

National Burial Council

Letter of Wishes – Guidance Note



What is a Letter of Wishes?

A Letter of Wishes is a personal document that accompanies your will. It provides guidance to those responsible for managing your estate after your death. While not legally binding, it offers valuable insight into your preferences and intentions, helping executors, trustees, and family members carry out your wishes with compassion and clarity.

Does a Letter of Wishes Replace a Will?

No. A Letter of Wishes does not replace a will and should not be treated as a legal substitute. Instead, it complements your will by offering practical and emotional guidance—particularly in matters such as funeral arrangements, personal belongings, and family considerations.

Who Should Use a Letter of Wishes?

Everyone should have a valid will in place. In Islam, the importance of preparing a will is deeply rooted in faith. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"It is not permissible for any Muslim who has something to will to stay for two nights without having his last will and testament written and kept ready with him." (Sahih al-Bukhari 2738)

If you wish to provide specific instructions about your funeral arrangements, a Letter of Wishes can be a meaningful way to express your preferences in accordance with your Islamic values.

What to Include

With regards to funeral wishes specifically, you may wish to include guidance on the following:

- That your funeral be conducted in accordance with Islamic principles
- Preferences regarding preparation, washing, and shrouding
- Funeral prayers and timing
- Preferred burial location
- Requests for non-invasive post-mortem procedures (e.g., MRI) if legally required
- Timely release of the body and prompt burial wherever practical
- Details of your pre-paid funeral plan if one is in place.

In addition to funeral wishes, you can include other important points as guidance, such as, who will care for your children if they are below 18, details of debts owed/due, clarifying ownership of assets.

Key Tips for Writing a Letter of Wishes

- ✓ Keep it simple and provide clear, actionable instructions
- ✓ Use plain language that is easily understood
- ✓ Review and update your Letter of Wishes regularly (minimum every 3 years or sooner if circumstances change significantly).
- ✓ Keep it private and share only with those who need to know
- ✓ Store it safely alongside your will
- ❖ Ensure it does not contradict your will
- ❖ Avoid including sensitive or ambiguous information
- ❖ Do not use it as a substitute for a legally valid will

The Letter of Wishes Template is prepared by the National Burial Council (NBC) to help you express your funeral preferences with clarity and dignity. You may wish to seek advice from a solicitor or trusted organisation to ensure your wishes are properly documented and respected.

LETTER OF WISHES

Full Name	
Full Address	

I do **Solemnly and sincerely declare as follows: that I** am a Muslim and following my demise, my body **SHALL** be prepared for burial in keeping with the Islamic Law that is based upon the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (Saw) peace be upon him.

I direct my Executors, surviving relatives, and friends to ensure that I have a funeral strictly following Islamic law that must include Washing (Ghusl), Shrouding (Kafn), Funeral Prayer (Janazah) and Burial (Dafn).

I also wish that my body be released as soon as possible after my death and that the burial is undertaken at the earliest practical opportunity.

Should a post-mortem examination be legally mandated by a Coroner, my wishes are that this requirement be fulfilled through non-invasive imaging, wherever permissible under applicable law and medical protocols. My wish is a non-invasive option be fully explored before any invasive post-mortem is undertaken.

I would also like to be buried in the Muslim Cemetery closest to the place of my death. *(or I have reserved a grave at (insert name of cemetery), should I die in the United Kingdom I wish to be buried in the grave reserved- (if applicable)).*

Should I die in another country, I wish to be buried in that country and strictly do not want my body to be repatriated to the UK (place of residence). I know this is a serious obligation and I would request that you use your best endeavours, to reach an agreement over the fundamental matters mentioned and compromise on others if you differ in opinion.

My body or any remains thereof **SHALL NOT be embalmed or under any circumstances be cremated in keeping with religious and cultural traditions and belief.**

The preparation of my body is to be performed by Muslims of the same sex **in strict compliance with the Islamic Shariah (Law) and practice.**

There is to be no viewing of my remains after my body has been prepared for burial and the Janazah Salaat has been performed.

There **should be NO OTHER religious service for me** than the Janazah prayer and the traditional Islamic prayer at the graveside.

The Interment of my body must also meet the Islamic requirement that I (my body) face in the direction of the Holy Kabah in Makkah, Arabia.

In the event of my death, executors appointed in my Will or another Muslim as set out in the schedule below are to be contacted immediately. They shall have the complete authority along with any executors that I may appoint to complete all my funeral arrangements that shall be under Islamic Law and practice.

Executor	
Name and Address of Organisation	
Local Mosque	

Name	Signed	Date
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