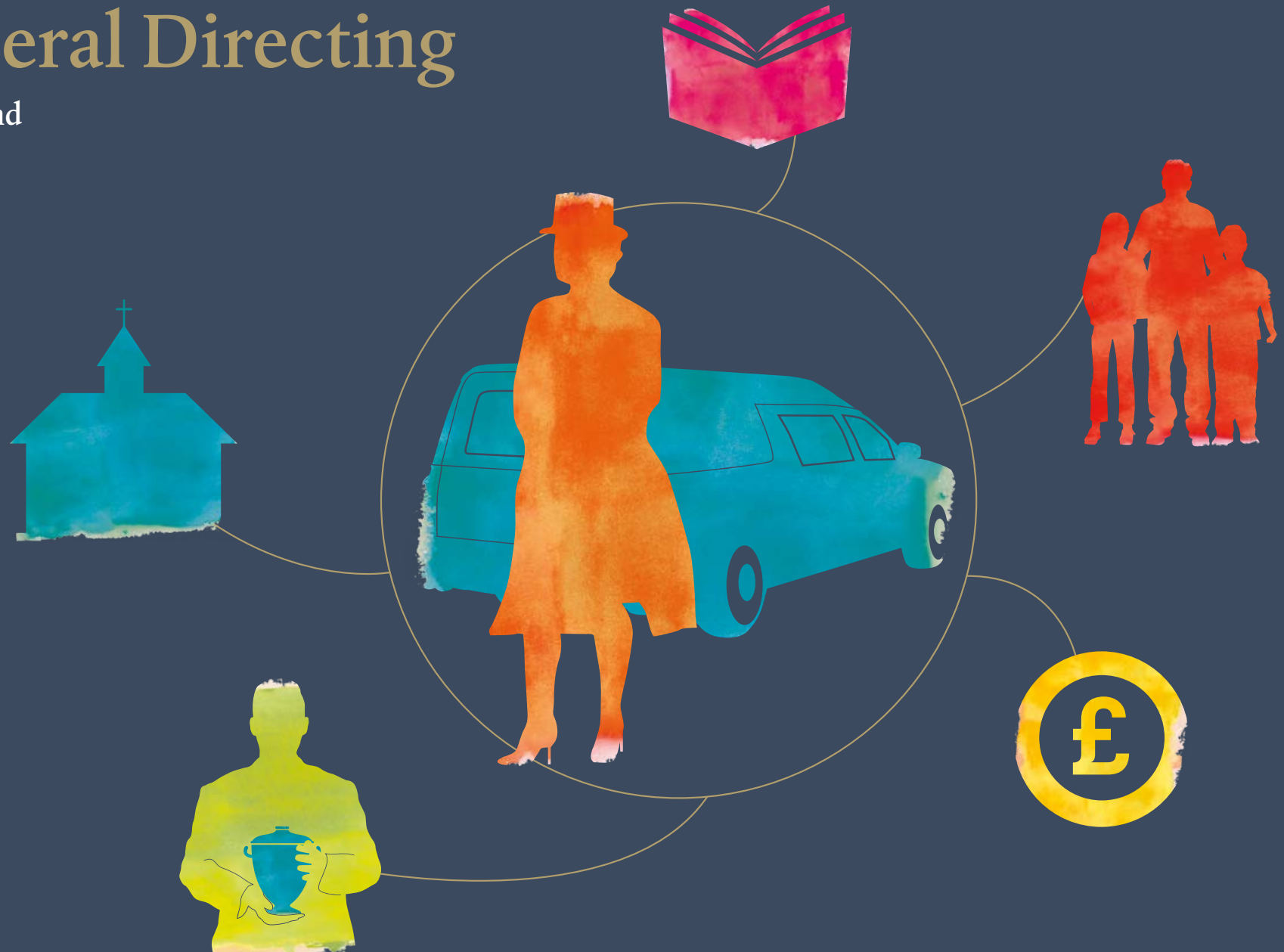


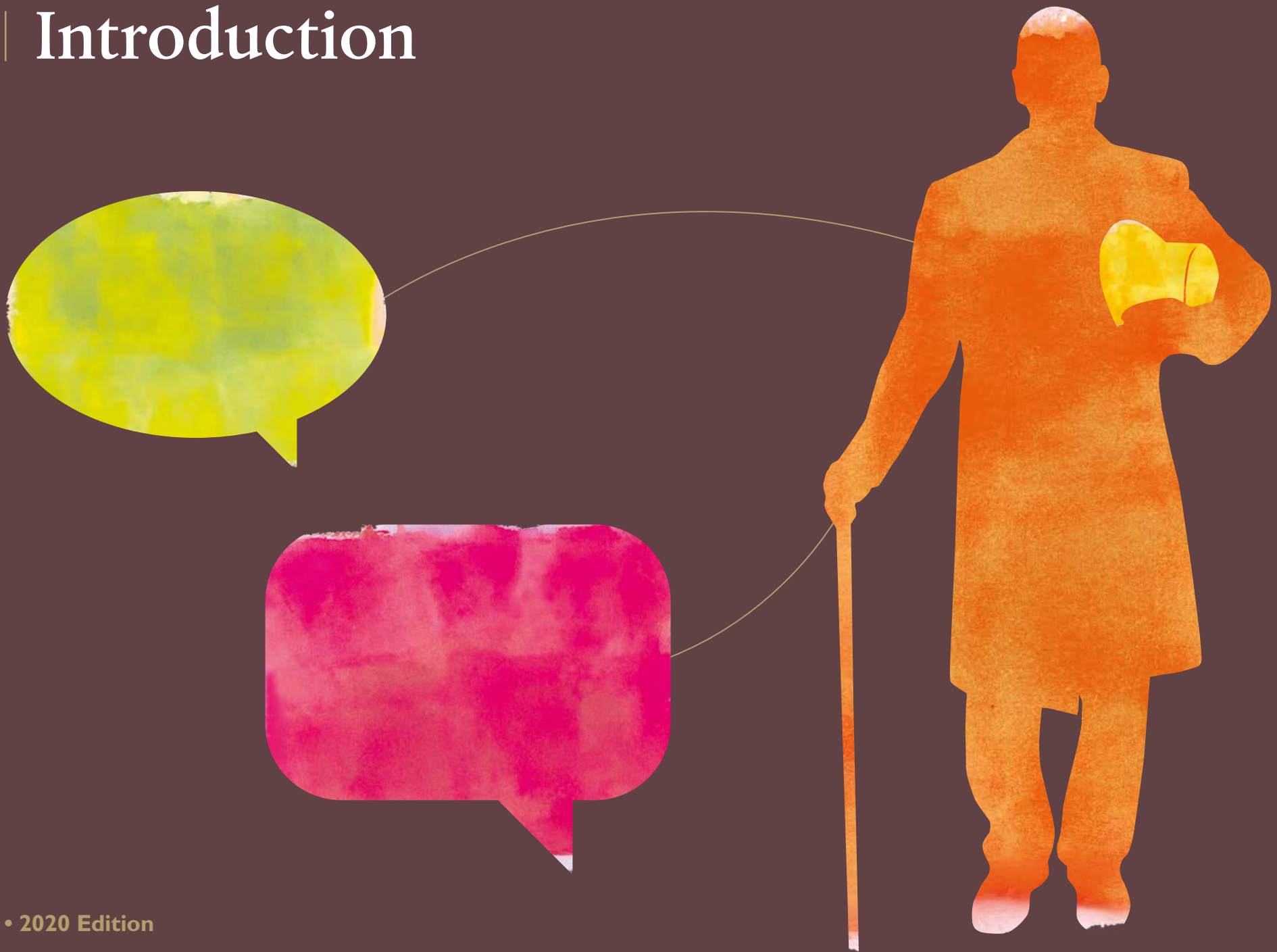
The NAFD Manual of Funeral Directing

Northern Ireland

2020 Edition



| Introduction



• 2020 Edition

| INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2020 Manual of Funeral Directing, your essential guide and reference tool in support of your role as a Funeral Director.

The Manual is a key benefit of your membership of the National Association of Funeral Directors and it brings together the collective knowledge of many of your fellow members, who have shared their expertise and experience of the profession in the spirit of collective professional development and service to bereaved people.

Funeral directing is an invaluable and essential service in society, combining professionalism and expertise with compassion and sensitivity. Every year, somewhere in the region of 600,000 people die in the United Kingdom and, for the majority of their bereaved families, one of the first people they turn to for support is a Funeral Director.

Although a historic profession, richly embedded with tradition, funerals are changing – and so the funeral profession is changing in response. As a profession we are working hard to meet the evolving needs of bereaved families and the wishes of those they have lost; we are responding to advances in technology and innovation in service delivery; we are working to invest in our people and our businesses to deliver consistently high standards – and we are seeking to anticipate the future needs of a fast-changing regulatory landscape.

As an NAFD member, you have agreed to abide by the NAFD's Code of Practice and open up the way you operate your business to our Standards and Quality Managers. In doing so, you clearly demonstrate your commitment to caring for bereaved people and those who have died, to the very best of your ability and to high standards.

The NAFD's role is to support you in your work and this latest edition of the Manual has been updated to reflect the very latest information and best practice available. It also includes links to information and organisations that are essential to your work as a Funeral Director.

Alison Crane MBA FCMJ

Chair, NAFD Board of Education and NAFD Past President

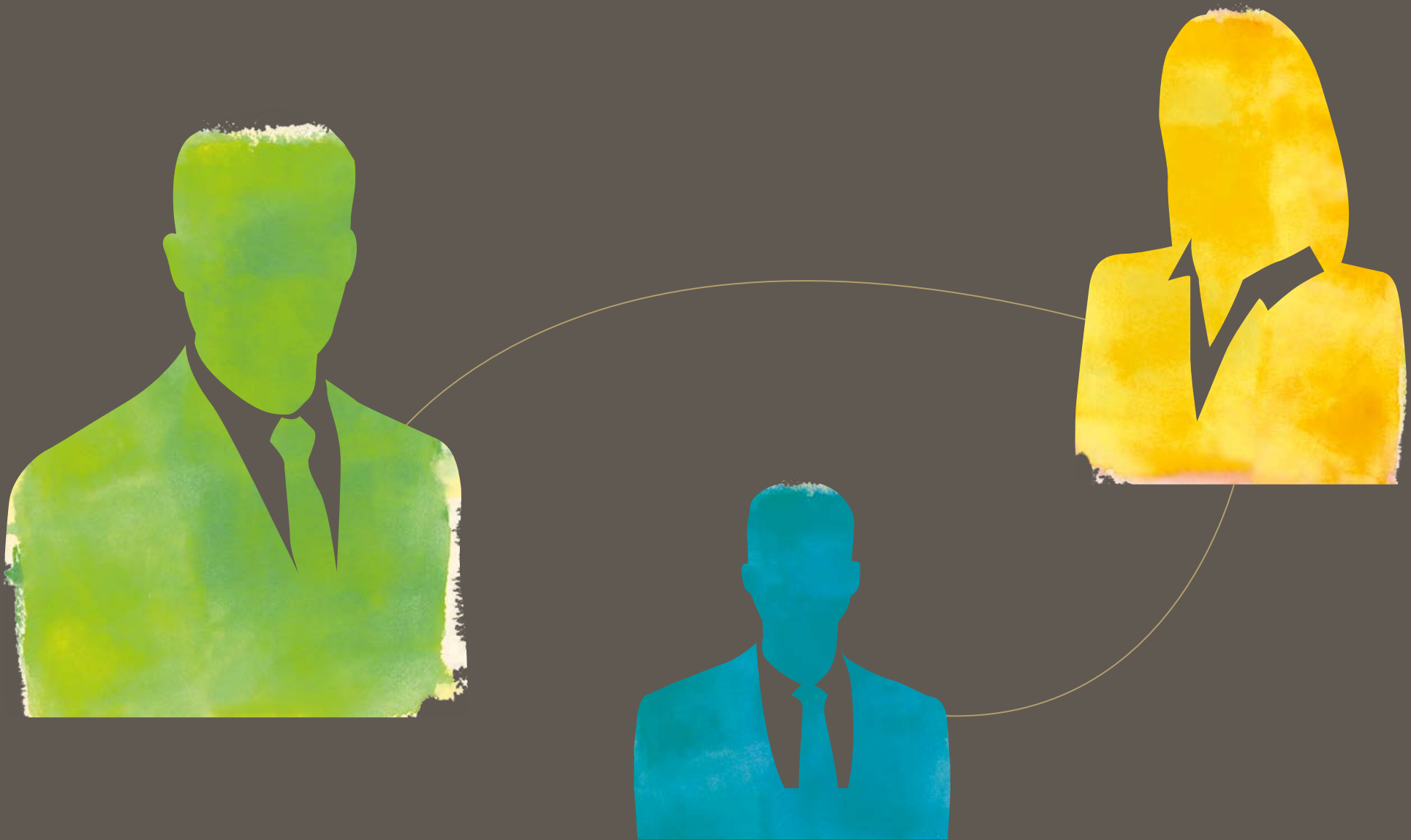
Share your expertise

We would like to invite you to share your expertise in helping us ensure the Manual remains up to date.

If you see something in the Manual that needs to be updated – or you would like to share something new that will be of benefit to your professional colleagues across the UK – please email manual@nafd.org.uk to ensure it is considered for the next six-monthly update of the Manual.



| Acknowledgements



| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NAFD would like to acknowledge and thank Kate Edwards, tutor and NAFD First Vice President, for her work in leading this review of the Manual of Funeral Directing.

The Association would also like to thank:

- **John Adams**
NAFD Second Vice President, Perry & Phillips
- **David Barrington**
President of the NAFD, Barrington's Funerals
- **James Blackburn**
Head of Funerals, Scotmid
- **Paul Cuthell**
NAFD Past President, Thomas Cuthell & Sons
- **George Fernie**
Chief Medical Examiner - Scotland
- **Jeremy Field**
NAFD Past President, CPJ Field
- **Jenny Gilbert-Trigg**
AJ Adkinson & Son
- **Helen Guyan**
Ecclesiastical
- **Rev. Gary Haire**
President of the Northern Ireland Federation, S Clarke and Son
- **Peter Linford**
Head of Training, CPJ Field
- **Graham Lymn**
NAFD Past President, funeral celebrant
- **Jackie Lymn Rose**
Director, A.W. Lymn the Family Funeral Service
- **Nigel Lymn Rose**
NAFD Past President,
Director, A.W. Lymn the Family Funeral Service
- **Natalie McKail**
Former Inspector of Funeral Directors - Scotland
- **Abi Pattenden**
NAFD Past President, Freeman Brothers
- **Steve Rowland**
Rowland Brothers International
- **Jon Levett**
NAFD Chief Executive
- **Karen Vanstone**
NAFD Education Development Manager
- **Morgan Harris**
NAFD Policy and Legislation Manager
- **Deborah Smith**
Wordsmith Communication
- **Nick Britten**
Wordsmith Communication

The NAFD Board of Education

- **Alison Crake**
NAFD Past President, Crake and Mallon (Chair)
- **Kate Edwards**
NAFD Vice President (Vice Chair)
- **Natasha Gidley**
Lincolnshire Co-operative Funeral Services
- **Keith Peacock**
Chair, Board of Examiners,
Walter C. Parson Funeral Directors
- **Barry Pritchard**
Barry Pritchard Funeral Services
- **Austin Williams**
Bristol Funeral Directors



| Contents



CONTENTS

Introduction

Acknowledgements

Contents

Chapter 1 | About the NAFD and membership

Chapter 2 | Standards

Chapter 3 | Funerals and Society

Chapter 4 | Understanding and Supporting the Bereaved

Your funeral business

Chapter 5 | The Premises

Chapter 6 | Health and Safety

Chapter 7 | Client Care & Communication

Chapter 8 | Professional Development



Arranging and conducting funerals

Chapter 9 | The role of the Funeral Director

Chapter 10 | Registering a Death

Chapter 11 | Bringing the Deceased into Care

Chapter 12 | Arranging the funeral

Chapter 13 | Care & Presentation of a Deceased Person

Chapter 14 | Liability, Entitlement Of Clients
& Other Financial Considerations

Chapter 15 | Coroner Procedures / Procurator Fiscal Procedures

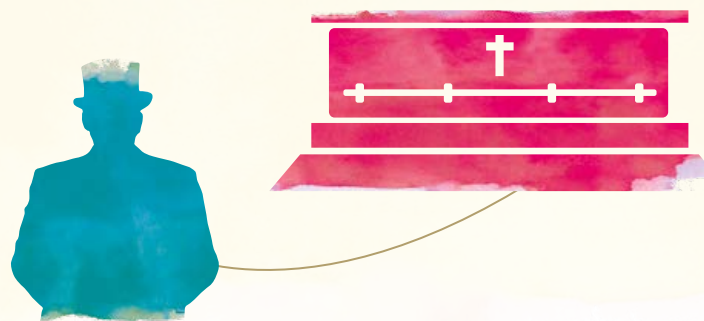
Chapter 16 | Burial

Chapter 17 | Cremation

Chapter 18 | Paying Last Respects

Chapter 19 | Managing and Conducting the Funeral

Chapter 20 | When a Child Dies



Special procedures

Chapter 21 | Bequeathal

Chapter 22 | Exhumation

Chapter 23 | Repatriation

Chapter 24 | Burial at Sea

Glossary of terms



Chapter I

About the NAFD and Membership



ABOUT THE NAFD

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

The National Association of Funeral Directors is the oldest, largest and most inclusive trade body in the sector, representing and setting the standards for more than 4,000 UK funeral homes.

The NAFD was founded in 1905 as the British Undertakers Association, becoming the NAFD in 1936 and it is known as the voice of the funeral profession - advocating for the highest standards within the profession and campaigning for the rights of all Funeral Directors and their clients.

The NAFD represents all funeral businesses, regardless of size or structure, making a commitment to both promoting and protecting the whole profession and to giving voice to the variety of views within the membership.

The Association also ensures that its members set the highest standards of customer care in the industry, through a robust Code of Practice, Code of Professional Standards and independent arbitration service.

As a result, the NAFD's lion logo is acknowledged as a 'kite mark' of quality assurance, something that the public can look for as a guarantee of high professional standards. Bereaved families should always be able to turn to an NAFD member firm with confidence to arrange a funeral that is a fitting final farewell to their loved one and meeting these high standards are central to your membership of the Association.



THE NAFD: WORKING HARD FOR UK FUNERAL FIRMS

Trust

Bearing the NAFD logo on your business stationery and branch windows indicates your professional credibility and trustworthiness to bereaved families.

Influence

The NAFD represents member views to elected members and civil servants in three of the UK's parliaments and assemblies (the Northern Ireland Assembly having been in suspension since mid-2017) – as well as with a wide variety of government bodies and other stakeholders.

Professionalism

The NAFD takes the lead in education within the profession and is responsible for a range of professional development programmes, recognised by major UK educational bodies such as the National Open College Network.

Profile

The NAFD works hard to promote to the public, media and parliamentarians the importance of not only choosing an NAFD member to bereaved families but also the standards upheld by NAFD members. Within the profession we also provide a wide range of promotional opportunities, enabling supplier members to highlight their products and services to funeral firms.

Value for money

The NAFD also continues to offer outstanding value for money to members with the most valuable benefits package in the profession and targeted support services designed to help members grow their funeral businesses. See over for details of how this benefits package saves your business money and helps it to grow.

GOVERNANCE

NAFD is a company limited by guarantee, and is governed by a Board of Directors (referred to as the Executive). The Executive comprises of an elected President, Vice President, Second Vice President, four other elected Executive Members and the Immediate Past President. Representatives of the three largest member organisations are also appointed to the Executive.

The Executive may appoint additional members, in particular to ensure that all four countries of the UK are represented.

As a Board of Directors, the Executive is responsible for setting NAFD's strategic direction and monitoring progress against the strategy. Elections for director posts are held annually at the Annual General Meeting, held in May each year.

Day to day oversight of the Association is undertaken by a Management Committee, comprising the CEO, Officers and an independent chair. The Management Committee is responsible for developing the NAFD strategy and budget and recommending these to the Executive, overseeing the work of the NAFD staff team and reporting progress to the membership.



THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF NAFD

The Articles of Association state that:

“The Company has been formed to organise, watch over, maintain, promote, protect and assist the rights and interest of members of the Company, of all Funeral Directors and other persons interested or concerned in the objects of the Company, and to give such members the means and advantages of association and united action”.

The Mission Statement of NAFD is “Helping Funeral Directors care for the Bereaved” and, in so doing, the objects of the Association are:

- a) to provide for and protect the interests of members by means of formulating, making known and implementing policy with regard to the statutory, legal, economic, health and safety, commercial, educational and other matters affecting funeral service and to make known the funeral service's views to Government and other Bodies or persons, as appropriate
- b) to secure and maintain high standards of qualification for all who seek to practice as Funeral Directors and the recognition of a Code of Professional Conduct
- c) to encourage, by the provision of lectures and teaching, the study and practice of improved methods of funeral directing and all subjects incidental thereto, and to provide for the holding of examinations and for the award of Diplomas and Certificates of proficiency therein
- d) to promote and support the formation of groups of members within the Association for the proper fulfilment of these objects
- e) to provide machinery for the settlement of disputes between members, and members and clients
- f) to facilitate the interchange of members' views with regard to matters of common interest, and to promote the consideration and discussion of all questions affecting the same

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Association is divided into four categories:-

- A. Businesses engaged in (but not necessarily exclusively) the practice of funeral directing within the United Kingdom, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
- B. Businesses engaged in (but not necessarily exclusively) supplying goods or services to the funeral profession.
- C. Funeral Directors, ancillary businesses and allied professional Associations who operate outside the United Kingdom.
- D. Membership of Category D shall entitle any Past President of the National Association of Funeral Directors to attend General meetings of the Association but not to vote in this capacity.

In respect of applications for Category A membership, a premises inspection shall be carried out by one of the Association's Standard & Quality Managers to show suitability of premises and compliance with the Code of Practice and Code of Professional Standards.

In the absence of an employee who is a qualified holder of the Diploma in Funeral Directing on staff, a representative of the applicant must successfully complete and pass a qualifying examination for entry into membership.



For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The NAFD delivers a range of core activities from which all members benefit.

These include:-

Representation to government on regulation affecting the profession

The NAFD has an extensive meetings programme with ministers and civil servants in all UK parliaments and assemblies, provides secretariat to three All Party Parliamentary Groups for funeral and bereavement issues and submits representations to all relevant government consultations and inquiries.

funeral-directory.co.uk

A major investment for the Association, funeral-directory.co.uk is already delivering leads to NAFD members across the UK by providing a central database of members to the public, complete with service information and reviews. The addition of pricing information will ensure consumers have everything they need to pick up the phone to you.

Promoting the Association and funeral profession to the media and general public

In the past year, NAFD spokespersons have appeared on all the main news channels, and on both national and local radio – as well as comments from the Association in the major national and regional daily newspapers on subjects as varied as the Department for Work & Pensions Social Fund, the importance of choosing a Funeral Director that “abides by a Code of Practice and is regularly inspected”, the importance of setting out your funeral wishes, monitoring standards within the profession and what consumers want from different types of funeral service.

Insight into consumer needs, and insight into what the profession wants

The NAFD's investment in member and consumer research (YouGov) helps equip you with useful insight into what your customers are thinking and equips the NAFD with strong arguments in support of your business.

Funeral Director Monthly magazine

Delivered to your door each month, *Funeral Director Monthly* covers all the main issues affecting the profession, updates members on the work of the NAFD, offers interesting (and unusual) stories and features, showcases suppliers and celebrates the work of NAFD members across the UK and around the world.

NAFD social media channels (Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn)

The NAFD's social media channels continue to grow their audiences, with the main Twitter account followed by more than 3,500 people and Facebook by 2,500 people. Our posts are read by the public, journalists, politicians and other stakeholders and reach hundreds of thousands of people every year.

THE TOP THREE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

In the last three Members' Surveys, the following were voted the three most valuable benefits of NAFD membership:-

NAFD Code of Practice

The NAFD logo and Code of Practice enable you to demonstrate to consumers that you are an open and accountable business. The NAFD's Standards and Quality Management team aims to inspect half of all member branches each year (circa 2,000 inspections). The Association does not charge a fee for these branch inspections as it is a key benefit of membership but, based upon fees levied upon business in other sectors by other UK trade associations, these inspections are valued at £180 - £1,020 per visit.

Customer Complaints Scheme

A customer complaints scheme is funded by the NAFD and independently operated by IDRS Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution.

From May 2019 the NAFD began the transition from a previous scheme (The Funeral Arbitration Scheme) to NAFD Resolve. This process will take twelve months to complete, as clients have up to 12 months from the date of the funeral service to make a complaint.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

The NAFD is the only trade association in the sector that offers £5m professional indemnity cover for **each UK funeral home member company**. For the majority of members, this benefit is worth more than the cost of their membership subscription on its own.

For example, if purchased individually by a firm with a turnover of £50,000, the cost would be in excess of £1,500. For a turnover of £250,000 this would be £1,800 or £2,385 for a turnover of £500,000.

In addition, members receive legal expenses insurance. For most members this represents a very important resource that they do not have to fund themselves and, again, the cost for members to individually purchase this type of cover themselves would be at least £700.

A full list of member benefits can be found on the [NAFD members website](#).

ENGAGING WITH THE NAFD

The NAFD's Local Associations and Area Federations

The NAFD's Local Associations and Area Federations offer a convenient way for members to connect with each other in their local area and to work together on issues of common interest. If you would like information on your Local Association or Area Federation, please contact Su Lewis on su@nafd.org.uk.

NAFD national events

Each year, at NAFD Conference and NAFD Autumn General Meeting, there are discussions and debates which shape the future of the Association – and of its members. As a membership organisation, these events lie at the heart of the Association's governance structure and are not only vital to the democratic purpose of the NAFD – they are also highly social and enjoyable events, enabling members to build their professional networks and, often, lifelong friendships too.

Celebration of Success

Each year, the NAFD hosts a graduation ceremony and celebration for students who have passed the Diploma in Funeral Arranging and Administration or Diploma in Funeral Directing.

The National Funeral Exhibition

The biennial National Funeral Exhibition not only offers a vibrant opportunity to find out the very latest developments in your profession and meet suppliers from not only the UK and Ireland but around the world too – it is also a revenue stream for the NAFD, helping to fund our activity on your behalf.

Member communications

From the NAFD member website to the monthly e-newsletter and other email briefings, the NAFD aims to keep members updated on the latest information affecting the funeral profession and what it means for your business.

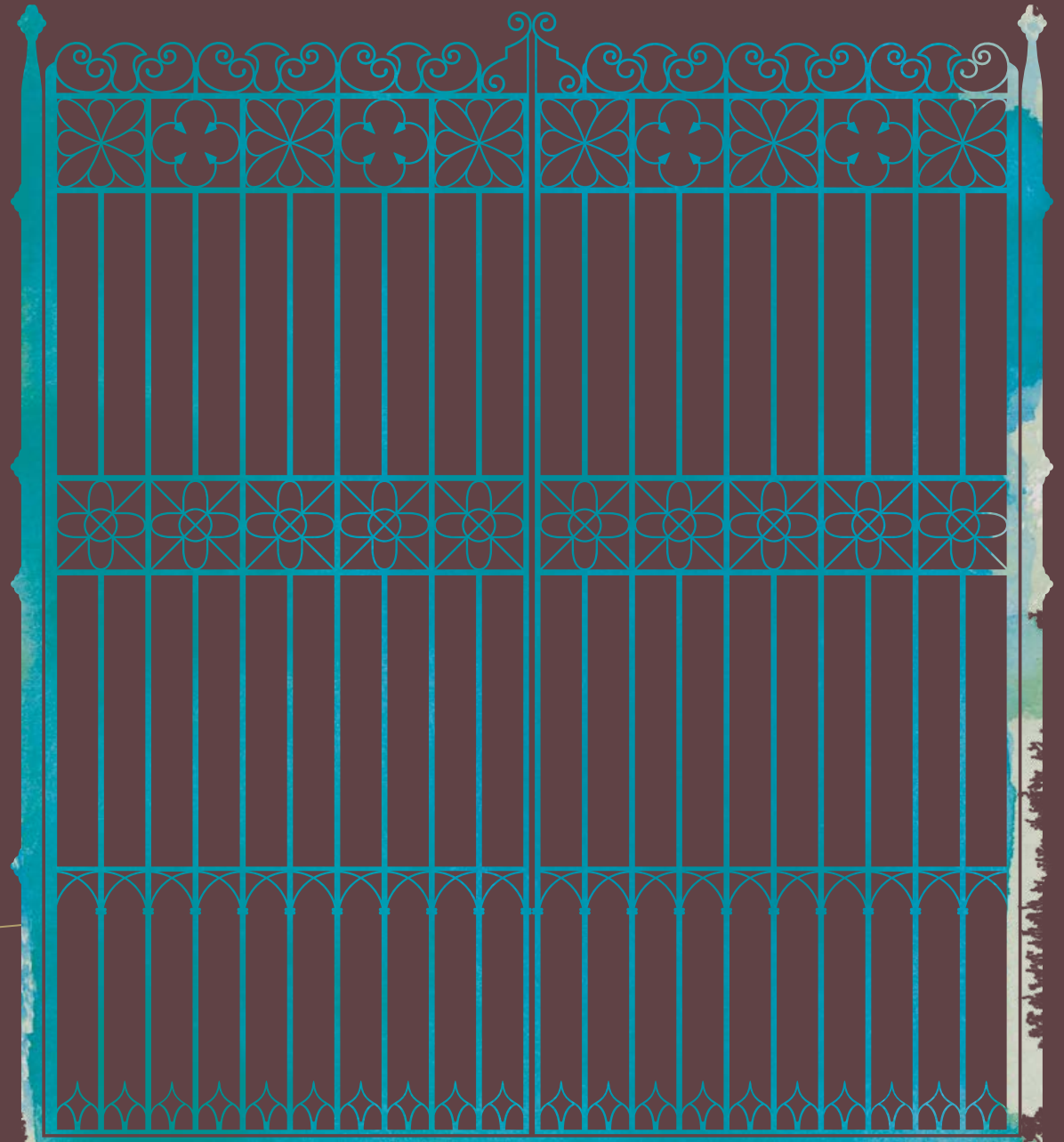
International

As well as welcoming overseas members, attending major funeral trade events across the globe and hosting the biennial National Funeral Exhibition, which welcomes visitors from 19 nations, the NAFD is represented on FIAT/IFTA and the European Federation of Funeral Services (EFFS). The Association also monitors the activities of the European Commission and European Parliament for changes to legislation which may impact upon its members.

**The more you engage with the NAFD,
the more benefit you will derive from it.**

Chapter 2

Standards

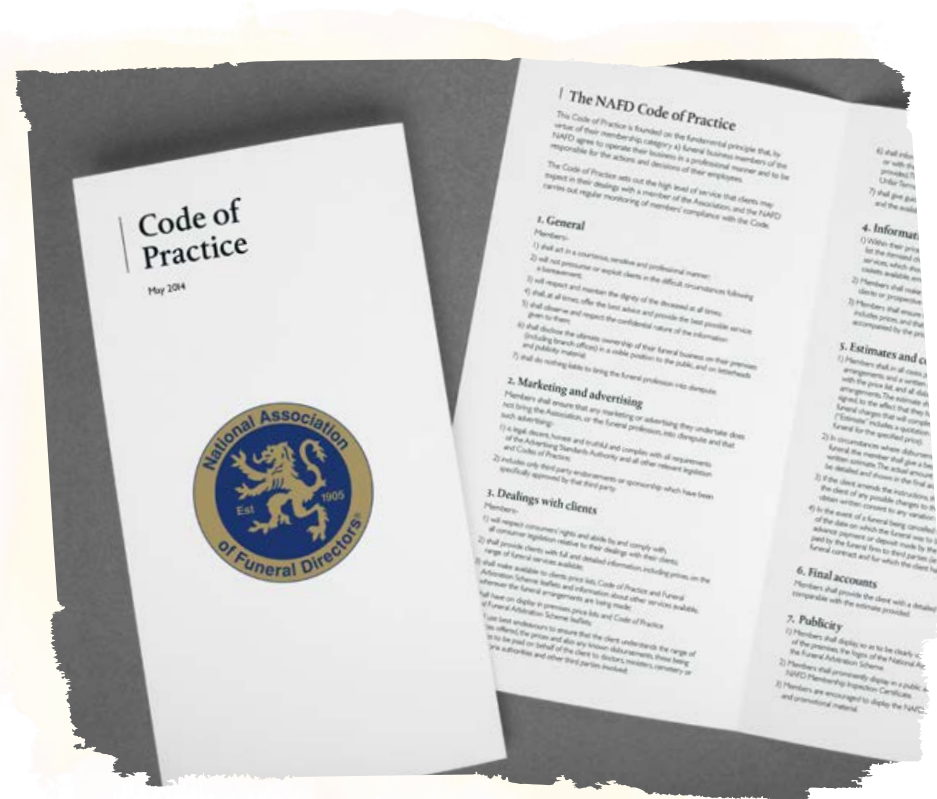


STANDARDS

The NAFD Code of Practice ('the Code') sets out the high standard of service that bereaved families can expect in their dealings with Category A (UK funeral firm) members of the National Association of Funeral Directors. Among other things, the Code sets out key requirements in respect of price information, estimates, final accounts and marketing.

Members' compliance with the Code is monitored by the Association's Committee for Professional Standards with support from complaint handling staff at National Office and a national team of Standards and Quality Managers.

The requirement that all Category A members must abide by the Code ensures that bereaved families can look for the NAFD logo as a symbol of quality and the highest standards when they are choosing a Funeral Director.



I. THE NAFD CODE OF PRACTICE

Funerals are an important part of the grieving process and Funeral Directors provide an invaluable service by making arrangements and providing services for clients at a time when they may be vulnerable and emotional. The NAFD requires its members to adopt the highest standards, both in assisting their client to choose a funeral that is right for them and the person that has died, and in providing a professional and compassionate service according to the wishes of the client.

In 1979, to foster good practice within the funeral service profession, the National Association of Funeral Directors drew up a Code of Practice. The Code of Practice applies to all Category A members (UK funeral firms). Since 1979, a number of changes have been made to the Code of Practice, ensuring a stricter and more wide ranging set of criteria was established.

Paragraph 10(3) of the Code requires Category A members to co-operate in the Association's client redress procedures¹ and to participate in independent dispute resolution processes such as conciliation and arbitration should this become necessary.

In agreeing to abide by the Code of Practice as a condition of membership, members of the NAFD have a responsibility to maintain the highest level of service and care to both the bereaved and the deceased people entrusted into their care.

There has, perhaps, never been a more important time for the whole profession to work together under a united representative body to deliver the highest possible standards. Regulation of the funeral profession is soon expected to roll out in Scotland and, in Westminster; not one but two inquiries into funerals were launched in 2018 - the HM Treasury consultation on funeral plan regulation and the Competition & Markets Authority market study of the funeral sector.

As well as the interest in the profession by Government, the funeral profession remains almost constantly under the spotlight of both traditional media (print, television and radio) as well as across digital and social media. Given all of this change, not only must Funeral Directors continue to deliver the highest levels of client service, they must be seen to do so, giving confidence to the general public who rightly expect the highest standards of care, compassion and service from the funeral profession.

1. The NAFD's client redress procedures include 'The Funeral Arbitration Scheme' and 'NAFD Resolve'. For further information, see the relevant part of this chapter below.

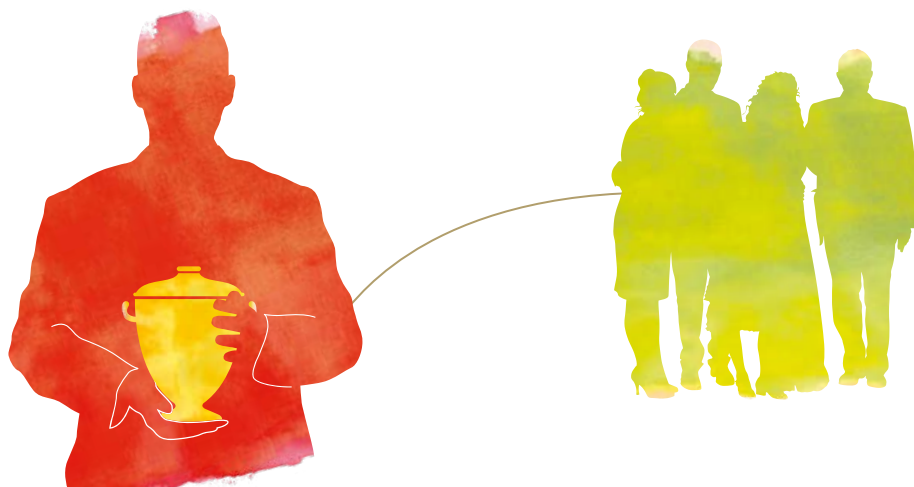
It is important that all funeral directing, funeral arranging and funeral service operating staff have read and fully understood the Code.

The Code of Practice highlights the basic relationship between a Funeral Director and their client, guiding the public to expect good service from this relationship.

By following the Code, the Funeral Director guarantees to the public:

- the integrity of a Funeral Director;
- value for money;
- a dignified, professional and compassionate service;
- itemised charges;
- a written, itemised estimate;
- the support and standards monitoring of a respected and professional trade association; and
- an independent complaints service for dissatisfied clients, even in circumstances where they might not have a valid legal claim.

The NAFD Code of Practice (2013 revision) is detailed in full below. It includes Section 9.2, which was removed from the Code in February 2019. The Code is currently under review and this manual will be reissued with the revised Code when it is published.



NAFD CODE OF PRACTICE

This Code of Practice is founded on the fundamental principle that Category A funeral directing members of NAFD, who by virtue of their membership, agree to operate the business in a professional manner and to be responsible for the actions and decisions of their employees. The Code of Practice sets out the high level of service that clients may expect in their dealings with a member of the National Association of Funeral Directors, and the NAFD carries out regular monitoring of members compliance with the Code.

I. GENERAL

Members:-

- 1) Shall, act in a courteous, sensitive and professional manner;
- 2) will not pressurise or exploit clients in the difficult circumstances following a bereavement;
- 3) will respect and maintain the dignity of the deceased at all times.
- 4) shall, at all times, offer the best advice and provide the best possible service;
- 5) shall observe and respect the confidential nature of the information given to them;
- 6) shall disclose the ultimate ownership of their funeral business on premises (including branch offices) which is in a visible position to the public, and on letterheads and publicity material;
- 7) shall do nothing liable to bring the funeral profession into disrepute.

2. MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Members shall ensure that any marketing or advertising they undertake does not bring the Association, or the funeral profession, into disrepute and that such advertising:-

- 1) is legal, decent, honest and truthful and complies with all requirements of the Advertising Standards Authority and all other relevant legislation and Codes of Practice;
- 2) includes only third party endorsements or sponsorship which have been specifically approved by that third party.

3. DEALINGS WITH CLIENTS

Members:-

- 1) will respect consumers' rights and abide by, and comply with, all consumer legislation relative to their dealings with their client;
- 2) shall provide clients with full and detailed information, including prices, on the range of funeral services available;
- 3) shall make available to clients price lists, Code of Practice and Funeral Arbitration Scheme leaflets and information about other services available, wherever the funeral arrangements are being made;
- 4) shall have on display in premises price lists, Code of Practice and Funeral Arbitration Scheme leaflets;
- 5) shall use best endeavours to ensure that the client understands the range of services offered, the prices and also any known disbursements, these being the fees to be paid on behalf of the client to Doctors, Ministers, cemetery or crematoria authorities and other third parties involved;
- 6) shall inform the client in writing, either at the time of making the arrangements or with the estimate, of the terms and conditions on which services will be provided. These terms and conditions must be drawn up in line with the Unfair Terms and Consumer Contracts Regulations;
- 7) shall give guidance to the client with regard to registration of the death and the availability of relevant Government benefits;

4. INFORMATION TO BE MADE AVAILABLE

- 1) Members shall have within the price lists on display and available:- the itemised charges and descriptions of the constituent elements of their services to include, professional services, removal charges, coffins or caskets available, embalming, hearse(s), limousine(s) along with other services available.
- 2) Members shall make copies of the price lists available to be taken away by clients or prospective clients.
- 3) Members shall ensure that all literature detailing coffins and/or caskets available shall include prices, and that coffins or caskets displayed on the premises are accompanied by the price.

