

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Policy on arrangements for Books of Condolence



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Policy Control

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1. Statement

In certain circumstances Council will wish to make available Books of Condolence in Council Offices to allow members of the public to record their respects. The Chairperson of Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, shall determine those occasions when it is appropriate for Books of Condolence to be arranged.

2. Aims of this Policy

This policy aims to standardise arrangements for Books of Condolence.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to arrangements for all Books of Condolence opened by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

4. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme
N Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors
Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees

5. General

The Chairperson, in consultation with the Chief Executive, shall determine those occasions when it is appropriate for Books of Condolence to be arranged.

Democratic Services is responsible for arrangements for Books of Condolence, in line with arrangements detailed in appendix 1. They will work with the Head of Marketing to advertise the availability of Books.

Completed Books of Condolence are forwarded by Democratic Services to an address agreed by the Chairperson and Chief Executive, after time of closure.

The Council reserves the right to redact any recorded comments which are not deemed to be messages of condolence and which may cause offence to either members of the public signing the book, or to those to whom the Book will be presented after it has been closed.

Closure of Books shall take place 2 weeks after they have been opened.

6. Locations for Books of Condolence

Books of Condolence shall be located at:

District Electoral Area	Location/s
Crotlieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warrenpoint Town Hall
Downpatrick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Headquarters, Downshire Civic Centre Down Arts Centre
Newry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Headquarters, O'Hagan House, Newry Newry Town Hall
Rowallane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballynahinch Market House
Slieve Croob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castlewellan Community Centre
Slieve Gullion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crossmaglen Community Centre
The Mournes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcastle Centre

The Chairperson, in consultation with the Chief Executive, may determine additional places for books to be located, if particular circumstances deem this to be appropriate.

7. Emergency Contact

Circumstances leading to the need to arrange Books of Condolence can arise at short notice and can necessitate action at weekends or during holiday periods.

In such circumstances, the Chairperson will contact the Chief Executive or their designated nominee.

8. Policy Review Date

The policy will be reviewed in line with the Council's agreed policy review cycle i.e. every 4 years (as per Council's Equality Scheme commitment 4.31) or sooner, to ensure it remains reflective of legislative developments.

9. Equality Screening

Having screened the Books of Condolence policy the decision is that it should not be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) with no mitigating measures required. A copy of the equality screening is available from the Head of Corporate Policy.

Appendix 1

Action required	Implemented by	Other Notes
<p>The Chairperson will issue a statement via Marketing, expressing the sadness of the Council and people of the District at the news of the death of...../incident in question. The statement will also appear on the home page of the Council's website and on its social media accounts.</p> <p>The statement will give details of the location of the Books of Condolence. It will also mention any arrangements for an e-Book of Condolence if available.</p> <p>Photographer to be arranged to photograph for distribution to media with press statement.</p> <hr/> <p>Table/chair will be positioned in each venue with Books of Condolence (loose-leaf black folders,) a framed message, floral arrangement and table cloths.</p> <p>Email will be sent to all Councillors advising that Books of Condolence are being opened and providing details of all arrangements. Chairperson shall be the first person to sign the Book of Condolence (at one of the venues – Chairperson to decide which).</p> <p>The Books of Condolence will close two weeks after the date on which they were opened.</p> <p>When the Book of Condolence has been closed, Democratic Services will arrange, following discussion with the Chairperson and Chief Executive, arrangements for binding and where the final bound version is to be sent to or lodged.</p>	<p>Marketing</p> <p>(Statement to be approved by the Chairperson, and Chief Executive or their nominee, prior to issue)</p> <hr/> <p>Democratic Services</p> <p>(Framed message to be approved by the Chairperson, and Chief Executive or their nominee, prior to issue).</p>	