

# Government recommends crematoria be for “all faiths and none”

Posted: Fri, 12th Apr 2019

New government guidance has said crematoria should accommodate the needs of people of "all faiths and none", following recommendations made by the National Secular Society.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government outlined the requirement in response to a review on crematoria provision and facilities.

The ministry said crematoria should "ensure that their facilities are suitable to meet the needs of all members of the community, including those from all faiths and none".

It added that it encouraged "the provision of interchangeable iconography" and said it would consult on revised guidance supporting this.

The guidance is broadly in line with the recommendations submitted by the NSS in its [response](#) to the consultation, which took place in 2016.

The NSS said "all civic crematoria should be religiously neutral spaces by default, providing a range religious symbols/iconography to be made available to users upon prior request".

It added that "fixed religious iconography should be removed from crematoria wherever it is practical and reasonable to do so".

Other respondents said iconography and other materials "were not provided to meet the needs of their faith or belief" and the design of crematoria "remained overwhelmingly Christian in ethos".

The government's response said it was "important to note that England has an established church" and the status of the Church of England "is protected in law". But it also said crematoria providers should "clearly be able to demonstrate sufficient understanding of faith and other community groups' requirements to be able to provide an appropriate service".

Last year's British Social Attitudes survey [found](#) that over 52% of people in Britain have no religion and only 14% identify as belonging to the Church of England.

A response from Wakefield Council said it provides a cross that can be covered at its crematoria and the cross is uncovered for only "about 30% services".

NSS chief executive Stephen Evans welcomed the government's recommendations.

"Crematoria should be welcoming and sensitive to all.

"To this end, it is reasonable that religious iconography should be made available for all who want it in their services. However, it should not be featured as standard. It is positive that the government, despite acknowledging the privileged position of the established church, has still recommended crematoria provisions be flexible and accommodating to people of all faiths and none."

*Image: Garston / West Herts Crematorium, © [Nigel Cox](#) [CC BY-SA 2.0]*

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