5. ESTIMATES AND CONFIRMATIONS

Members:-

- 1) shall, in all cases, provide a written confirmation of the funeral arrangements and a written itemised estimate of all funeral charges consistent with the price list, and all disbursements known at the time of making the arrangements. The estimate shall make it clear that the client has accepted, and signed, to the effect that they have accepted personal responsibility for the funeral charges which will complete the contractual arrangements for the funeral. ('Estimate' includes a quotation and is an offer to carry out the specified funeral for the specified price).
- 2) In circumstances where disbursements may not be known in advance of the funeral, the member shall give a best estimate of such disbursements on the written estimate. The actual amount of such disbursements shall be detailed and shown in the final account.
- 3) If the client amends the instructions, the member shall endeavour to inform the client of any possible changes to the original estimate and, where possible, obtain written consent to any variation from the initial agreement.
- 4) In the event of a funeral being cancelled, the member shall repay to a client, within thirty days of the date on which the funeral was to be performed, any advance payment or deposit made by the client less any amounts which were paid by the Funeral Director to third parties (e.g. cremation fees) pursuant to the funeral contract and for which the client has received goods or services.

6. FINAL ACCOUNTS

Members shall provide the client with a detailed and itemised final account that is comparable with the estimate provided.

7. PUBLICITY

- 1) Members shall display, so as to be clearly visible to the public from the outside of the premises, the logos of the National Association of Funeral Directors and the *Funeral Arbitration Scheme*.
- 2) Members shall prominently display in a public area of their premises a current *Premises Inspection Certificate*.
- 3) Members are encouraged to display the NAFD logo on stationery and promotional material.

8. MONITORING

The Association will monitor the compliance of its members with their obligations of this Code of Practice through education, inspection, independent conciliation and arbitration. The Association will publish annually a report on members' compliance with this Code of Practice, which will also include the annual report of the Independent Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee on the workings of this Code of Practice.

9. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- 1) The choice of a funeral firm to carry out a funeral should always be the prerogative of the family concerned. When two members are called at the same time to attend a bereavement, both shall show a willingness to withdraw leaving the choice with the family.
- 2) Members shall not solicit funeral instructions, nor employ any person to do so, nor shall they offer or give reward for recommendation. *(Please note, 9.2 was removed from the Code of Practice in February 2019 and no longer applies. It will be removed from the manual when the new Code of Practice is published.)*
- 3) Members shall provide employees with training, including the provisions of the Code and legal obligations to consumers, and written guidance which ensures that clients are given sufficient information to make informed decisions about entering into funeral arrangements.
- 4) Members shall have arrangements for dealing with all reasonable consumer enquiries before, during and after the funeral service has been completed.

10. COMPLAINTS

- 1) Members shall appoint a designated senior person to deal with complaints from clients and have a formal written procedure for handling such complaints.
- 2) The vast majority of funerals are carried out to the satisfaction of clients. The National Association of Funeral Directors, through its Funeral Arbitration Scheme, provides a dedicated procedure for clients who feel they have not received the service they desired. To use this service a complaint must be made within twelve months of the date of the funeral. The first stage is for the client to contact the member to resolve the issues they have about the service received. If the client is unable to reach a resolution of the issues with the member, they should contact the Funeral Arbitration Scheme at 618 Warwick Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1AA, which provides independent conciliation and arbitration through IDRS Ltd (the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution).

From 1st January 2020 NAFD complaints will be handled through NAFD Resolve.

- 3) Members are required, by virtue of the Rules of the Association, to co-operate in the client redress procedures and to participate in the independent conciliation and arbitration scheme. Members are bound by an arbitrator's decision.
- 4) Members also agree to abide by the decisions of the Disciplinary Committee on any matter referred to them alleging a breach of the Rules and Guidelines of the Association and this Code of Practice.
- 5) Members, when submitting the final account, shall invite the client to offer any comments they may have about the service received. A contact name shall be provided for this purpose and to raise any concerns about the service.
- 6) Members are required to co-operate at all times with Trading Standards Offices, Citizens Advice Bureaux, consumer support groups and any other organisation representing clients in the resolution of complaints or disputes.
- 7) A complaint under this procedure must be made within twelve months of the date of the funeral.



2. THE NAFD CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

In 2014, the Association launched its Code of Professional Standards. This underpins the Code of Practice by requiring members to have in place a recommended set of operating procedures ('ways of working') covering such issues as:

- ensuring high standards are reached and maintained for the interior and exterior of member premises;
- ensuring funeral colleagues are trained and qualified, where possible; and
- there are robust and auditable records in respect of procedures followed for:
 - o Management of donations
 - o Management of cremation remains
 - o Identification procedures
 - o Management of jewellery and personal possessions

The Code of Professional Standards is detailed in full opposite.



For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

NAFD CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

It is a fundamental principle of the Code of Practice and the Code of Professional Standards that category a) members of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) are responsible for the actions and decisions of their employees while their company is in membership. It is expected that members will abide by, and comply with, all funeral, business, health and safety and such related laws and rules as are, from time to time, issued by the Government and other regulatory bodies. Any such non-compliance may lead to suspension/withdrawal of membership.

In accordance with Rule 7 which states that members shall be required to register all trading names and branch offices, members will confirm to the Association the type of premises, as follows:-

Type 1: Main office with full facilities

Type 2: Branch office with full facilities

Type 3: Branch office with arranging facilities only

Type 4: Branch office with viewing facilities only. No arranging or facilities for retaining the deceased

Type 5: Funeral service hub premises. No access by the public, and the main function is the holding and preparation of the deceased and other related activities

Type 6: Main business premises. Holding and viewing of the deceased takes place at the premises of another member funeral firm

Members will ensure that their premises and vehicles are available for inspection by the Standards & Quality Managers (SQM) of the NAFD, or any other person nominated by the NAFD for such purpose. **In this instance, "Premises" will mean:**

- all buildings used and/or owned by the member for the provision of funeral services;
- both the exterior and interior of all buildings used in the provision of funeral service will be expected to show a good standard of maintenance and cleanliness and be acceptable in all respects for the provision of funeral services;
- the reception area must be well decorated and furnished, and toilet facilities for clients should be available where possible;
- the showroom (where such exists) or the brochure in the interview/arranging room, will be inspected to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice with particular regard to prices and information;
- the interview/arranging room shall be such where the client can feel relaxed and be an appropriate environment for arranging a funeral. The area should be well decorated, furnished and maintained and be able to be isolated from interruption, i.e. telephones ringing;

- the preparation and holding facilities for the deceased shall be dignified and adequate for the number of funerals conducted by the member. These facilities do not have to be on the same site, but will come under the scope of the premises inspection. It is expected that refrigeration facilities will be available and/or evidence of embalming facilities. The deceased shall be treated with respect at all times;
- the viewing room, chapel of rest or similar facility to allow families to pay their last respects shall be on site or within a reasonable travelling distance of the member's office where the arrangements are made. These facilities should be well decorated and furnished to ensure an acceptable ambience;
- whether owned by the member or not, i.e. hired in, all vehicles used by the member for the provision of funeral services (to include removal vehicles, "runabout" style vehicles if they are used in funeral service, hearses and limousines) are expected to comply with the relevant legislation.

Any equipment used in funeral service must be used as directed by the manufacturer and for the task for which it was intended, and be serviced in line with the manufacturer's recommendations.

During the inspection both the appearance and conduct of employees may be monitored. It is expected that all employees shall be properly trained, obtain industry qualifications where possible and be aware of, and comply with, the NAFD's Codes.

It is accepted that an inspection can only provide a view taken at that particular time. Whilst every endeavour will be made to compile a realistic report on each premises inspected, the member will always be given the opportunity to discuss the report with the SQM or his/her line manager. It is usually possible to agree a timescale for any non-compliance issues to be corrected, and a date agreed by which a re-inspection can be made.

In addition to the above, members will be expected to, if requested, provide evidence of robust and auditable records regarding:-

- the collection, collation and distribution of donations;
- procedures relating to the identification of the deceased and records for the tracking of where the deceased is held;
- the safe keeping of cremated remains and records showing evidence of the client's requirements/instructions;
- the safe keeping of jewellery and personal possessions and evidence of the client's requirements/instructions.

Examples of 'best practice' and documentation to assist in these procedures are available from National Office or downloadable from the NAFD website www.nafd.org.uk. They are also displayed in the chapters each relates to throughout the Manual.

3. INSPECTIONS

The NAFD's Standards & Quality Manager (SQM) team is responsible for visiting members on a biennial basis to ensure compliance with the Association's Code of Practice and Code of Professional Standards.

They are also available to give advice and support during our visits, as well as keeping members updated with NAFD qualifications and the wide range of member benefits available from the NAFD to support their business and its employees.

About the inspection

The visiting SQM will require an accompanied tour of all the facilities at the funeral home, including any facilities that may be on a different site to the main address. They will need to audit completed documentation in relation to funeral arrangements, including arrangement forms and written estimates.

Mortuary, cremated remains and jewellery/personal effects registers will also be checked, as will systems and procedures for identification of deceased persons and cremated remains. The safeguarding of jewellery, personal effects and charitable donations will also be discussed.

The length of an inspection visit depends on the size of the facilities and whether or not there are issues raised which require discussion but, as a rule of thumb, members should expect the visit to last between 60 and 90 minutes.

The SQM will only review the documents, they will not record or copy any information within the documents. In addition, we consider any General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy you have should state you will share information with third parties.

Whilst SQM's have no legal right to enter your premises, it is a condition of membership that you allow us to inspect your facilities and documentation on a two yearly basis. We are there to help and support members and so would encourage you to welcome the inspection process and see it as a chance to secure support and advice on the continuous improvement of your services.

If you are with a client family when the SQM arrives, the SQM will not insist on a visit, as client families always come first. The SQM will either return later in the day, or at another time.

All members of the team carry photo ID which they will show you when they arrive.

What happens if a funeral home fails an inspection?

There are three possible outcomes from the visit: compliant, non-compliant and fixed. If there are any issues raised which result in non-compliance, these will be discussed at the time and support and guidance will be given to ensure members can meet the requirements of the Codes in the future.

Some areas can be fixed immediately, but these are limited to minor issues such as leaflets not being on display or a missing NAFD Funeral Advisory Scheme window sticker.

If the funeral home is found to be non-compliant, a letter will be sent to the member firm's head office highlighting the areas needing attention and you will be asked to provide supporting evidence to show that these have been rectified.

The SQM will agree a date with you to return to ensure that any remedial action agreed has been implemented. You will also receive a letter confirming this.

Although the team only visit on a biennial basis, please feel free to contact them in between these visits if they can be of any assistance to you - or if you would a SQM to see any refurbishments you have completed since your last visit.

4. NAFD CLIENT REDRESS PROCEDURES

The National Association of Funeral Directors is committed to supporting its members in providing professional and compassionate care to bereaved people. This includes making sure they properly address any concerns raised about the services they provide.

Although the vast majority of funerals are completed to the satisfaction of the client, there will be occasions when something does not go well and help is needed from an independent party to resolve the situation.

The NAFD, in conjunction with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR), provides the clients of Category A NAFD members with access to an independent dispute resolution process.

About CEDR

CEDR is an independent non-profit organisation and a registered charity with a vision that **better conflicts** result in **better outcomes** leading to a **better world**. Their mission is to provide society with skills and solutions for effective dialogue and to bring about sustainable change.

The NAFD currently operates two similar but separate client redress procedures: 'NAFD Resolve' and 'The Funeral Arbitration Scheme'. The correct scheme for a particular client will depend on the timing and circumstances of their complaint.

Both of the NAFD's client redress procedures involve the use of trained dispute resolution specialists to help bring the dispute to an end.

A customer complaints scheme is funded by the NAFD and independently operated by IDRS Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution.

From May 2019 the NAFD began the transition from a previous scheme (The Funeral Arbitration Scheme) to NAFD Resolve. This process will take twelve months to complete, as clients have up to 12 months from the date of the funeral service to make a complaint.

More information about these procedures, including member obligations and client eligibility rules, can be found on the [NAFD website](https://www.nafd.org.uk).

A client has a complaint. What should they do?

In the first instance, if they feel comfortable doing so, we always recommend clients should discuss their complaint with you directly and give you the opportunity to resolve their concerns.

NAFD member firms are required to have a complaints process and a senior person, within the firm, responsible for handling any such complaints in a professional and objective way.

However, if the client is not satisfied that their concerns have been adequately addressed by the Category A member firm, they have a right to seek dispute resolution assistance from the NAFD.

Clients can make a complaint via our [online complaint form](https://www.nafd.org.uk), on the complaints section of our website, www.nafd.org.uk.

If they do not have access to the internet, they can request a call back from a member of our complaints team by leaving a voice message on 0121 711 1636.

They will receive notification that we have received their complaint within three working days.

Chapter 3

Funerals and Society



FUNERALS AND SOCIETY

WHAT IS A FUNERAL?

For thousands of years, funerals have combined the disposal of mortal remains with an event which provides people with a means of expressing their beliefs, thoughts and feelings about the person that has died. Funeral rites are as old as human culture itself, pre-dating the evolution of Homo Sapiens and there is evidence of funerals dating to at least 300,000 years ago.

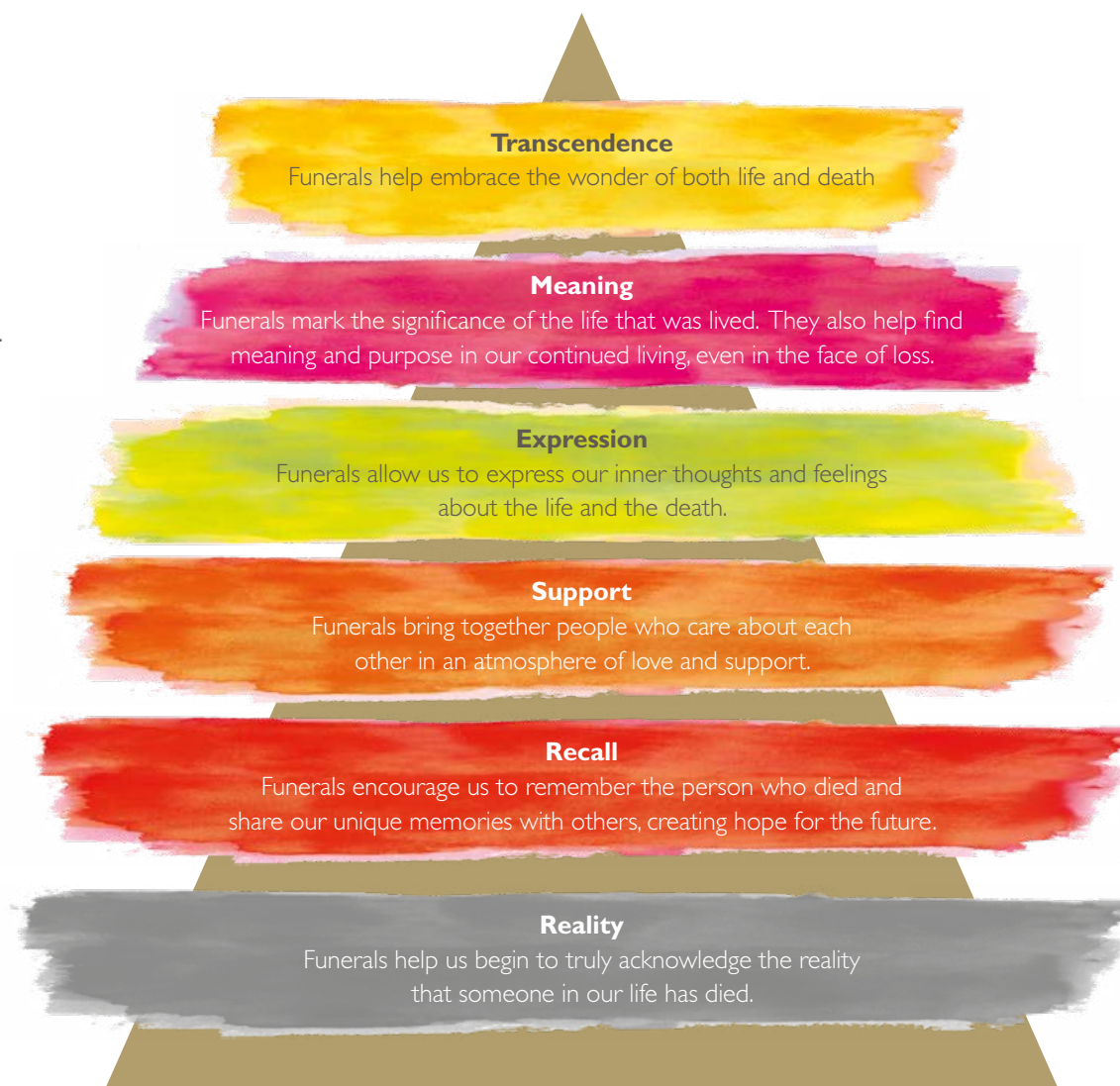
The disposal of the body alone does not constitute a funeral – it simply meets the environmental health requirements for disposal of a body. All dictionary definitions of a funeral confirm that it includes a ceremony, held shortly after a person's death, usually including the person's burial or cremation.

For a funeral service to have taken place it must, therefore, also meet the needs of the living.

The author, educator and grief counsellor, Dr Alan Wolfelt, established that a funeral service can fulfil a number of important requirements:

- They provide for the dignified and respectful care of the deceased
- They help us acknowledge that someone loved has died
- They allow us to say goodbye
- They provide a support system (for family and friends of the deceased person)
- They offer reflection on the meaning of life and death;
- They offer continuity and hope for the living

Dr Wolfelt developed the 'Hierarchy of the Purpose of Funerals' to help us understand the different ways in which funerals meet an important need in society.



THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF FUNERALS AROUND THE GLOBE

While in Western society funerals follow a very similar set of core patterns and traditions, in other cultures they are dramatically different to those we are familiar with in the UK:

- In Tana Toraja in eastern **Indonesia**, funerals are raucous affairs involving the whole village. They can last anywhere from days to weeks. Families save up for long periods of time to raise the resources for a lavish funeral, where sacrificial water buffalo will carry the deceased's soul to the afterlife.
- The Benguet of north western **Philippines** blindfold their dead and place them next to the main entrance of the house – and their Tinguian neighbours dress bodies in their best clothes, sit them on a chair and place a lit cigarette in their lips. The Caviteño tribes, who live near Manila, bury their dead in a hollowed-out tree trunk. When someone becomes ill, they select the tree where they will eventually be entombed. Meanwhile, the Apayo, who live in the north of the Philippines, bury their dead under the kitchen.
- Many Vajrayana Buddhists in **Mongolia and Tibet** believe in the transmigration of spirits after death – that the soul moves on, while the body becomes an empty vessel. To return it to the earth, the body is chopped into pieces and placed on a mountaintop, which exposes it to the elements – including vultures.
- The Malagasy people of **Madagascar** have a famous ritual called “famadihana,” or “the turning of the bones”. Once every five or seven years, a family has a celebration at its ancestral crypt where the bodies, wrapped in cloth, are exhumed and sprayed with wine or perfume. As a band plays at the lively event, family members dance with the bodies.
- When a loved one dies in Aboriginal society in **Australia's Northern Territory**, elaborate rituals begin. First, a smoking ceremony is held in the loved one's living area to drive away their spirit. Next a feast is held, with mourners painted ochre as they partake in food and dance. The body is traditionally placed atop a platform and covered in leaves as it is left to decompose.



FUNERALS IN THE UK

Many of what are often seen as British funeral traditions were born during the reign of Queen Victoria. During this time, Victorian funerals became a highly elaborate affair - with bespoke mourning clothing, mourning envelopes and paper with black sealing wax and mourning jewellery all considered a standard part of the funeral arrangements.

By the mid-twentieth century funerals had become much more low key and often followed a similar and simple formula with a service (often in a church) followed by a burial or, increasingly, a cremation and a modest reception for the mourners.

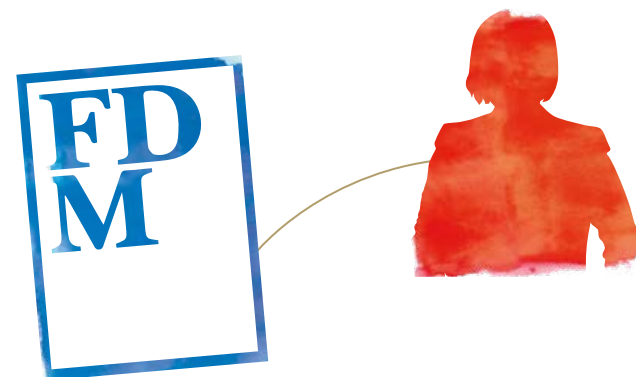
However, funerals today are rapidly becoming much more individualistic, with a wide choice and range of options available, as more people opt to celebrate the life of the individual who has passed away, as well as mourning their death.

For many people in the UK, funerals are being designed to be uplifting occasions where families, friends and loved ones increasingly choose to add personal touches to a funeral service and arrange unique elements to give a send-off that is unique to the person that has died. This means that Funeral Directors need to be aware of a very wide range of options that might help families to have the funeral that is right for them.

The NAFD's monthly magazine *Funeral Director Monthly* reports on a wide range of funeral case studies and features the latest products from suppliers to the funeral profession. This can assist Funeral Directors in staying up to date on the latest developments within the profession.

There are now far fewer religious funerals held in the UK, with the Church of England now presiding over around a third of all funerals in the UK and increasing numbers of services being led by non-religious celebrants instead.

The increasingly cultural diversity of the UK also means Funeral Directors are also becoming increasingly experienced in arranging funerals for a wide range of different religious communities.



FAITH FUNERALS IN THE UK

Below is a brief guide to the funeral rituals of the main faiths in the UK. If you need guidance on arrangement of a funeral for another faith, please call the NAFD on 0121 711 1343 and we will put you in touch with a fellow member with the relevant experience.

AFRO-CARIBBEAN FUNERALS

Afro-Caribbean Funerals can last between 3-5 hours. They are seen as a farewell thanksgiving service because a loved one is 'going home'. Funerals involve the whole community and are sometimes held on a Saturday so the maximum number can attend.

After death, a vigil is held - known as a 'nine night' ritual, it is a gathering of friends and relatives to eat, drink and swap stories. The body of the deceased person is washed and prepared, then dressed in their best clothing and laid out on the bed. During the wake, friends and relatives file past the bed to pay last respects before burial takes place the following day.

The funeral dress-code for mourners may well include brightly coloured clothing and large, ornate caskets are a likely choice of coffin. There will often be a large procession of mourners following behind the hearse.

The funeral is likely to include joyous singing of favourite hymns, including 'How Great Thou Art' and 'Amazing Grace' and at the end of the service mourners are often invited to pass by the open-casket, to pay final respects to the deceased, before the lid is sealed down.

Relatives and friends may speak at the graveside and often they will want to fill in the grave themselves, accompanied by the congregation singing traditional songs and hymns.

For further information, visit: <https://ajamaicaexperience.com/jamaican-funeral-traditions/>

BAPTIST FUNERALS

A viewing service, where mourners go to view their loved one, is a common practice in the Baptist church. This often happens at the funeral home or the church, and usually takes place a day or two before a Baptist funeral. Any civil or military funeral rites that the family requests are conducted during this ceremony.

Baptist funeral services often take place in a church or crematorium and are led by a Baptist Minister. The Baptist funeral order of service primarily focuses on the role of God in the life of the person who has passed away and their soul reuniting with God in the afterlife. The funeral service can be a joyous occasion that celebrates the loved one's life and their afterlife with God. Alternatively, it can be a more sombre ceremony.

Most congregations allow a close friend or family member to deliver a eulogy at the service, as long as they focus on the life of their loved one, God and their faith.

After a Baptist funeral, mourners are usually invited to attend a short graveside ceremony of scripture reading and prayer. This is then followed by the lowering of the coffin into the grave. If cremation ashes are going to be buried or scattered in a significant place, this ceremony may take place as they are buried or scattered.

A reception is often held after a Baptist funeral at the bereaved family's home, a communal room in the church or at a restaurant or other private venue.

Baptist funerals may also differ between ethnic communities. For example, Afro-Caribbean Baptist churches often have traditions and customs unique to them.

For further information, visit: <https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/371528/Practical-guidance-for.aspx>

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS (INCLUDING CHRISTIAN, ANGLICAN AND CATHOLIC SERVICES)

A Christian funeral service can take place almost anywhere, including a church, cemetery or crematorium.

A Church of England/Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland Christian funeral service usually follows a general structure, with the order of service including readings, a sermon, prayers and hymns. In addition, the service may include a eulogy written and delivered by a family member or close friend. Special requests such as the deceased's favourite music and funeral flowers are customary at Christian funerals.

A Catholic funeral service is led by one or more priests and follows an orderly ritual. Whilst, traditionally, the Catholic Church has preferred its members to choose burial, cremation is allowed. If a loved one is cremated, their ashes should not be scattered or kept in an urn at home. Instead, the ashes should be buried in a respectful manner.

The Vigil allows family and friends to gather and celebrate the life of the deceased before the actual funeral service. It may take place in the deceased's home, church or your local funeral home, with prayers and songs offered during this time.

The Funeral Mass is usually held in the church where the deceased worshipped. It is celebrated by a priest and includes the Eucharistic Prayer and the giving of the Holy Communion.

Christian funeral services end with a burial or cremation. Cultural rituals include throwing soil or flowers on the coffin and placing material possessions on the casket. Christian funeral services are generally followed by a post-funeral reception, commonly known as a wake. Increasingly, separate memorial services are being arranged to celebrate the life of the person that has died.

Flowers, wreaths and cards are common at Church of England/Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland and Catholic funeral services, although donations in lieu of flowers are growing in popularity.

For further information, visit:

<https://churchofenglandfunerals.org/>

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/ritual_and_remembrance

<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/life/funerals/service/>

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/our-faith/how-do-i-/arrange-a-funeral>

<https://rcdow.org.uk/diocese/liturgy/catholic-funerals/>

JEWISH FUNERALS

Jewish funerals should be planned and organised with the help of the Rabbi. Jewish funerals are solemn occasions, marked by an avoidance of music and flowers, sombre dress and reserved behaviour. In many Jewish communities, the “Hevra Kadisha”, a holy society which supervises funerals, helps to comfort bereaved people as well as make sure that all Jewish laws and customs are followed for funeral ceremonies and rituals.

Jewish funerals should take place as soon as possible after death, often within 24 hours. Funerals may be delayed if the death falls immediately prior to Shabbat (Friday evening until Saturday night), if the body needs to be repatriated or transported a long distance or because relatives are travelling a long way to attend the funeral.

In the time prior to burial the deceased person's body should not be left alone. A Shomer (guardian – often a friend or relative) looks after the body at this time and recites Psalms.

The deceased person's body must be cleaned and shrouded according to Jewish law, and embalming and the use of cosmetics is prohibited. The deceased is placed in a very simple coffin, constructed entirely from timber; with no use of metal or decorative components.

Jewish funerals are usually simple, respectful services. Most take place in a synagogue or at the graveside. During this service Psalms are chanted, the “Eyl Malei Rahamim” (memorial prayer) is said and a eulogy honouring and celebrating the deceased is given. Viewing of the body is prohibited during Orthodox Jewish funerals.

The casket is carried to the gravesite by pallbearers who stop seven times while family and friends follow. “K'vurah” (burial) then takes place and the “Kaddish” is recited.

Jewish people are generally buried in Jewish cemeteries or Jewish sections within other cemeteries.

Orthodox Jews are forbidden from selecting cremation. However Reform Judaism has a more liberal attitude towards the practice of cremation. NAFD members are advised to seek guidance and assistance from the Rabbi.

For further information, visit: <https://www.theus.org.uk/burial>

MUSLIM FUNERALS

A loss of an individual is not just regarded as a loss to the family but to the whole Muslim community as well, and so it is common for people who may not know an individual personally to attend his/her funeral. In fact, Muslims are encouraged to attend any Muslim's funeral due to the profound personal, social and spiritual significance of such an event.

It is not unusual for the deceased person to be buried within 24 hours of their death. The main steps involved are washing the body of the deceased, shrouding it, performance of the funeral prayer and finally burial. The first two steps are performed only by selected relatives and community members due to the intimacy involved with the body. The funeral prayer is a Muslim ritual which must be performed by Muslims, though observers are welcome.

Women from the Muslim faith commonly do not attend the funeral; however, should non-Muslim women wish to attend, they should dress conservatively with an ankle length skirt together with a long sleeved and high-necked top for the women. A headscarf is also essential.

Shoes are removed before going into the prayer hall.

During the funeral service, the congregation will line up in rows behind the deceased's coffin to perform the funeral prayer. The funeral prayer is performed for the deceased and not to the deceased. Following its completion the congregation will form two lines and pass the coffin from shoulder to shoulder taking it towards the grave site. Once at the grave the coffin will be lowered, usually by members of the family, and the grave filled. The Imam will then say a few final prayers at the graveside and, following this, the congregation will disperse. The immediate members of the family will most likely remain at the graveside for a short while longer.

For more information, visit: <https://www.nlg.nhs.uk/content/uploads/2017/06/Muslim-funeral-guide-1.pdf>

QUAKER FUNERALS

A Quaker funeral is generally a simple affair, a silent meeting for worship to give thanks for the grace of God in the life of the person who has died. Sometimes there is a reading, or a song but most of the time is given over to quiet reflection and thanksgiving.

They can take place in a Quaker meeting house, a crematorium, at the graveside, or in another convenient meeting place. Sometimes people – family members, Quakers from the meeting community or friends of the person – will rise and speak in an act of ministry. Anyone can contribute. What they say may be prayers, memories of the deceased, expressions of thankfulness for their life or words of comfort and solace for those left behind.

The funeral ends when the time feels right – usually after no more than an hour – by all shaking hands with those around them.

For further information, visit:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/our-faith/marriages-funerals>

SIKH FUNERALS

In Sikhism death is considered a natural process and God's will, and public displays of grief at the funeral are discouraged.

Cremation is the preferred method of disposal, although if it is not possible any other method such as burial or submergence at sea are acceptable. Worship of the dead with gravestones, etc, is discouraged, because the body is considered to be only the shell, the person's soul is their real essence.

The body is usually bathed and clothed by family members and taken to the cremation grounds. There, hymns that induce feelings of detachment are recited by the congregation. As the body is being cremated, Kirtan Sohila (the nighttime prayer) is recited and Ardas is offered. The ashes are disposed of by immersing them in the nearest river.

A non-continuous reading of the entire Sri Guru Granth Sahib is undertaken and timed to conclude on the tenth day. This may be undertaken at home or in the Gurdwara. The conclusion of this ceremony marks the end of the mourning period.

For further information, visit: <http://sikhs.org/fest.htm>

THE FUNERAL AS A RITE OF PASSAGE

The concept of death and its aftermath as some kind of 'passage' from one world to another abounds throughout history and endures into the present day. The ancient Egyptians sent their dead off into the next world with many artefacts to ensure their new life would be comfortable. The ancient Greeks envisaged a boat crossing the River Styx (although it was customary to burn the actual body). The Norse men (we don't know too much about the women) placed the dead in a boat, which was either burned or buried (we have archaeological evidence for this in the UK).

All these customs suggest that, regardless of one's faith or lack thereof, we have a need to see funerals as a time when the dead move on from the world both they and we know.

The concept of the funeral as a rite of passage seems to be as relevant to those who have little or no faith as to those who have a very strong belief system. While the exact ritual associated with a funeral will vary depending on this factor, it has been observed in the context of rites of passage, that the funeral represents three distinct phases:

Separation

The funeral is the public declaration that the dead are dead. Even when there is no belief in an afterlife it marks the fact that a significant ending has taken place, an ending that may have been prolonged or sudden and traumatic. Wherever the dead now are, even if for some people they are 'nowhere', they are no longer of this world and so the funeral is a marked moment of separation for the bereaved friends and relations.

This separation can also occur prior to the funeral itself. Until comparatively recently in the UK, the body was kept at home until the funeral and was sometimes taken to the church the night before. This happens very rarely now and the body is released to the Funeral Director soon after the death, unless there is a specific reason (in the care of the Coroner for example) for this not to happen. The Funeral Director can, therefore, be seen as an agent of separation as he/she will take the deceased from the home/nursing/care/residential home/hospital in order to prepare for the funeral. This may be the time when it is realised fully that the person who was, no longer is, and this can have a profound effect on those left behind. All that made the deceased who he or she was is gone.

Making sure the bereaved remember the dignity with which this separation is managed can contribute greatly to their comfort.

Transition

Just as separation can be seen as relevant to both the person who has died and to the bereaved, so can the time which elapses between the death and the funeral itself. This is the time which we call transition. Once again the funeral professional can have an enormous effect on how this time is spent and on how it will be remembered.

Until the funeral, the Funeral Director is the guardian of the person who has died and the bereaved need to know that role is valued. The visits to, and conversations with, the bereaved person should be carefully timed. There needs to be reassurance that this sense of 'taking care' is honoured.

Some people are anxious about what is happening to the body and reassurance that the Funeral Director is a trustworthy custodian can be extremely helpful during this 'in between' period. Even for those who do not wish to view the body, the sense that it is being 'kept safe' during this time of transition is important.

This is also a transition time for the bereaved. Many bereaved people say that, despite there being much to do at this time, it nevertheless feels as if time has stood still. The bereaved may experience 'uncertainty and confusion' - particularly about their new status as widow/widower, orphan or single person, this may be especially acute if the death was sudden and unexpected. The increasingly longer life-span in the West often means that bereaved people have little or even no experience of arranging funerals and this may add to their uncertainty and confusion.

The funeral profession has a privileged role in helping to dispel some of this distress. The role needs to be carried out with care so the bereaved never feel they had no share in the arrangement. Walking a tightrope between discreet management of the funeral without 'taking over' takes patience and sensitivity.

Incorporation/re-integration

The gathering after the funeral is the time when bereaved people are taken back into the community in their new status. Friends and family can be enormously supportive at this time. The value of this social aspect of the funeral seems to vary. Some people find it affirming that so many want to support them and to offer kindly words or ways of helping, others may find the gathering a terrible ordeal.

Within some cultures there is a very established structure to assist mourners and grieving. In others there is little guidance and this period after the funeral can be isolating for some bereaved people. Increasing numbers of NAFD members are seeking to support newly bereaved people during this period (see Chapter 4 - Bereavement Support for further details).

CHILDREN AND FUNERALS

For many children and young people, the death of a parent, caregiver, sibling or grandparent is an experience they are faced with early in life. Research suggests that 24% of Britons have been bereaved of someone close to them by the time they are ten years old.

Children experience grief differently to adults. In an example given by child bereavement charity Winston's Wish, if for adults grief can feel like having to wade through rivers of grief, for children, their grieving can seem more like leaping in and out of puddles. First reactions may range from great distress to seeming not to be interested. One minute they may be sobbing, the next they are asking "What's for tea?" It does not mean they care any less about what has happened.

The charity Marie Curie gives examples of the sort of questions often asked by children:

- What happens after death?
- Where do you go when you die?
- Does death hurt?
- What is a funeral?
- What happens at a funeral?

Children's attitudes to death and, therefore, to funerals are coloured by the attitudes of the adults around them. The decision as to whether children should attend funerals will be made following consultation between the child and his/her parents. When a funeral professional is helping to plan the event and asks about the presence of children, or is asked for an opinion, a first step is to ask the parent what, if any, discussions have taken place with the child. What a child wishes to do will be strongly influenced by how much is understood about what will happen and what they might see.

Parents and other carers may well be too upset to give the child the information they need. In some cases they may not themselves have the knowledge. Much of the confusion children experience can be a reflection of adult confusion. Even with knowledge, it is not possible to be dogmatic about whether a child should or should not attend a funeral, particularly that of a close relative. So much will depend on who has died, the nature of the child's relationship to that person, family attitudes and the form of the service to be used.

In many cultures there is no difficulty as children are expected to be present, but other cultures and individuals may have strong feelings to the opposite.

Why it can help children to attend the funeral

Families will have different cultural and religious beliefs about seeing the person who has died and attending the funeral, but it can help a child to:

- begin to say goodbye;
- begin to accept the reality and finality of the death;
- begin to understand what has happened;
- be less scared;
- feel part of what is happening;
- share with others an important last memory about the person who died.

Probably the biggest factor that will affect a younger child's attendance at a funeral is if they feel their presence is welcome there. If there is going to be tension (as opposed to sadness) they will pick this up and feel more distressed by the atmosphere than by what is happening. Many children understand and appreciate sharing in other people's sadness - after all it is what they are feeling too. It's your family. You know them best.

Information provided by Winston's Wish.

Funeral Directors can play an important part in supporting families in this decision by having some sound strategies to offer whilst not appearing to influence the discussions:

- Talk the child through what will happen, using clear and age-appropriate language.
- Encourage him or her to ask questions and answer them honestly. Be honest and say so if you don't know the answer.
- Explain what the coffin will look like and what it is for. A very good image is to compare it to a jewellery box or casket, which is used to keep something very precious.
- If the child is allowed to decide whether or not they will attend the funeral, it should be made clear that they are allowed to change their mind at any stage, including going out for parts of the service.
- It may be helpful to have someone designated at the service to go outside with a child or children if they need to.

Cruse Bereavement Care and **Winston's Wish** both recommend that a child be given the choice whether or not to attend a funeral. Likewise, if the child chooses not to attend they should be supported in finding other ways to say goodbye to the person who has died. If the child does not want to attend (or is not being allowed to) the funeral professional can offer some suggestions about how they can be involved, for example by drawing a picture that can be placed in the coffin, or writing a poem that can be read. What matters is the sense of involvement.

Chapter 4

Understanding and Supporting the Bereaved – Northern Ireland

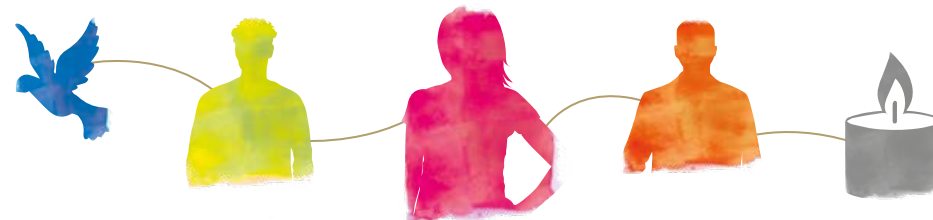


UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING THE BEREAVED

Funeral Directors often see bereaved people at the start of their journey through grief and are, therefore, in an important position to provide them with support and guidance at a difficult time.

As Funeral Directors will know, everyone grieves very differently. However, having an understanding of the grieving process, as well as drawing upon both personal and professional experience, can assist Funeral Directors in caring for bereaved people to the best of their ability.

This chapter also contains links to respected sources of bereavement support and advice and useful information for Funeral Directors.



COMMON REACTIONS TO BEREAVEMENT

(provided by Cruse Bereavement Care)

Bereaved people may feel a number of things immediately after a death. All of them are perfectly normal and an awareness of these can help Funeral Directors to know how to respond – and, where appropriate, how and when to recommend the right professional bereavement care and support.

Below are some of the most common reactions.

Shock: It may take the bereaved person a long time to grasp what has happened. The shock can make them numb, and some people at first carry on as if nothing has happened. It is hard to believe that someone important is not coming back. Many people feel disorientated – as if they have lost their place and purpose in life or are living in a different world.

Pain: Feelings of pain and distress following bereavement can be overwhelming and very frightening.

Anger: Sometimes bereaved people can feel angry. This anger is a completely natural emotion, typical of the grieving process. Death can seem cruel and unfair, especially when you feel someone has died before their time or when you had plans for the future together. We may also feel angry towards the person who has died, or angry at ourselves for things we did or didn't do or say to the person before their death.

Guilt: Guilt is another common reaction. People who have been bereaved of someone close often say they feel directly or indirectly to blame for the person's death. They may also feel guilt if they had a difficult or confusing relationship with the person who has died, or if they feel they didn't do enough to help them when they were alive.

Depression: Many bereaved people experience feelings of depression following the death of someone close. Life can feel like it no longer holds any meaning and some people say they too want to die.

Longing: Thinking they are hearing or seeing someone who has died is a common experience and can happen when they least expect it. Some people may find that they can't stop thinking about the events leading up to the death. "Seeing" the person who has died and hearing their voice can happen because the brain is trying to process the death and acknowledge the finality of it.

