

Burial and Cremation Bill Scotland (2015)  
Response from Muslim Council of Scotland, MCS

MCS welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the above Bill. As a representative body for Muslims across Scotland we have provided responses which reflect the needs of Scottish Muslims, achieved through consultation with the community.

The Muslim Council of Scotland is a membership-based umbrella organisation, which accommodates and reflects the variety of social and cultural backgrounds and outlook of the Muslim community in Scotland.

It is an independent body working to promote consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim affairs in Scotland. It is a non-sectarian and non-partisan body working for the common good.

### **General points, to both committees**

First: We draw the attention of the committee to Item 1 of the summary of the recommendations of the Burial and Cremation Review Group which states:

*The procedure for certifying deaths should be sensitive to the many different faiths and beliefs in Scotland and ensure as short a delay as possible between death and disposal.*

We think it is appropriate that a similar statement be included in the text of this Bill.

The reason for this request is that there will be many Ministerial orders and regulations which will follow in addition to Local Authorities regulations, NHS etc

Second: Burial is the only accepted method of disposal for Muslims and should be offered always at the same time as cremation, this includes adults, children, still-birth and even foetus.

## **To the Health & Safety Committee:**

### **Applications for burial (Section 8)**

The application for Burial should not introduce any extra delay to the performance of the burial process. The new Death Certification law 2011, is already unpopular because it does introduce some delay and uncertainty due to the requirement of registration before burial and the extra unknown delay if the case is chosen for review.

As to the questions raised by the consultation:

Question 1; We cannot give an opinion unless we know the details of the way it will be executed, the exhumation of bodies is a very sensitive issue.

Question 2. No comment

Question 3. We agree with the principal of the inspection.

Question 4. We agree with the principal of the proposed regulation of funeral directors.

Question 5. We believe that the Bill should address the funeral costs and introduce all possible measures to do so.

We note that the cost of the liar is a major proportion of the total costs and SG should work with Local Authorities to address this item.

Question 6. The existing provisions restricting the proximity of new crematorium to housing should stay.