

DonnaOckenden

September 2016

Donna Ockenden participated in an infant cremations consultation which has resulted in changes to a number of key issues relevant to maternity services which will come into effect on the 1st October 2016.

Dr Phillip Lee the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Victims, Youth and Family Justice has written a Ministerial Statement.

'I am announcing that new regulations regarding cremation in England and Wales have been laid before Parliament. The Cremation (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 will come into effect on 1 October 2016. We are making these changes following our recent response to our consultation on cremation, published on 7 July 2016, in which we committed to make a number of changes to infant cremation regulations and practice.

The regulations introduce a statutory definition of ashes. They also remove the current requirement that cremation authorities must keep original paper records for two years, even though they have also made electronic copies of those records.

These changes will provide clarity for bereaved parents at a difficult time in their lives, and modernise processes for crematoria.

In addition I would like to announce that, as also promised in the consultation response, we have now set up a National Cremation Working Group. The group is made up of representatives from the cremation and funeral industries, voluntary organisations who support bereaved parents, medical professionals and other government departments with an interest in cremation. In the coming months it will provide expert input into our work to further improve cremation legislation and practice.

The group's first priority will be amending statutory application forms regarding options for disposal of ashes, and bringing the cremation of foetuses of less than 24 weeks' gestation into the remit of the cremation regulations.'

8th September 2016

End.