One of the hardest things for a bereaved person to face is the way other people react. They often do not know what to say or how to respond to loss. Because they don't know what to say or are worried about saying the wrong thing, people can avoid those who have lost someone. This is hard, because they may well want to talk about the person who has died.

Funeral Directors can, therefore, provide a vital outlet to enable the bereaved person to talk about the person that has died. Although it is important to seek permission first (and to check information is correct), referring to the deceased person by their first name or their relationship to the client ('your mum', 'David' etc.) can help to make them feel comfortable and can unlock conversation.

GUIDANCE, HELP AND SUPPORT

It is important that Funeral Directors know the contact details of national and local bereavement support services. Below are links to the key national and regional organisations with which the Association has contact. It is not exhaustive and we would welcome recommendations for members for other organisations that can provide support for bereaved people.

Charity Choice

A list of local and national bereavement organisations.

Website: www.charitychoice.co.uk

Child Bereavement UK (national)

Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies, or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.

Telephone: 0800 0288 840

Website: <https://childbereavementuk.org>

Compassionate Friends

A charitable organisation of bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents dedicated to the support and care of other bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents who have suffered the death of a child or children.

Telephone: 0345 123 2304

Website: <https://www.tcf.org.uk/>

Cruse Bereavement Care (Northern Ireland)

Cruse Bereavement Care exists to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief, cope with their loss and to promote their well-being. Cruse was first established in Northern Ireland in 1984. Currently there are seven areas located throughout Northern Ireland with over 400 volunteers. Each year they conduct over 8,000 support sessions in Northern Ireland alone.

Telephone: 0808 808 1677

Website: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/local-services/northern-ireland/northern-ireland/about-us>

Grief Encounter

Supports bereaved children and teenagers through its website.

Telephone: 020 8371 8455

Website: <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/>

Health and Social Care Northern Ireland

The HCSNI online portal provides links to the six health trusts providing services in Northern Ireland. Search for the one applicable to your local area to access targeted bereavement information.

Website: <http://online.hscni.net/>

The six trusts can be accessed directly through these links:

- [Belfast HSC Trust](#)
- [Northern HSC Trust](#)
- [South Eastern HSC Trust](#)
- [Southern HSC Trust](#)
- [Western HSC Trust](#)

Winston's Wish (national)

A UK-wide childhood bereavement charity, supporting children and their families after the death of a parent or sibling.

Telephone: 08088 020 021

Website: <https://www.winstonswish.org/>

Widowed and Young (national)

WAY is a national charity in the UK for people aged 50 or under when their partner died. It's a peer-to-peer support group run by a network of volunteers who have been bereaved at a young age themselves, so they understand exactly what other members are going through.

All contact is through the website: <https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/>

BOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES

The NAFD is often advised of books, written about bereavement and grief, that people have found to be useful, and so has produced a guide to some of the books recommended.

Many of these books are recommended by respected bereavement charities - such as Cruse and Winston's Wish - however, some are simply books that readers have found helpful and wanted to pass on for the benefit of others.

[Click here](#) to download the guide, which can be found on the NAFD website.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING BEREAVEMENT

The rules relating to bereavement benefits changed in April 2017. If your client lives in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and their husband, wife or civil partner has recently died they may be eligible to receive a bereavement benefit.

The type of bereavement benefit that they may get depends on when their husband, wife or civil partner died, whether they paid National Insurance contributions and whether they have dependant children.

There are three types of bereavement benefit: Bereavement Allowance, Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Payment.

Which benefits and how much someone would qualify for will depend on:

- their age;
- whether they have dependant children;
- whether the person who died paid enough National Insurance Contributions during their working lives.

BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT INFORMATION ON NIDIRECT.GOV

Full information about all benefits for Northern Ireland citizens following a death can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/bereavement>

INFORMATION FROM THE NAFD

The NAFD has produced a leaflet which describes the various benefit options. You can download the leaflet from <https://nafd.org.uk/funeral-advice/bereavement-benefits/> or request artwork so that you can have copies printed for your funeral home.

[Click here](#) to access the guide, which can be found on the NAFD's website.



HOW FUNERAL DIRECTORS CAN SUPPORT PEOPLE AFTER/PREPARE PEOPLE FOR BEREAVEMENT

Before bereavement

One of the key challenges that continues to face the funeral profession (and is a subject now being investigated by the Competition and Markets Authority) is that, as a society, many Britons prefer not to think about their mortality – or that of those that they love.

This reluctance of consumers to engage with the topic of their funeral, or to think about death more generally, can serve to make the experience of loss all the more traumatic when it does occur and their ability to make informed decisions much harder.

The NAFD and its members have supported Dying Matters Week since its inception as one of a number of initiatives to help the public feel more comfortable and confident in talking about the end of life.

Many NAFD members hold events in their communities during (but not restricted to) Dying Matters Week, in May each year, to engage with local people and help to start conversations. These include open days, participation in community events or charitable activities.

You can find out more about Dying Matters Week on their website:

<https://www.dyingmatters.org/>

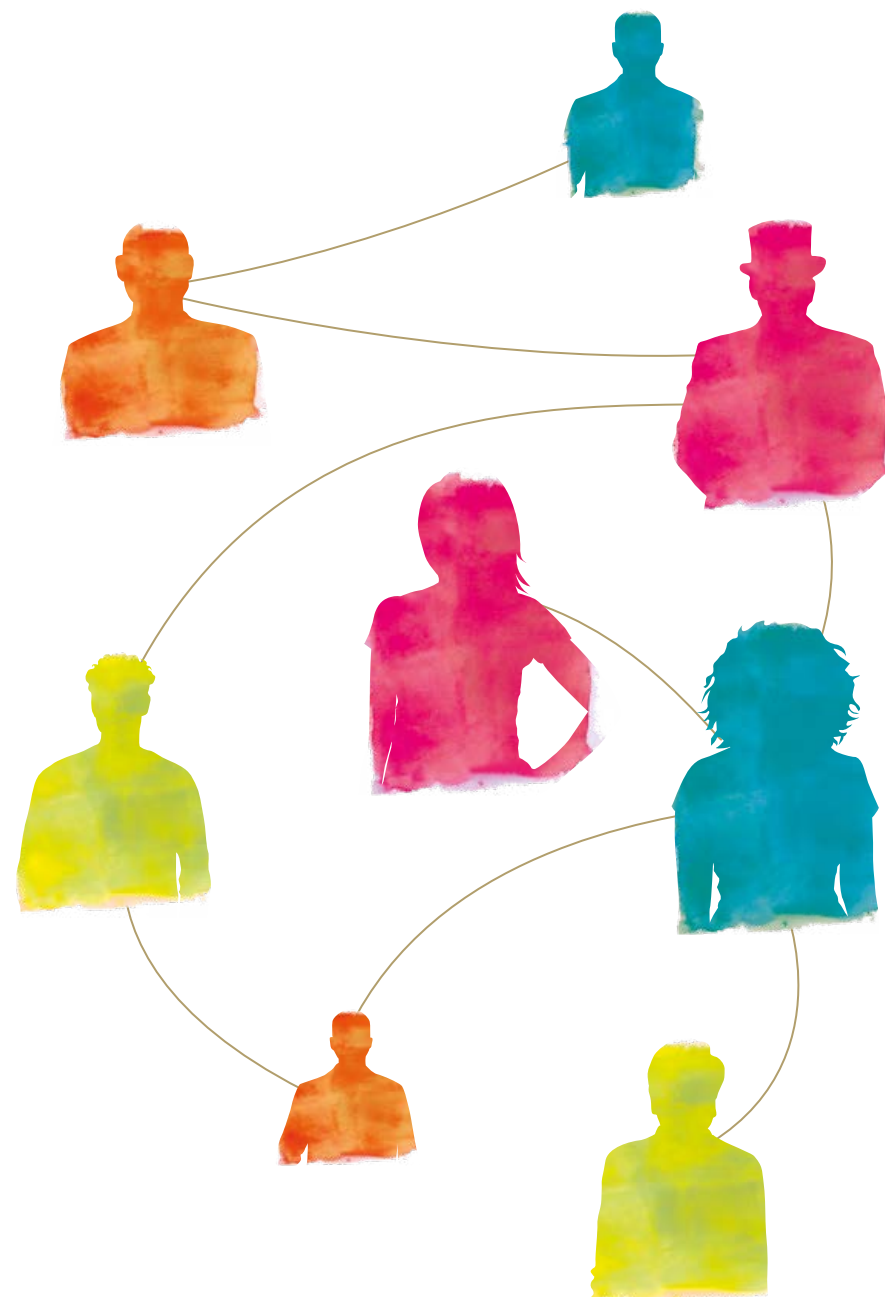
The NAFD has also collaborated with Dying Matters on the 'My Funeral Wishes' leaflet which is designed to encourage conversations about funerals.

You can download a copy from the NAFD website and find out more by clicking [here](#).

Following bereavement

As well as providing practical advice and guidance (and being an important source of comfort during the funeral arrangement period), a number of NAFD members go further in their support of clients – sometimes long after the funeral is completed.

Some hold annual services of remembrance to which they invite all their previous client families, or have trees of remembrance in funeral homes at Christmas. Others create support networks for clients such as periodic social opportunities for bereaved people to get together.



Chapter 5

The Premises



THE PREMISES

Funeral home premises can be in the form of converted offices, shops and private houses, or they can be purpose built facilities. The facilities available at each funeral home will vary according to the space available, anticipated number of funerals, financial considerations and local expectations. Whatever form they take, funeral homes should always be clean, tidy, well equipped and in good decorative order.

As well as meeting all health, safety, environmental and employment regulations, NAFD members should also ensure their premises meet the standards set out in the NAFD Code of Practice and Code of Professional Standards.

This chapter aims to help Funeral Directors think about their premises – and any they are considering acquiring, to ensure they are professional and fit for purpose.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

The two main requirements of any funeral home are:

- to provide a comfortable and private facility; and
- to offer an appropriate working facility with provision to handle deceased persons in a manner which meets all applicable laws and regulations, is welcoming to bereaved clients and maintains the dignity of deceased persons at all times.

It is recommended that Funeral Directors who are thinking of setting up a new funeral home or opening an additional branch, research the demographic of the chosen local area as part of their due diligence. Local customs will help the Funeral Director decide whether facilities such as a service chapel; a catering suite or a coffin showroom may be desirable, in addition to the core facilities.

The following factors should also be considered when setting up a new funeral home, moving or refurbishing existing premises:

- Local Authority planning controls. An informal meeting with the local planning officer may well save much time and money at a later stage.
- Building inspectors, Fire and Health & Safety Officers will need to be involved, particularly in larger or multiple-use premises.
- The local water company and suppliers of amenities and services.
- Parking restrictions, on and around the site.
- Nature of the tenure e.g. freehold or leasehold.

- Where buildings are in multiple use and a street level business is being considered, the use to which other floors are put should be considered, in order to decide whether their interests are compatible with a funeral home.
- Facilities such as workshops and garaging could disturb the neighbours.
- The desirability or necessity of providing residential accommodation as part of the premises.
- Access for elderly and disabled persons.
- Noise from traffic or local industry that could be a drawback in providing a peaceful environment for those wishing to visit the Chapel of Rest.
- Availability of a rear or second access to allow loading and unloading out of the view of the public.
- Future availability of adjoining land or premises if expansion is considered.

As a condition of your NAFD membership, your premises and vehicles should be available for inspection by the Standards & Quality Managers (SQMs), or any other person nominated by the NAFD for such purpose.

Further, any member who hires the facilities and/or equipment (including the hire and use of vehicles) of another Funeral Director, must ensure that Funeral Director is also a member of the NAFD and therefore open to inspection and adherence to the Code of Practice and Code of Professional Standards.

PREFERRED FACILITIES

A funeral home should provide a quiet and dignified environment. It should also be well equipped, in good decorative order and professionally run in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Every funeral home offers different facilities but as a minimum the following is recommended:



RECEPTION

The reception area must be well decorated and furnished, providing an air of comfort and warmth.

If there is no permanent receptionist in this area, there should be an office nearby to enable colleagues to be aware of and attend to any visitors immediately.

INTERVIEW/ARRANGING ROOM

The interview/arranging room should be a room where the client can feel relaxed and it should be an appropriate environment for arranging a funeral.

The area should be well decorated, furnished and maintained. There is no set format to how the interview/arranging room should be furnished, however people visiting your funeral home need to be comfortable, so do consider both comfortable and upright chairs available, as well as space for wheelchairs to accommodate people with mobility issues or other health requirements.

The Funeral Director should also ensure that this room is isolated from interruption e.g. telephones ringing.



CHAPEL OF REST/VIEWING ROOM

The Chapel of Rest/viewing room or similar facility, allowing mourners to pay their last respects, should be on site or within a reasonable travelling distance of the member's office where the arrangements have been made. These facilities should be well decorated and furnished to ensure an acceptable ambience.

It is recommended that lighting should be warm and capable of being dimmed. Adequate room should be given to allow the coffin or casket as well as one or two chairs for mourners if required. A table or wall space should be available to ensure that any religious symbols required can be seen. If religious symbols are to be wall mounted, they need to be able to be removed if necessary.

Particular attention should be paid to the doorway. It needs to be wide enough to allow easy movement of the coffin or casket as well as allowing wheelchair access. If space permits, the coffin or casket should be brought in via a separate doorway leading to and from the preparation room or holding area, enabling movement of the coffin or casket to be moved out of public sight.

The positioning of the coffin or casket in relation to the entrance point is important. It is often felt easier for mourners to approach from the foot of the coffin. This can enable them to gradually become accustomed to what are likely to be very unfamiliar surroundings. However, there is no hard and fast rule about this.

It may be appropriate to provide either a room or an area adjacent to the Chapel of Rest/viewing room, with suitable seating where mourners can spend some private time before and/or after spending time in the Chapel, or both.

Please see Chapter 18 Paying Last Respects for further guidance on preparing a Chapel of Rest/viewing room.

Preparation room/embalming room

How the funeral profession cares for deceased persons is such an important issue, not simply for their dignity, or to provide comfort to their family and friends that their loved one is well cared for, but for the Funeral Director too.

The preparation/embalming room, or other holding facilities, should be dignified and adequate for the number of funerals conducted by the Funeral Director. These facilities do not have to be on the same site but close by so that when transferring a deceased person from the preparation/embalming room, long distances are not involved. If the preparation/embalming room is off site, such as at a hub which serves several funeral homes, it will still come under the scope of the NAFD premises inspection.

Storage options available to the Funeral Director include refrigeration units (both permanent and temporary/portable) and cold rooms.

Equipment should also be in place to assist the Funeral Director in offering either the service of embalming or first offices (see Chapter 13 Care and Preparation of Deceased Persons).

These facilities need not be in place in every funeral home, for example where there is a central hub facility or funeral home that services several funeral premises. It is, however, recommended that if a funeral business operates several premises, each of those premises has in place a cold room or a refrigerated unit.

This area should always be maintained, fit for purpose and ready for inspection.

Administrative office

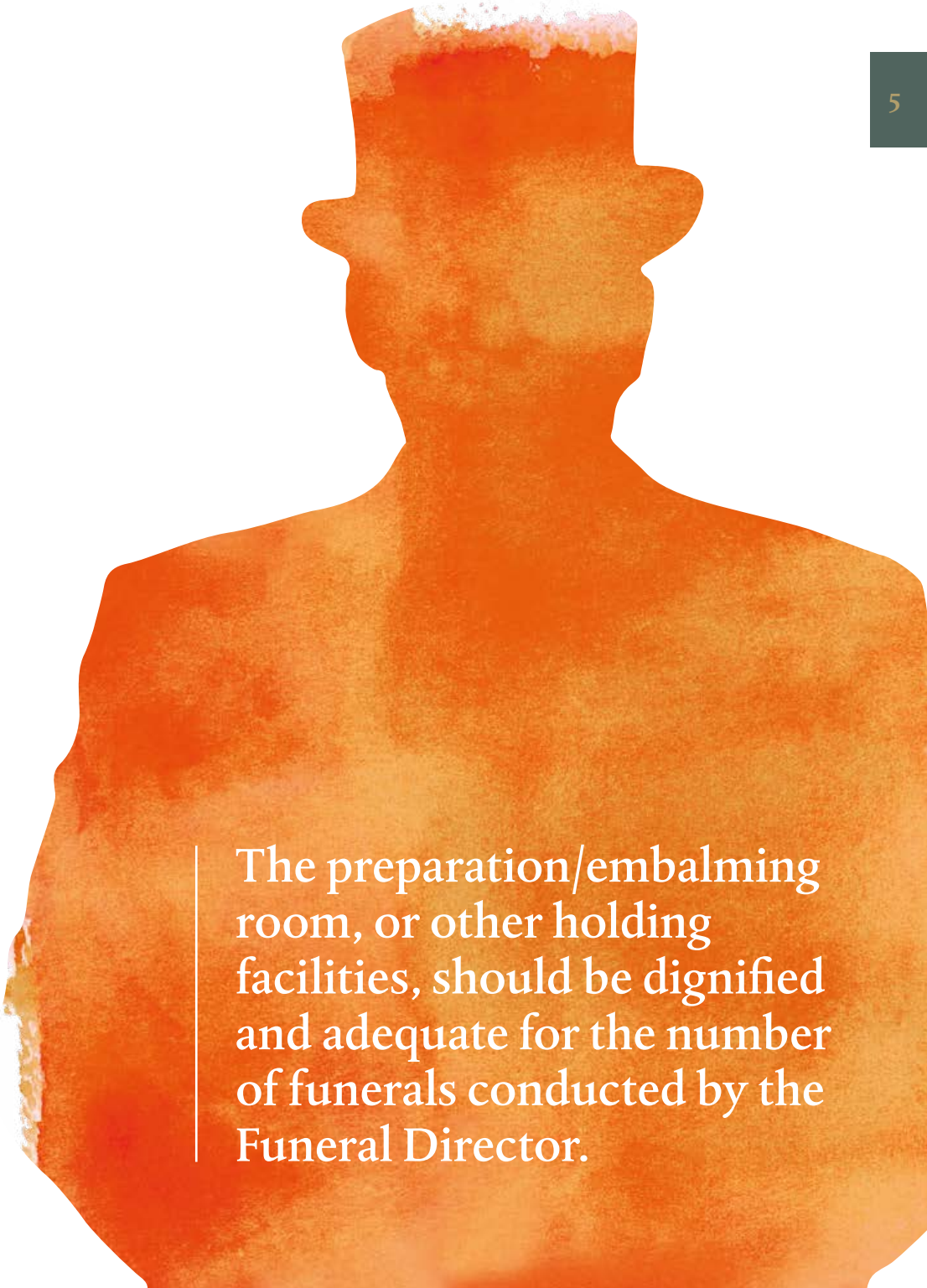
Wherever possible, the administration office should be out of sight of bereaved visitors.

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

As with all business premises, meeting environmental considerations and regulations is a basic standard which must be met. Sensible practices such as minimising energy and water use by colleagues can all have a beneficial effect on the considerable costs of running a funeral business.

However, in addition, an increasing number of funeral homes are being built or refurbished to incorporate other renewable resources such as rainwater recycling and the use of solar or other green energy.

These investments can not only reduce energy costs, they can also offer a point of difference when you are marketing your business, ensuring that the increasing number of clients for whom a green funeral is important recognise your investment and commitment to operating an environmentally friendly funeral home.



The preparation/embalming room, or other holding facilities, should be dignified and adequate for the number of funerals conducted by the Funeral Director.

Chapter 6

Health and Safety



HEALTH AND SAFETY

In general, health and safety laws apply to all businesses in the UK, no matter how small. As an employer, or a self-employed person in the funeral sector, you are responsible for health and safety in your business. You need to take the right precautions to reduce the risks of workplace dangers and provide a safe working environment.

Health and safety management should be a straightforward part of managing your workplace as a whole. It involves practical steps that protect people from harm and at the same time protect the future success and the growth of your business. Good practice in health and safety makes sound business sense.

This chapter, Adapted from the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox, explains what the law requires and helps you put it into practice. It will help you and your workers stay safe and healthy and will also go a long way to satisfying the law – including the risk assessment that you must do under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

This chapter covers England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales Health as safety law is the same across Great Britain. However, there is a major difference in how offenses are prosecuted in Scotland. HSE inspectors report matters they have investigated and make recommendations on offences to the specialist Health and Safety Division within the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), who decide whether or not to institute criminal proceedings in the public interest.

For further information on HSE prosecutions are undertaken in Scotland, please [click here](#).



THE MAIN CAUSES OF ILL HEALTH AND ACCIDENTS AT WORK

Each year people are killed at work and many are injured or suffer ill health.

The most common causes of serious injury at work are slips and trips and falls from height. There are also health conditions that can be caused or made worse by work and working environments, including cancer, asthma, skin complaints, stress and musculoskeletal disorders such as back pain.

THE LAW AND GUIDANCE

The main law governing health and safety at work in the United Kingdom is the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act)**.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (the HSW Act), you have to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of yourself and others who may be affected by what you do or do not do. It applies to all work activities and premises and everyone at work has responsibilities under it, including the self-employed.

Employees must take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. They must also co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also apply to every work activity and workplace and require all risks to be assessed and, where necessary, controlled.

Other regulations supporting the HSW Act set out more detailed legal duties for specific activities or industries. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced publications to help you understand what these mean in practice.

HOW TO MANAGE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Managing health and safety is an integral part of managing your business. You need to do a risk assessment to find out about the risks in your workplace, put sensible measures in place to control them, and make sure they stay controlled.

This is known as the 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' approach:

1. **Plan:** Describe how you manage health and safety in your business (your legally required policy) and plan to make it happen in practice.
2. **Do:** Prioritise and control your risks – consult your employees and provide training and information.
3. **Check:** Measure how you are doing.
4. **Act:** Learn from your experience.

PLANNING FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Planning is the key to ensuring your health and safety arrangements really work. It helps you think through the actions you have set out in your policy and work out how they will happen in practice.

Consider:

- what you want to achieve, e.g. how you will ensure that your employees and others are kept healthy and safe at work;
- how you will decide what might cause harm to people and whether you are doing enough or need to do more to prevent that harm;
- how you will prioritise the improvements you may need to make;
- who will be responsible for health and safety tasks, what they should do, when and with what results; and
- how you will measure and review whether you have achieved what you set out to do.

WRITING A HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Your business must have a health and safety policy, and if you have fewer than five employees, you don't have to write anything down.

Most businesses set out their policy in three sections:

- The statement of general policy on health and safety at work sets out your commitment to managing health and safety effectively, and what you want to achieve
- The responsibility section sets out who is responsible for specific actions
- The arrangements section contains the detail of what you are going to do in practice to achieve the aims set out in your statement of health and safety policy

To help you structure your policy, an example and template is provided at the end of this section.

The arrangements section should say how you will meet the commitments you have made in your statement of health and safety policy. Include information on how you are going to eliminate or reduce the risks of hazards in your workplace.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'HAZARD' AND 'RISK'?

A **hazard** is something in your business that could cause harm to people, such as chemicals, electricity and working at height. A **risk** is the chance – however large or small – that a hazard could cause harm.

They could include:

- staff training
- using signs to highlight risks
- improved safety equipment, such as guards or additional personal protective equipment in the mortuary environment etc.
- replacing hazardous chemicals with less harmful alternatives
- improved lighting
- anti-slip flooring

Focus your attention on the activities that could present a risk to people or cause serious harm.



CONTROLLING THE RISKS

As part of managing the health and safety of your business, you must control the risks in your workplace. To do this you need to think about what might cause harm to people and decide whether you are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm.

This process is known as risk assessment and it is something you are required by law to carry out. **If you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down.**

A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace.

You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees, but your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have covered all you need to.

IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

One of the most important aspects of your risk assessment is accurately identifying the potential hazards in your workplace.

A good starting point is to walk around your workplace and think about any hazards (things that may cause harm). In other words, what is it about the activities, processes or substances used that could injure your employees or harm their health?

When you work in a place every day it is easy to overlook some hazards, so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

- **Check manufacturers' instructions** or data sheets for chemicals and equipment as they can be very helpful in explaining the hazards and putting them in their true perspective
- **Look back at your accident and ill-health records** – these often help to identify the less obvious hazards
- **Take account of non-routine operations** (e.g. maintenance and cleaning operations)
- **Remember to think about long-term hazards to health** (e.g. high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances)

There are some hazards with a recognised risk of harm, for example working at height, working with chemicals and machinery. As a funeral firm, you need to consider every aspect of what you do to establish any other hazards that are relevant to your business.

WHO MIGHT BE HARMED?

Then think **how** employees (or others who may be present such as contractors or clients) might be harmed. Ask your employees what they think the hazards are, as they may notice things that are not obvious to you and may have some good ideas on how to control the risks.

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed – it will help you identify the best way of controlling the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. 'people working in the mortuary' or 'bereaved clients').

Remember:

- Some workers may have particular requirements, for example new and young workers, migrant workers, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, temporary workers, contractors, homeworkers and lone workers ([see the HSE website section Your Workers](#)).
- Think about people who might not be in the workplace all the time, such as visitors, contractors and maintenance workers.
- Take members of the public into account if they could be harmed by your work activities.
- If you share premises with another business, consider how your work affects others and how their work affects you and your workers. Talk to each other and make sure controls are in place.
- Ask your workers if there is anyone you may have missed.



EVALUATE THE RISKS

Having identified the hazards, you then have to decide how likely it is that harm will occur, i.e. the level of risk and what to do about it. Risk is a part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate all risks.

What you must do is make sure you know about the main risks and the things you need to do to manage them responsibly. Generally, you need to do everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm.

Your risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know – you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

Look at what you're already doing and the control measures you already have in place.

Ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

Some practical steps you could take include:

- trying a less risky option;
- preventing access to the hazards;
- organising the way your firm operates to reduce exposure to the hazard;
- issuing protective equipment;
- providing welfare facilities such as first-aid and washing facilities;
- involving and consulting with your employees;

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a blind corner to help prevent vehicle accidents is a low-cost precaution, considering the risks. Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen.

If you control a number of premises, you can produce a 'model' risk assessment reflecting the common hazards and risks associated with these activities for use at all locations.

RECORD YOUR FINDINGS IN A RISK ASSESSMENT

Make a record of your significant findings – the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and what you have in place to control the risks. Any record produced should be simple and focused on controls.

Although, if you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down, it is useful to do this so you can review it at a later date, for example if something changes. If you have five or more employees you are required by law to write it down.

Any paperwork you produce should help you to communicate and manage the risks in your business. For most people this does not need to be a big exercise – just note the main points down about the significant risks and what you concluded.

When writing down your results keep it simple, for example 'contact with embalming chemicals'.

A risk assessment must be 'suitable and sufficient', i.e. it should show that:

- a proper check was made
- you asked who might be affected
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low
- you involved your employees or their representatives in the process

If your risk assessment identifies a number of hazards, you need to put them in order of importance and address the most serious risks first.

Identify long-term solutions for the risks with the biggest consequences, as well as those risks most likely to cause accidents or ill health. You should also establish whether there are improvements that can be implemented quickly, even temporarily, until more reliable controls can be put in place.

Remember; the greater the hazard the more robust and reliable the measures to control the risk of an injury occurring need to be.

You should regularly review your risk assessment to make sure it is comprehensive and has accommodated changes to your business operations.

USEFUL LINKS

A model risk assessment can be found at the end of this chapter.

The HSE also provides a selection of [example risk assessments](#). They show you what a completed risk assessment might look like for your type of workplace. You can use these as a guide when doing your own.

The HSE has also developed [online risk assessment tools](#), to help employers complete and print off their own records.

ACCIDENTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Monitor the effectiveness of the measures you put in place to control the risks in your workplace. As part of your monitoring, you should investigate incidents to ensure that corrective action is taken, learning is shared and any necessary improvements are put in place.

Investigations will help you to:

- identify why your existing control measures failed and what improvements or additional measures are needed;
- plan to prevent the incident from happening again;
- point to areas where your risk assessment needs reviewing and
- improve risk control in your workplace in the future.

Reporting incidents should not stop you from carrying out your own investigation to ensure risks in your workplace are controlled efficiently.

An investigation is not an end in itself, but the first step in preventing future adverse events that includes:

- accident: an event that results in injury or ill health
- incident:
 - o near miss: an event not causing harm, but has the potential to cause injury or ill health (in this guidance, the term near miss will include dangerous occurrences)
 - o undesired circumstance: a set of conditions or circumstances that have the potential to cause injury or ill health, eg untrained nurses handling heavy patients
- dangerous occurrence: one of a number of specific, reportable adverse events, as defined in the [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 \(RIDDOR\)](#).

DECIDING WHO WILL HELP YOU WITH YOUR DUTIES

As an employer, you must appoint someone competent to help you meet your health and safety duties. A competent person is someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage health and safety. In many cases, you will know the risks in your business best. This will mean that you are the competent person and can carry out the risk assessments yourself.

You could appoint (one or a combination of):

- yourself
- one or more of your workers
- someone from outside your business

Many businesses can develop the necessary expertise in-house and are well equipped to manage health and safety themselves. However, there are some things you may not be able to do for yourself and you may decide to get external help. There are consultants registered on the [Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register \(OSHCR\)](#) that you may choose to use, as well as health and safety training providers and equipment suppliers.

Identifying and deciding what help you need is very important. If you appoint someone to help you, you must ensure that they are competent to carry out the tasks you give them and that you provide them with adequate information and support.

CONSULTING YOUR EMPLOYEES

Workplaces where employees are involved in taking decisions about health and safety are safer and healthier. Collaboration with your employees helps you to manage health and safety in a practical way by:

- helping you spot workplace risks;
- making sure health and safety controls are practical;
- increasing the level of commitment to working in a safe and healthy way; and
- providing you with feedback on the effectiveness of your health and safety arrangements and control measures.

Under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) and Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 you must consult all your employees, in good time, on health and safety matters. In workplaces where a trade union is recognised, this will be through union health and safety representatives. In non-unionised workplaces, you can consult either directly or through other elected representatives.

Representatives' main role is to talk to their employer about issues affecting the health and safety of employees they represent in the workplace. You should ensure that any representatives receive paid time off during normal working hours so they can carry out their duties. They should also receive suitable training and access to any facilities needed to help them in their role.

Consultation involves employers not only giving information to employees but also listening to them and taking account of what they say before making decisions on health and safety. You have to give employees or their representatives information to allow full and effective participation in consultation. **This should include:**

- risks arising from their work;
- proposals to manage and/or control these risks;
- what to do if employees are exposed to a risk; and
- the best ways of providing information and training.

PROVIDING TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Everyone who works for you needs to know how to work safely and without risks to health. You must provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, for your employees.

Consider how much training is necessary, a proportionate approach is needed.

Don't forget contractors and self-employed people who may be working for you and make sure everyone has the right level of information on:

- hazards and risks they may face, if any;
- measures in place to deal with those hazards and risks, if necessary; and
- how to follow any emergency procedures.

Some employees may have particular training needs, for example:

- new recruits need basic induction training in how to work safely, including arrangements for first aid, fire and evacuation;
- people changing jobs or taking on extra responsibilities need to know about any new health and safety implications;
- young employees are particularly vulnerable to accidents and you need to pay particular attention to their needs, so their training should be a priority. It is also important that new, inexperienced or young employees are adequately supervised;
- employee representatives or safety representatives will require training that reflects their responsibilities; and
- some people's skills may need updating by refresher training.

Your risk assessment should identify any further training needs associated with specific risks. If you have identified danger areas in your workplace, you must ensure that your employees receive adequate instruction and training on precautions they must take before entering them.

Employees also have responsibilities under health and safety law to:

- take care of their own health and safety and that of others;
- co-operate with their employer to help them comply with health and safety legislation;
- follow any instructions or health and safety training provided;
- report any work situations that present a serious and imminent risk; and
- report any other failings they identify in the health and safety arrangements.

PROVIDING SUPERVISION

You must provide an adequate and appropriate level of supervision for your employees:

- Supervisors need to know what you expect from them in terms of health and safety. They need to understand your health and safety policy, where they fit in, and how you want health and safety managed.
- Supervisors may need training in the specific hazards of your processes and how you expect the risks to be controlled.
- New, inexperienced or young people, as well as those whose first language is not English, are very likely to need more supervision than others. Make sure workers know how to raise concerns and supervisors are familiar with the possible problems due to unfamiliarity, inexperience and communication difficulties.
- Supervisors need to ensure that workers in their charge understand risks associated with the work environment and measures to control them.
- Supervisors will need to make sure the control measures to protect against risk are up to date and are being properly used, maintained and monitored.
- Make sure you have arrangements in place to check the work of contractors is being done as agreed.

FIRST AID

You need to assess your first-aid requirements to help you decide what equipment and facilities you need, and how many first-aid personnel you should provide. The minimum first-aid provision in any workplace is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box
- an appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements

You also need to put up notices telling your employees where they can find the first-aiders or appointed persons and the first-aid box. For drivers of funeral fleets or other vehicles connected with the company, your assessment may identify the need to keep a first-aid kit in every vehicle.

For Funeral Directors that are self-employed, you should have equipment to be able to provide first aid to yourself at work. You should make an assessment of the hazards and risks in your workplace and establish an appropriate level of first-aid provision.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Funeral premises need a plan for emergencies that can have a wider impact.

Special procedures are needed for emergencies such as serious injuries, explosion, flood, poisoning, electrocution, fire, chemical spills etc.

Write, communicate and practice an emergency plan if a major incident at your workplace could involve risks to the public, impact on other employers, rescuing employees or the co-ordination of emergency services.



REPORTING ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS AND DISEASES

The [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 \(RIDDOR\)](#) regulations require employers or, in certain circumstances, others who control or manage the premises, to report to the relevant enforcing authority and keep records of:

- work-related deaths;
- work-related accidents which cause certain specified serious injuries to workers, or which result in a worker being incapacitated for more than seven consecutive days ([see the RIDDOR website](#));
- cases of those industrial diseases listed in RIDDOR;
- certain 'dangerous occurrences' (near-miss accidents); and/or
- injuries to a person who is not at work, such as a member of the public, which are caused by an accident at work and which result in the person being taken to hospital from the site for treatment

Reports to the enforcing authority of all of the above categories, except over-seven-day injuries, must be made immediately by the quickest practicable means and followed up by a written notification within 10 days. Reports of over-seven-day injuries must be sent to the enforcing authority within 15 days.

In addition, **records** must be kept of all of 'over-three-day injuries', which are those where a person who is injured at work is incapacitated for more than three consecutive days. Over-three-day injuries do not, however, have to be reported to the enforcing authority. If you are an employer who must keep an accident book under the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979, an entry about an over-three-day injury is a sufficient record for the purposes of RIDDOR.

As an employer, you must keep a record of:

- any reportable death, injury, occupational disease or dangerous occurrence; and
- all work-related injuries that result in a worker being away from work or unable to do their full range of normal duties for more than three consecutive days (not counting the day of the accident but including any weekends or other rest days).

If you employ anyone, you must display the health and safety law poster, or provide each worker with a copy of the approved leaflet or equivalent pocket card. You must display the poster where your workers can easily read it.

The poster outlines British health and safety laws and includes a straightforward list that tells workers what they and their employers need to do. You can also add details of any employee safety representatives or health and safety contacts if you wish to do so.

The poster was updated in 2009 and all employers must display this new version, or provide each worker with a copy of the equivalent leaflet or pocket card, by no later than 5 April 2014. Employers can use the older poster or leaflet until then.

You can download [free copies of the leaflet and pocket card](#), where you can also buy them in priced packs, or buy the law poster itself.

SAFETY SIGNS

Employers must provide safety signs if there is a significant risk that can't be avoided or controlled in any other way, such as through safe systems of work or engineering controls.

There is no need to provide safety signs if they don't help reduce the risk or if the risk isn't significant. This applies to all places and activities where people are employed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INSURANCE

If your business has employees you are likely to be required by law to have employers' liability insurance.

Only a few businesses are not required to have employers' liability insurance. If you have no employees, or are a family business and all employees are closely related to you, you may not need it. **For further details, see the [HSE leaflet Employers' Liability \(Compulsory Insurance\) Act 1969: A brief guide for employers](#).**

As an NAFD member you benefit from Complimentary Health and Safety prosecution insurance through SEIB, the Association's recommended insurance provider, as well as access to a range of other insurance benefits either complimentary or at reduced cost.

INSPECTORS AND THE LAW

Health and safety laws applying to your business are enforced by HSE inspectors or by officers from your local authority.

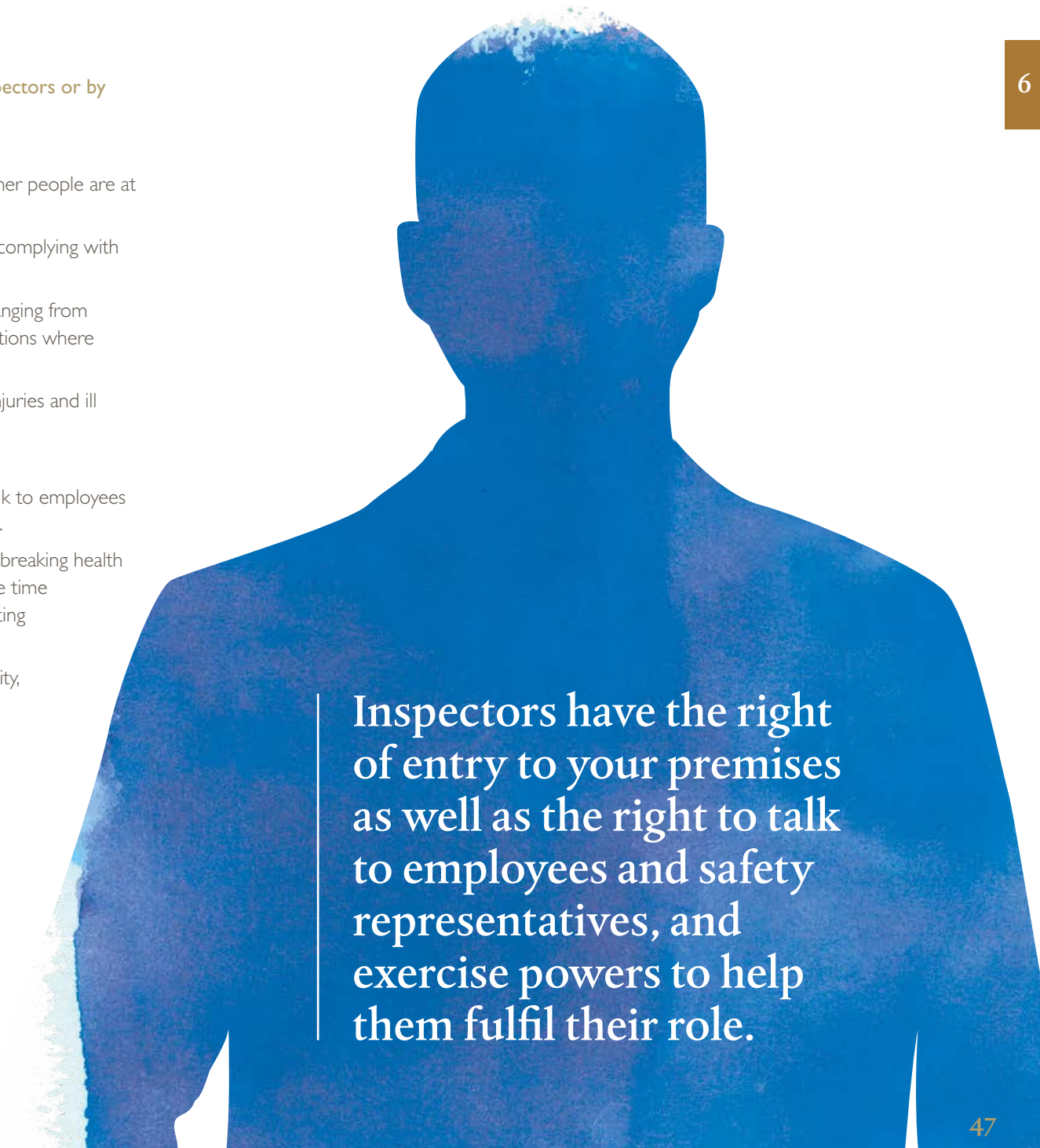
An inspector's role is to:

- investigate (when accidents have happened or a complaint is made) whether people are at risk, to find out if something has gone wrong;
- require you to take action to control risks properly if you are not already complying with the law;
- take appropriate enforcement action in relation to any non-compliance, ranging from advice on stopping dangerous work activities to potentially taking prosecutions where people are put at serious risk; and
- provide advice and guidance to help you comply with the law and avoid injuries and ill health at work.

