

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

<p>What is being reviewed?</p>	<p>The current operating status of Poole site commonly known as Poole Crematorium.</p>
<p>What changes are being made?</p>	<p>A decision on the current operating status of the site.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty on a local authority to provide burial or cremation facilities. The bereavement industry and in particular cremation services are offered to the public marketplace through a mixed provision model of both Local Authority and Private Sector providers.</p> <p>Poole Crematorium stopped cremating in April 2020 due to the age of the equipment and associated safety concerns. A pre-planned contingency arrangement was implemented involving the conveyancing of deceased following services at Poole to Bournemouth Crematorium for cremation. This enabled the Council to continue offering Poole as a choice venue for families to arrange their final goodbye moment. The arrangement in Poole has continued to operate to date with local funeral directors continuing to make bookings for services at the site with in-house conveyancing undertaken.</p> <p>Options tabled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 continue to operate as a ceremonial venue only. Undertaking the necessary steps to change the operating status of the site as a ceremonial only venue pursuant to the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 • Options 2, 3 & 4 invest now in reinstating cremator(s) at the Poole site thereby enabling the site to once again provide cremations to service users on site and in accordance with the Regulations to continue to legally use the name 'Poole Crematorium'
<p>Service Unit:</p>	<p>Environment / Bereavement Services</p>
<p>Participants in the conversation:</p>	<p>Kate Langdown – Director of Environment; Andy McDonald – Head of Parks & Bereavement Services; Liz Hall – Bereavement, Coroners & Mortuary Manager</p>
<p>Conversation date/s:</p>	<p>02 July 2022, 25 August 2022 & 02 September 2022. 06 February 2023</p>
<p>Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?</p>	<p>Citizens of Bournemouth, Christchurch, and in particular Poole including neighbouring areas. Funeral Directors Religious Groups Religious Funeral Celebrants</p>

Do different groups have different needs or experiences?

Through BCP Bereavement Care individuals and families can:

- decide the form of any ceremony they choose to have
- choose a religious, humanist or civil ceremony
- choose a ceremony that reflects any religious beliefs or multicultural traditions

BCP Council have a responsibility under Section 46 of the [Public Health \(Control of Disease\) Act 1984](#) to plan and pay for Public Health Funerals when there are no known relatives or friends willing or able to make the funeral arrangements. This could lead to an increase in 'demand' for Council Public Health funerals.

Residents on low incomes can find funding funerals difficult and will borrow or loan funds to pay for funeral services that they can ill afford. This in turn can lead to increased levels of 'Funeral Poverty'. Families that are claiming certain benefits or tax credits can apply for a [Funeral Expenses Payment](#) which will help towards some, not all, of the cost of a funeral. BCP Bereavement Care offers a range of advice and packages including Direct Cremations to support families during their time of loss.

Historically the purpose of most religious funerals was to aid the deceased in their passage to the next life, and this remains an important factor for many religious groups with certain protocols or rites being carried out prior to the actual funeral taking place, during and after. In more recent times, and in more secular funerals, the emphasis has shifted towards providing comfort and support for the bereaved. However, there are primary faith groups within our communities that remain committed to the rites of their particular faith group and as a bereavement service we work in tandem with faith group leaders to ensure their faith groups feel supported within the community when experiencing bereavement. Some faith groups prefer burial over cremation and vice-versa with members of the certain faith groups preferring expedient burial following a death of a faith member. The faith groups that we currently support include:

- Christian and Protestant Church
- Roman Catholic & Orthodox Church
- Islam
- Judaism (Chabbad, Orthodox, Liberals & Reform)
- Hinduism
- Sikhism

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism <p>These arrangements and ongoing support would not change as a result of any of the options being considered.</p>
<p>Will this change affect any service users?</p>	<p>The decision to install or not to install new cremators at Poole now or in the future will have no negative impact on any protected characteristics. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age • gender reassignment • being married or in a civil partnership • being pregnant or on maternity leave • disability • race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin • religion or belief • sex • sexual orientation • armed forces community • human rights <p>As stated earlier, Funeral Poverty could impact on those with low income/socio economic status, however this can be mitigated through Funeral Expenses Payment, less costly options for services such as a direct or unattended cremation or through a referral made for a Public Health Funeral.</p> <p>A decision to take forward Option 1 could negatively impact Funeral Directors and Celebrants whose potential customers may choose to use alternative providers such as Harbour View if cremators are not reinstated at Poole in the medium term.</p> <p>Individual mental health can be impacted during a period of bereavement and grief including the responsibilities of overseeing funeral arrangements. Clear guidance and support is made available to all experiencing a bereavement with signposting to support agencies where appropriate. Death needs to be discussed more openly and we are encouraging communities to talk more openly about death, grief and the various support mechanisms in place to alleviate the isolating impact grief can have on mental and emotional wellbeing.</p>
<p>What are the benefits or positive impacts of the change on current or potential users?</p>	<p>The decision to install cremators if made will deliver benefits that are not linked to the protected characteristics but may support individual or family choice and local funeral director</p>

