of the most comprehensive for any crematorium in Scotland.

The Plan contains a great deal more than that required under the Regulations.

## 14. General Observations / Recent Changes

Since the date of the last inspection there have been some improvements to the grounds, including a new waiting area for the cortege on the approach to the crematorium, and alterations to part of the Garden of Remembrance.

Future plans are believed to include the resurfacing of parts of the car park, paths and pavements.

All public and private areas seen during the course of the inspection were found to be clean, tidy and in a state of good repair.

The grounds and Garden of Remembrance were seen to be well maintained.

The only notable change within the crematory was the relocation of the area for coffins which are held over for cremation the following day.

## 15. Overall Assessment

The inspection found no shortcomings to any area of the cremation process, with good practice observed throughout all stages.

The crematorium continues to operate to the highest of standards, with great credit to all staff, who collectively provide a first class service to the local community and beyond.

Whilst staff are undoubtedly relieved that duties appear to have returned to pre-pandemic levels, they are by no means complacent, and are well prepared for any potential winter increase.

As has been stated in previous reports, the Cremation Authority are very fortunate in having such an experienced, enthusiastic and knowledgeable team.

**Signed:** Robert Swanson QPM  
Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors (Scotland)

**Date:** Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023