Inspectors have the right of entry to your premises as well as the right to talk to employees and safety representatives, and exercise powers to help them fulfil their role.

HSE operates a Fee for Intervention (FFI) cost recovery scheme. If you are breaking health and safety laws, HSE may recover its costs from you by charging a fee for the time and effort it spends on helping you to put the matter right, such as investigating and taking enforcement action.

If an HSE inspector visits your premises and you want to confirm their identity, they all carry identification and you can ask to see this.



Inspectors have the right of entry to your premises as well as the right to talk to employees and safety representatives, and exercise powers to help them fulfil their role.

KEY PUBLICATIONS AND REGULATIONS FOR FUNERAL DIRECTORS

6

MANAGING INFECTION RISK WHEN HANDLING THE DECEASED

This publication provides guidance on managing the risks of infection from work activities which involve handling the deceased. It covers the safe handling, storage and examination of bodies and pathological specimens in hospitals, mortuaries and post-mortem rooms. It also provides guidance for those involved in funeral services (including embalmers) and exhumations of human remains.

It updates and combines previous HSE guidance, Safe working and the prevention of infection in the mortuary and post-mortem room (2003) and Controlling the risks of infection at work from human remains (2005), based on a review of scientific knowledge, stakeholder feedback and experience of how the previous guidance was used in the workplace.

Copies of this guidance can be purchased here - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/books/hsg283.htm>

BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES IN THE WORKPLACE

This leaflet is aimed at employers, employees and safety representatives in areas of work where exposure to blood or other body fluids may occur.

It explains what blood-borne viruses (BBVs) are; the type of work where exposure to BBVs may occur; how BBVs are spread; the legal duties of employers and employees; what action to take after infection with a BBV and special considerations for first-aiders.

Copies of this guidance can be purchased here - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/indg342.htm>

APPROVED LIST OF BIOLOGICAL AGENTS

The Approved List of biological agents and associated guidance are prepared by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) at the request of the Health and Safety Executive.

The Approved List provides the approved classification of biological agents as referred to in COSHH. It is relevant to risk assessment for work with biological agents and the application of appropriate control measures.

It is for use by people who deliberately work with biological agents, especially those in research, development, teaching or diagnostic laboratories and industrial processes, or those who work with humans or animals who are (or are suspected to be) infected with such an agent in health and animal care facilities.

This free publication can be downloaded here - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/misc208.htm>

INFECTION AT WORK: CONTROLLING THE RISKS

This guide deals with the risk of infection at work, but it is not aimed at those who deliberately work with micro-organisms, eg in laboratories.

You should use this guidance if your employees could come into contact with infectious micro-organisms as a result of the kind of work they do, e.g. caring for deceased persons who might be infectious or handling waste material that may be contaminated with microorganisms.

This free publication can be downloaded here - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/infection.pdf>

APPENDIX I: APPLICATION OF TRANSMISSION-BASED PRECAUTIONS TO KEY INFECTIONS IN THE DECEASED

The causative agents for the key infections listed below have been arranged according to the most likely route of transmission, taking account of the activity when handling the deceased, eg through post-mortem and embalming.

Infection	Causative agent	Hazard group	Is a body bag needed ¹ ?	Can the body be viewed?	Can postmortem be carried out?	Can hygienic treatment be carried out?	Can embalming be carried out?
Airborne Small particles that can remain airborne with potential for transmission by inhalation							
Tuberculosis	Mycobacterium tuberculosis	3	Yes	Yes ²	Yes ³	Yes	Yes ³
Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)	MERS coronavirus	3	Yes	Yes	Yes ³	Yes	Yes ³
Severe acute respiratory syndromes (SARS)	eg SARS coronavirus	3	Yes	Yes	Yes ³	Yes	Yes ³
Droplet Large particles that do not remain airborne for very long and do not travel far from source with potential for transmission via mucocutaneous routes (ie mouth, nose or eyes)							
Meningococcal septicaemia (meningitis)	Neisseria meningitidis	2	No	Yes	Yes ⁵	Yes	Yes ⁵
Flu (animal origin)	eg H5 and H7 influenza viruses	3	No	Yes	Yes ⁵	Yes	Yes ⁵
Diphtheria	Corynebacterium diphtheriae	2	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contact Either direct via hands of employees, or indirect via equipment and other contaminated articles where transmission is primarily via an ingestion route							
Invasive streptococcal infection	Streptococcus pyogenes (Group A)	2	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁵	No	No
Dysentery (shigellosis)	Shigella dysenteriae (type I)	3	No ⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hepatitis A	Hepatitis A virus	2	No ⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hepatitis E	Hepatitis E virus	3	No ⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enteric fever (typhoid/paratyphoid)	Salmonella typhi/paratyphi	3	No ⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brucellosis	Brucella melitensis	3	No	Yes	Yes ⁴	Yes	Yes ⁴
Haemolytic uraemic syndrome	Verocytotoxin / shiga toxinproducing E.coli (eg O157:H7)	3	No ⁶	Yes	Yes ⁴	Yes	Yes ⁴
Contact Either direct or indirect contact with blood/other blood containing body fluids via a skin-penetrating injury or via broken skin and through splashes of blood/other blood containing body fluids to eyes, nose and mouth							
Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)-related illness	Human immunodeficiency virus	3	No	Yes	Yes ⁷	Yes	Yes ⁷
Anthrax	Bacillus anthracis	3	Yes	No	Yes ⁸	No	No

Infection	Causative agent	Hazard group	Is a body bag needed ¹ ?	Can the body be viewed?	Can postmortem be carried out?	Can hygienic treatment be carried out?	Can embalming be carried out?
Hepatitis B, D and C	Hepatitis B, D and C viruses	3	No	Yes	Yes ⁷	Yes	Yes ⁷
Rabies	Lyssaviruses	3	No	Yes	No	No	No
Viral haemorrhagic fevers	Specifically Lassa fever; Ebola, Marburg, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever viruses	4	Yes ⁹	No	No	No	No
Contact Either direct or indirect contact with body fluids (eg brain and other neurological tissue) via a skin-penetrating injury or via broken skin							
Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (eg CJD)	Various prions	3	Yes	Yes	Yes ¹⁰	Yes	No

KEY

Red Minimise procedures or handling of the deceased

Yellow TBPs are necessary when carrying out procedures or handling the deceased

The highlighted areas indicate an increased level of risk associated with the infection to workers (with areas in red posing increased risk) and therefore require additional control measures when handling the deceased.

Notes

- ¹ It is advised that a body bag is used for the deceased in all cases where there is, or is likely to be, leakage of body fluids.
- ² With appropriate measures to deal with potential release of aerosols (eg place cloth or mask over mouth when moving the deceased).
- ³ With appropriate measures to deal with aerosol-generating procedures.
- ⁴ With measures to minimise environmental contamination (because of low infectious dose; ie the amount of pathogen or number of bacteria required to cause an infection is low).
- ⁵ With appropriate measures to prevent exposure of mucosal surfaces (eg a physical barrier to protect eyes, mouth and nose, such as a facemask or visor).
- ⁶ Although illness may have increased likelihood of leakage of body fluids.
- ⁷ With appropriate robust measures for the use of sharps (eg minimise use or use safer sharps devices).
- ⁸ Before undertaking a procedure, the rationale for a post-mortem should be carefully considered where anthrax infection is suspected, particularly where examination may increase the potential for aerosol generation.
- ⁹ With double body bag.
- ¹⁰ With appropriate measures to minimise percutaneous injury and contamination of work area, and to help with decontamination (eg high-level sharps control or dedicated equipment).

SAFE MANAGEMENT OF LINEN (INCLUDING UNIFORMS OR WORK CLOTHING)

Store clean linen and clothing appropriately in a designated area and in sufficient supply for the scale of work. Dispose of any linen or work clothing that is unfit for reuse (eg badly torn).

Categorise any linen (eg sheets or blankets) used for transfer of the deceased at the point of use. For all used linen, provide a laundry container as close as possible to the point of use for immediate deposit. The used linen should not be:

- rinsed, shaken or sorted when removed from trolleys;
- placed on the floor or other surfaces (eg locker or table top);
- rehandled once bagged.

Do not overfill laundry containers and do not put inappropriate items in them (eg needles or used equipment).

Place all infectious linen or work clothing (ie that has been used for the deceased who are known or suspected to have been infectious and/or that is contaminated with blood and/or other body fluids) directly in a water-soluble or alginate bag and secure it. Then place it in a plastic bag and secure it before placing it in a laundry receptacle. Dispose of items that are heavily soiled and unlikely to be fit for reuse as clinical waste.

Store all used and contaminated linen in a designated safe area while awaiting collection or laundering. The storage should be lockable if it is in a publicly accessible area. A suitable frequency for collection or laundering should be in place to avoid a build-up of linen receptacles.

SAFE DISPOSAL OF WASTE (INCLUDING SHARPS)

Waste generated from handling the deceased needs to be disposed of safely. Where the waste needs to be transported off-site via public roads, there are specific requirements that need to be met. Guidance on these requirements is available in Safe management of healthcare waste.

Although this guidance is aimed at healthcare, the principles are relevant to embalming and funeral services.

The deceased's clothing is usually passed to the family by hospital or funeral services staff, unless it is soiled. In this case discuss the issue sensitively with the family and if they do not wish it returned, dispose of it as healthcare waste.

Classify all waste from the post-mortem and embalming rooms as healthcare waste.



CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH REGULATIONS 2002 (COSHH)

These Regulations are extremely relevant to the funeral service, mainly in embalming rooms and mortuaries because of the chemicals used, but also in various other parts of funeral premises, e.g. cleaning agents and other household chemicals need to be monitored. The Regulations require that all substances used in the workplace shall be assessed to determine any hazards and to ensure their correct use. Action under the Regulation 7 can be summarised under two headings:

Employers – first the operator must determine the hazard of a substance and then assess the risk to people's health from the way that substance is used in the workplace. Arrange it so there is no danger of anyone being exposed to the substances and if not:

- decide how to control exposures to reduce risk
- establish effective controls
- train and inform the workforce
- monitoring employees' exposure may be required along with the provision of health surveillance

Employees – Employees need to know more than just the hazard presented by a substance before it is used. It should be understood:

- what the risks are from using it at the workplace
- how those risks are controlled
- the precautions that have to be taken.

It is essential that both employers and employees realise that these Regulations cover the whole of the workplace and they aim to maintain and improve existing standards of health and safety in relation to work involving substances hazardous to health.

To download the opposite form:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg283.pdf> See page 51 of the PDF.

Appendix 2: Hazard notification sheet

1	Name of deceased		
2	Date and time of death		
3	Source (hospital, ward or other)		
4 Infection risk from the deceased ¹			
4a	Does the deceased present an infection risk? (Ring as appropriate)		
	Yes	Suspected	None suspected
4b	If yes, what are the likely routes of transmission? (Ring all that apply) ²		
	Airborne	Droplet	Contact
4c	Infection (if permitted to disclose) ³		
4d	Provide any relevant information to enable the deceased to be handled safely ⁴		
5 Condition of the deceased ⁵			
5a	Is the deceased leaking body fluids? Please provide details		
5b	Have accessories that present a risk of sharps injury been removed?		
5c	If yes, have the puncture points been covered or sealed?		
5d	If no, please provide details and location		
5e	Does the deceased have an implantable device? (Ring as appropriate)		
	No	Yes and switched off	Yes but not switched off
5f	If yes, please provide details and location		
5g	Was the deceased receiving radiotherapy? (If yes, please provide details)		
6	Signed ⁶		
	Print name		
	Institution		

RECORD KEEPING

Keep accurate occupational health records for all staff exposed to microorganisms.

These records include:

- the type of work the employee does;
- dates of when work was started and, when appropriate, finished;
- the biological agents to which they have been exposed;
- records of any exposures, accidents or incidents;
- records of any vaccines given and the checks that were made to ensure protection.

Arrangements should be in place to make sure that staff are recalled and followed up for re-immunisation and boosters. Health records must be maintained in most cases for 10 years following the last known exposure. In certain instances, such as work exposure to Mycobacterium tuberculosis, CJD and some bloodborne viruses, the records may need to be kept for 40 years from the date of the last entry.

Employers should monitor the health of their staff and note and act upon occurrences of work-related illness, such as sickness absence. Active health surveillance will be required for sharps injuries and following exposure to pathogens associated with latency (eg Mycobacterium tuberculosis). **For more information, see HSE's guidance on health surveillance at www.hse.gov.uk/healthsurveillance/index.htm**

IMMUNISATION

Where there is a risk of exposure to infectious microorganisms for which effective vaccines are readily available, COSHH requires employers to make these vaccines available to employees who are exposed to biological agents. As this is a specific requirement under health and safety law, employers cannot charge their employees for such vaccines.

For some vaccines, a pre-exposure screening programme and appropriate follow-up assessments may be necessary to show whether employees are immune to the relevant microorganism. The screening records should include the dates of an employee's vaccinations and when any boosters or follow-up screenings are due.

The need for specific immunisations should be based on the guidance Immunisation against infectious disease from the Department of Health and Public Health England.²⁴ In most cases, mortuary and funeral service staff who handle the deceased will need to be immunised, as a minimum, against Hepatitis B, tetanus and tuberculosis.

Immunisation should, however, be seen only as a supplement to reinforce SICPs (and TBPs where necessary), procedural controls and the use of PPE.

For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

When employers provide vaccines they should make sure that employees are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of immunisation, and its limitations.

The employer responsible for the premises should co-operate with the employers of other people who may visit their premises (for example, at a post-mortem examination) to make sure that those who may be at risk are suitably immunised.

MANUAL HANDLING AT WORK: A BRIEF GUIDE

This leaflet is aimed at managers in small and medium sized businesses.

It explains the problems associated with manual handling and gives guidance on how to deal with them. The leaflet gives useful practical advice on reducing the risk of injury from manual handling. It will help employers to implement their duties under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

Copies of this guidance can be purchased here - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.htm>

All of the above information was accurate at the time of publication. The NAFD urges you to regularly check the Health and Safety website to satisfy yourself that you are taking all necessary steps to consider Health and Safety issues in your business.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Your safe working practices should clearly specify what PPE should be worn in the designated clean and dirty areas of the funeral premises (such as the viewing room and embalming room).

Anyone entering such areas should comply with these requirements; they will be different during procedures and after the areas have been decontaminated. SICPs and TBPs explain how PPE fits with other control precautions. However, for most routine activities single-use gloves and plastic aprons should give sufficient protection. People handling the deceased should always wear gloves and wash their hands afterwards. The safe working practices should set out where additional PPE is required.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AT WORK (PPE) REGULATIONS 1992

This legislation sets out the principles for selecting, providing, maintaining and using PPE. PPE is defined as: all equipment designed to be worn or held to protect against a risk to health and safety, and includes most types of protective clothing and equipment. It is recognised that the issue and use of PPE should only be considered as a last resort, i.e. when the risk cannot be controlled by other means. Again duties are imposed in relation to:

- Assessing the risk and the PPE intended to be used, to determine if it is suitable.
- Maintaining, cleaning and replacing PPE.
- Providing storage for PPE when not being used.
- Introducing staff to the use of PPE and how to look after it

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

A notifiable disease is a disease listed by the Department of Health that has to be reported on diagnosis to the Medical Officer of Environmental Health. Examples are measles, whooping cough and typhoid fever. Within the group are some that are infectious after death and can therefore affect the funeral director. A few are especially hazardous so the funeral director should be aware of these conditions, make every effort to ascertain the cause of death and keep staff, especially the embalmer, aware of any condition that gives cause for concern.

Where a person dies in hospital whilst suffering from a notifiable disease, the local Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) or some other medical practitioner may prohibit the removal of the body except for its removal to a mortuary or removal for burial or cremation forthwith. In practice, it is found that Health Authorities only exercise these powers in respect of the most dangerous of the notifiable diseases, such as viral hemorrhagic fever or anthrax.

In respect of other infectious diseases, hospitals will allow removal if certain conditions are complied with. Where established conditions and controls are in existence it is the responsibility of the Funeral Director to ensure that these are followed. Rules vary from place to place and according to the particular infection present, but, in the main, they require that the body be enclosed in a sealed plastic body bag before being placed in the coffin or casket which is to be kept closed after leaving the hospital.

In the latter case, should the relatives wish to view, the robing of the deceased must be carried out at the hospital and it is usual to fit a glass panel in the lid of the coffin or casket, this being protected with a detachable cover. Embalmers should obtain permission from the hospital authorities before embalming such a case. Recommendations in respect of the most important infectious diseases are listed separately below.

In the event of shipment abroad after death from an infectious disease, Consular rules can be very strict. They involve full embalmment of the body, the use of a hermetically sealed coffin or casket and/or container and may call for an enforced delay before shipment of up to two years.

Detailed below is a list of notifiable diseases:

- Acute encephalitis
- Acute meningitis
- Acute poliomyelitis
- Acute infectious hepatitis
- Anthrax
- Botulism
- Brucellosis
- Cholera
- Diphtheria
- Enteric fever (typhoid or paratyphoid fever)
- Food poisoning (as defined by the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food)
- Haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS)
- Infectious bloody diarrhoea
- Invasive group A streptococcal diseases and scarlet fever
- Legionnaires' Disease
- Leprosy
- Malaria
- Measles
- Meningococcal septicaemia
- Mumps
- Plague
- Rabies
- Rubella
- SARS
- Smallpox
- Tetanus
- Tuberculosis
- Typhus
- Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF)
- Whooping cough
- Yellow fever

GUIDANCE TABLE

The table below provides guidelines for handling bodies with infections (both notifiable and non-notifiable).

Disease	Body Bag?	First Offices?	Embalming?	Viewing Allowed?
Acute Encephalitis	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Acute Infectious Hepatitis	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Acute Poliomyelitis	No – maybe appropriate after assessing the risks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anthrax	Yes	No	No	No
Brucellosis	No – maybe appropriate after assessing the risks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cholera	No – unless leakage of body fluids	Yes	Yes with special care	Yes
Diphtheria	No – maybe appropriate after assessing the risks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dysentery (Amoebic or Bacillary)	No – unless leakage of body fluids	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enteric Fever (Typhoid or Paratyphoid fever)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Food poisoning (or suspected)	No – unless leakage of body fluids	Yes	Yes	Yes
HIV/AIDS	No – unless leakage of body fluids	Yes	Not advised	Yes
Legionnaires Disease	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leprosy	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leptospirosis (Weil's)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malaria	No	Yes	Yes with special care	Yes
Measles	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meningococcal Disease	No – maybe appropriate after assessing the risks	Yes	Yes	Yes

Disease	Body Bag?	First Offices?	Embalming?	Viewing Allowed?
MRSA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mumps	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plague	Yes	No	No	No
Rabies	Yes	No	No	No
Relapsing Fever	No – maybe appropriate after assessing the risks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rubella	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
SARS	Yes	No	No	No
Scarlet Fever	No – maybe appropriate after assessing the risks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smallpox	Yes	No	No	No
Tetanus	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy	Yes	No	No	No
Tuberculosis	No – maybe appropriate after assessing the risks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Typhus	Yes	No	No	No
Viral Haemorrhagic	Yes	No	No	No
Whooping Cough	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yellow Fever	Yes	No	No	No

Detailed guidance on how to deal with the risks from infection, infection control, disinfectants and disinfection, please refer to the HSE's Controlling the risks of infection at work from human remains. A guide for those involved in funeral services (including embalmers) and those involved in exhumation.

This guide can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/information.htm> under the **General Occupation Guidance** header.

Chapter 7

Client Care & Communication



CLIENT CARE & COMMUNICATION

All members of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) share their desire to offer the very best client service through adherence to the Code of Practice and Code of Professional Standards.

A Funeral Director/arranger does not get a second chance to ensure such an important event is arranged and managed to the highest standard.

The role of the Funeral Director/arranger and the needs of the consumer is now more publicly discussed than ever before so having a good understanding of what client care is and knowing how the improvement of client care should be a continuous process is imperative to our work.

The arrangement of a funeral is not an everyday occurrence and so often, a client, when having to arrange a loved one's funeral for the first time, has no real understanding of what to expect by way of standards or service. This should always be borne in mind by the Funeral Director/arranger who carries out the role of arranging a funeral on a daily/weekly basis.

This chapter hopes to bring some practical illustrations of client care within the funeral profession. Quite often the goods and services offered by competing businesses are not all that different. What can make a difference to the client is the how the Funeral Director/arranger demonstrates their empathy with the client and detail. It is very often the small things that count when the client comes to the funeral home.



WHAT IS CLIENT CARE?

According to the definition with the Collins English Dictionary, client care is “the work of looking after customers and ensuring their satisfaction with one’s business and its goods or services”.

WHEN IS CLIENT CARE IMPORTANT?

Funeral Directors/arrangers are constantly ‘on-show’ to their clients and colleagues so by analysing their dealings with clients, it becomes apparent that every activity has an impact on client care, for example:

On the Telephone

An initial call to notify the Funeral Director/arranger of a death is often the first exposure a client will have with the funeral business and so it is important that we are:

Prompt. Answering the telephone promptly will provide an early confidence in the level of care the Funeral Director/arranger will offer.

Efficient. It is key to be efficient in gathering all the appropriate information so that we may, for example, arrange for the funeral team to attend a request to bring a deceased into the care of the funeral home.

First Face to Face Contact

This is often at the point of removal, particularly if family or anyone who cared for the deceased are still present at the location of where the deceased passed away on our arrival. For many Funeral Directors/arrangers, first face to face contact can be where the client/family members attend the funeral home.

Some examples of how client care can be demonstrated by those who attend on behalf of the service are:

- **Of smart appearance.** Many funeral businesses operate a policy whereby their representatives are required to wear a uniform as well as ensuring a high standard of personal hygiene.
- **Reliable.** During the initial telephone call (if there has been one) to the Funeral Director/arranger, it is quite usual for the caller to be given an estimated time of arrival of the funeral team. It is therefore important to ensure we arrive within that estimated time.

Whilst Making the Funeral Arrangements

Whether funeral arrangements are being made in the client's home or in a funeral home, there are a number of elements the Funeral Director/arranger can do to demonstrate client care – for example by showing:

Personal Interest. In order to build a successful relationship with a client and their family it is most important for the Funeral Director/arranger to show a sincere interest - both in the person(s) and things that are important to them. When the Funeral Director/arranger expresses a real interest in the client's and deceased's background, stories, hobbies, career, family, or anything else closely connected to them, the Funeral Director/arranger will be providing them with a sense of importance and value.

Adaptability. With changes in the choices clients can make in regard to the personalisation of funerals, technology and diversity, it is important that the Funeral Director/funeral arranger is open to new ideas and flexible enough to work through any issues that might prove challenging. Adaptability can involve preparing alternative options for discussion, showing acceptance when a service or product that the Funeral Director/arranger offers is rejected by the client so thought has to be given to alternatives. Demonstration of adaptability can gain the confidence of the client.

Professionalism. Professionalism can be broken down into a number of different areas. For example, it may be that professionalism is shown through adherence to the NAFD's Code of Practice and Professional Standards as well as the policies and procedures of the business. Professionalism might also be shown in areas that are less tangible such as dress; communication skills and behaviours.

Dealing with Third Parties such as Doctors, Officiants etc

It shouldn't be forgotten that Funeral Director/arranger's need to be able to show their care skills not just to their clients/families, but also to others who they might deal with on a day to day basis. Some examples here might be showing:

Knowledge. Knowing who to contact, within what timescales etc when arranging a funeral is important to all parties involved, including the third parties that help the Funeral Director/funeral arranger help the client.

Helpfulness. Helpfulness is making the effort to make life a little easier for other people. This can relate to both the client and their families but also all those who will make a difference to the working of a funeral.

By Correspondence

Whilst most elements of a funeral can be done via the telephone. Good client care is ensuring all client's instructions are gathered and confirmed to all parties involved (including the client) in writing, either by letter or email.

During Administration Details

The Funeral Director/arranger has the responsibility of ensuring all appropriate documentation is completed in a timely fashion. The client and third parties contacted should all have confidence that details will be completed clearly and accurately.

Visitors to the Funeral Home

When there are visitors to the funeral home, particularly if the family, friends and acquaintances of the deceased are present in order to pay their last respects, client care can be shown through:

Empathy. Showing an active interest in someone and being able to display an appreciation of another's feelings is essential. The Funeral Director/arranger allowing themselves to 'walk a mile in another's shoes' as such, permits them to understand the emotions that another person is feeling.

At what might be for many such a distressing time, being able to demonstrate empathy allows us to show them we genuinely care about how they are feeling.

At and After the Funeral

Historically, it may be that the services of the Funeral Director/arranger ended when the funeral service was complete, and the account paid.

Today, many funeral businesses give thought to what happens after the funeral has taken place. It is now not unusual for client care to include:

Good Aftercare Service. This can be shown in a number of ways such as:

- Issuing a questionnaire to gain an idea of client satisfaction
- Offering bereavement counselling
- Inviting the client to memorial services throughout the year or at special times of the year
- Inviting the client to place a memorial star on a Christmas tree.

Each of the stages described above are critical, even when the Funeral Director/arranger is not in direct contact with their client, there is an influence on the care they receive.

COLLEAGUES

To consider the individual needs of clients, there must be a clear understanding as to who is considered the client and who is considered a colleague. Most Funeral Directors/arrangers will state that their client is the person who they sit and arrange the funeral with. If we therefore use the term 'colleague' to represent others that the Funeral Director/arranger would liaise with.

There are two types of colleague, those external to the funeral business such as:

- Relatives
- Sales representatives
- Postmen
- Police
- Nurses
- Friends of the bereaved
- Officiants
- Doctors

and, those inside the funeral business such as:

- Embalmer (if employed)
- Funeral Service Assistants/Operatives
- Manager

Client care concerns every role within the funeral business. As all of us are providing a service to someone, Funeral Directors/arrangers have a direct influence on the quality of service their external clients receive. It is worth remembering that behaviour mirrors behaviour and so it follows that giving good personal service to colleagues is just as important as giving it to external clients. We are all part of a process which determines the sort of service our external clients receive.

WHAT DO CLIENTS EXPECT?

As stated earlier in the chapter, the expectations of a client may very well depend on whether they've had experience in dealing with a funeral.

If Funeral Directors/arrangers are aware of, and understand what their clients expect, they can always use these as their own standards and aim to provide a level of performance and service at least to those standards. Funeral Directors/arrangers are part of a unique service, unique because of the feelings and emotions of their clients, thus making the care they receive even more critical.

There are two different areas to bear in mind when considering what a client may expect from their Funeral Director/arranger and funeral service. **These are material service standards and personal service standards. Some examples of what these are, are shown below:**

Material Service Standards

- A clean, bright and attractive funeral home
 - No client would expect to see any area of the funeral home in a poor or unclean condition.
- Quality of product - coffin/casket, flowers etc
 - It is essential for the business as well as the client that they ensure any suppliers contracted with to supply goods through their business is of a high quality.
- Clean vehicles - inside and out
- Correct number of vehicles arriving at the right place at the right time.
- Choice - of coffins and other products such as floral tributes; orders of service etc.

Personal Service Standards

Material service is the easiest to define and measure, what is interesting however is how a client's view of the material service may be affected by the personal service received. An example of this might be where a client waits in the funeral home reception area to see the Funeral Director or arranger. We should consider what their perception would be during that wait and how their perception is influenced by the quality of the personal service given during the wait. A friendly word, a smile, an explanation as to the reason for the delay, an estimate of how long the wait is likely to be, an offer of refreshment can go a long way in making the client feel they are receiving good personal service. The client will remember the treatment showed to them during the first five minutes of any initial contact, whether it is by telephone or face to face. These crucial minutes influence the client's view of the overall service received and whether they have received value for money.

Some examples of personal service standards are:

- Empathy
- Patience
- Flexibility
- Professionalism
- Friendly but not over-familiar service
- Not to be kept waiting
- Polite and dignified treatment
- Knowledge of all types of funeral arrangement and/or ability to acquire knowledge of the more unusual case.

These are some of the key standards that must always be achieved. All clients, be they internal or external, have expectations such as these.

What are the Skills Needed?

To enable good client care to be consistently provided, the Funeral Director/arranger needs to have excellent communication skills. Communication is the imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings. It is important to remember that communication is a two-way exchange between a sender and a receiver. Communication is not just a way of imparting facts or information but also of imparting attitudes and feelings. Humans communicate in several ways:

- Verbally - through the choice of words used
- Non-verbally e.g. body language
- Listening - the method by which communications are received
- Written through the use of the written word
- Visual through the use of graphics and signs

COMMUNICATION

Research has shown that 80% of the communication process is non-verbal. To provide consistently good client care, this non-verbal element needs to be examined in more detail and the following positive and negative factors considered:

1. Tone of voice

Positive

Caring with a gentle intonation
Confident pace
Asking appropriate questions
Clear and concise speech

Negative

Too loud
Too quiet
Bored intonation
Too fast or too slow

2. Body Language

Positive

Relaxed, yet upright posture
Open arm gestures
Allowing personal space
Gentle head movements
Smart and clean appearance

Negative

Fidgeting or impatient
Slumped posture, folded arms
Standing or sitting too close
Rapid head movements
Untidy appearance

3. Facial expression

Positive

Friendly face
Gentle, genuine smile
Good eye contact
Looking interested
Controlled facial expression

Negative

Bored
False smile
Looking away or staring
Raising eyebrows to humiliate
Frowning

(The above provides examples and is not exhaustive).

Funeral Directors/arrangers often must deal with extremely emotional situations. Clients can be experiencing feelings such as anger, despair, guilt and frustration and the non-verbal response to these emotions is critical.

Funeral Directors/arrangers need to communicate that they are offering a friendly, caring, helpful and yet professional service. At the same time, they must stay in control, in some respects, be professionally distant and yet be caring and understanding.

The non-verbal messages transmitted to clients are most important. These messages are not interpreted individually but happen all at the same time. The reading of, and response to, these messages is a natural reaction, but an awareness of their power will help to develop and control communication skills.

The key to finding the balance between professional formal control and caring and understanding is the skill of active listening. Listening is a skill that can be developed and improved. Bereavement counsellors and members of the Samaritans are trained to listen in an intensive development programme. **So, although listening is a common skill, that skill can be improved by an awareness of some of the key principles:**

The skills of the active listener

- Put the client at ease
- Stop talking and clear the mind of everything except the case in hand
- Do not interrupt
- Relax, be calm, show every willingness to give the client all the time needed
- Listen exactly to what the person is trying to say and not what it is believed should be said
- Look for non-verbal signals and respond to them
- Look at the person and use eye contact
- Use non-verbal signals to show an attentive interest, especially use of your head in a positive manner; open arm gestures and eye contact
- Use appropriate questions to help the client to continue talking
- Summarise what is being said to check understanding - keep it simple. Be genuinely interested
- Be aware of expressing personal opinions. Make a conscious effort to prevent personal opinions affecting any reactions.

Remember; when listening to someone who is communicating, the message should be "I care, I respect you and I want to help".

Questioning

We have said previously that when actively listening, use of appropriate questions helps the client to continue talking and communicates the listener's interest and attention. The definition of a question is 'a statement made by one to another to elicit information'.

A question should be phrased so that it obtains the information needed; it should promote a good relationship between the Funeral Director/arranger and the client; it should be expressed as clearly as possible; it should aim to elicit information related to one topic at a time. These points show that there are two types of question, namely:

Open questions that are aimed at receiving a broad amount of information and leave the client with a choice of what he/she wishes to talk about, e.g. "What kind of flower arrangement were you interested in?"

Closed questions which direct the client to a particular subject and can usually be answered with a "Yes" or "No", e.g. "Would you like a service in Church?"

Never use a multiple question, such as, "Would you like roses or carnations and how would you like them arranged?" Such a question asks for too much information all at once and will only confuse the client.

Just as there are skills to active listening, we must also be aware of what may stop us from actively listening.

Barriers to Good Listening

'On-off' listening

This unfortunate habit in listening arises from the fact that most of us think about four times as fast as the average person speaks. Thus, the listener has three-quarters of a minute of spare thinking time for each listening minute. Sometimes we use this extra time to think of our own personal affairs, concerns, or interests and troubles instead of listening.

'Red flag' listening

To some of us some words are like the proverbial red flag to the bull. When we hear them, we get upset or irritated and stop listening. These terms vary with individuals. However, to some words like 'should', 'must', 'unfaithful', 'police', 'discipline', 'school', 'management', 'Unions', etc. are signals to which there is an automatic response. When this signal comes in we tune out the speaker.

'Open ears - closed mind' listening

Sometimes we decide rather quickly that either the subject or the speaker is boring and what is said makes no sense. Often, we jump to conclusions that we can predict what he/she knows or what he/she will say; thus, we conclude, there is no reason to listen because we will hear nothing new if we do.

'Glassy eyed' listening

Sometimes we look at a person intently and we almost seem to be listening, although our minds may be on other things or on far distant places. We drop back into the comfort of our own thoughts. We get glassy-eyed and often a dreamy expression appears on our faces. We can tell when people look at us in this way. Similarly, they can see the same in us and we're not fooling anyone.

'Too-deep-for-me' listening

When we are listening to ideas that are too complex and complicated there is a danger we will 'shut-off'.

'Matter-over-mind' listening

We do not like to have our pet ideas, prejudices, and points of view overturned. We do not like to have our opinions and judgements challenged. Consequently, when a speaker says something that clashes with what we think, believe, and hold firm then we may unconsciously stop listening or even become defensive and plan a counter-attack.

Being 'subject-centred' instead of 'speaker-centred'

Sometimes we concentrate on the problem and not the person. Detail and fact about an incident become more important than what people are saying about themselves.

'Fact' listening

Often as we listen to people, we try to remember the facts and repeat them over and over again to drive them home. As we do this, frequently the speaker has gone on to new facts and we lose them in the process.

'Pencil' listening

Trying to put down on paper everything the speaker says; usually means we are bound to lose some of it because the speaker's words come out faster than we can write them down. Eye contact also becomes more difficult.

'Hubbub' listening

Sometimes there are many distractions when we listen, such as, noise, movement of people, or other matters clamouring for our attention.

An awareness of the above pitfalls can be the first step to avoiding them.

The type of question can be determined by two factors: how the client feels and what the Funeral Director/arranger needs to find out. It will be possible to determine how the client feels by being aware of the non-verbal element of communication. Does the client want to talk about the person who has died? If it is believed the answer is 'yes', and that it might help the client to relax, then an open question should be used. If it is felt that the client is too

upset and does not want to discuss their bereavement, a closed question should be used. Questioning is part of the active listening process.

Caring for Others Starts by Caring for Oneself

It will be evident that the responsibility for a high standard of client care rests with all those involved in funeral service; however, the bereaved cannot be served effectively unless steps are taken to prepare Funeral Directors/arrangers for this task.

As individuals, Funeral Directors/arrangers need to recognise that caring for others involves directing attention to their own skills and knowledge. Although daily contact with clients increases experience in the handling of situations, on a more professional level it is essential that the need for on-going personal development is recognised.

Client care which rises above being 'good enough' to being 'good' and then to 'excellent' depends to a large extent, on excellence in communication. It is important to realise that communication is a two-way process the hearer may often not 'receive' the message that the speaker thinks is being given. This may be for a variety of reasons:

- In the early days of bereavement, grieving people may be so overwhelmed by sorrow that they quite literally do not hear what is said to them - rather as one can become so absorbed in a book or some other occupation that the outside world temporarily does not exist.
- Their grief may make them impatient with the detail of planning the funeral, so that all they want is to "get it over with", which may make it difficult for them to listen. This can lead to problems later, if the funeral does not go as they had expected, or if the account is different from their expectations.
- There may be a host of barriers to listening (in both parties) and one of these may be conflict about how the funeral should be conducted. A look at the barriers identified on the following sheet will highlight how complex communication can be, especially if we add emotional and psychological barriers to the list.
- Non-verbal communication is also important. It has been calculated that communication is
 - o 7% Content
 - o 38.9% Tone
 - o 55% Non-verbal communication

Good communicators are aware of how their body language will affect their message. The unfortunate image of the Funeral Director as Dickens's "ever so 'umble" Uriah Heep, is mercifully wholly inaccurate, but this does not mean that the image presented to the bereaved is unimportant.

Essential Qualities

Extensive research has been carried out into which qualities are needed for an interaction to be perceived as helpful. The list is quite long, but there are three qualities that, if they are not present will mean that the person on the receiving end will not perceive the exchange as positive or helpful. **The three qualities which research shows as being essential are:**

Sincerity

If we are not sincere in our wish to help, anything we offer will be seen as “phoney” - as the old joke has it, “You can’t fake sincerity.”

The Funeral Director/arranger will have great familiarity with death, but good client care will depend on the genuine ability to convey to the bereaved an understanding that their grief is unique.

Acceptance

Occasionally, this quality is thought to mean that we must agree with what the other person is saying, thinking or feeling, but this is not its meaning as an essential helping quality. Its meaning is more to do with accepting that what the person thinks or feels (however odd or even bizarre it seems to us) is real for them. This is especially true of grief, where the power of the emotions can often result in people doing and saying things which in retrospect will surprise them and which they may regret. The communication task of the sensitive Funeral Director/arranger is to show respect, acknowledging that it is the event of the death that may cause unusual behaviours and withholding any sense of criticism. Too often bereaved people get commended for being “good” - i.e. not crying; not showing emotion etc - as if there were some sort of moral strength in being stoical. For some people this may be important, but we need to convey acceptance for all reactions, especially if there are cultural norms involved.

Empathy

This rather over-worked word is the third essential quality. It differs from sympathy, in that it involves feeling with the other person, rather than feeling for them, which would be sympathy. On the other hand, it does not mean losing our own “footing” so to speak. Carl Rogers, who introduced the term into helping, described it in this way:

The ability to experience another person’s world as if it were one’s own, without losing the ‘as if’.

A Funeral Director/arranger who can, so to speak, keep one foot in the grieving person’s world and one foot in his or her own is giving a gift to the bereaved.

Crucial Skills

There is little point in having these qualities in abundance if the person on the receiving end is not aware of them! The qualities are conveyed and communicated through skills. Skills in communication are what we can actually see. It is through them that we know that the qualities are present. Try to recall a one-to-one exchange that you have had when you have been the “receiver” - perhaps with your doctor; or for some sort of appraisal. What did the other person do or say which made that interaction good or bad? If I had been a fly on the wall, what could I have noted?

The points you made may have clustered themselves into:

Attention

The person had a range of skills that confirmed that you were the object of their attention for however long the exchange lasted.

There are many ways of showing attention; being ready to listen can be shown by maximising the environment, minimising interruptions and distractions. If a home visit is called for, the Funeral Director may not have much choice about the environment, but it is still possible to suggest that the discussion is important and perhaps a time of quiet will help. The quality of respect will not be shown if mobile ‘phones ring during the interview. Allowing sufficient time is another way of demonstrating attention - surreptitiously glancing at a watch will not demonstrate genuineness and will be noticed. It is more respectful to set a time limit at the start and to remind the person that time is drawing to a close e.g. “You’ll remember that we agreed that I’d have to leave at..... but if we need to meet again, we can arrange to do so”.

Non-verbal communication will also play an important role - the way we sit, the amount of appropriate eye contact, our facial expression, not shuffling papers, all convey whether or not we are giving full attention. Research seems to prove that first impressions are the ones that last, and this is especially pertinent in funeral directing, where the client is in a very vulnerable state and therefore very impressionable.

Observant

The person seemed to notice how you were - “You look tired today”.

Being able to pick up on the clients’ non-verbal language, as well as being aware of our own, is often helpful in gauging the level of emotion, so that what is said, and any information given is appropriate to that level. For example, if a client seems agitated, finds it difficult to sustain eye contact or perhaps cannot keep still, it may be a clue that information needs to be repeated.

Being able to pick up on the clients’ non-verbal language, as well as being aware of our own, is often helpful in gauging the level of emotion, so that what is said, and any information given is appropriate to that level. For example, if a client seems agitated, finds it difficult to sustain

eye contact or perhaps cannot keep still, it may be a clue that information needs to be repeated.

Listened

What you had to say was carefully listened to - you felt heard.

