

Executive Summary

- 1. The current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic will require a collective response from the Muslim community, working with health services and local authorities, to manage the volume of deaths.**
- 2. There are certain mandatory funerary rites afforded to the Muslim deceased.**
- 3. In such circumstances, the Divine law permits certain relaxations of these rites.**
- 4. Families should be comforted that their loved ones receive the deaths of martyrs, and that any short-comings in normal funerary rites will not affect this.**
- 5. NHS and emergency workers (including funeral workers) should not forget their own physical and mental health, nor that of their families, in caring for others.**
- 6. The risk of transmission of COVID-19 from a deceased body is low and should not be feared, provided adequate precautions are taken.**
- 7. All such precautions must be taken by those handling the deceased's body, whilst ensuring dignity is maintained. The needs of the living take priority over the needs of the deceased.**
- 8. There are several options for ritual cleansing from: full ghusl, minimal ghusl, tayammum, wiping over the body bag. Each should be considered in sequence, but if none can be done, burial without ghusl is permissible.**
- 9. The body bag may be considered to fulfil the role of the burial shroud (kafan).**
- 10. Funeral (janaza) prayers should be performed by a minimum of people; alternatives include the absentee funeral prayer (salat al-gha'ib).**
- 11. A number of options for burial can be considered, including shared graves, transferral to other sites, and delay in burial. Preparations should be made in advance, especially in areas with a large Muslim population. Cremation must be avoided at all costs.**
- 12. The BBSI emphatically exhorts community organisations, mosques, and charities to mobilise the community so that they might get trained in funerary rites. Local communities are advised to take decisions on the basis of this guidance whilst factoring in local circumstances.**
- 13. We are all returning to our Lord, and should pray for those who have passed away collectively and individually, remembering always the life to come.**