	<p>businesses who may have potentially been losing a % of customers to other providers.</p>
<p>What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?</p>	<p>None of options presented have negative impacts on a protected characteristic group.</p> <p>If the decision is made not to install or to continue evaluating installation decisions the current operational arrangement with in-house conveyancing will continue to be offered which is a service that has been in place for 2 years. The marketplace is subject to a changing environment and increased competition for which long term impacts are yet to be fully understood. For example increase in direct cremation market and associated pricing.</p> <p>A number of written complaints and comments from certain community groups regarding the non-cremating status of the Poole site have been received. The local National Association of Funeral Directors have made a number of representations on the installation of new cremators at Poole together with the local Churches Together Association with a limited number of personal written comments received by local residents. The essence of the complaints focuses on the committal and cremation together at the same site ie. rite of committal followed by cremation onsite without the need to transport the deceased to Bournemouth Crematorium for cremation. There is no legislation prohibiting this and the deceased is treated with respect and dignity at all times when conveyancing arrangements are undertaken.</p> <p>A public 'Save Poole Crematorium' online petition has been set up which has been led by a local retired businessman which is supported by the local funeral director, F C Douch & Sons. This arrangement in no way impacts negatively on the protected characteristics but is one of personal opinion and belief.</p> <p>Funeral Directors are the first point of contact for most families experiencing a bereavement, and our service relies on the information imparted to grieving families at this point. This includes information regarding the operating status of the site. Residents are still given the choice to select the Poole site to hold their 'final goodbye moment' or 'celebration of life' services. We rely on funeral directors to advise families choosing Poole for their service to notify them that their loved one will not be cremated onsite at Poole. All supporting documentation required to be completed by the family clearly advises the coffin conveyancing arrangement in place which should be further emphasised by the funeral director.</p>

<p>Will the change affect employees?</p>	<p>Additional staff would need to be recruited in order to operate two sites as a crematorium compliantly under current legislation and according to the ICCM's Code of Cremation Practice.</p>
<p>Will the change affect the wider community?</p>	<p>Option 1 may result in fewer families choosing Poole as a venue of choice, impacting local funeral directors however numbers over the last two years indicate demand as a ceremonial facility remains evident. Option 2, 3 & 4 may result in more families choosing Poole as a venue of choice if the cremation takes place onsite without the need for conveyancing , but will be subject to wider marketplace competition.</p>
<p>What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?</p>	<p>No negative impacts have been identified on the protected characteristics therefore there are no mitigating actions required.</p> <p>BCP Bereavement Care Services is one of a number of marketplace providers. BCP currently operating a crematorium facility (with 4 cremators) located at Bournemouth and the current ceremonial facility at Poole with conveyancing arrangement to Bournemouth. Together comfortably serving the level of market demand experienced.</p> <p>The wider market provides individuals and families with further choice of facilities including nearby privately operated Harbour View, New Milton and Local Authority run facilities at Weymouth, Southampton and Salisbury.</p>
<p>Summary of Equality Implications:</p>	<p>In summary there is no statutory requirement for BCP Council to provide Crematorium facilities within the conurbation. At present BCP Council provides an operating crematorium facility (with 4 cremators) located at Bournemouth and the current ceremonial facility at Poole with conveyancing arrangement to Bournemouth.</p> <p>Option 1 would see a continuation of current operating practice and would not see any impact to any protected characteristic group. It may negatively impact some local marketplace funeral directors customer base.</p> <p>Option 2, 3 & 4 would not see any impact to any protected characteristic group and may increase the number of individuals and families opting to use the facility and in turn local funeral director businesses, however this not guaranteed and would be subject to wider marketplace competition.</p>