We have already looked at some of the barriers to good listening, but the ability to listen actively is an invaluable gift for a Funeral Director/arranger. Passive listening will not convey those core qualities. We need to be able to listen on at least two levels - listening for the content is not too difficult, although the number of points that get overlooked can be alarming! We also need to listen for the feeling behind the words.

"I don't want any fuss", can be said in many different ways (try to listen to the many different things it can convey, depending upon how it is said). The sensitive Funeral Director will be listening not only to the words, but to "the music behind the words".

Responded

Replies to what you had said were appropriate and carefully timed.

If we are listening to both content and feeling(s), then we should also respond to both. The skill which best achieves this is reflection. The Funeral Director/arranger will, of necessity, need to ask questions. If possible, these should be open questions (beginning How ... ? What ... ? When ... ?), as these are more likely to ensure that the funeral is what the client wants, whereas closed questions will result in Yes/No answers which tends to leave all the control with the Funeral Director/arranging, when the aim is to give as much as possible to the client. Too many questions especially closed questions, can make the client feel interrogated.

The skill of reflection demonstrates empathy. 'When you mentioned...', 'you sounded/seemed...'. Let the client know that you not only heard what they said, but that you were sensitive enough to hear how they said it, that is you heard the feeling as well as the content.

The practical details of providing a service will be well known to Funeral Directors, but there is little doubt that it is the personalised quality of the service that has most significance for the client. Losing sight of this can result in the funeral not having that meaningful quality which we emphasised earlier. Checking that we communicate the core qualities and are self-aware - not self-conscious, which is an uncomfortable way of being - will ensure that the client remembers the significance that the Funeral Director lent to an occasion that has the potential for being traumatic. Being self-aware implies taking care of ourselves. Funeral directing is, by its nature, stressful; working with and for people in a highly emotional state, constantly helping with acute grief, walking that professional tightrope between the practical and the personal will inevitably take its toll. Ensuring that neither "distancing" - that the client will see as indifference - nor "burn out" that leads to stress related illness, happens is a personal responsibility. We do well to remember:

Many helpers, when they themselves are suffering, are incapable of accepting support, or at least of receiving it easily. Chances are, if you cannot accept help you cannot really give it.

We owe it to our clients and to ourselves to give ourselves the same care that we offer the clients.

Communicating with Clients who speak English as a second language or come from other Cultures

We may find that at times, we are communicating with the bereaved where their English may be limited. So that we can ensure their understanding of discussions, we should try to find out where the client is along the continuum of language. Some considerations are listed below:

When you need to talk about significant information, such as the funeral arrangement, ask the client how they prefer to communicate. If necessary, consider using an interpreter or translated materials to improve understanding. Consider using a professional interpreter to communicate important information. A bilingual/ bicultural interpreter can not only speak in the client's language but can also present information in ways that are consistent with the person's cultural beliefs and practices.

State your message clearly and simply. Use everyday words rather than technical ones. It may be necessary to demonstrate or use pictures to get your point across.

Speak clearly and concentrate on the most important message.

Think about what you want to say, and then carefully choose the words to say it. Speak at a slower pace, pausing for two or three seconds after you ask a question or give new information.

Use phrases or short sentences. Include the full form of words, rather than contractions—"I will," for example, rather than "I'll." Do not speak louder just because a client has limited English—this can come across as sounding angry and does nothing to improve communication.

Work with the family decision maker.

In some cultures, the client is not the primary decision maker. Find out who is responsible for making the major decisions, and include this person when discussing the arrangement options.

Verify the client understands.

Do not assume that a nod and a smile mean the message was understood.

To verify, ask the client an open-ended question such as, “How will you...?” rather than a yes/no question such as, “Do you know how to...?” Clarify any misunderstanding by finding new and simple ways to say the same thing.

Effective communication with people with Special Needs

There are many that believe that those with People with physical or mental impairments should be described as “people with disabilities” rather than “the disabled” as being referred to as “the disabled” takes away the individual person’s identity by associating them with a group of people, all of whom could have differing impairments.

Here are some ways that you can effectively communicate with people with disabilities:

- Don’t make assumptions about what type of disability a person has.
- Some disabilities are not visible, take time to get to know your client’s needs
- Don’t use phrases such as “handicapped”
- Be patient, people with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Find a good way to communicate, a good start is to listen carefully.
- Look at your client but don’t stare. Speak directly to people with disabilities, not to their carer or someone who is with them (unless you are specifically asked to)
- Don’t touch service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Do not invade someone’s personal space – you don’t need to stand closer to a person with disabilities than you would to anyone else.
- You should talk to adults with disabilities in the same manner and with the same respect that you show for all adults.
- When speaking with a wheelchair user try to place yourself at their eye-level if possible.

Assisting Clients that have Physical Disability

Physical impairment refers to a broad range of disabilities which include orthopedic, neuromuscular, cardiovascular and pulmonary disorders. People with these disabilities often rely upon assertive assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, canes, and artificial limbs to obtain mobility.

Although the cause of the disability may vary, clients with physical disabilities may face the following difficulties:

- Access Issues:
- Inability to gain access to inaccessible building or room.
- Decreased eye-hand coordination.
- Impaired verbal communication.
- Decreased physical stamina and endurance.

Considerations:

If a client uses a wheelchair, conversations at different eye levels are difficult. If a conversation continues for more than a few minutes and if it is possible to do so, sit down, kneel, or squat and share eye level.

A wheelchair is part of your client’s body space. Do not automatically hang or lean on the chair; it is similar to hanging or leaning on the person.

When it appears that your client needs assistance, ask if you can help. Most people will ask for assistance if they need it. Accept a “no thank you” graciously. Accept the fact that a disability exists. By not acknowledging this fact is the same as not acknowledging your client.

People with physical disabilities are not “confined” to wheelchairs. They often transfer over to automobiles and to furniture. Some who use wheelchairs can walk with the aid of canes, braces, crutches or walkers. Using a wheelchair some of the time does not mean an individual is “faking” a disability. It may be a means to conserve energy or move about more quickly.

If a person’s speech is difficult to understand, do not hesitate to ask him/her to repeat.

Provide assistance if you are asked. Never come up behind a client who uses a wheelchair and push them. Always ask first while facing the person. Never take the door out of a person’s hand to assist them in opening it, they may be using the door for balance. Always ask if you can help first.

Communicating with Clients who are deaf, or hard of hearing.

Ask your client how you can improve communication with them. This can be as simple as moving your chair to face the client directly so he or she can see your lips. Allow extra time in your appointment for the arrangement to make sure that messages are clearly understood.

Get the person's attention.

Face the person before you speak and, as appropriate, touch him or her lightly on the shoulder. This not only gets the person's attention, but also orients him or her to where the sound is coming from.

Articulate clearly and speak in natural tones.

Speak distinctly, not necessarily loudly. Shouting is unpleasant and not helpful; it distorts the lip movements, making lip reading more difficult, and may interfere with a hearing aid's ability to pick up usable sounds. Use a slower rate of speech, but don't exaggerate pronunciation to the point that you distort individual words.

Reduce distracting/ interfering sounds. Find a quiet environment in which to communicate. It is even more difficult for a person with limited hearing to understand you when there is competing noise, such as the hum from an air conditioning unit.

Make sure that you can be clearly seen.

Make sure that the light is adequate and that your face is clearly visible. Do not block your mouth, and make sure you do not talk at the same time as someone else.

Appreciate that it takes significant concentration to read lips or speech. People lip-read when they look at someone's mouth, and they speech-read when they also look at the other person's gestures, expressions and actions. Sometimes messages are interpreted incorrectly, for pairs of words may sound alike, such as bed and men, or pain and main.

Confirm understanding. Take time to confirm what clients understand. If the client is unclear, rephrase it, don't repeat it.

Communicating with Clients who are blind or partially sighted.

Introduce yourself and others. When you enter the room where there is a blind client, make sure to identify yourself by name. When a client with low vision enters the room, orient him or her by introducing yourself and everyone else who is present. When you are about to leave the room, communicate that information as well.

Ask if the person wants assistance. The amount of assistance a client desires depends on the situation and his or her comfort in asking.

Ask if a client wants help and, if so, find out how you can best be of assistance. The client may want descriptive or directional information, such as identifying where objects are located within the room, or may ask you to explain any unusual sounds or noises.

The client may also ask to walk with you, putting his or her hand through the crook of your elbow.

Use everyday words. Give clear and specific information, and use everyday words, not funeral service related jargon. Don't be afraid to use verbs such as see and look, for they are a part of everyday speech.

Provide clear directions. If your client wishes to visit the chapel of rest to spend time with the deceased, make sure a member of staff is in attendance if the client is alone, to guide and to seat within the room.

Find out how you can be of help, such as offering to give a detailed commentary of the surroundings, and if the client wishes to touch the deceased, ask permission to guide their hand to touch the deceased hands or face.

A few simple things to remember when meeting with clients or family members who are blind or visually impaired:

When accompanying a blind person in an unfamiliar room, never leave them standing alone in the middle of the floor. Escort them to a seat or place their hand on a "point of reference" such as a wall or table.

When you are in a client's home, leave their things where they have placed them. If you move their belongings, they may have trouble finding them later on.

When you meet a blind client, identify yourself. When you're leaving the room, tell them you are leaving. In a group, address your client by name if they are expected to reply.

Always talk directly to a blind person, not through his /her companion. Blind people can talk for themselves! Speak in a normal tone and volume.

Don't be over-protective. Most blind people can do things by themselves. If they need assistance, they will ask.

When approaching a blind person / family member who you suspect needs assistance in getting from one place to another, ask if they need help. If assistance is desired, offer your arm so they can grasp your elbow. This position offers the greatest amount of information and security. Do not take their arm and propel them by the elbow.

When walking with a blind person, proceed at a normal pace. You may hesitate slightly before stepping up or down; allow time and caution them of any unusual obstructions ahead.

Working Guide Dogs

A guide dog walks on a blind person's left, so you should walk on their right. As tempting as it may be to pet a guide dog, remember that this dog is responsible for guiding a master who cannot see. The dog should never be distracted from that duty.

In guiding a blind client or family member to a chair, place their hand upon the back of the chair; don't try to push them into it. Their touch will tell them the type, width, and height of the chair as well as which way it is facing.

If you are assisting a blind client or family member into a car when the door is open, guide their hand to the roof just over the door. If the car door is closed, place their hand on the handle. They can close their own door.

When assisting your client throughout the arrangement, take care to explain in detail about the options and choices they need to make.

When creating the estimate of costs during the arrangement, ensure that you talk to your client, and explain what you are doing, and how you are calculating the costs.

Remember, when you do meet a blind client or a mourner, common sense and sensitivity to others are most important of all.

Dealing with Conflict

There will be times when the funeral arranger/ director or any of his or her colleagues will find themselves having to deal with conflict whilst making funeral arrangements. Whilst the Funeral Director may only be involved in that conflict indirectly, for example when there is heated disagreement between family members when the funeral arrangements are being made, it can still be very disconcerting to be part of it.

Family conflict has three characteristics that distinguish it from other types of conflict; the intensity, complexity and duration of the relationships. Relationships between family members are typically the closest and most emotionally intense; and the bonds between adult partners, between parents of children or between siblings can involve the highest level of attachment, affection and commitment. In times of bereavement these feelings can intensify further; old arguments can be re-raised, blame for the death can be unfairly apportioned and the Funeral Director can find himself or herself part of an emotional battlefield.

There are a few points that it is worth remembering to help you mediate a difficult situation and help control the quality of the communication in it before things escalate out of hand.

Speak calmly, slowly and stay in control

It is important to keep your own communication controlled when in a difficult conflict situation. Your speech, reactions and body language have an enormous impact on others so you must be very careful with them to ensure that you do not inflame an already difficult situation. Even if you need to step into an argument of name calling and yelling, you can only be effective if you remain calm yourself. Speak slowly if others are worked up and quick with their words, speak softly if others are yelling. We unconsciously match our communication style to mirror those we are with – so resist the urge to yell back! – speak softly and slowly to encourage others to naturally gravitate to match your behaviour.

Empathise without claiming to know how they feel. Emotional intelligence skills will mean that you are able to recognise the emotional state of others. However, feelings are personal to everyone – particularly when bereavement is involved – so do not claim to know exactly how someone feels or say you have felt like that yourself at one time. It may come across as arrogance if you try to claim to understand exactly how they feel. Chances are the people involved will be feeling very vulnerable and may feel awkward that you are witnessing such intense family emotions. You can empathise and relate to their situation by choosing your wording carefully, such as, "I am sure that this is a very difficult situation for all of you, I am here to help and offer support in whatever way I can".

Stay objective


Staying in control means staying objective, that is, you should not take sides or decide how to resolve any conflict yourself. You might have some ideas or suggestions but always let the people involved decide how to address things and attend to the situation. If you force the situation you can quickly appear to be taking sides, if you are truly empathising with everyone you must leave the decisions and the communication up to them and only be available to listen, help and guide people towards a solution without yourself becoming part of the problem!

When to walk away

If family arguments escalate out of hand and all your attempts to diffuse the situation fail you should judge whether it is appropriate to halt the making of the funeral arrangements until the situation has calmed somewhat. Your approach to this needs to be calm and controlled and done in a way that does not attribute blame or reproach to those involved in the argument. Remember to speak softly and calmly. You should direct your statement to your client, you may want to phrase it as something along the lines of "If there are some issues you would like to discuss privately as a family, I can make arrangements to call back and see you later in the day". Sometimes statements such as these can diffuse the situation and make people refocus on the arrangements in hand. Very often family situations such as these involve harsh words, spoken in haste and in grief. However, if you feel that there is a threat of violence or that you are in danger of becoming involved in a physical dispute between family members you should extract yourself from that environment at the earliest opportunity

Conclusion

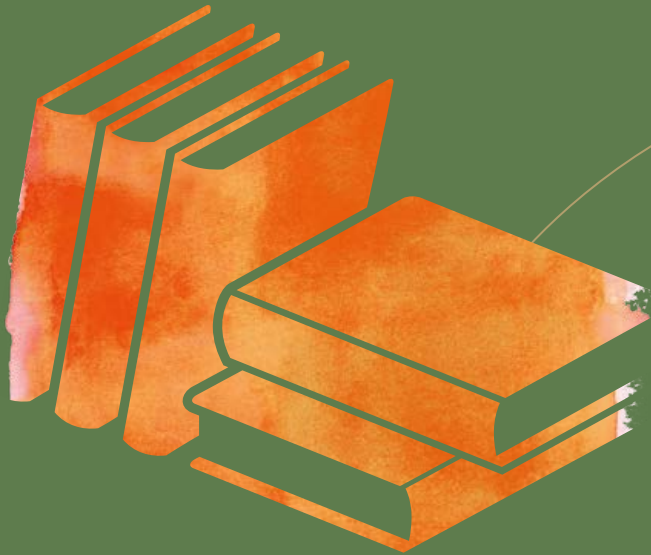
As a final thought for this chapter, the following words sum up what our aim should be: If you really want to help somebody, first you must find him/her where he/she is and start there. This is the secret of caring. If you cannot do that, it is only an illusion, if you think you can help another human being. Helping somebody implies your understanding more than he/she does, but first you must understand what he/she understands. If you cannot do that, your understanding will be of no avail. All true caring starts with humility. The helper must be humble in his/her attitude towards the person he/she wants to help. He/she must understand that helping is not dominating but serving. Caring implies patience as well as acceptance of not being right and of not understanding what the other person understands.



Helping somebody implies
your understanding more
than he/she does, but first
you must understand
what he/she understands.

Chapter 8

Professional Development



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.” – **Socrates**

Designed to expand the knowledge of funeral sector employees and inspire excellence in their work to care for bereaved families and those that have died, the NAFD offers a range of quality-assured funeral service qualifications.

Our two respected qualifications provide comprehensive training for funeral service professionals and are considered the 'gold standard' qualifications for the sector. The funeral service awareness course, delivered online, offers an introduction to the profession, and a range of training workshops and courses support NAFD member firms in developing the experience and strengths of employees, further enhancing knowledge, skills and expertise.

The NAFD's Board of Education oversees the educational aims of the Association and, as well as developing the NAFD's suite of qualifications, it encourages the Association's area federations and local associations to hold seminars on topics such as new legislation, health and safety etc.

A wide range of learning is available from our online funeral service awareness training, the Certificate in Funeral Arranging & Administration (Cert. FAA) and Diploma in Funeral Directing (Dip.FD) to a series of one day workshops to a range of vocational training courses.



INTRODUCTION TO THE FUNERAL SECTOR

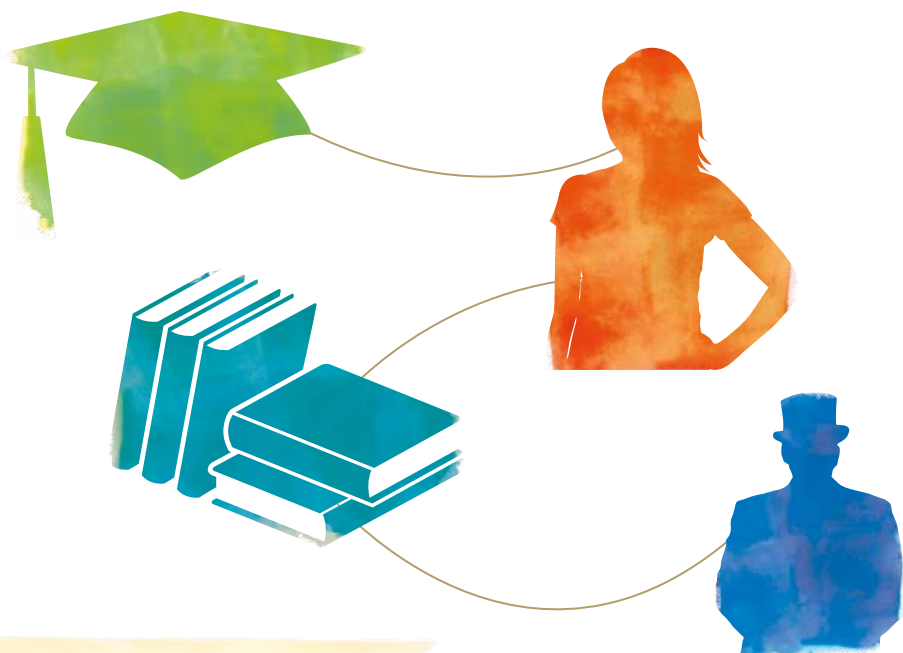
FUNERAL SERVICE AWARENESS

The NAFD's Funeral Service Awareness training programme is designed to support anyone considering a career in the funeral profession or anyone who would like a better understanding of the profession, including new starters within funeral service businesses.

Delivered online, the training has been designed to introduce the funeral profession. For job applicants, this taster course offers vital basic knowledge about the funeral service to prepare for applying for a job and help them gain an understanding of whether a career in funeral service is right for them.

For allied professionals, including the emergency services and caring professions, the Funeral Service Awareness course offers a great introduction to the profession to assist in building strong working relationships.

For aspiring Funeral Directors, completion of this course does not guarantee employment in the funeral profession but it does show employers a genuine interest and can help to ensure candidates are fully aware of the nature of the role before application.



For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

FUNERAL QUALIFICATIONS

DIPLOMA IN FUNERAL ARRANGING & ADMINISTRATION (Dip. FAA)

The Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration (Dip. FAA) is designed for anyone who has been working in the funeral service for six months or more as a funeral arranger and administrator or Funeral Director.

It is benchmarked to National Standards of learning for a funeral arranger.

It can be taken as a stand-alone award, or as a prerequisite qualification prior to registering to study for the NAFD Diploma in Funeral Directing. There are five mandatory modules within the qualification, designed to equip funeral arrangers and administrators with the comprehensive knowledge and skills required to perform effectively in the role.

This qualification offers acquisition of the comprehensive knowledge and skills required for funeral arranging and administration. Registration is restricted to existing employees within the funeral service working in related roles.

Holders of the previous NAFD Foundation Certificate in Funeral Service are required to register and achieve the Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration (Dip. FAA) prior to registration for the NAFD Diploma in Funeral Directing.

DIPLOMA IN FUNERAL DIRECTING (DIP.FD)

The NAFD Diploma in Funeral Directing (Dip. FD) qualification is bench marked to National Standards of learning and assessment. This aligns directly to the level and breadth of responsibilities performed by a Funeral Director.

The Diploma in Funeral Directing is aimed at employees within the funeral service working in an associated funeral directing role who have successfully achieved, and been awarded the Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration (Dip.FAA).

The Dip.FD also enables career progression for funeral arrangers and administrators wishing to progress into funeral directing, although funeral arrangers must be able to provide evidence of workplace experience of a range of funeral directing responsibilities, including the experience of conducting a funeral within the period of study to enable achievement of the qualification.

This qualification offers acquisition of the comprehensive knowledge and skills required for directing. Registration is restricted to existing employees within the funeral service working in related roles, and students must be able to provide workplace evidence of funeral directing responsibilities, including the conducting of a number of funerals prior to full achievement of the Diploma.

BECOME AN NAFD EXAMINER

The Board of Education would like to invite qualified Funeral Directors to join a team of examiners to help develop and uphold the standards of the Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration (Dip. FAA) and Diploma in Funeral Directing (Dip.FD).

WHO ARE THE NAFD EXAMINERS?

Examiners are experienced Funeral Directors who have current knowledge of funeral directing tasks and responsibilities, including the requirements of the NAFD syllabi and assessment procedures.

Examiners commit to offering a reasonable amount of their time throughout the year to ensure that the qualification standards are upheld. It is a responsible position and as such a process of progression exists. Initially, NAFD examiners join the Panel of Examiners before progression to the Board of Examiners.

HOW ARE NAFD EXAMINERS SELECTED?

At present, potential examiners are usually nominated by individual members of the NAFD Board of Examiners, or by self-nomination.

In any instance, all nominations and written applications are screened and judged by the Chair of the Board of Examiners, against the criteria for appointment and then formally considered by members of the Board of Examiners for approval. The latter makes recommendations for appointment. Once approved by the Board, new examiners are placed on to the panel of examiners.

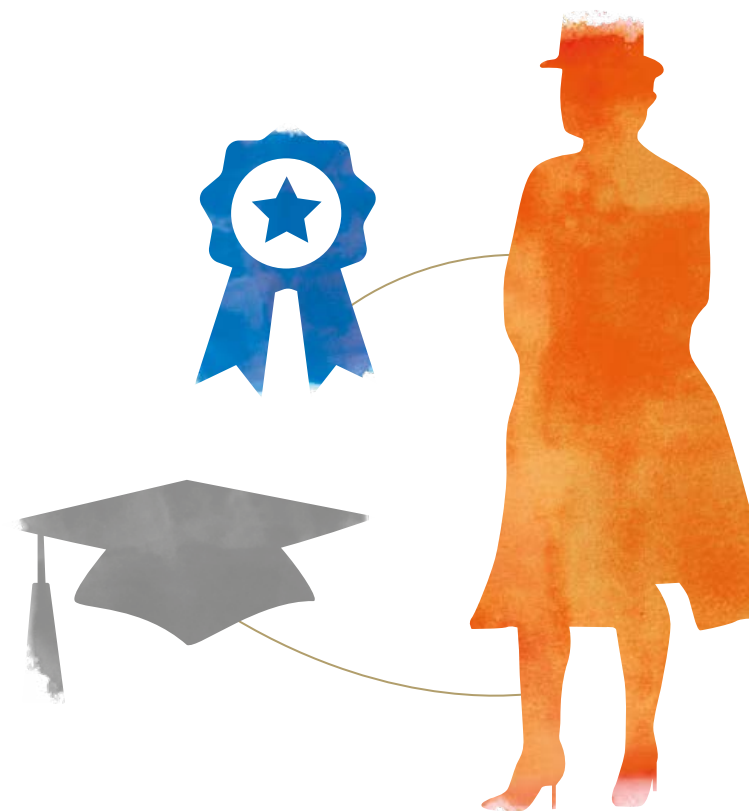
TERM OF SERVICE

The term of service is usually for three years, with a maximum further three years extension. The Association endeavour to maintain a group of examiners who are representative of the funeral service in terms of equal opportunity and geographical location.

Examiners give their time to the NAFD on a purely voluntary basis. A process is in place to enable claims for travel expenses to meetings and for examination related activities.

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

If you are interested in becoming an NAFD Examiner please email us at info@nafd.org.uk for further information



Chapter 9

The Role of the Funeral Director



THE ROLE OF THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR

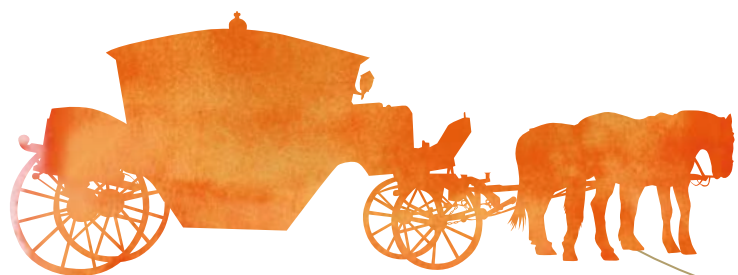
The funeral profession has a long and proud history of providing sensitive and professional service to local communities; building trusted relationships that often endure for generations. Many funeral homes have a long term involvement in the communities they serve and the reputation of these businesses can often be seen to stand or fall through the level of service provided and the professionalism of those employed.

Funeral Directors perform a unique role in society. It is a role that encompasses vocation, profession and business all at the same time. The functions of a Funeral Director are to be a master of ceremonies, custodian of deceased people, technical adviser, agent and contractor to the client.

To deliver this wide ranging role, Funeral Directors must be approachable, sympathetic and experienced professionals - capable of assuming the entire responsibility for overseeing the arranging, organising and conducting of a funeral in line with the wishes of the client.

They must always be available in time of need and always capable of providing emotional support, expert advice and practical help; caring for the living and the dead with equal levels of professionalism and compassion.

This chapter examines the role of the Funeral Director in more detail. Although it uses the term 'Funeral Director' throughout, the NAFD understands that roles may take different forms or have different titles in each member firm business and so, for the purposes of this manual, a Funeral Director should be taken to mean anyone who is personally responsible for dealing with a bereaved person (client) for the purpose of making and/or conducting funeral arrangements.



THE FUNCTIONS OF A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Let us consider the functions of the role of the Funeral Director in more detail:

Master of Ceremonies

The Funeral Director assumes the role of Master of Ceremonies on the day of the funeral. The ritual or ceremony of the funeral is extremely important and often is a complex operation involving many individuals and organisations. It is therefore incumbent on the Funeral Director to liaise with all those involved to ensure that the funeral is carried out according to the wishes and instructions of the family and that he or she is seen to be a team leader who is dignified, calm and efficient.

Care of the Deceased

The Funeral Director fulfills their primary role of carer of the deceased person. The funeral profession essentially centres on caring for people after they have died. Being entrusted with the care of the body, until the time of the funeral, is a responsible task - calling for technical knowledge as well as the provision of adequate and proper facilities.

In case it is required, the Funeral Director should understand the process of embalming and, even if not a practitioner of the science, should be able to describe fully the process and where it may offer advantages to the bereaved relatives.

Technical Advisor

Following a death, the bereaved person may turn to the Funeral Director for guidance, seeking the benefit of his or her knowledge and experience. Familiarity with regulations, statute law, local by-laws, rites, procedures and options available, all form part of the advice a Funeral Director must be able to offer those they are called upon to serve - treating all information, however gained, as strictly confidential.

Agent

As an agent, the Funeral Director liaises between the bereaved person and the various organisations providing the services required. This will include (but isn't restricted to) clergy and officiants, doctors, newspapers, coroners and/or procurators fiscal, printers, florists, monumental masons and indeed anyone connected with the funeral service. It is therefore essential that the Funeral Director has a comprehensive knowledge of all of these products and services, and the associated costs, and can explain these to the client.

For example, when arranging a cremation, the Funeral Director and staff employed as funeral arrangers should understand the operational requirements of their local crematoria and what facilities are available in respect of a wide range of matters, from the length of service times (and associated fees) and chapel capacity, to the availability and contact details of an organist. Likewise, when arranging a burial, the Funeral Director and the arrangers should be aware of the types of grave that are available in the area and any restrictions that there may be on the placing of different types of memorials.

Contractor

When a family or an individual places an order for a funeral, they enter into a contract and become legally responsible for payment of the ensuing account. For this reason, it is essential that clients are made fully aware of the services they are contracting you to provide and all associated costs. A full price list, provided well in advance and written estimate, as required by the NAFD Code of Practice will help to ensure clients are fully aware and comfortable with the costs of the services requested, before the funeral takes place.

In addition, clients must be made aware of any clause specifying rates of interest or additional charges levied on overdue accounts, or any discounts which may be available.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

If the five functions above adequately describe the individual tasks that combine to represent the work of the modern Funeral Director, this section outlines the qualities that mark out a great representative of the funeral profession.

Care, compassion and the ability to absorb other peoples' distress without it affecting you personally requires great self awareness. You will need to become accustomed to the various types of bereavement and the various stages of grief through which each bereavement progresses - whilst never losing the emotional strength needed to cope with the massive range of feelings different people display, as reactions vary greatly from person to person. You will need the ability to deal with a variety of people from all walks of life, including not only the bereaved families themselves but also other bereavement service professionals. You must accept that this is no 'ordinary' job with set hours of work. The funeral service operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in all weathers and in any circumstances.

There are a number of attributes which can be ascribed to Funeral Directors, all of equal and interrelated importance:

- The Funeral Director should be **technically competent** in all aspects of funeral service to enable him or her to meet the needs of bereaved people, not only those of a technical nature but of general operational and people management skills. Attention to detail, a high degree of accuracy and ability to manage and prioritise work accordingly are essential skills.
- Funeral Directors must have **good interpersonal skills**. Funerals focus on the needs of people, many of whom will be distressed and some of whom may be vulnerable. The Funeral Director must be able to relate to those who call upon them in their time of bereavement. When conducting the funeral, the Funeral Director needs to give clear instructions to those present, guiding and explaining the procedures to them. This calls for clarity of expression in a manner appropriate to the occasion and, sometimes, may call for the Funeral Director to provide gentle guidance. For example, where a bereaved person has advised that they have a particular budget they need to meet for the funeral, but is at risk of over-spending on certain elements of the funeral, being able to tactfully support and guide them in arranging the funeral they wish, within this budget, will call for excellence in customer service skills.
- The Funeral Director must be **flexible in style of approach and manner** as people react to loss in different ways. This calls for tact, calmness and patience on the part of the Funeral Director in order to provide the best possible support to each bereaved family. NAFD members tell us that they are increasingly exposed to family conflict during funeral arrangement meetings, and providing training or support in how to diffuse difficult situations can prove invaluable.

- As one of the primary caregivers to the newly bereaved person, it is essential that the Funeral Director expresses the qualities of **empathy** rather than sympathy, along with **sensitivity**. By showing empathy to the family, the Funeral Director is showing that they appreciate the sense of loss being experienced. By demonstrating sensitivity, respect for the feelings of the bereaved person is shown.
- To help achieve this, advantage should be taken of funeral directing qualifications and professional training, such as that offered by the NAFD. In addition, Funeral Directors must take responsibility for their own continuous professional development, checking for up-to-date information via the NAFD's email newsletters, *Funeral Directory Monthly*, funeral service websites and reading the relevant trade periodicals, as well as by attending training seminars. Information should be openly shared and cascaded to relevant staff.

THE MANNER AND APPEARANCE OF A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Funeral Directors should, by their manner, appearance and professional style, seek to engender a feeling of confidence in them by bereaved families. Suitable, professional attire should be worn at all times when in face-to-face contact with clients, in order to present a professional image to the communities they serve.

However, given the evolving change in public attitudes towards funerals, it may well help families to feel comfortable if the Funeral Director is dressed in a sober and professional manner; rather than a sombre and formal one, for arrangement meetings. For this reason, many Funeral Directors wear suits for arrangement meetings and only their full morning dress uniform for the funeral itself – as appropriate to the requests of the family concerned.

For clients, arranging a funeral can be stressful and upsetting. For most people, it is an unnatural situation that they will never get used to in their lifetime. Greeting and dealing with them in a relaxed, compassionate, patient and professional manner can be important in helping them to feel confident and comfortable about the process of arranging the funeral and the choices they make.



An experienced funeral arranger / Funeral Director can take away the anxieties and make clients' and members of their families feel confident – all they have to do is listen, plan, check and deliver. In effect, your role is to help families celebrate a life lived and take the strain out of the planning process and ensure you have accurately gathered and recorded all the relevant information.

Clients are also entitled to expect that funeral arrangers / Funeral Directors will demonstrate an acceptable level of care and respect. This includes:-

- o Safe, dignified and respectful care of the deceased
- o Unbiased and ethical verbal and non-verbal behaviour
- o Sharing of objective and professional advice, based on up to date funeral service knowledge and professional judgement.

Any personal views or prejudice about the deceased, or the client, will impact on the level of care or service provided and will damage the reputation of the business. Comments and personal perceptions and views relating to any or all of the following should be avoided:-

- o cultural background
- o disability
- o race, ethnic or national origin
- o gender
- o lifestyle
- o marital or parental status
- o religion or belief
- o sexual orientation
- o social or financial status of the deceased, or of the client.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Clients must be able to trust you and your colleagues. In order to justify that trust, it is important for funeral arrangers / Funeral Directors to pay particular attention to the following aspects of professional practice:-

- Ensure professional and ethical behaviour is demonstrated relating to the care of the client and of the deceased as part of demonstrating good Client Care.
- Ensure professional knowledge and skills are current and reflective of up to date funeral arranging and funeral service practice.
- Avoid unfairly discriminating against the client, by allowing personal views and prejudices to adversely affect the professional relationship, or in caring for the deceased.
- Treat the deceased as an individual, and show respect for their dignity at all times.
- Treat the deceased and the client politely and considerately at all times.
- Respect the deceased and the client's right to confidentiality.
- Listen to the client and respond to their concerns and preferences.
- Be honest and open with the client and act with integrity at all times.
- Avoid discriminating unfairly against clients' or the deceased.
- Never abuse or jeopardise the clients' trust in you or the public's trust in the profession.

Clients naturally consider the individual funeral arranger / Funeral Director to be in a position of responsibility, and as such, may attach added importance to their opinions or comments made. A professional boundary between the client, or anyone closely related to the deceased should be maintained at all times.

The client should also have a right to expect information about the deceased, and their own personal information to be held strictly in confidence.

Remember; the funeral arranger can by his or her appearance engender a feeling of confidence in them by the family, or not, as the case may be. The air of mourning and deep solemnity in dress is now outdated and often an unwelcome intrusion. It may well assist families if the funeral arranger / director is dressed in a sober rather than a sombre manner.

Suitable business attire should be worn at all times when in face to face contact with clients, in order to present a professional image.

Always remember; the experiences of any one client will have a ripple effect. A good experience will lead to a positive recommendation.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

As with all professions, social workers are expected to uphold key boundaries to protect themselves, their clients and the organisation they work for. These boundaries are meant to ensure that relationships between social workers and clients remain professional, even when working on very personal and difficult issues.

In a recently updated guide for Community Care Inform, Frank Cooper covers the boundaries social workers need to observe, how to manage them and how to deal with situations when boundaries have been crossed. Inform subscribers can access the full guide on both Inform Children and Inform Adults. Here, we present a few key pieces of advice from the guide.

What are the boundaries?

These are a few of the major boundaries that may have implications for your practice and behaviour.

Client focus.

You are expected to place the needs of service users on your caseload at the centre of any decisions that you make about them and their lives.

Self-disclosure.

Information about yourself and your personal life should not be disclosed to clients.

Dual relationships.

You should not hold more than one type of relationship with a client, for example, they cannot work for you, be a family member or receive extra private support from you, as well as be one of your clients.

Working within your competence.

It is important that you understand the limitations of your role and of your personal capabilities, and when to refer to other professionals or to seek further support and advice for yourself and your clients.

Looking after self.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in a fit state to do the job that you are required to do. This covers not only your behaviour outside work but also how you manage your stress and emotions within work and caused by your work.

CROSSING OR BREAKING BOUNDARIES

The reality of work in the social care sector is that boundaries will get crossed at various points for a variety of reasons, whether it is simple human error, tiredness, stress, manipulation by clients, difficult situations, bad luck or just a bad day at the office. It is your job to spot potential and actual boundary crossings and to take appropriate action.

A boundary crossing is usually part of a pattern or a build up of behaviour between you and your client. Much of the build up may be internal for one, or both, of you. It is not practical for us to challenge everything that a client says or does that might be a crossed boundary and so we have to work in a world where we are essentially doing an ongoing dynamic risk assessment of the situation, intervening where necessary.

Personal versus professional

The key to managing many of these boundaries is understanding the difference between a professional and a personal relationship and ensuring that your behaviour always remains on the right side of the line. Professional relationships are time bound; have a distinct role and purpose; have some structure; one participant holds the power and is specifically trained and supported for the role; there is a power imbalance in favour of the professional; the professional has a responsibility for the welfare of the non-professional and there are rules and boundaries that guide the relationship.

Once you have allowed a relationship to stray into some personal areas, it is much harder for you to maintain other professional boundaries. You will also find that when you do behave in a professional manner, clients will be surprised, unhappy and resentful as they may have been expecting a personal response. You will also find that it may be much harder for you to make the decisions that your role or your service requires you to make if they are detrimental to the client.

You and your client need to be clear that you are not literally, potentially or figuratively their friend, parent, partner or child and it is your responsibility to ensure that this is not the case.



Chapter 10

Registering a Death – Northern Ireland



INTRODUCTION

It is important for Funeral Directors to be able to guide clients as to register a death as they may be one of the first people to see the client after death has occurred.

Additional information such as the location of the local registrars, contact details, opening hours and whether an appointment is necessary should be made available.

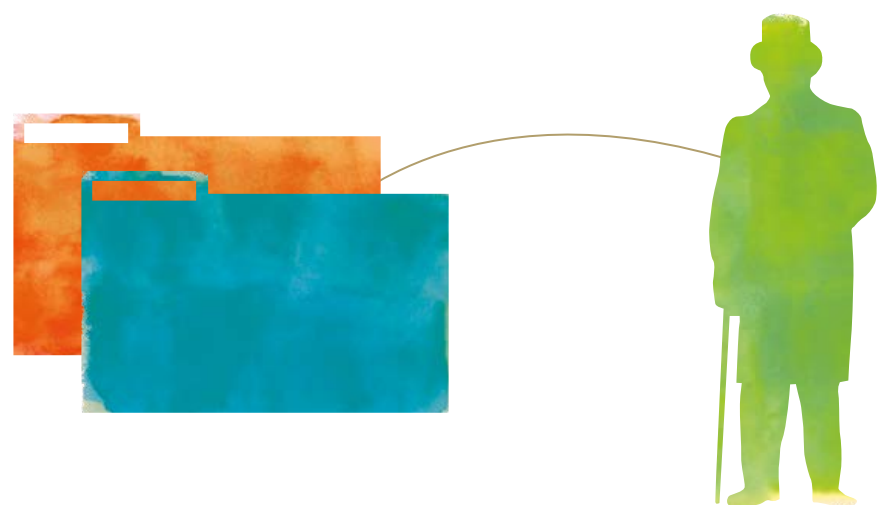
LEGISLATION

The Registration of deaths in Northern Ireland is governed by the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, which has been amended by the Civil Registration Regulations (NI) 2012 Civil Registration Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

PERIOD FOR REGISTRATION

By law all deaths occurring in Northern Ireland must be registered in Northern Ireland. A death should be registered as soon as possible to allow further arrangements to be made but no later than five days from the date of occurrence except where the matter has been referred to the Coroner.

Death may be registered at any District Registration Office in Northern Ireland.



WHO IS QUALIFIED TO ACT AS AN INFORMANT?

The following qualify to act as an informant to the registrar:

- any relative of the deceased who has knowledge of the particulars required to be registered;
- any person present at the death;
- the executor or administrator of the deceased's estate;
- the occupier, at the time of the death, of the premises in which the death, to the knowledge of the occupier, occurred;
- the person finding the body;
- the person taking charge of the body; and
- the person procuring the disposal of the body.

These persons are not only qualified to register but, according to the terms of the order, have a cascading duty to do so (ceasing to have that duty if it has been fulfilled by someone higher on the list). A registrar finding that a death has not been registered within the prescribed time may serve notice on an informant to do so. Where such notice is served, it gives a period of not less than ten days from the notice for this to be done.

Where a death has not been registered within one-year (other than where the case has been referred to the Coroner) registration may only take place with written authority from the Registrar General.

HOW TO REGISTER

A registration form is required (GRO73: Details Required for Registration of a Death). This may be found [online](#) for pre-completion.

The only document that must be taken to the Registrar is the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD).

Under the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, Article 25, the registered medical practitioner who attended the deceased during their last illness shall be the person who signs and issues the MCCD. "Attended" is not defined but is taken as having cared for the patient in the illness leading to death and familiarity with the history and treatment of that illness. Within 28 days prior to death is the accepted period, but it might be longer with consent from the Coroner who in such a case will have issued Form 14. (see Chapter 15 Coroner Procedures (Northern Ireland) for more on this).

It is worth noting that where a deceased person has passed away in hospital, there may have been a number of doctors who attended them during their final illness. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Consultant in charge of the patient's care to ensure their death is properly certified.

Where more than one General Practitioner had been involved in the deceased's care, each is able to certify death. If no doctor who has attended the deceased during the 28 day period can be found, the death must be referred to the Coroner.

In summary, a doctor will normally issue the MCCD when:

- He/she is a registered Medical Practitioner - even if only provisionally registered.
- He/she was in attendance during the last illness - in practice this is within 28 days.
- He/she knows the cause of death.
- He/she does not consider it a case that requires referral to the Coroner.

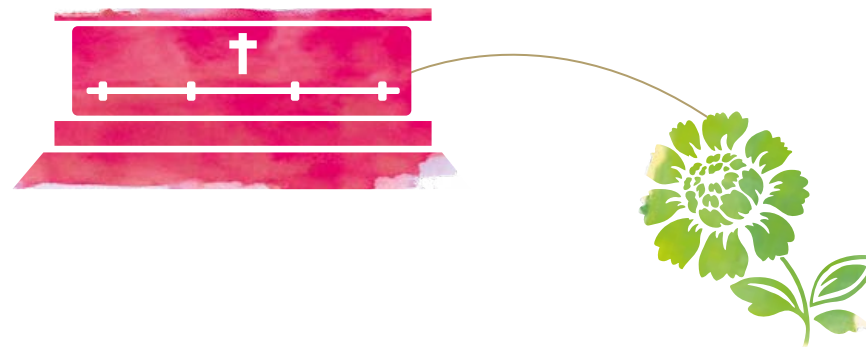
In addition to the MCCD, the informant must also take to the registrar:

- the registration form **GRO73**

INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE REGISTRAR

Information required by the registrar is:

- full name and surname of the deceased and maiden name, if applicable;
- date and place of death and usual address (if not the place of death);
- marital status or if in civil partnership;
- date and place of birth;
- occupation of the deceased and if the deceased was a wife or widow, the full name and occupation of her husband or deceased husband;
- where known, or if the deceased was a child under 16, the full names and occupation of the mother and father will be required, or where the parents are not married, the full name and occupation of the mother will be required;
- the name and address of the deceased's GP;
- details of any pension apart from a state pension that the deceased may have held;
- the name and address of the informant; and
- the informant's relationship to the deceased and qualification as informant.



WHAT THE REGISTRAR ISSUES

Upon registration the informant will receive:

- Form GRO21
 - o To be passed to the Funeral Director to effect burial or cremation
- Form 36
 - o Issued for social security matters
- Copies of the Certified Copy of an Entry in either short or full form. These are paid for. Funeral Directors should be ready to advise clients on how many of these to get. The cost is revised periodically. One cost applies at the time of registration but the cost thereafter is increased when obtained from the [General Register Office](#).

DUTY TO GIVE INFORMATION TO CORONER

Provision exists under Section 7 of the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 for:

- a medical practitioner;
- a Registrar;
- a Funeral Director;
- the occupier of a house or mobile dwelling in which a deceased person was residing; or
- the person in charge of any institution or premises in which a deceased person was residing

To provide the Coroner within whose district the body of the deceased person was found, with the facts and circumstances relating to the death, if they believe the deceased has died (either directly or indirectly) as a result of:

- violence;
- misadventure;
- unfair means;
- negligence;
- misconduct;
- malpractice;
- from any cause other than natural illness or disease for which he/she had been treated by a medical practitioner within 28 days prior to death;

- from any cause other than natural illness or disease for which he/she had been seen and treated by a registered medical practitioner within twenty-eight days prior to death; or
- such circumstances as may require investigation (including death as the result of the administration of an anaesthetic).

Burial before registration

The normal process is that a qualified informant registers a death with the Registrar before the burial occurs when they will be issued with a form GRO 21 that authorises the burial or application for cremation to be given to the Funeral Director.

There can be rare occasions when a burial will be requested to take place pre-registration although we would NOT expect this to be the normal order of events.

Under Article 30 of the Births and Deaths Registration (NI) Order 1976 and Regulation 29 of the Civil Registration Regulations (NI) 2012 a burial is *currently* permitted to take place pre-registration but this is the exception and is not the normal sequence of events.

However, if a burial does take place pre-registration it is **MANDATORY** for Form GRO 27 to be completed and returned to the District Registrar's Office within 7 days of burial – even if death registration is subsequently affected within the normal five-day permitted period following the burial.

Any person who fails to comply with returning the form shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine in respect of each disposal of which he fails to give notice. Recent legal advice to General Registrar's Office (GRO) indicates that it is the Funeral Director's responsibility to return the form (by post or email).

Chapter II

Bringing the Deceased into Care – Northern Ireland



THE FIRST CALL (NORTHERN IRELAND)

The first call is the initial enquiry regarding the arrangement of a funeral and is usually very soon after death has occurred.

First calls usually fall into three categories:

- Deaths occurring at a private address or nursing/care/residential home
- Deaths occurring at a hospital
- Sudden deaths where the Coroner is involved

FIRST STEPS

Unless the call is made by a professional, the first call is often a bereaved person's first contact with you and the firm you represent, and they may well be extremely distressed and/or confused. It is important that the call is handled by someone who is properly trained and experienced.

As many funeral businesses offer 24/7 care, it is essential the telephone is staffed both day and night by colleagues who are both qualified and experienced in handling such sensitive conversations and are able to deal with any actions which result from the call.

Best practice for first calls is that Funeral Directors will:

- answer the telephone promptly;
- greet the caller in accordance with your internal policies
- be warm, empathetic, patient and helpful, offering reassurance throughout;
- greet the caller in accordance with your internal policies
- minimise any waiting time. If you need to place someone on hold, confirm this with the caller first and don't keep them waiting too long; and
- deal with questions effectively

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

It is recommended that as a minimum the following information be captured during the first call, a checklist should be used - often called a 'first call sheet'.

A first call sheet will typically contain the following points:

- the caller's name;
- the caller's telephone number;
- the deceased's full name;
- the location of the deceased;
- has the doctor or a person qualified to confirm death attended (if appropriate)?
- whether they are aware of the deceased's wishes regarding burial or cremation
- if their own general medical practitioner (GP) will be issuing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)

The first call sheet should also include a prompt to note the date, time and name of the person who took the first call.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If appropriate, further details can be captured at the first call, such as in addition to those above you could ask for the callers address, callers relationship to deceased person, the deceased persons usual address, details of the next of kin (if different to the caller).

Will the caller be the primary contact for future communication?

Are they looking for burial or cremation?



DEATH AT A PRIVATE ADDRESS

If the deceased person has died at a private address, in addition to the essential information above, it is recommended that you also ask these additional questions:

1. Has a doctor or a person qualified to confirm Verification of Life Extinct (VLE) (e.g. a paramedic/nurse etc.) attended?
2. The name of the doctor or person qualified to confirm death Verification of Life Extinct (VLE) (if appropriate)
3. Confirmation that the doctor or person qualified to confirm death has given permission for the deceased person to be moved.
4. Are the family ready for the deceased to be moved to the funeral home.

DEATH AT A NURSING/CARE/RESIDENTIAL HOME/HOSPICE

If the deceased person has passed away at a nursing/care or residential home, in addition to the essential information, the following may also be obtained:

1. Is the family of the deceased still present?
2. Is the family ready for the deceased person to be moved to the funeral home?
3. Is the time suitable for the home (bear in mind meal times)?
4. Is the deceased person lying in a shared room? If so, can the other resident be moved to a different room or can the deceased person be screened from the other resident.
5. What is the most convenient way to undertake the removal e.g. which entrance/exit is preferable?
6. Does the nursing/care/residential home or hospice have a preference for the type of equipment or vehicle to be used?
7. Has the doctor or a person qualified to confirm death attended (if appropriate)?

DEATH AT A HOSPITAL

If the deceased has passed away in hospital, in addition to the essential information, you may also be able to, if appropriate, ask whether the funeral will be a burial or cremation. Having this information whilst the deceased person is at the hospital can assist in obtaining the medical certificates Form B Medical Certificate and Form C Confirmatory medical certificate.

It is important to ensure you know what authorisation (if any) is required by the hospital before leaving to bring the deceased into the care of the funeral home, for example, the registrars certificate for burial, coroners release form, or a hospital release form.

For any updates please email: manual@nafed.org.uk

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE CALLER

It is recommended that the caller is provided with an estimated time of arrival and the name of the colleagues attending (if known), as well as the location that the deceased person will be taken to.

It may be appropriate to advise the caller of some simple information regarding registration of the death.

This could include:

- the location of the Registrar;
- opening and closing times of the District Registrar's office (though they can register the death at any of the Registrar's office in Northern Ireland);
- whether an appointment is required;
- parking facilities and public transport links;
- what documentation/information to take (see Chapter 10 Registration – Northern Ireland) for more detail and;
- confirmation that the funeral arrangements can be made at the funeral home or the client's home.

Understandably, on some occasions a caller may be too upset to provide, or take in, all of the information discussed above. If this occurs, take the essential information and provide the caller with an estimated time of arrival.

If felt appropriate and to offer further assistance, ask for the name and telephone number of a relative or neighbour who can be contacted and asked to provide some immediate support to the caller.

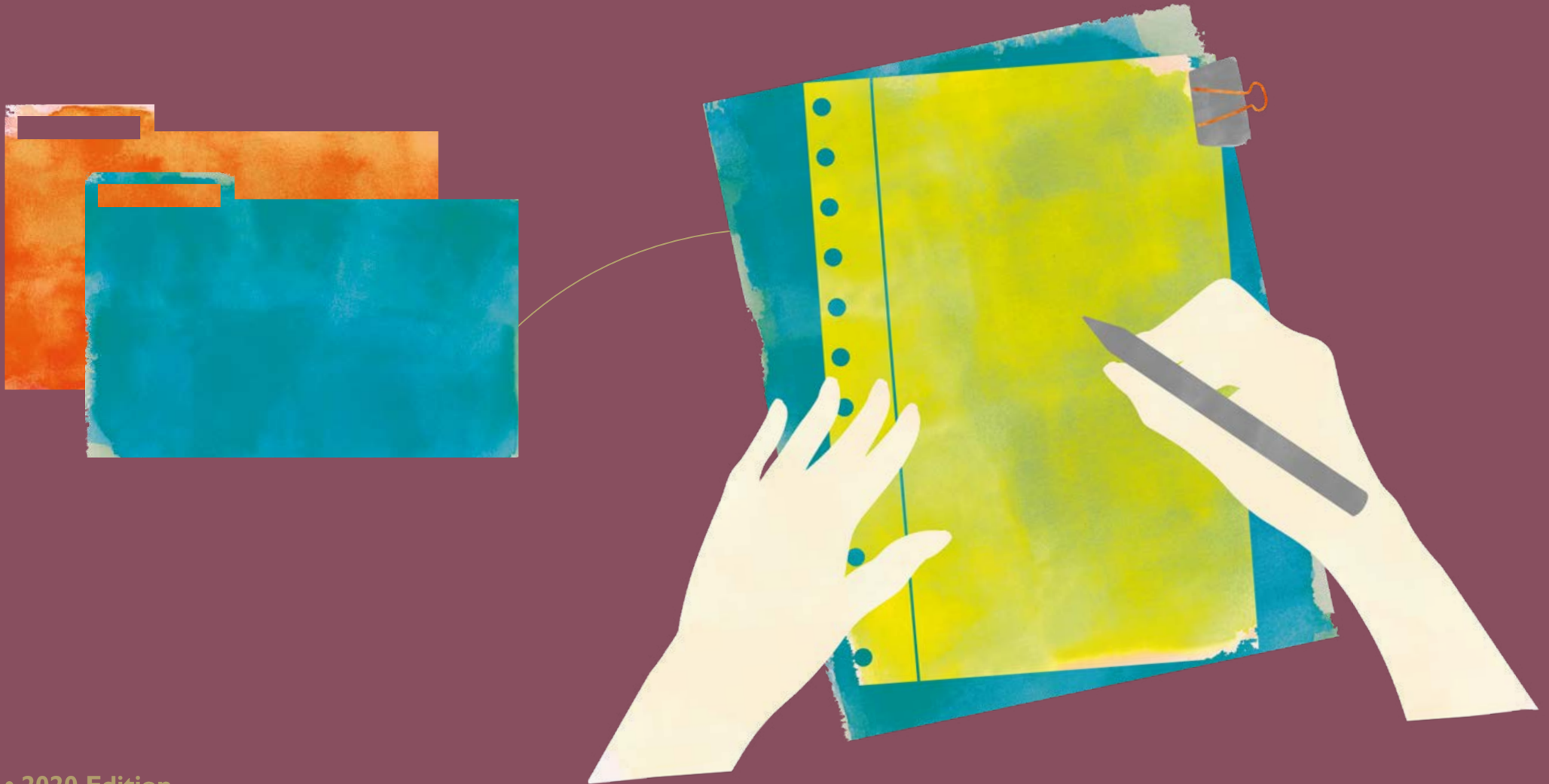
SUDDEN DEATHS INVOLVING THE CORONER

There are certain circumstances under which a death may have to be reported to the Coroner (see Coroner Procedures - Northern Ireland) for full procedures.

It is important to be fully conversant with these procedures and the circumstances leading up to a referral to the Coroner. Should the Coroner become involved, the caller can be offered reassurance and an explanation as to why the Coroner is involved and what will happen next.

Chapter 12

Arranging the funeral



ARRANGING THE FUNERAL

Arranging a funeral is one of the most important facets of the duties of a Funeral Director and/or funeral arranger.

Sitting down and discussing the needs of the bereaved client, in a compassionate and professional manner, can reassure them of the commitment we have as a profession in ensuring the funeral is a personal and unique tribute to their loved one and their loved one will be well cared for.

Arranging a funeral can be a traumatic and emotive event for a family. The funeral arrangements should be completed with knowledge, patience, courtesy, tact and in a calm, unhurried manner.

Many funeral homes have arrangement or interview rooms where the family may discuss their needs in private, without interruption. These rooms will vary widely from business to business and should be designed to safeguard the comfort and privacy of bereaved clients.

PREPARATION

Whether the funeral arrangements are made on the funeral premises, or at a family home, the basic format of each arrangement will follow a similar pattern. The arrangement should avoid a straight question and answer method but be in a more informal style. Holding conversations with the bereaved relatives will assist the Funeral Director or arranger in building rapport with the family and make certain they feel at ease in expressing their wishes.

When asked for advice and guidance, the Funeral Director or arranger should present all options available in a completely unbiased manner. This will ensure the outcome is the decision of the client and not that of the Funeral Director or arranger.

As there are a number of options to be discussed throughout the arrangement, it is wise for the Funeral Director or arranger to use a set funeral arrangement form rather than rely on memory. Your business may have a form for you to follow – either paper-based, or using computer or tablet-based software. If not, the detailed information below is designed to act as a guide, and a sample arrangement form is provided in the NAFD member website download area for your use.

When making funeral arrangements, it is important to remember the following ten points:

1. Advise clients rather than dictate to them.
2. Listen and take nothing for granted.
3. Be clear on what your client needs to do (perhaps create a 'to do' list for them) and what you need to do.
4. Be familiar with all required paperwork.
5. Make detailed notes to pass to colleagues so mistakes may be avoided.
6. Avoid jargon or buzz words such as 'crem', 'PM', limo etc. Use the proper names and terms.
7. Give guidance in a clear and unbiased manner, ensuring all choices are available.
8. Use open questioning techniques to avoid a simple 'yes/no' answer.
9. Discuss, do not interrogate.
10. Ensure any special needs relating to a disability or other additional needs are discussed with the client, to ensure all mourners' needs are met.

Whilst the interview process will inevitably consist of a great deal of form filling, it should not appear to be merely a question and answer session conducted by the Funeral Director/ funeral arranger. A skilled Funeral Director/arranger will be fully conversant with their arrangement form and should be able to conduct an interview whilst, at the same time, continuing to build trust with their client (as well as any other person in the arranging room or at the home).

The Funeral Director/funeral arranger should also listen to any additional information provided so that the funeral can be turned into a unique and personalised experience.



THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT MEETING

The purpose of a funeral arrangement is to both obtain and provide information to the client. Consequently, an arrangement form needs to accommodate all the details relating to a funeral in one document. All arrangement forms should contain sufficient space to hold the information required and in this way, it may act as a reminder to the Funeral Director/funeral arranger, or any other colleagues that may require the information, of the instructions provided.

Each funeral business tailors its form to its business needs and those of its client families. However, below are some recommended areas for information gathering and discussion during a funeral arrangement meeting. The need for accuracy in completing an arrangement form is essential and either a paper or secure digital a copy should always be retained for future reference.

The introduction

Before a case is opened or any paperwork produced, it is important to be able to reassure the client/family that the arrangement can be taken at their own pace. It may also be helpful to the client to check if they have a preference over whether a male or female is to participate in a particular role throughout the funeral process, including the arrangement meeting.

To begin, it is suggested that an understanding of how the arrangement will progress, is given. An initial conversation can often bring out a wealth of personal background information that may be used in the practicalities of the funeral service. Having carried out introductions between all present, it is important to establish in this opening conversation the following information:

- **Who is the client?** It is essential to obtain this detail early on to ensure instructions are being taken from the correct representative of the deceased person. It is also important for the client to understand his/her responsibility in confirming the funeral arrangements made and payment of the funeral account. For an understanding of client liability and the financial support that may be available, dependent upon circumstances, please see Chapter 14 – Financial liability, support and entitlement.
- **Who has died, when, where and how?** This can help the Funeral Director/funeral arranger ascertain whether the Coroner is involved and give appropriate guidance on Registration and/or Coroner procedures.
- **Is the funeral to be a burial or cremation?**
- **Is a religious or non-religious service preferred?**

When you feel the client/family are ready, this is the time to start taking the necessary detailed notes on the arrangement form. At this stage, the Funeral Director/funeral arranger can demonstrate their confidence and competence by placing the client at ease and presenting a professional and empathetic manner. It is vital that the Funeral Director/funeral arranger maintains the momentum and flow of the arrangement, but should not be too concerned with any silences that occur while they're completing any paperwork.

The client/applicant

It is recommended that, as a minimum, the following information should be obtained from the client:

- full name (ensure correct spelling is checked);
- address;
- relationship to the deceased person;
- occupation;
- telephone number (both land and mobile if available); and
- email address.

The deceased person

It is recommended that, as a minimum, the following information should be obtained in respect of the personal that has died:

- full name (ensure correct spelling is checked);
- were they known by another name?;
- address;
- age;
- date of birth;
- date of death;
- place of death; and
- where the deceased is at the time of arrangement.

Next of kin

It is recommended that, as a minimum, the following information should be obtained in respect of the deceased person's next of kin:

- full name (ensure correct spelling is checked);
- address;
- relationship to the deceased person; and
- telephone number

Account details

It is recommended that, as a minimum, the following information should be obtained in respect of who and where the funeral account should be sent to:

- full name (ensure correct spelling is checked);
- name of company (for example if a solicitor);
- address;
- relationship to the deceased person; and
- telephone number

NB: It is suggested that if the client has requested your invoice be sent to either a solicitor or bank, an initial call be made requesting confirmation that funds are available to cover the cost of any outstanding balance.

Doctor

It is recommended that, as a minimum, the following information should be obtained in respect of the deceased's general practitioner:

- doctor's name (ensure correct spelling is checked);
- surgery name;
- address; and
- telephone number

This information can be researched by the Funeral Director/funeral arranger, on behalf of the client, if not known by the client.

Registration and coroner procedures

Before proceeding further with the arrangements, it is useful to ascertain whether registration has been carried out or an appointment made with the Registrar or whether the Coroner is involved. Either way, this may be a good time to fully explain either the registration procedures or Coroner procedures.

To obtain more detail around this, please refer to the relevant chapters.

Bringing the deceased person into your care

Please refer to Chapter 11 - Bringing a Deceased Person into our care chapter for guidance.

Let the client know when you will be able to bring the deceased person into your care (if they are not already in your care) and whether this may incur any additional charges e.g. mileage.

First offices/embalming

It is important to ensure a client understands the difference between what we call first offices and embalming.

A detailed description of the first offices procedure can be found in the Chapter 13 - Care and Presentation of the Deceased chapter.

First offices is generally considered to be the standard level of care which all deceased persons may undergo prior to their funeral. However, some clients may prefer for the deceased person to not be 'touched' and to be confined with no procedure having taken place at all. If this is the case, the Funeral Director needs to ensure the family is made aware of the potential consequences.

There are many occasions where it is felt that some form of care will be required e.g. closing of eyes and mouth. However, if a family specifically decide to opt out of any such procedure but intimate they may wish to visit the deceased person, it is important for the Funeral Director to provide the family with an honest and professional opinion of the current presentation of the deceased and have ready a document with an appropriate form of words for the client to sign, confirming their instructions not to carry out first offices.

The embalming procedure can sometimes be referred to as hygienic treatment. The Care and Presentation of a Deceased Person chapter provides you with some examples of how you might describe, in a sensitive way, the embalming procedure to a client in order that they can make an informed decision.

Whichever procedure is chosen, the client's permission should be sought and recorded either on a separate document or as part of the funeral arrangement form.

Valuables & personal effects

It is recommended that, as a minimum, the Funeral Director/arranger should establish if any valuables and/or personal effects are to remain with the deceased person or if they should be returned to the client?

If the valuables and/or personal effects are jewellery and the deceased person is to be cremated, the client should be advised that the jewellery will not be returned along with the cremated remains unless it is removed first.

If the valuables and/or personal effects are to be returned to the client, they may wish for those valuables or personal effects to remain with the deceased whilst mourners pay their last respects and then be returned.

Please note, valuables may not simply be those items with a financial value – but could also be items with sentimental value and it's important to check with the client.

Gown or own clothes

The option of whether the client wishes the deceased person to be dressed in a gown or their own clothes should be offered.

If own clothes are preferred, the client can be advised to bring those chosen clothes (including underwear) to the funeral home, or collection of the same can be arranged.

On receipt of clothes, it is advisable to record the following:

- name of the deceased person
- date clothes received
- name of person receiving the clothes
- breakdown of clothes, e.g. one navy suit jacket (size 38R), one white shirt (size 15"), one red tie, one navy suit trousers (size 32R), one pair of socks, one underwear.

Clothes should be placed in a bag (if not already in one) and this information securely placed on or in it and placed either in a secure area or with the deceased person.

If the deceased is to be cremated, the chosen crematorium may have restrictions in place on what the deceased person can be dressed in, e.g. no shoes. This information should be passed to the client advising that any items of clothing can be returned after all mourners have paid their last respects.

If a gown is preferred, try to help the client personalise by finding out information such as favourite colours etc.

Paying last respects (viewing)

Please see Chapter 18 - Paying Last Respects for detailed guidance on arranging viewings.

It is important to establish, during the funeral arrangement meeting, if the client and or other people wish to pay last respects and if there are any specific instructions surrounding who is/ is not able to pay last respects.

The client should be made aware of the funeral home's opening/closing times, if viewing is restricted to within these times and whether an appointment should be made first.

When discussing paying last respects with the client, the Funeral Director/arranger should check if there are any reasons why a viewing may cause additional distress to mourners (for example because of the cause of death, period of time since death etc.).

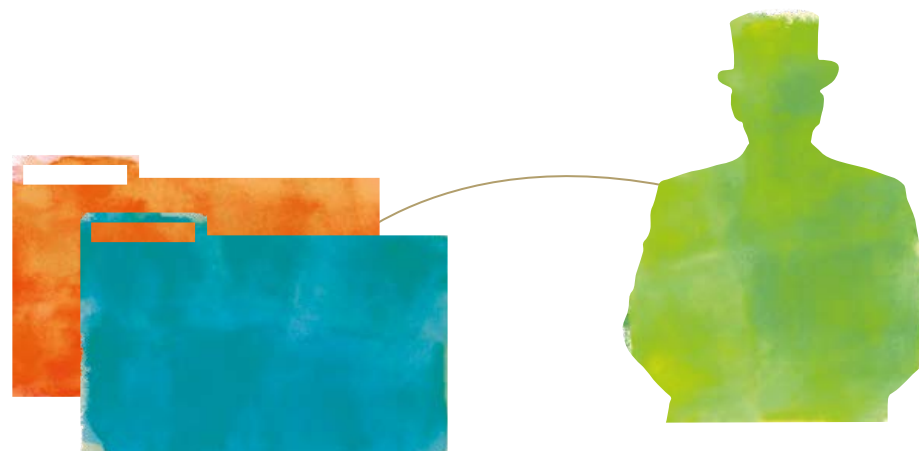
The Funeral Director/arranger should gently discuss this with the client so they can make an informed decision as to whether or not they wish to go ahead with the viewing and/or allow others to pay their last respects. In cases where the Funeral Director/arranger advises against viewing, time spent with a closed coffin can be offered as an alternative.

If this is the recommendation of the Funeral Director/arranger, a note of the discussions with the client and their instructions should be recorded and kept with the funeral paperwork.

Special requirements

The client should be asked whether they or any mourners have any special requirements that should be considered such as those with mobility issues, hearing or sight problems.

It is useful to have the contact details of interpreters and translators to help with funeral arrangements, where clients speak a different language or have additional needs.



Family bearers

The client should be asked whether any members of the deceased person's family or friends wish to carry the coffin at any stage of the funeral.

Health and Safety considerations are a key issue in such circumstances and Funeral Directors/arrangers are advised to check insurance arrangements to cover any incident where family and friends are acting as bearers.

If family and friends are to act as bearers, the NAFD would recommend that a risk assessment is undertaken and consideration is given to the following:

- the number, height, weight and lifting capacity of the proposed bearers;
- the opportunity to 'rehearse' and to provide simple manual handling training guidance; and
- The involvement of funeral staff to maintain a safe lift – and any insurance implications this might have.

It is also advisable to check with insurance providers if family bearers should sign an Indemnity Form in advance.

Ultimately, the Funeral Director must take responsibility and sanction whether the family bearers are safe to carry the coffin. It is advisable to provide sufficient colleagues to attend the funeral to carry the coffin themselves, should the family bearers either decide they cannot do so, or sufficient numbers do not arrive.

Officiant

The Funeral Director should offer all available choices of officiant to the client. If the family wish to have a religious service (see the Funerals and Society chapter) as a matter of courtesy, the Minister of the deceased person's religious persuasion and Parish, or equivalent, should initially be approached to conduct the service, unless the client requests otherwise.

If that Minister cannot assist, permission should be sought before asking someone else to officiate.

The Funeral Director should have available a selection of celebrants who will provide a non-religious, Humanist or civil funeral. The chosen officiant should be offered as much background information as is possible to assist in his/her dealings with the family and in preparing the ceremony.

Once the chosen officiant has confirmed whether he/she is able to take the service, written confirmation of this should be sent. The client should also be informed that the officiant will be provided with their contact details and direct contact will be made by the officiant to set up an appointment to come and see them.

Service location

As a minimum, the following information should be obtained in respect of the service location:

- Does the client wish to arrange a religious service?
- The number of mourners expected

If the client wishes a religious service, this may be arranged at a place of worship such as a Church, Chapel or Meeting House.

However, clients may wish for a religious aspect to a funeral service but hold the service elsewhere or have no religion as part of the service at all.

Some suggestions as to where a service may be held in these circumstances are detailed below:

- crematorium chapel (check to see whether religious symbols can be removed or covered).
- graveside (if burial);
- village/church hall;
- the deceased person's/client's home; or
- a hotel or other venue with rooms for hire.

The number of mourners expected to attend will need to be determined, to ensure that enough room is available and health and safety considerations can be made e.g. appropriate number of fire exits.

Funeral service

When determining a date and time for the funeral service, the following considerations should be made:

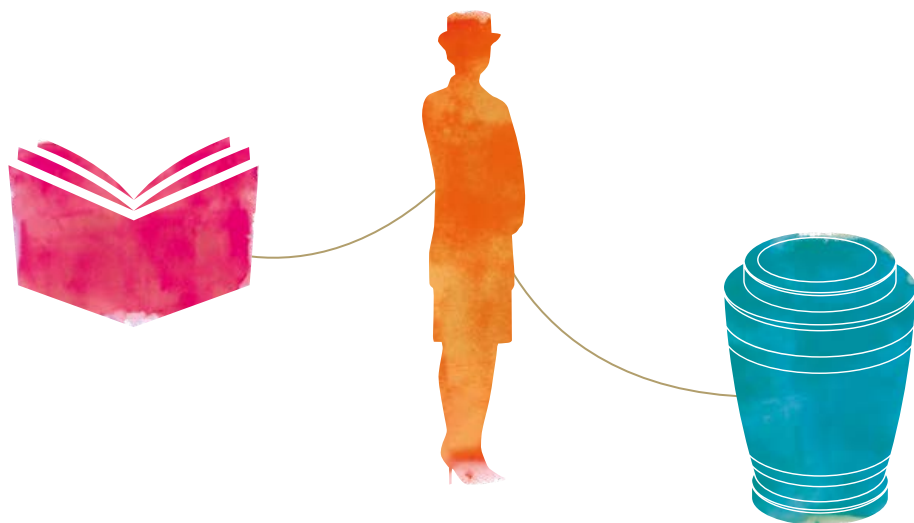
- Is the Coroner/Procurator Fiscal involved? If so, the family may be advised that a date and time cannot be confirmed until the deceased person has been released into the care of the funeral home and issued with the appropriate paperwork.
- Has the death been registered?

Once the above has been determined, it is suggested that the Funeral Director/arranger checks diaries and provides the client with an idea of when the funeral service may be held, to allow them to choose a date and time. It is also important to note any dates which would not be suitable for them.

This would then allow the Funeral Director to confirm the following:

- the availability of colleagues and vehicles;
- the availability of the chosen officiant;
- the availability of the crematorium or cemetery; and
- if burial (particularly in a churchyard), the availability of a gravedigger.

As contact with the above is often done during the funeral arrangement, once confirmation from all parties is in place, the Funeral Director can then confirm date and time with the client. If communicated verbally, it is wise to always follow up in writing.



Place of committal (cremation)

The important points relating to a cremation are covered in the Cremation Chapter. As a reminder, the following needs to be considered during the arrangement meeting:

- which crematorium?;
- which chapel and the capacity of each, if there is more than one?;
- knowledge of the crematorium time slots;
- is the Coroner/Procurator Fiscal involved?;
- who is to be the applicant?;
- type of coffin (not all coffins are suitable for cremation);
- method of ashes disposal
 - o The question should also be asked how soon this is to take place. If ashes are required for interment or scattering the same or next day, for religious reasons, the crematorium should be notified as they may need to keep a cremator available. Otherwise the client will need to be advised that it may be 2-3 days before ashes are available for collection from the crematorium. Consideration should also be given for the timing of the ceremony to ensure that sufficient time is available to carry out cremation;
- method of metals disposal;
 - o applicants are entitled to have metals returned to them, but many crematoria now offer the facility for metals to be recycled for charitable benefit;
- music choices (enabling the Funeral Director/arranger to book an organist or electronic system, such as Wesley or Orbitus, if applicable);
- will a single timeslot be sufficient?;
- are religious symbols applicable?;
- are implants to be removed?;
- is charging to be witnessed?; and
- the size of coffin (to ensure the local crematorium can accommodate the cremation).

A good knowledge of local crematoria is needed along with their charges, timings, music options, special rules and services on offer in respect of memorialisation.

A visit to your local crematorium will enhance knowledge of the procedures followed.

Place of Committal (burial)

A number of points have already been covered in the Burial chapter.

As a reminder the following needs to be considered:

- in which cemetery/Churchyard/private burial ground is interment to take place?;
- is there to be a graveside service or service elsewhere?;
- is this to be a new grave/lair or the re-opening of an existing one?;
 - o if a new grave/lair is to be purchased in a cemetery:
 - who is purchasing the grave/lair for the purpose of the title deeds and provide confirmation of how long exclusive right of burial is being purchased for;
 - what type of grave/lair is being purchased (see the Burial chapter for options).
 - o if a new grave/lair is required in a Churchyard:
 - explain that exclusive right of burial does not apply and there may be restrictions surrounding any memorial the client wishes to place on the grave/lair
 - o if a new grave/lair is to be purchased in a woodland/natural burial ground
 - explain the ground may only allow single depth grave/lair
 - the choice of memorial may be restricted
 - o if a re-open:
 - is there room in the grave/lair?
 - who is the grave/lair owner (applicable to a re-open in a cemetery)?
If the client is not the owner:
 - can permission from the owner be provided?
 - does ownership need to be transferred into the applicant's name, if for example, the owner is the deceased person?
 - will the cemetery require an indemnity to be signed?
 - is there a memorial that will require removing?
- was the deceased person, or is the applicant a resident or non-resident (parishioner or non-parishioner), of the place where interment is to take place - as this may affect the fee charged?;
- the size of the coffin/casket;
- if a casket, is it metal (some places of burial do not allow metals to be interred)?; and
- is the grave/lair to be dug coffin or casket shaped (required if grave is to be dug by hand)?

Taking the deceased person home/into church

Taking the coffin home before the funeral

Some families may wish their loved one to be taken home prior to the funeral time. This might be an hour or so before the funeral, the evening before or for a longer period.

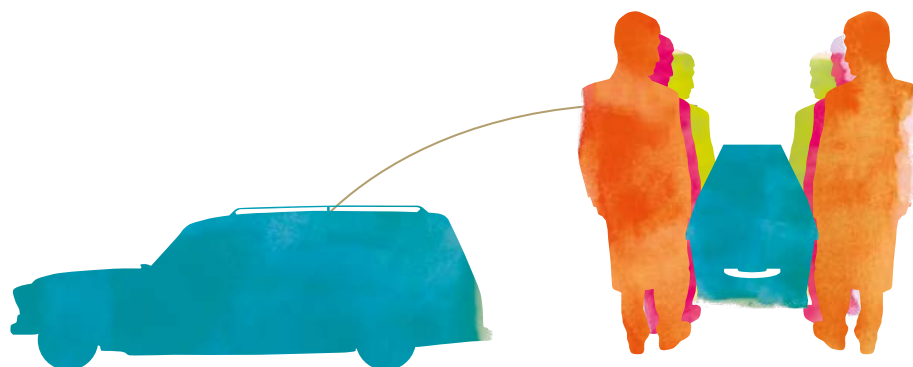
Aspects to consider when accommodating such a request might be:

- access to the place where the deceased person is to lie;
- temperature (both in the house and externally);
- the desirability of embalming the deceased person;
- the availability of a separate room for the deceased person to lie in;
- the time at which the deceased is to go home (considering staffing and availability of vehicles, also if there are children around); and
- ensuring there is a suitable stand for the coffin to rest on safely. Careful planning and regular communication with the client can assist in this.

Taking the coffin into church

Some religions/families may wish the deceased to lie in church overnight. Such a request can be accommodated with communication with the clergy/ Priest involved.

Care should be taken to ensure that the time requested suits all parties, being mindful of the availability of staff and vehicles. Such an event should be treated as part of the funeral itself, with a conductor, hearse and full bearer team. Transport for the family may also be requested.



The cortege

The Funeral Director can assist by offering the client the various alternatives available for where the cortege can start from, for example:

- the home of the deceased person;
- the funeral home;
- the residence of the family, client or friends;

Alternatively, the family can choose to meet the hearse at the place of service – church, crematorium, cemetery chapel etc.; or a limousine(s)/car(s) can collect mourners from one point or various points, and then meet the hearse at the place of service - or en route.

Confirmation should also be sought as to whether the hearse will form part of the cortege, or meet the mourners at the place of service.

In deciding on the place of assembly, such points as the method of transport (including the use of private cars) and transport for the Minister must be borne in mind, together with any known restrictions regarding the route to the venue, local road works etc. which may affect the timings.

The number of following cars chosen by the client will be dictated by the number of mourners requiring transport and seats available in each vehicle, remembering the insurance aspect with regards to the maximum number of passengers allowed. Having decided how many vehicles will be needed, the family may even consider who will be seated in each of the following cars.

Special attention may be given to the requirement for seatbelts to be worn or additional time allowed for the fitting of baby seats or assistance for wheelchair users.

Choice of funeral vehicle

The Funeral Director/arranger should also be prepared to discuss the type of vehicles the client may want to arrange to help represent the life of the deceased person.

It should never be assumed they will only want the hearse that forms part of the Funeral Director's fleet as there are many alternatives available, including:

- horsedrawn hearse;
- motorcycle hearse;
- vintage hearse;
- rainbow, pink or other coloured hearse;

- different makes of vehicles such as Citroen or Volkswagen hearses;
- routemaster bus;
- fire engine;
- lorry;
- 4x4;

Coffin/Casket Selection

This can be a very difficult choice for a client to make and the Funeral Director/arranger may need to be prepared for the client to not feel ready during the initial arrangement to confirm their choice.

The coffin selection can be done by asking the client if they would like to see a brochure containing the choices available to them, by inviting the client to visit the selection room or, if the client prefers, by a verbal explanation of what is available. Some arrangers leave the client to look through the brochure, whilst they go to check on funeral timings etc.

The Funeral Director should have a choice of coffins/caskets to show the client, if appropriate, as there are many choices available eg:

- veneered wood coffins;
- solid wood coffins;
- solid wood caskets;
- 'American style' caskets;
- picture coffins;
- coffins made from wicker, willow, banana leaf, wool and other materials; and
- cardboard coffins.

This is a very personal choice and the Funeral Director/arranger should be prepared to answer any questions the client may have and be able to offer guidance to the client as to which style helps represent the life/interests of the deceased person. It is also very important to ensure the client understands the cost of each coffin/casket offered as well as their choice being suitable for either the burial or cremation being arranged.

In respect of cremations, it is also important to ensure that the coffin choice is accredited by one of the two coffin accreditation schemes (FFMA or CSMA). Please see the section on appropriate coffin choice in Chapter 17 - Cremation (England and Wales).

Donations

The collection of charitable donations has long been a feature of many funerals. More recently though, the method of collection has evolved with increasing numbers of people now raising money online rather than through cash donations.

Handling cash donations is a significant responsibility for funeral firms and the processing of cash and cheques can be costly.

The option to move this activity online, through one of a number online donations providers, offers a safer and more straightforward service. Collecting online also enables the donations to attract Gift Aid. Gift Aid is a 25% government tax incentive on cash donations made during funeral services.

Handling cash donations

Despite the increase in online giving, it may still be the case that mourners wish to make a cash donation either during the service or via the Funeral Director afterwards. In these cases, the following guidelines may be followed:

1. Donations for each deceased person should be kept separate from each other.
2. A list of contributors should be made which includes on it the amount donated and whether it was in cash or a cheque.
3. If cash is handed in, count it with a witness, who countersigns the amount.
4. A receipt or acknowledgement of receipt of donation should be given for every donation payment received.
5. Keep donations in a safe until either banked or forwarded on.
6. Forward the donations to the particular charity or charities promptly, asking for a receipt and acknowledgement to the family (ideally within four weeks of the funeral).
7. A list of contributors should be sent to the family showing the total amount donated.
8. A collection made at a church, cemetery or crematorium should be checked in front of at least one witness at the earliest opportunity and, either given to a member of the family, kept in your safe or banked into the charity account until forwarded to the charity concerned.

NB. If a family ask for a plate to be placed in an Anglican Church to receive donations, the consent of the incumbent must be obtained in advance, since all monies received within a church become the property of the church. In other churches it is courteous to ask permission, as it is at cemetery and crematoria chapels.

It may be wise to open a bank account especially for donations - a 'charity' account. All donations received can be paid into the account and then a cheque can be drawn and sent to the charity at the appropriate time. If a separate account is not opened for such eventualities and you put the monies into an ordinary account, this can cause confusion during your financial audit and could leave you open to accusations of possible mishandling of donation monies.

For more information:

www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/managing-fundraising/handling-of-cash-and-other-donations/

Donations forwarded to the family of the deceased or direct to the designated charity

If it is the policy of a funeral firm not to accept donations, the client may accept responsibility for receiving them or arrangements can be made to send donations direct to the charity or to a nominated bank.

Instructions for forwarding such gifts can be incorporated into any funeral announcement placed in the press. Some newspapers will not accept, in notices, donations for charities being forwarded to anyone other than the Funeral Director, a bank or the charity concerned.

The Funeral Director can help the family further by directing general enquiries concerning donations to the correct contact; it is also good practice to contact the charity concerned before placing any notice in the press, especially when it is a local address, to find out whether the particulars you have are correct.

Additional Services

The arranging form should also cover additional services allowing the Funeral Director to provide a complete and bespoke service to each client.

These might include the following services.

Listing of mourners

It may be part of the Funeral Director's service to offer to list the names of those attending the funeral service. There are a number of ways of fulfilling such a request. A member of the funeral team may be asked to take the name of each person on arrival for the service. Each person may also be asked if they are representing another person or organisation. Once complete, the list(s) can be typed and presented to the client after the funeral.

Alternatively, a book of condolence or remembrance can be placed in a convenient position. This might be at the place of service or at the address mourners gather either before or after the funeral service.

Attendance or pew cards may be an alternative. These can be placed on each seat or pew and collected at the conclusion of the service. It is recommended that the name and address of the Funeral Director is printed on the back of the card to act as a reminder to the holder that it should have been handed in.

There are advantages and disadvantages to these methods of listing mourners. In the first two scenarios above, people do tend to arrive together, thus causing possible queues, while the third scenario places the onus on the person attending. However, in all cases arrangements should be made to have sufficient members of the team available, at least one of whom should not have other duties to deal with. For examples of an attendance/pew card, please visit the downloads section of the NAFD members website.

OBITUARIES, DEATH NOTICES, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND ONLINE TRIBUTES

Obituary

An obituary is a news article that reports the recent death of a person, typically along with an account of the person's life and information about the upcoming funeral, in large cities and larger newspapers such as The Times or Telegraph. For example obituaries, please click.

Death notices

A death notice is a public announcement of who has died and the date/time of the funeral. An example can be seen here:

HERBERT

Mabel Florence passed away peacefully on 1st April aged 98. Will be fondly remembered by husband Alan, children Harri and James, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Funeral Service at St Leodagarius, Nottingham followed by committal at Thornhill Crematorium on Thursday 12th May at 12.30 p.m. Family flowers only please. Enquiries and donations for McMillan Nurses may be sent c/o Jones & Edwards, Lou Road, SPI 3UN, Tel: 01267 325700.

Facilities for placing death notices exist in most local newspapers in addition to the national daily press. Most newspapers publish an instruction panel containing information on costs, deadlines etc. Death notices attract VAT which must be included in the estimate given to the client. Any handling charge made by the funeral firm should also be included.

- All notices commence with the proper surname of the deceased - civil Honours and professional qualifications are included in brackets, if desired - and continue with the date of death, unless it is impossible to ascertain it, or the first name(s) of the person who has died.

The exact time of death is not included. Nor are thanks to the doctors and staff of hospitals and nursing homes.

- The name of a nursing home or hotel should not appear without permission being given. The name of a hospital is not mentioned in conjunction with either of the phrases “after an operation” or “as the result of an accident”, unless, in the case of an accident, it is made clear that it did not take place in the hospital.
- Illnesses and diseases are not mentioned by name.
- Lengthy descriptions of the career and achievements of the deceased, more suited to an editorial obituary, are not normally included.
- There is no objection to a farewell message at the end of the notice, e.g. a quotation or Latin phrase or abbreviation, however, for reasons of space they should be kept short.

Always make clear the day(s) on which the notice is to appear.

Acknowledgements

An acknowledgement is where the family wish to publicly thank relatives/friends for their support.

An example can be seen here:

HERBERT MABEL FLORENCE

Alan and family would like to thank all relatives and friends for their support, messages of sympathy and donations following the sad loss of my dear wife Mabel Florence.

Thanks also to all at Jones & Edwards and Reverend Ronper for the sensitive handling of the service.

Online tributes

An increasingly popular alternative or accompaniment to a newspaper death notice is an online tribute on one of a number of website-based services, several of which are in NAFD supplier membership.

These services offer a digital and more informal option for families wishing to mark the death of a loved one. Depending upon the provider, clients can share information and pictures about the life of the deceased person, communicate funeral arrangements, light a virtual candle and, where appropriate, provide a link to a suggested charity to enable online donations.

The benefit of online donations, as opposed to cash collected during a funeral, is that it is easier to secure the benefit of Gift Aid, which adds a further 20% to the value of the donation.

There are a number of companies in supplier membership of the NAFD that provided these services.

It is unlikely that the Funeral Director will be asked to write an obituary, but it is not unusual for the client to need some guidance when constructing a death notice, acknowledgement or online tribute. It is wise to keep a record of local and national newspaper publishing days and costs, as well as a list of providers of online tribute and memorial services. There are a number in NAFD supplier members for example.

It is most important to talk through the notice with the client emphasising that whilst any announcement can be placed in the press immediately, the date and time for the funeral service cannot be placed until all parties have confirmed. It is often helpful to have a number of examples available for a client to read through. Particular attention should be paid to the spelling of all names to ensure accuracy. The deceased may also hold academic or professional qualifications which should be mentioned e.g.: B.A., B.Sc., a decoration such as MBE or a title such as Dr.

Managing floral tributes

There are no rigid rules governing the treatment of floral tributes by the Funeral Director, however the following guidelines may be helpful:

Ordering

Most Funeral Directors offer to supply flowers to their clients, either as agents or from their own floristry department. As much, if not more, time can be spent on ordering flowers as on arranging the rest of the funeral, which demonstrates the importance of flowers to the majority of families.

It can be the case that clients might be tempted to become over-extravagant with their choice of flowers and may benefit from sensitive guidance and support when selecting tributes.

Very large tributes are often unsuitable to be placed on the coffin or casket, can prove difficult to handle and may not even go inside, or on the top of, the hearse. When faced with this kind of situation, it may be necessary to supply a separate vehicle as a flower car, or even a suitably dressed flat-bed lorry.

Those firms offering a floral service normally sell from a brochure so it is important that all arrangers should be well acquainted with the flowers illustrated, should be aware of which flowers are in season and of the variable costs at different times of the year.

Floral tribute cards

Upon ordering flowers, clients should be offered a selection of cards to write their messages on – with the offer that you are happy to write the message for them if it's easier.

Clients may need assistance with the composition of a suitable message and it may be helpful to have to hand some ideas for expressions and phrases that can be used or, by talking to them a little, offer suggestions that help them to decide what to say.

When making arrangements at the home of the client, you can also leave a selection of cards, to give them time to decide on a message and completing the cards themselves.

Either way, it is important that clients should be allowed ample time before making the final decision as to the type of tribute(s) and message(s) required, as often other members of the family need to be consulted before requirements can be stated with any degree of certainty.

It is usual for Funeral Directors who do not own their own floristry business to sub-contract to a local florist on a discount basis. When selecting a florist to work with, it is wise to choose one with a good reputation for quality and reliability – rather than necessarily the

largest discount on offer. The flowers will be ordered through you, so it is your reputation that will be at stake.

Payment

A substantial debt can be incurred on floral accounts. It is therefore wise to obtain pre-payment on orders whenever possible.

Accounting for flowers is a matter of choice. However, it is probably better to invoice flowers separately, unless you have been asked to include them on the funeral account, both from the VAT point of view and when such an account is forwarded to a solicitor who may not approve the payment of flower accounts from the estate, unless the deceased has specifically requested for flowers to be provided.

It should also be noted that flower orders are subject to VAT, and, if registered, it is necessary to show the Funeral Director's business VAT registration number on the invoice.

Catering

Some funeral homes have their own rooms and facilities available for catering, others have trusted arrangements with local caterers or venues. To help clients who may wish the Funeral Director to arrange catering, it is a good idea to have available lists of local establishments and caterers that are experienced in holding receptions after funerals.

Do keep menus to hand so that the cost of catering can be included on the estimate of funeral expenses.

Printing & stationery

There are a number of options for the client by way of printing and stationery such as hymn sheets, orders of service or service sheets, bookmarks, mass cards or memorial cards, attendance cards and/or acknowledgement cards.

In particular, the use of Orders of Service has grown in both popularity in recent years and they are increasingly more complex celebration of life publications as well as acting as service sheets.

Funeral firms will have their own preferred suppliers – be it a local printer, a specialist online stationery service, or perhaps an in-house design capability within your business. You can support your clients in choosing paper/card and design styles to suit their needs and they should review a proof of the order of service before printing to be able to check for any errors.

Here are some useful tips on what to include:

- photographs of the deceased person;
- their full name and dates of birth and death;
- the date and location of the funeral;
- the text of the service:
 - o the text of any hymn should be printed in full, as should any other parts of the service in which the whole congregation is expected to participate
 - o always check that the gender is correct in the responses and certain prayers;
- details of any speakers during the service (to read poems, or give the eulogy); and
- details of charitable organisations which will receive donations.

As with every aspect of the arrangement of the funeral, particular care should be taken to ensure all spelling is checked and, where appropriate, ensure the Officiant and client have been fully involved in the drafting. Care should be taken to ensure final approval has been given by the client before any printing is carried out.

Memorialisation

As part of the arrangement process, Funeral Directors/arrangers may be asked to arrange the removal of a memorial on a grave to allow an interment to take place.

Accordingly, it is important they know who to contact in order to arrange the removal, storage information and whether it's possible for the client to arrange additional inscriptions. If known, the original supplier of the memorial should initially be contacted. The cost associated with the removal can also be included on the estimate of funeral expenses.

Guidance on timescales for the memorial to be placed back on to the grave can either be given by the Funeral Director; or the client can be provided with the memorial mason's contact details.

Memorialisation is also available for cremated remains. It is advisable to find out from local crematoria what forms of memorials are available to the client, e.g. Book of Remembrance, memorial plaques, rose trees etc. Often, the crematorium will contact the Applicant (the person who completed the cremation form) directly with a list of what is available.

Cremated remains

There are many options available for clients in respect of cremated remains/ashes such as:

Interment

- in an existing grave (with the owner's permission);
 - private land (with permission);
 - in a columbarium (a room or building with niches where cremated remain urns can rest);
- or
- at sea.

Scattering

- on an existing grave (with owner's permission);
 - on private land (with permission);
 - on the sea;
- or
- in a garden of remembrance within a crematorium (this can be done with the family present or without).

Other options

- there are a wide variety of companies offering to make jewellery, sculptures, paperweights and other memorials that include a small portion of the cremated remains/ashes. The family will need to consider what they wish to do with the remaining cremated remains;
- the family can retain them at home;
- the family can ask the Funeral Director to retain them on their behalf;
- there are specialised options, such as:
 - o mixing some cremated remains with paint to create a portrait;
 - o pressing a portion of cremated remains into a vinyl record;
 - o arranging a firework display containing cremated remains; and
 - o adding a portion of ashes to a memorial spaceflight.

These are just a few of the many and diverse options available and the Funeral Director/arranger should be prepared to help research what options may be available to the client, including the type of urn (of which there are many choices that can be offered). The NAFD's Funeral Director Monthly magazine runs regular features on memorialisation which can provide ideas and useful contacts.

When sourcing a service or product from a third party, always ensure quality and confirm instructions in writing.

Music

The choice of music, whether sung, recorded or physically performed in a funeral service, is very personal to the bereaved family, and especially the deceased. Careful consideration should be taken to liaise closely with the family, those managing the service locations (such as a cemetery chapel or Church) and the Officiant to ensure that what is chosen is both appropriate and permissible by all parties.

Two bodies are involved in the licensing of music for public performance, with distinct but complementary roles. They are:

- The Performing Rights Society (PRS).
- Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL).

PRS collects fees on behalf of the composer and publisher of music. PPL collects fees on behalf of the recording company and performing artists. Both PRS and PPL are clear that they do not require a licence to play or perform music at a funeral ceremony, and this applies both to music played from a recording and to music performed live. It applies to music played or performed wherever the funeral ceremony is held.

They also require no licence for the reproduction of song lyrics or words of hymns where these are in use for funerals. The pitfall for Funeral Directors (and families) lies in how the music is obtained. What both PRS and PPL do require is that any music played or performed was obtained and recorded legally and is supplied either in its original medium or in a licensed copy.

For example, if a family supply you with a commercially-produced CD containing, say, Pink Floyd's Comfortably Numb and this is taken to the crematorium or other venue and played, then that would be okay. If, however, the family burned Comfortably Numb onto a blank CD, perhaps with other songs for the ceremony, and asked you to take that to the crematorium, that would be illegal, unless they had first obtained authority from the composer, publisher and recording artists.

Checking licensing of music is a considerable challenge. However, there is a solution in the Limited Manufacture License, provided jointly by PPL and PRS. For a modest fee this permits the copying of up to 250 units (pieces of music) to be used for a specific purpose. It also (of which more later) permits the recording of the ceremony and distribution of that recording. Another use for the LM licence, which may be relevant to bereaved families, is that it covers the use of music as a background to, for example, photo montages that might be projected during a service and/or burned to disc and distributed to family friends attending the ceremony, or displayed online.

The license is obtainable through the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS), a subsection of PRS, which distributes the money paid to the artists concerned. It is important to bear in mind that the LM licence is not a one-off licence which may be issued to a Funeral Director for all future cases. It should be obtained by the family, or by the Funeral Director on the family's behalf, for a particular funeral.

In the case of many crematoria, a simpler solution lies in the use of the Wesley Music system, or equivalent such as Obitus or Vivedia's Music Engine. This removes the need for families to provide their own CDs, tapes, vinyl or digital media to the Funeral Director or crematorium. In some cases, crematoria will not accept 'home burnt' (essentially pirated) CDs for playing on their equipment.

The Funeral Director should establish with the family what music is required, then notify Wesley (or equivalent) of the date and time of the ceremony, the location, the name of the deceased person and the music required. The Funeral Director should confirm the title of the music and the artist.

In the case of classical music, the Funeral Director should also confirm if a particular recording is required. If it is possible to obtain the catalogue number of the CD or digital download details, that is even better. This may also be required where families provide music as an mp3 as it gives evidence of ownership.

Wesley will then secure the recording and upload it to the system at the crematorium in question, giving the Funeral Director a reference number to quote to the crematorium when completing the particular form. Wesley takes care of the licensing issues on the Funeral Director's behalf. It is engaged by the crematorium for an annual fee, so no direct cost applies to the Funeral Director or their client. At crematoria where the system is well established, or where the music requested is familiar from other services, the Funeral Director should first check whether the recording is already on the system.

In addition to copyrighted material, a family's own recordings, such as of a family member speaking or performing, can be digitally recorded and uploaded to the system. Generally speaking, where a recording is not already on a crematorium's system, 48 hours' notice should be given to the music system provider to secure and upload the recording. By removing the need to supply CDs, the Funeral Director and the family can ensure not only that the recording is of good quality, but is legally obtained.

Where religious music is concerned, the Funeral Director's first recourse is to Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) which, for an annual fee, will issue a Church Copyright Licence (CCL) to permit Funeral Directors to reproduce the words of hymns and worship songs. The CCL also permits audio and video recording of funeral services. As with PRS, however, it is not a statutory body and not all hymns and songs are covered. Again, if in doubt, the Funeral Director should contact the individual copyright holder. It should also

be borne in mind that the CCLI mainly deals with Protestant music. For Roman Catholic music, a comparable body is Calamus. Calamus makes no charge for licensing music for use in funerals, but does require that permission is sought. Roman Catholic Churches are likely to have a Calamus licence, which will cover any music played there or the text of hymns and songs printed in service booklets. Calamus licences are less widespread at crematoria. Once again, the Funeral Director should always check whether the copyright holder for the music requested is within the scheme.

Music does not typically feature in Muslim, Quaker or Jewish funeral services, while Baptist funerals include both religious and secular (popular) music. It is always important to check with the faith leader concerned about the customs and requirements in relation to music when arranging a funeral for a person of faith.

The Price list

The NAFD Code of Practice states that comprehensive price lists covering all services and products, including the separate charges for the constituent parts of the Funeral Director's services, must be readily available, and on display in the public area of the funeral home.

The NAFD intends to extend this requirement, upon publication of the next version of the NAFD Code of Practice, to also include publication of prices online, either on members own websites or funeral-directory.co.uk. Many members have already published some or all of their prices online.

Work to agree a consistent glossary of terms for funeral services is currently underway by the Funeral Services Consumer Standards Review, which has representation from across the sector as well as a consumer reference group. As soon as this work is completed it will be provided to NAFD members.

For members in Scotland:

In May 2019, the Scottish Government published its guidance on funeral costs, which contains information for burial authorities, cremation authorities and Funeral Directors in Scotland.

The document lays out 17 good practice recommendations for Funeral Directors, covering a wide range of areas, including transparency of pricing on and offline, helping clients understand costs, provision of estimates and final bills, and making information about lower-cost funeral options available.

The guidance also addresses simple funerals, and what they should and should not include.

For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

The Guidance on Funeral Costs can be viewed or downloaded here:

www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-funeral-costs/

It is advisable that the Funeral Director informs clients that the business is in membership of the National Association of Funeral Directors and, accordingly, abides by their requirements set out in the Code of Practice.

Estimate of funeral expenses

The estimate/confirmation form should provide the client with details of the funeral, including the date and time, place of assembly, service, place of committal and any additional services in respect of items such as arrangements for the cremated remains.

It should also provide the client with a detailed estimate of the costs of the funeral. When signed by the client, it indicates an approval of the arrangements and costs. Should a query arise at a later date, it provides a basic record of the services requested and ensures that your funeral home conforms with Section 7 of the NAFD Code of Practice.

Although the majority of your estimated costs may not change when your final invoice is issued, it may be worth considering ensuring that your client understands that certain costs are indicative and may change dependent upon final decisions made by the client.

The Funeral Director might be in a position to provide this detailed estimate at the end of the arrangement meeting (if all information has been gathered), so the client may leave the funeral home (or the Funeral Director leave the client's home) with written instructions and a breakdown of costs. If further work is needed to arrive at a detailed breakdown, this can be emailed or posted to the client as soon as possible thereafter.

The client should be made aware that funeral costs are made up in two ways:

- The charges of the Funeral Director: These charges cover such items as professional services, the removal, the hearse, the following limousine(s) and the coffin/casket selected.
- The disbursements (third party fees), which are monies paid out by the Funeral Director on behalf of the client, and, depending on the case, will include such items as the cemetery or crematorium fees, Clergy/Celebrant fees, Notices in the paper, etc.

The Funeral Director/arranger should clearly explain the charges of their firm, again talking through the services provided for each charge. Once the costs have been identified the Funeral Director/arranger will add them up and tell the client the cost.

Once the Funeral Director/arranger feels the client understands the pricing structure of the funeral, he/she should go on to itemise all the disbursements to be paid on the client's behalf, explaining each item clearly as recorded on the arrangement form. Once all the

disbursements are written down, they should be added to the Funeral Directors charges, together with any other services requested to arrive at the overall estimated cost of the funeral.

Many funeral firms request that money for the disbursements is paid in advance of the funeral. If this is the case, at this stage the Funeral Director/arranger needs to explain the methods and schedules of payment available and the necessary timescale, explaining that such payments will be deducted clearly on the final invoice. Some firms offer discounts for early settlement, the option to pay in instalments, or interest-free options – all of which should be discussed with the client.

Some Funeral Directors offer 'package' prices, which include a particular funeral specification and coffin type. It is important for the client to fully understand what is and isn't included within these packages and be given the option to upgrade or downgrade between them.

It may be that these packages have been established as the most common type of local funeral and where the sum of the 'itemised' funeral arrangements works out slightly cheaper within a 'package'.

It is important to make the client fully aware of your Terms and Conditions, particularly prior to them signing a written estimate. Terms and conditions are individual to each business but should include:

- any discounts there may be on offer, e.g. for early settlement;
- additional charges made for overdue accounts;
- when the invoice will be issued;
- when the invoice will fall due for payment;
- when any deposits are due for payment;
- the responsibility of the Funeral Director to the client; and
- the responsibility of the client to the Funeral Director.

It is important that, once the funeral arrangements have been discussed and the *estimate* broken down and discussed, the Funeral Director goes over the information (the funeral arrangements and estimate of funeral expenses) once again to ensure understanding.

At this point, ideally the client should be made aware that this is an estimate of costs. To ensure they are comfortable with the estimated charges, the client can be encouraged to take their time and discuss everything they have arranged with family or friends, to ensure they are comfortable with the choices made during the funeral arrangement and the cost.

The client will also need to be advised that, following agreement and the signing of a contract, any subsequent changes would need to be advised in good time, as funeral arrangements are mostly commenced immediately given the relatively short timeframe and volume of tasks.

However, if - once arrangements have been estimated - the client raises immediate concerns regarding the cost, do offer reassurance that you will work with them to arrive at a final set of arrangements that is within their budget. Revisit the options already discussed and look at those options that can be reduced in price (such as floral tributes, by changing the specification).

If the funeral business offers a simple funeral package, this may be a preferable option to discuss, as well as whether it is appropriate for your client to seek guidance on claiming from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for a Social Fund funeral expenses payment towards the cost of the funeral.

Once the arrangement has been completed and the products/services agreed, it is recommended that the client be asked to sign to this effect. If an estimate of funeral expenses is completed with the client present, the client should also be asked to sign. However, if an estimate is sent to the client a day or two after the arrangements, it is recommended that the Funeral Director requests that a signed copy be returned to them within a specified time (to be specified by your business, e.g. three days).

Many businesses detail their business terms and conditions (as outlined above) as part of the estimate of funeral costs and, by ensuring the client signs such a document, this becomes a record of their agreement to those terms and conditions and the costs associated with the funeral options discussed.

Confirmation of funeral arrangements

The aim of a confirmation of funeral arrangements is to provide the client with the key details of the funeral arrangements such as:

- the date of the funeral;
- the time and place of assembly;
- the time and place of the service location;
- the time and place of the place of committal; and
- any additional services, such as arrangements for ashes.

The Notice of Right to Cancel

The funeral arrangements, as noted on a signed and agreed estimate/confirmation form, constitute a contract between the client and the Funeral Director. In case law, it is the person actually making the funeral arrangements and signs the form who is the client, and is therefore liable for payment of the account, regardless of their relationship to the deceased person, executor or next of kin.

Under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, the client has the right to cancel this contract if they so wish, by sending or taking a cancellation notice to the Funeral Director at any time within the period of fourteen days starting with the day of receipt of a notice in writing of the right to cancel.

Some funeral firms ask the client to sign the estimate, retaining a duplicate copy in the office. Your terms and conditions should be included in the documents, and they should be made clear to the client before the estimate is signed.

The key areas to be covered with the client are:

- The client has the right to cancel the agreement made within 14 days.
- The cancellation must be made in writing.
- Any services or products provided to the client up to the point of cancellation will be charged for.
- In order for the Funeral Director/arranger to commence work on the client's behalf within the 14 day cancellation period, the client must sign allowing the Funeral Director/arranger to do so.

Conclusion

Before taking leave of the client, the Funeral Director should ask if there are any points that need clarifying or any questions or concerns they may have.

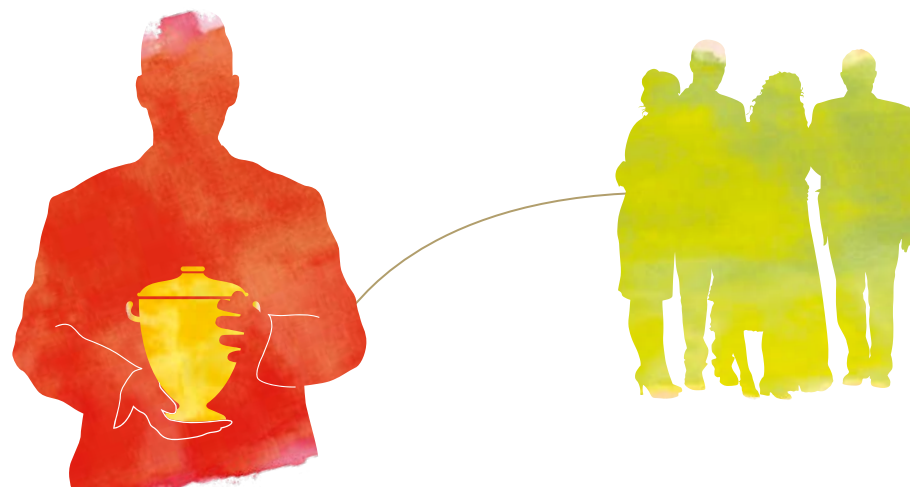
They should remind the client of what actions he/she is going to take and hand the client a business card, if not already given at the beginning of the arrangement, and/or information about the firm.

A good way to complete the arrangement is for the Funeral Director to assure the client of his/her best attention and availability at all times.

Distance funeral arrangements

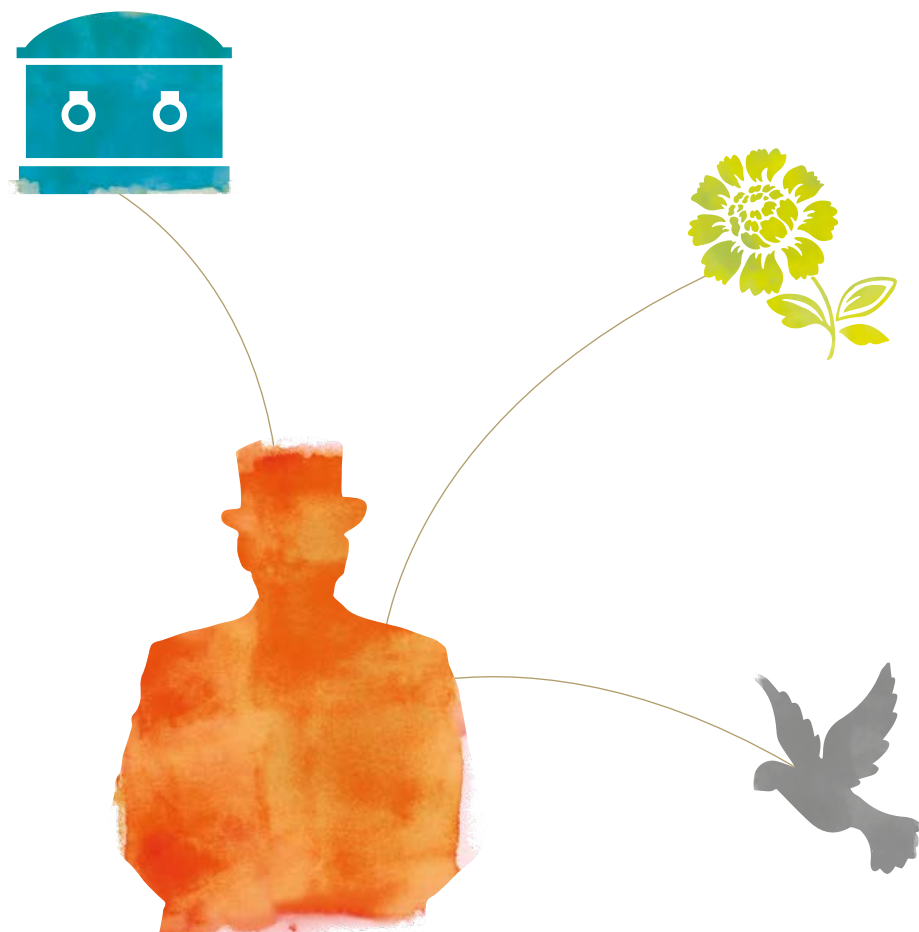
Whilst making a funeral arrangement via email or Skype, for example, is not ideal for the Funeral Director or, in particular, the client - it may sometimes be necessary.

Careful consideration must be given as to how signatures are obtained on all appropriate documentation as, often, crematoria or local authorities may require original signatures rather than e-signatures.



QUALITY

It is important for the funeral director to ensure that the quality of any products (e.g. coffins, hired-in funeral vehicles) and/or services (e.g. officiants, florists) are reputable and of a high and satisfactory standard. Very often, what the funeral director offers is seen as a direct reflection of their own service and reputation - and so quality checks are a must.



AFTER THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT MEETING

Changes to the funeral arrangements

Should there be any changes to the arrangements, it is advisable that a record of the change is made and followed up in writing (where there is time). Any change in costs must be notified, preferably in writing, to the client at the time the change is made.

Internal communication

The smooth running of any business depends on its system of communication. It is essential that, whatever system is used, it must be flexible to cope with the varying demands placed upon it, easily understood and sufficient training is given to those members of the team who have to operate it.

No matter what the size of the organisation, information gained during the arrangement will need to be communicated to various departments, such as transport, workshop and the mortuary. When an alteration to an arrangement is made, the appropriate department should be notified verbally followed by written confirmation. If the change to arrangements is substantial, it may well be necessary to issue a new instruction sheet stating that it replaces any earlier communication.

Managing floral tributes

The reception of flowers at the funeral home

It is advisable to have a specially designated area where flowers for a particular funeral can be received, displayed without fear of damage and kept separate from flowers belonging to other funerals.

The following controls should be in place:

- Check the name of the deceased and time of the funeral. It is not unknown for florists to deliver on the wrong day, at the wrong time, or to the wrong premises.
- Make sure the tribute is marked with the name of the deceased, preferably on the back of the card.
- Examine for any damage and make a note on the florist's delivery slip or book if the flowers are not in good condition on receipt.
- Always insist on giving a signature to the person delivering; this will protect you and the florist in the event of any future complaint.
- Always handle flowers with the utmost care.
- Ensure that all floral tributes delivered to your premises for a particular funeral are then placed on the hearse or flower car and conveyed at the time of the funeral.

It is the practice of many Funeral Directors to make a list of the tributes received at every funeral, not only as a service to their clients but also as a safeguard against any misunderstanding, the list being given to the family on the day of the funeral, or delivered to them at a later date.

If it is not usual practice to make flower lists for every funeral, the Funeral Director must make this clear at the time of arranging the funeral and be prepared to make the service available if the client wishes it.

The list must be prepared by taking the names from the actual flower card on each tribute and not from the list supplied by the florist, as these can often be abbreviated, spelt wrongly or difficult to read. Do remember to include flowers that may have been delivered to the house, to the church or to the place of committal.

It is advisable for the Funeral Director to retain a copy of the flower list. A client may require additional copies, or instruct you to arrange to have it published in the local press.

Presentation of tributes

Adequate training should be given to funeral service employees in order to achieve a well-dressed hearse for every funeral.

In addition staff should know how to display tributes in church, at the crematorium and at the graveside, not only to create an attractive display but to ensure that message cards are easily readable.



Disposal of floral tributes

Floral tributes may be left at the crematorium, however, the client should be told how long the flowers will remain on the initial display area, whether there is a secondary display area, its location and how long they will be displayed there before being removed by the crematorium staff.

If cremated remains are to be interred in a grave at a later date, some families may wish for all or only the family tributes to be placed on the grave and the Funeral Director should be prepared to carry out this request.

In the case of earth burial, the client may wish for one or more of the tributes to be left on the coffin and lowered into the grave.

The family may request that any suitable tributes be delivered to hospitals, care or retirement homes, or to a church. It is important that the Funeral Director checks with the intended hospital or home as to what the policy is, as not all are able to accept them for reasons of allergy or hygiene.

With the exception of those being taken to a church or removed by the officiating minister at the request of the family, all such flowers must be signed for and the number and types of tributes clearly recorded. A duplicate book is ideal for this purpose, the name and address of the person to whom the recipient may acknowledge receipt and express thanks together with the name of the Funeral Director must be clearly indicated. The top copy should be given to the person receiving the flowers with the Funeral Director retaining the copy for his/ her records.

Accounts

A detailed account invoice should be provided after the funeral has taken place, and at a time lapse according to your terms and conditions of business. Under the terms of the NAFD Code of it must be itemised, "in a form readily comparable with the estimate."

However, the Code of Practice also states: "The account may be less detailed if reference is made to a written, itemised estimate provided the charges levied by the Funeral Director and the disbursements have been separately identified."

As well as it being a requirement of the NAFD Code of Practice, the Competition and Markets Authority emphasises the need for price transparency and it is a subject that is central to their [investigations into the funeral sector](#) which commenced in June 2018.

The NAFD recommends you present a detailed account that correlates directly to the estimate, both so that it is easy for the family to understand, and also as the account can be passed on to an executor, solicitor or the DWP - who will be unfamiliar with the detail of the funeral.

A covering letter should be included with the account, thanking the client for entrusting the arrangements to the firm, explaining arrangements for payment and indicating payment terms and methods (e.g. cash, bank transfer, credit card – or other payment terms agreed with the client).

Included in the letter should also be the name of the person at your firm they should contact should they have any complaints or queries. A client survey or feedback sheet could also be included at this time (see below).

An example of what an invoice might look like can be found in the downloads section of the NAFD members website.

Client survey/feedback

For many businesses, in addition to the invoice a client survey or feedback sheet is included, encouraging the client to come back to them with opinions on each aspect of the service received.

Should the client have any concerns you should refer them to your Complaints Procedure in the first instance. If this does not resolve the concerns, they can contact NAFD Resolve, using the information and [online form](#) provided on the NAFD website.

Record keeping and data protection

Maintaining an accurate record of client service is essential to the proper management of a funeral home. Funeral homes deal with personal data and should have had in place proper data protection guidelines, to store and secure personal data properly, since the Data Protection Act came into force in 1998.

The General Data Protection Regulations (2018) superseded the DPA and has placed additional requirements relating to data protection on all organisations – including funeral homes. The General Data Protection Regulation affects anyone/all companies who process personal data belonging EU residents and will be applicable, irrespective of the outcome of Brexit.

Failing to abide by these is breaking the law and can result in a significant financial penalty from the Information Commissioner. The current penalty for failing to comply with the new regulation is fines of up to EURO 20,000,000 or 4% of annual turnover in the preceding year, whichever is greater. Fines can increase if misuse of personal data continues.

An important first step is to register as Data Controller and Data Processor with the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

The ICO's definition of controllers and processors is:

- A controller determines the purposes and means of processing personal data. For funeral plans that will be the plan provider.
- A processor is responsible for processing personal data on behalf of a controller. For funeral plans that will be the Funeral Director.
- If you are a processor, the General Data Protection Regulation places specific legal obligations on you; for example, you are required to maintain records of personal data and processing activities. You will have legal liability if you are responsible for a breach.
- However, if you are a controller, you are not relieved of your obligations where a processor is involved – the General Data Protection Regulation places further obligations on you to ensure your contracts with processors comply with the regulation.

You are a data controller for your own business. If you offer pre-paid funeral plans, you will be a data processor for your plan provider.

GDPR covers requirements such as how data is collected and stored, how long it is stored for and how it is disposed of. It also covers the need to gain specific consent in order to be able to contact clients about matters not directly connected with the contracted funeral arrangements (e.g. marketing).

The General Data Protection Regulation outlines that companies should take appropriate measures to ensure the security of the customer information that they hold. This may vary across different businesses as each business will have a different set up and technology.

The General Data Protection Regulation only applies to living individuals, therefore it depends on what information is held (e.g. living next of kin, etc.) you may feel that it is reasonable to keep details for:

- Regular use of archived records for reference purposes at the request of next of kin or a future funeral arranger
- Future requests to exhume the remains of a deceased person, including cremated remains

You must document your reasons for holding data in your data processing summary statement (which should be given to clients at the earliest reasonable opportunity), privacy notice and document retention policy.

Funeral Directors can use various methods to store and back up data as long as the site has appropriate security measures and is compatible with the General Data Protection Regulation. Individual sites will be able to give you further information on their adherence to the new regulation. You are responsible for that data and what happens to it. You should ensure that you do not use any backup sites that do not adhere to GDPR.

A privacy notice (or privacy policy or data use policy as it can also be known as) should be concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible. A privacy notice can be detailed within terms and conditions; however it must be made clear within the document. It should be noted that if a Funeral Director has a website that the privacy notice should be added to the website.

For further information on GDPR, please visit the [Information Commissioner's website](#).

What data might you wish to keep?

Suggested record fields should include:

- surname and first name(s);
- date of death;
- date of funeral;
- Place of committal - burial or cremation;
- coffin/casket type;
- next of kin contact information; and
- reference number.

Other points worth considering when preparing an index are:

- hyphenated i.e. double-barreled names should be entered under both names; and
- still-born children should be entered under both 'S' for still-born and under the mother's surname.

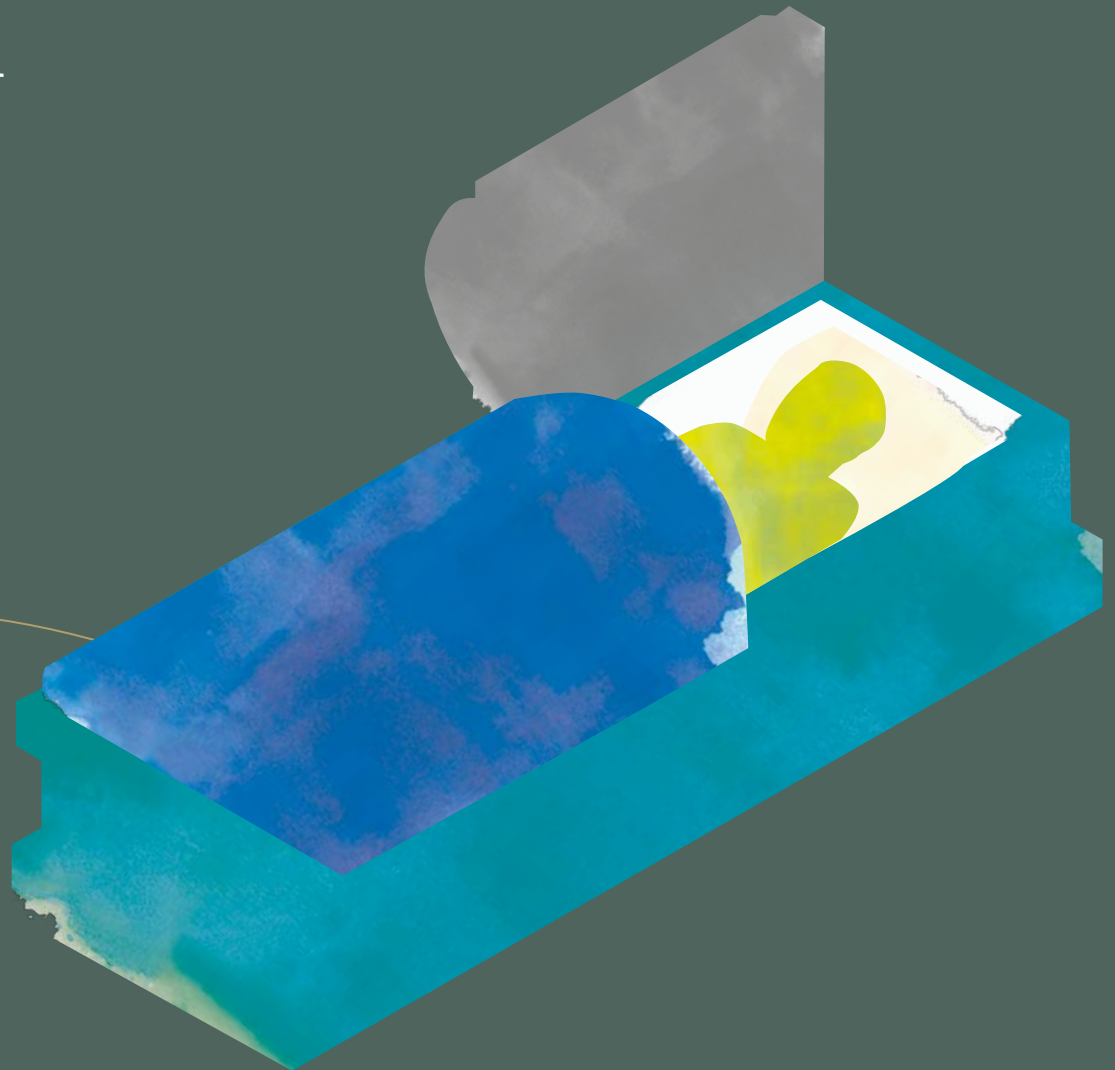
As a matter of routine, all records should be updated promptly and data held should be reviewed annually against your firm's data policy.

A useful GDPR data collection form for clients, which describes how a funeral firm may use their data, can be downloaded from the NAFD members website.



Chapter 13

Care & Presentation of the Deceased



INTRODUCTION

When a family entrusts the body of one they love to a Funeral Director, they charge that Funeral Director with what could be considered a sacred duty. Whether the deceased person is in hospital, a nursing or care home or a hospital mortuary, once they are released to the Funeral Director, it is his/her duty to care for that person until the time of committal, whenever that may be.

Once a deceased person is received into the Funeral Director's care, they should be able to satisfy themselves and, on occasion, the family, that death has taken place.

It is an industry-wide acceptance that bringing a deceased person into the Funeral Director's care should not be carried out until it has been verified that death has taken place. Although it is important that a medically qualified person undertakes this duty, it is also good practice for Funeral Directors to have an understanding of the signs of death and tests for death.

CARE OF DECEASED PEOPLE

When a death occurs in hospital or a nursing home, the nursing staff may carry out the sanitary attention to the deceased person. However, some may no longer carry out what is known as 'last offices' (the laying out of the deceased person), and will expect the Funeral Director to do this.

The best place to carry out the initial laying out and embalming (if selected by the next of kin), is at the funeral home.

Guidance may need to be provided to the family where there may be a delay in the Funeral Director being able to bring the deceased person into their care; for example, where some members of the family have not yet arrived.

Guidance could include:

- Keeping the room cool and turning off any heating in the room.
- Ensuring any electric blanket covering the deceased person is switched off.
- Keeping the doors and windows closed in the room where the deceased person is resting.
- Placing a pillow under the head of the deceased person if they are lying down.

If a significant delay is possible, or the deceased person has passed away in something other than a bed, e.g. a chair; it may be preferable for the Funeral Director to make a visit to the home to ensure the deceased person is cared for appropriately, until such time as the family authorises them to bring the deceased person into their care.

EQUIPMENT

As a general rule, the following equipment ought to be available for first offices:

- disposable gloves;
- plastic and/or dry sheeting;
- clinical waste bags;
- cleansing gel;
- wristlets or wristbands, similar to those used in hospitals. These can enable the deceased's full name, age, date, place of death and gender to be recorded. An alternative might be a tag which can be attached to the deceased person's toe or wrist. Whichever form of identification is used, it is recommended that it remain with the deceased person at all times and hidden from view of anyone paying their last respects as best as possible;
- cotton wool;
- tweezers;
- aneurysm hook;
- eye caps;
- needle;
- surgical thread;
- apron;
- mask;
- goggles;
- sleevelets; and
- overshoes.



FIRST OFFICES

Funeral Directors should be mindful that the client may have specific requests in respect of first offices, such as whether a male or female should carry out the procedure or whether the deceased person's religious or cultural beliefs dictate that family members should carry out this procedure rather than those employed by the funeral service.

Infectious diseases

If it is known that the deceased person suffered from an infectious disease, the designated Health and Safety representative within the business should be advised.

The Health and Safety Executive document "Managing infection risks when handling the deceased" can be accessed here: www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg283.pdf

For further information, please see Chapter 6 - Health and Safety.

Guidance can also be sought from your local Health Authority as to what next steps to take.

Procedures for first offices

Below is a standardised set of instructions for first offices, although we recognise that individual firms may have alternative procedures and so Funeral Directors should check with their employer before proceeding.

When a deceased person remains at home until the funeral

There may, on the rare occasion, be a request to the Funeral Director that the deceased person remain at home until the day of the funeral. It is important to discuss with the family the practical implications of keeping the person that has died at home, to check that they are fully prepared, run through the procedures and provide any equipment they will need.

The procedures below are for the undertaking of first offices for a deceased person at the funeral home.

Where the procedure may change for a private home a note has been made. It must be emphasised that this is a guide only, and each funeral home will have its own policies and procedures.

It is recommended that, before first offices are carried out, the following checks are made:

- Check the identification of the deceased person.
- Has the Doctor who was looking after the deceased during their last illness issued the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)?
- If the deceased person has been referred to the Coroner/Procurator Fiscal and a post-mortem carried out, do you have the correct form to allow cremation to take place?

The forms are:

- o **Scotland:** Form 14 – Certificate of Registration of Death and Form E1 – Certificate of the Procurator Fiscal
- o **England and Wales:** Form 20a (Coroner's Authority for Cremation) and Certificate of Registration of Death
- o **Northern Ireland:** Certificate of Registration of Death and Form 20a (Coroner's Authority for Cremation).

- Has an explanation been provided to the client about first offices and permission obtained?
- Does the client have any particular requirements in respect of the deceased person's presentation, e.g. hair or make-up? If this is the case, it is recommended that a recent photograph of the deceased person be requested.
- Many of those who carry out the first offices or embalming procedure are trained that, before the deceased is touched, the signs and tests for death are carried out.
- Ensure the mortuary table (or equivalent) has been cleaned prior to transferring the deceased to it from where they are resting.
- **If at a private residence, on arrival at the home it should be ascertained from the family as to where they wish the deceased person to lie. Often, this would be in a bed.**

This should be done when having completed a risk assessment, taking into consideration such things as the weight of the deceased person, the number of colleagues required and any equipment that may assist, such as a wheeled bier or hoist.

- Once the deceased person is on the table, remove any clothing. Cover the genital area to preserve the dignity of the deceased person.
- **If at a private residence remove all clothing and bedding. Place a waterproof sheet on the mattress.**
- Break down any rigor mortis present by manipulation of the affected joints.
- Wash the body using a mild disinfectant in the water, commencing with the face and continuing with the hands, arms, legs, the whole of the trunk and genitals.

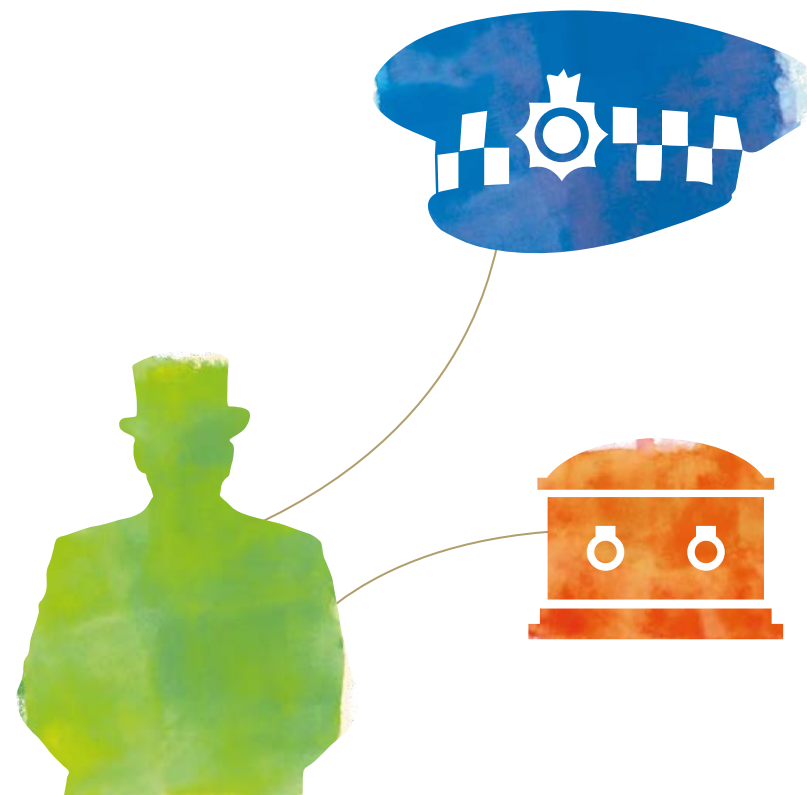
- Dry the body thoroughly after washing.
- Pack all orifices with cotton wool to prevent discharges.
- If caring for a male deceased person, if there is a noticeable growth of beard, other than a natural beard or 'designer stubble', the face should be shaved gently (check permission has been sought from the client first). Use plenty of shaving cream to avoid causing razor burns on the face. Razor burns tend to show up after a while due to the action of air, and more so after arterial embalming. This can be limited if, after shaving, a moisturizer is applied to the face and neck that has been treated.
- Clean the nose internally using a cotton wool swab (held in forceps) and soaked in a mild disinfectant. Use a fresh swab for each nostril. Dry and pack with clean cotton wool.
- Clean the mouth by first removing any dentures fitted. Swab the inside of the mouth and lips with cotton wool soaked in a mild disinfectant and dry. Pack the rear of the mouth with cotton wool. Clean and replace any dentures.
- Close the mouth using an oral suture. Care should be taken not to include lip tissue, which could produce a 'pinched' or unnatural pouting appearance to the mouth. Position using small amounts of cotton wool padding at the corners if felt necessary.
- Clean each eye by swabbing the eyeball and beneath the eyelid with diluted disinfectant, using a separate swab for each eye. Dry the eyeball and eyelid and place an eye cap in position. Each eye should be closed by bringing the top lid down over the eye cap two thirds of the way, and then bringing the lower lid up to meet the top lid.
- If the coffin/casket is ready, ensure there are sufficient staff available to assist with the dressing of the deceased person and then their transfer into their coffin/casket.
- **If at a private residence, place a clean sheet under the deceased person and cover with a clean top sheet which should be folded back neatly slightly below the chin.**
- Brush and/or comb the hair.
- **If at a private residence, generally tidy the room. Fold all discarded bedding neatly, likewise discarded clothing. Ascertain the wishes of the family as to what they would like done with the various items. If the family ask you to dispose of any soiled items, place them in a plastic or clinical waste bag before removal.**
- Re-pack your equipment case and/or disinfect equipment used, dry and put away. Dispose correctly of any clinical waste as per the policies and procedures of your funeral business.

POLICE REMOVALS

It is worth noting that there may be sudden/unexpected deaths which are believed to be medically related. In these instances, a paramedic or, perhaps a police officer, may pronounce life extinct and request a Funeral Director bring the deceased person into their care.

Instructions, however, may be given that no preparatory work should be carried out on the deceased, such as first offices, until a decision has been made as to whether the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) will be issued.

It is accepted that, in these instances, the Funeral Director will wash and clean the deceased person if they are in an undignified condition but, other than that, no first offices will be carried out.



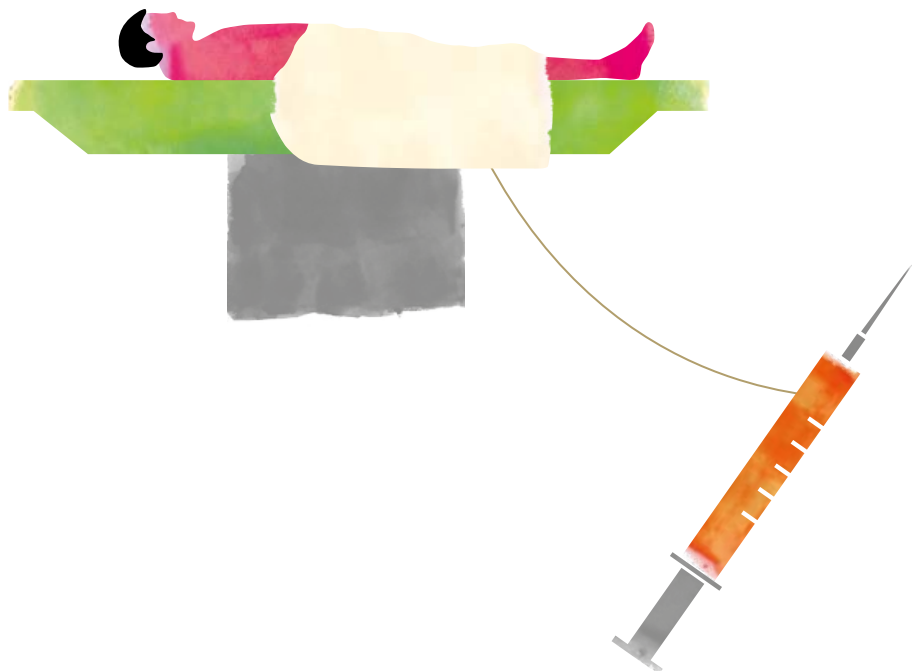
THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR & EMBALMING

All Funeral Directors should be confident in explaining and discussing embalming with their clients. They should have knowledge of the basic principles of arterial embalming, have the ability to explain its objectives and answer questions put to them by clients.

It is essential that the Funeral Director has the services of an embalmer available, if they are not trained themselves.

The British Institute of Embalmers' code of conduct states that bereaved families should be fully informed and give consent (ideally in writing) before embalming goes ahead.

When discussing embalming, many Funeral Directors prefer to describe the process as temporary preservation, sanitary or hygienic treatment. Some Funeral Directors, however, use these expressions to describe the "first offices" as above. It is important that the Funeral Director makes it clear to the client exactly what is being proposed.



A useful explanation of embalming:

PRESERVATION - of the body from the time it comes into the care of the Funeral Director until the time of committal. The procedure delays the onset of decomposition and, in doing so, can prevent purging, leaking fluids and obnoxious smells. The latter potentially emotive words should be avoided when talking to clients.

PROTECTION - embalming kills most pathogenic organisms, therefore offering the most effective control of the health risk to the Funeral Director and his/her staff.

PRESENTATION - embalming enables the Funeral Director to present the deceased as if they are at rest, with their dignity restored to them. This can be of great psychological value to those who wish to see the deceased. Viewing the deceased often helps to eradicate or lessen an earlier memory of seeing their loved one suffering.

The embalming process consists of arterial injection, venous drainage and treatment of the thoracic and abdominal cavities and their contents. In general, the embalmer selects a suitable artery and vein, the vessels selected depending on the cause of death and the general condition of the body to be embalmed. A small incision is made, exposing the artery and vein. The preservative fluid (normally based on formaldehyde) is injected into the vascular system through the artery and the blood drained from the accompanying vein. Whilst, usually, it is only necessary to raise one artery, there are times - due to the condition of the body - when it is necessary to inject more than one artery to achieve satisfactory saturation of the tissues.

The time required for an embalming is between one and two hours, but may be longer depending on the age and condition of the deceased, the cause of death, climatic conditions and facilities available.

If the deceased person has undergone a post mortem examination, the technique is different to the above. The accepted principle in treating such a case is to locate and inject arteries as near as possible to the point where they have been severed, with additional treatment being given to the contents of the thoracic and abdominal cavities. Treatment of autopsied cases can be relatively easy if the co-operation of the pathologist and mortuary technician is sought and given. The time required for such cases can vary from two to three hours, or even longer if death has been traumatic, and the embalmer has to make use of restorative and cosmetic procedures to achieve a satisfying result.

USEFUL TIPS AND GUIDANCE

- Be positive in your approach to embalming. The Funeral Director is concerned with caring for a deceased person and their loved ones during the period between death and the committal of the body and embalming can support the grieving process and help to maintain the deceased in a sanitary condition during this time.
- Explain the process simply, without using emotive or technical words (putrefaction, odours, etc.)
- Explain that there is no mutilation of the body and that, in the majority of cases, a small incision is all that is necessary. Where a post mortem has been carried out the client will, no doubt, be aware of this and there will be the opportunity of saying that the treatment can help to restore the dignity of the deceased person.
- Support the family in their decision if they choose to not embalm the person that has died.
- Do explain why embalming can be beneficial. One question that is often asked is how to do this in a sensitive way while, at the same time, giving the client a true understanding of what embalming entails. Everyone will find their own explanation that they are comfortable with, but an example might be:
 'Embalming is the injection of a formaldehyde-based solution into the arterial system. This will help delay nature's natural processes and aid in the presentation of your allowing you to spend time with up until the day of the funeral'.
- Another example might be:
 'Mainly for reasons of hygiene, we would normally recommend what we term as hygienic treatment or embalming. This will stabilise your physical condition until the time of the funeral. Additionally, the procedure, in most cases, has a mildly cosmetic effect in that it restores the skin to a more familiar colouration, thus allowing a positive final impression of your'
- Do not refer to smells, odours, purging, decomposition, unsanitary conditions and it is also recommended that you are sensitive in discussing how the body of the deceased person can quickly decay, change, become unpleasant or in any way unhygienic, particularly if the family have been looking after their loved one at home prior to death.

One positive objective of embalming is that the process can help restore the deceased's normal appearance and, with this in mind, it is recommended that a recent photograph be obtained so that the natural features and hair styling of the deceased can be matched as near as possible.

An aspect of preservation that needs to be mentioned is the guarding against infection. This needs to be spoken of with due consideration of the cause and circumstances of the death – many being non-infectious. It is the duty of the Funeral Director to try and find out the cause of death and inform his/her embalmer accordingly.

The most valid reason for embalming is to delay post mortem decomposition. When one finds it impossible to avoid this issue the Funeral Director should find a comfortable form of words to explain the benefits of embalming. The use of cosmetics may need to be approached and sensitivity and common sense used but, before using, consult the family.

CHECKS PRIOR TO EMBALMING

If a client has given permission to embalm, it is important that, before embalming is commenced, the Funeral Director ensures the following checks are carried out:

- Has the doctor who was looking after the deceased during their last illness issued the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)?
- If the deceased person has been referred to the Coroner/Procurator Fiscal and a post-mortem carried out, do you have the Form I4 – Certificate of Registration of Death and Form E1 – Certificate of the Coroner/Procurator Fiscal, authorising the cremation of the deceased?
- Has an explanation been provided to the client about first offices and permission obtained?
- Does the client have any particular requirements in respect of the deceased person's presentation, e.g. hair or make-up? If this is the case, it is recommended that a recent photograph of the deceased person be requested.

PRESENTATION OF THE DECEASED PERSON

Although this manual does not provide guidance on how to prepare a coffin/casket, it is important that Funeral Directors ensure the accurate measurement of a deceased person.

Cremation and burial forms in Scotland request that Funeral Directors provide an accurate combined weight of the coffin and the deceased person.

The interior furnishing of coffins and caskets can vary according to a client's choice. In most cases a pillow is supplied which assists with the positioning of the head. The sides are generally well padded to give a look of comfort and a coverlet may be supplied. Sometimes it may be useful to use wadding, or similar, to pack under the arms to hold them in position.

Local custom tends to dictate styles that have been accepted practice for many years, for example side curtains that drape each side of the head and side sheets that stretch across the coffin and cover everything except the face.

Shrouds are rarely used today, having been superseded by specially designed gowns that can be fitted over the clothing of the deceased person, if wished. Although most manufacturers offer a range of gowns in varying colours and designs, many families prefer their loved one to be dressed in their own clothing, allowing for local regulations if cremation is intended.

Whatever gown or clothing is chosen, it must be fitted carefully to appear to be comfortably worn by the deceased person. This is by no means easy to achieve as the fitting round the collar and over the shoulders can look awkward. If the deceased is to be dressed in their own clothes, difficulty can be experienced due to the clothes provided being too large or too small.

Whatever the style of coffin or casket, and however the deceased person is dressed, on standing back the final impression for the family should be of the deceased person having been presented in a restful and natural manner.

Once the Funeral Director is satisfied with the deceased person's presentation, the exterior of the coffin should be polished and free from defects. Any coffin furniture must be that which has been selected by the client.

The coffin's fixtures, fittings, lining and head support should be attached to the coffin in line with company procedures and to supplier specifications.

The details engraved on the coffin's nameplate should be checked to ensure accuracy and that it is in a clear font.

Local custom tends to dictate styles that have been accepted practice for many years, for example side curtains that drape each side of the head and side sheets that stretch across the coffin and cover everything except the face.

Chapter 14

Liability, Entitlement Of Clients & Other Financial Considerations – Northern Ireland



PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility for the disposal of a deceased person falls upon the deceased's personal representative. A personal representative can be an Executor to a Will, if the deceased had a Will in place. A personal representative may also be the person authorised to deal with an estate where the deceased had died intestate (see later in this chapter for the definition of 'intestate').

The personal representative is entitled to recover from the deceased person's estate (if there is one), funeral expenses reasonably and properly incurred. The personal representative should consider what funds are available through the deceased person's estate to help pay the cost of the funeral arranged. They should also bear in mind any written instructions in respect of the funeral (including whether burial or cremation is requested) and whether a pre-paid/pre-arranged funeral plan is in place.

Funeral expenses have priority over other claims against a deceased person's estate, along with any legal expenses incurred in administering that estate. Reasonable funeral expenses may also include the cost of a memorial, for inheritance tax purposes.

Client Liability

Case law has established that if the Funeral Director and their client agree on the details of the funeral arrangement and the cost of that arrangement, a contractual relationship between the two exists. This enables the Funeral Director to recover fees and expenses incurred in line with that agreement.

It should be noted that it is not necessary for the client to be the deceased person's personal representative (as defined above). Equally, the personal representative is not required to agree to or authorise payment from the deceased person's estate, to meet the cost of a funeral arranged by anyone other than themselves.

SETTLEMENT OF ESTATES

Since an original Certified Copy of an Entry is required in many of the dealings in relation to the estate of a deceased person, it is good practice for the informant to the Registrar (see Chapter 10 - Registering a Death (Northern Ireland)) to obtain a list of who is qualified to act as an informant) to purchase a number of copies of the Certified Copy of an Entry for that purpose.

It is worth noting that if a solicitor is dealing with the deceased person's estate, only one copy of the Certified Copy of an Entry is required, as photocopies can be made and certified by that solicitor.

Small estates

If there is no asset in the estate that exceeds a figure of £10,000, it is possible for the personal representative of the deceased to obtain release of any assets and/or funds held by bodies such as National Savings & Investments, Banks and Building Societies without the expense or formality of applying for and producing a Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration. This is also the case if the deceased owned everything jointly with someone else and everything passes automatically to the surviving joint owner.



Probate

If the deceased has left a Will with a named Executor, the Will will need to be provided to the Probate Office. It is useful to know that two additional documents should accompany the Will. These are:

- Inheritance Tax Form. This document lists the assets (anything of value that can be converted into cash) and liabilities (any monies owed) of the deceased's estate. This will enable any inheritance tax liability to be identified.
- Photo identification for the applicant(s).

In addition, an original Certified Copy of An Entry together with the appropriate fee should be sent to the Probate Office.

The document certifying approval of the will and the details of the estate is called a 'Grant of Probate'. The document is frequently required by the personal representative dealing with, and administering, the estate of the deceased. The authority of a personal representative who has been named as the Executor to the Will, will stem from the date of death of the deceased although it may be some time for the official Grant of Probate to be issued.

More detailed information can be found here:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/applying-probate

Grant of Letters of Administration

If the deceased has died intestate (not having made a will), or has made a will but naming no surviving Executor, the personal representative will be the person to whom the Court issues a document known as 'Grant of Letters of Administration'. The person who might apply for a Grant of Letters of Administration is usually the deceased's next of kin. Grant of Letters of Administration may not be issued if the person applying was the partner of the deceased but not their husband/wife or civil partner when they died.

Unlike with a Grant of Probate, the authority of a personal representative dealing with, and administering the estate of the deceased, will stem from the date of the grant of Letters of Administration and not from the date of death of the deceased.

It is the duty of the personal representative to ensure that the funeral expenses along with any legal expenses incurred, is paid out of the proceeds of the estate.

In addition to the Will (if there is one available) and the Certified Copy of an Entry, the following documents should accompany the application:

- Inheritance Tax Form
- Photo identification of the applicant(s)
- Marriage Certificate if the deceased was married or the Decree Absolute if the deceased was divorced.

The appropriate fee should also accompany the documents listed above and all sent to the Probate Office.

More detailed information can be found here:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/applying-probate

Dying intestate, with no known heirs

Where the deceased has passed away intestate, with no known heir or next of kin, their estate is administered by the 'Bona Vacantia' arm of the Government Legal Department. Bona Vacantia means vacant goods and is the name given to ownerless property, which by law passes to the Crown. The Treasury Solicitor acts for the Crown to administer the estates of people who die intestate and without known blood relatives.

It is the duty of the Crown Solicitor to examine a funeral account before agreeing to meet it from the estate he/she is dealing with. If the amount of the account is more than can be properly and justifiably charged against the deceased's estate, any excess may well be refused.

Funeral directors should bear in mind that if there is reason to believe that a deceased person has died intestate, the estate is likely to be referred to the Crown Solicitor concerned for settlement of the funeral account.

FUNERAL EXPENSES PAYMENT

Bereaved families on qualifying benefits can apply to the Social Fund for a funeral expenses payment.

Some general guidance and information is detailed below relating to the criteria for applying for a Funeral Expenses Payment from the Social Fund, in Northern Ireland.

Eligibility

The claimant may be able to get help toward the cost of a funeral if they:

- Receive certain benefits or tax credits
- Meet the rules on their relationship with the deceased person
- Make a claim within six months of the funeral
- Meet the rules on where the funeral takes place

Qualifying Benefits or Tax Credits

The claimant must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit which includes a disability or severe disability element
- Child Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

They may also be eligible if they get Support for Mortgage Interest loan payments.

Claimant's Relationship with the deceased person

The claimant must be one of the following:

- the partner of the deceased when they died
- a close relative or close friend of the deceased
- the parent of a baby stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- the parent of the deceased child if they were under 16 (or under 20 and not in full-time education)

If the parent is 'absent', the claimant must be responsible for the child and the absent parent must get a qualifying benefit or tax credit.

If there's a close relative of the deceased who isn't getting one of the qualifying benefits, the claimant may not be able to receive a Funeral Payment.

To be eligible:

- the funeral must usually take place in the UK
- if the funeral takes place in the Republic of Ireland, the deceased must normally have lived in Northern Ireland

As a close friend or relative, you can't get a funeral payment if:

- the deceased had a partner when they died
- there is a parent, son or daughter of the deceased who has not been awarded one of the qualifying benefits or tax credits or was not estranged from the deceased - this doesn't include family members who are:
 - o aged under 18
 - o qualifying young people for the purposes of Child Benefits
 - o full-time students
 - o members of religious orders
 - o in prison or in hospital (and who had been awarded a qualifying benefit immediately before they entered prison or hospital)
 - o asylum seekers being supported by the National Asylum Support Service
 - o family members not normally resident in the UK

- there is a close relative of the deceased, other than a close relative in one of the excluded groups listed above, who was in closer contact with the deceased than you were, or had equally close contact and is not getting a qualifying benefit

The claimant must apply within six months of the funeral. They can make a claim even if they are waiting on a decision on a qualifying benefit or tax credit.

Assistance available

The following can be included in the funeral payment:

- The cost of reopening a grave and burial costs, or
- The cost of opening a new grave and burial costs (including the fee purchase of exclusive right of burial)
- In the case of cremation:
 - The cremation fee
 - The cost of the Doctors' certificates
 - The cost of removing a pacemaker or other medical device that must be removed prior to the cremation
- The cost of any documents needed for the release of the money, savings and property of the person who has died
- When it is necessary to move the body over 50 miles within the UK to the premises of the Funeral Director or place of rest, the reasonable cost of that part of the journey which is over 50 miles.
- When the journey to the funeral is over 50 miles, the cost of that part of the journey which is over 50 miles for the transport of the coffin and bearers.
- The necessary cost of a return journey for the claimant to either:
 - Arrange the funeral or
 - Attend the funeral
- Up to £700 for any other funeral expenses. This amount includes all other costs in connection with the funeral. This might include the coffin, vehicles and the Funeral Director's fees.

It should be considered that if the claimant uses the services of a third party e.g. florist who invoices the claimant direct, the government will consider reimbursement if the amount paid to the Funeral Director for other funeral expenses is less than £700.

At the time of writing, the UK government had announced plans to increase the funeral expenses payment in England and Wales. It is expected that the same changes will take place in Northern Ireland when the plans come into effect in April 2020.

Funeral Plans

During the application, the will need to know if the person who has died had:

- A pre-paid funeral plan/funeral bond or similar

They will require sight of the original plan together with any documents received from the plan provider showing the items and services that the plan provides for:

Payment will be considered towards:

- The cost of any necessary items (as detailed above) that are not covered by the plan.
- The part-cost of any necessary items (as detailed above) that are only partly covered by the plan.
- Up to £120.00 for any other funeral expenses.

Deductions from amount allowable

The following may be deducted from any amount allowed:

- The amount of any assets of the deceased available to the claimant or any other member of their family such as their partner and/or children.
- The amount of any lump sum due to the claimant or any other member of their family through any insurance policy, occupational pension scheme or burial club.
- The amount of any financial contribution from the following:
 - A charity
 - Relatives
 - Any other resource e.g. friends of the deceased/claimant

For further information, click here:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/funeral-expenses-payment

Practical Considerations

1. At an early stage of the funeral arrangements, try to ascertain whether the client intends to make a claim from the Social Fund.
2. Explain the financial limits available from the Social Fund so that discussions may take place and agreements made on how the excess owed by the client can be repaid.
3. Funeral directors are urged not to complete an invoice for exactly £700 plus disbursements unless that is the actual charge. A detailed breakdown of the costs (both funeral and third party costs) should be provided.
4. Advise the client to visit their local Jobs & Benefits office to pick up a form, or complete a downloadable application form, as soon as possible.

Application forms are available online at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/funeral-expenses-payment

5. It must be made clear to clients that if their claim fails, the whole of the funeral account will become their responsibility.
6. Payment will be made direct to the Funeral Director if the account has yet to be paid. If the Funeral Director's account has been paid, payment will be issued direct to the client.

Some Funeral Directors may feel comfortable in sitting down and helping the client complete the form.

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Apart from assistance with the payment of funeral expenses, it may also be possible for the client to apply for a Bereavement Support Payment.

More detailed information can be found here:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/bereavement-support-payment

Some general information is as follows:

Bereavement Support Payment

A claimant may be eligible to receive a Bereavement Support Payment. The claimant will receive a larger first payment followed by up to 18 monthly payments. The amount received will depend on the claimant's circumstances. Payments are made directly into the claimant's bank or building society account.

In order to be eligible for the Bereavement Support Payment, the claimant's husband, wife or civil partner died on or after 6 April 2017 and if they:

- paid National Insurance contributions for at least 25 weeks
- died because of an accident at work or a disease caused by work

The claimant, when their husband, wife or civil partner died must have been:

- under State Pension age
- living in the UK or a country that pays bereavement benefits.

The claimant must make a claim within 3 months of the death to get the full amount. However, a claim is allowed up to 21 months after the death but the payments received will be less.

The claimant will not be eligible to make a claim if they are in prison.

NB: The Bereavement Support Allowance replaces the Bereavement Payment, Bereavement Allowance, Widowed Parent Allowance.

CLIENTS WITH LIMITED FUNDS

If a client is unable to secure a Funeral Expenses Payment and has no other means of covering funeral costs, Funeral Directors may wish suggest these alternative options to them.

Local Health Authority (NHS)

If a person dies in hospital, the hospital administrator will arrange and pay for a very simple burial or cremation. This is usually done by way of asking local Funeral Directors to the Health Authority to tender to carry out this service for an agreed fee. This type of contract is usual where there are no relatives able to take responsibility for the arrangement/payment of a funeral.

Any money from the deceased's estate may be used to pay for the funeral.

This arrangement can include stillborn babies.

Local Authority

Local authorities have a duty to arrange for the burial or cremation of a person that has died (or been found dead) within their area

However, they will firstly satisfy themselves that there is no other person available or willing to arrange the funeral themselves.

The Local Authority should not arrange for the cremation of a deceased person where they have any reason to believe that cremation would be contrary to the wishes of the deceased.

As with a Local Health Authority (NHS) funeral, the Local Authority may ask local Funeral Directors to tender for this service and any money from the deceased person's estate may be used to pay for the funeral.

War Pensions

On the death of a war pensioner, the family may be able to claim the cost of a simple funeral from the government.

Please visit:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/war-pension-scheme/war-pension-scheme-what-you-need-to-know to find out more.

Employer Pension Schemes

Some employers provide occupational pension schemes that include life insurance cover. This means that a lump sum is paid upon the death of the insured to help with the funeral costs.

Trades Union

Some Trades Union are able to make grants upon the death of a member under certain circumstances.

Provident Associations, Friendly Societies, Clubs, Charities and Other Associations

There are some clubs and associations that are able to make grants upon the death of a member or their dependents under certain circumstances.

Crowd Funding/Family & Friends/Donations

Crowd funding (typically advertised through social media) is the practice of asking many people to contribute possibly small amounts of money.

Family and friends of the deceased person and/or client may contribute toward the cost of the funeral.

Donations given to the family or collected by the Funeral Director may also be used to help pay for the funeral.

It should be noted that any monies collected through these methods may be deducted from any amount awarded by the DWP, should the client be making a claim for financial assistance.

PRE-ARRANGEMENT/PRE-PAYMENT OF FUNERALS

Pre-arranging a funeral, or simply setting out wishes in relation to a funeral, is undertaken by some people to assist surviving relatives or their named executor after their death has occurred. This enables major decisions involved in arranging a funeral to be made in an atmosphere less charged with emotion than when death takes place.

Pre-arranging for a funeral does not necessarily include the pre-payment of those arrangements.

My Funeral Wishes

A number of organisations and funeral firms offer leaflets to assist people in setting out their funeral wishes.

Since 2013, the NAFD, in conjunction with Dying Matters, has operated 'My Funeral Wishes, a simple leaflet which encourages people to talk to their loved ones about their final wishes and record them, however informally, as a record for the future.

To find out more and download a copy of My Funeral Wishes please click [here](#).

Pre-paid funeral plans

A funeral plan is an arrangement that allows a customer to pay in advance for theirs or another persons' funeral. The plan is a contractual arrangement with a provider, who assuming the plan has been paid for, is then responsible for paying for those elements of the funeral that are covered by the plan.

Pre-paid funeral plans allow consumers to choose and agree the arrangements for the sort of funeral they wish to have, in advance. They also enable consumers to fix the cost of some elements of the funeral, and protect them from the future inflation of funeral-related costs.

There are a number of benefits to someone wishing to either pre-arrange or pre-pay for their funeral. Some examples might be:

- 1.They wish to make a record of their final wishes.
- 2.They wish to reduce any financial burden on those left behind.
- 3.They wish to fix the costs of the their funeral (whether all or only some costs are fully covered depends on the individual pre-paid funeral plan).
- 4.There is often a choice for the client to pay in full or by instalments.
- 5.Whether pre-arranging or pre-paying, a client will be accepted regardless of health or age.

There are two main investment models underpinning funeral plans: trust funds and insurance policies. Plan providers have different terms and conditions in respect of the management and administrative charges they levy in respect of their plans – and there are a variety of plans available, including those which guarantee to cover all of the costs of the funeral and others which make a contribution towards them.

Your business may may sell or accept plans offered by other providers, accept plans sold by third party agents, or operate its own funeral plan.

Regulation of funeral plans

At present, the pre-paid funeral plan market is not regulated by government, although this is set to change.

Currently, the [Funeral Planning Authority](#) (FPA), an organisation set up by the industry to regulate providers in the UK pre-paid funeral plan industry, aims to ensure that its registered providers are operating in a manner that will result in customers getting the funeral they have paid for when it is needed. All registered providers abide by a set of Rules and a Code of Practice, which exceed statutory requirements. Registration with the FPS is not mandatory.

The FPA also helps customers who have a complaint about a plan, or a provider, by attempting to resolve matters with the provider. If resolution is not possible it offers access to an independent dispute resolution process.

At the time of writing (July 2019), HM Treasury is consulting on proposals to bring the regulation of the sale of funeral plans under the responsibility of the Financial Conduct Authority. At the same time, the Competition and Markets Authority is reviewing funerals paid for by a funeral plan in its market investigation of the funeral sector.

Until such time as the current regulatory scheme changes, the NAFD recommends that its members only work with plan providers that are registered with the Funeral Planning Authority

Choosing a plan provider to work with

There are a number of national, regional and local pre-paid funeral plan schemes providing a service to Funeral Directors.

Some of the benefits of using an existing scheme might be:

1. It saves the cost of setting up a scheme and the challenges of administering it properly.
2. The plan provider may already be registered with the Funeral Planning Authority and/or the Financial Conduct Authority.
3. You will receive assistance with training any staff members that will be involved in the sale of funeral plans.
4. You will be provided with promotional literature and other marketing tools.
5. It can assist your business in acquiring a ready-made list of future clients.

However, it is also important to consider the potential disadvantages too:

1. You may be required to conduct funerals at a price much lower than your normal price to a private client.
2. There may be restrictions placed upon you in terms of how many schemes you are able to offer.
3. You may find yourself tied to multiple Codes of Practice with different rules and disciplinary procedures.
4. You may find yourself subsidising and promoting a potential or actual competitor.
5. You may only find out that a funeral plan has been allocated to you after the plan holder dies and the family need to arrange the funeral.

It is recommended that Funeral Directors confirm with any plan provider they work how they will be informed about plans sold with their name against them, and any other terms and conditions under which the plan will be sold.

Advising a consumer on the purchase of a funeral plan

A funeral plan is a financial product. When meeting with clients who wish to pre-arrange or pre-pay their funeral, you should ensure you are fully conversant with any policies your business has in relation to funeral plans – particularly which plan providers your business has agreed to work with, the procedures for selling funeral plans to clients and which plan providers you accept funeral plans from.

Your plan provider will provide you with specific guidance on how plans are to be sold, including the process to be followed, the information to be provided and how the details of the arrangement or plan are to be recorded.

However, in terms of general guidance, your firm should treat the sale of a funeral plan in the same way it does the arrangement of a funeral:

- The person selling the funeral plan should be well informed and well trained.
- Clients should be provided with clear, comprehensive and transparent information about the plan and its prices.
- The client should be presented with all terms and conditions, and any limitations of the cover should be explained clearly to them.
- You should answer any questions the client may have and encourage them to involve their next of kin in the decisions they make.
- You should ensure the client is given enough time to adequately consider the choices they are making and the associated cost.
- The storing and recording of pre-paid funeral plan information should comply with GDPR regulations relating to the protection of data.

Until regulation of the funeral plan market changes, the NAFD continues to recommend that its members only work with and recommend plan providers that are registered with the Funeral Planning Authority.

Offering guidance to consumers

Funeral plans come in different shapes and sizes, just like all financial products and it's important that consumers choose one that's right for them.

The NAFD offers their members guidance that can be given to a consumer when considering buying a funeral plan. This may be of assistance to members when guiding clients and can be found on the NAFD's website – www.nafd.org.uk

Chapter 15

Coroner Procedures – Northern Ireland



THE WORK OF THE CORONER

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer who investigates sudden, unexpected, suspicious or unnatural deaths occurring anywhere in Northern Ireland. Authority for the Coroner to investigate deaths in Northern Ireland derives from the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 and the Coroners' (Practice and Procedure) Rules (Northern Ireland) 1963. There have been numerous amendments over the years.

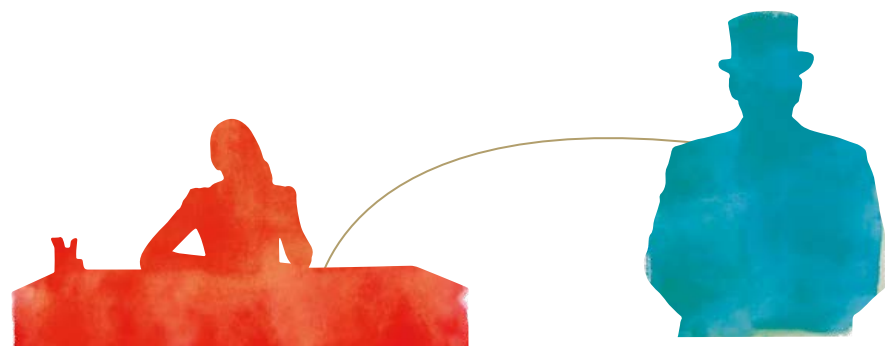
The Coronial Service in Northern Ireland is headed by a High Court Judge with the Coroners being qualified and experienced barristers or solicitors who are bound to excuse themselves from cases where they may have drawn up a Will for the person concerned. Coroners shall not act as solicitor or barrister in proceedings arising out of any matter which may have come before them as Coroner.

REPORTING OF DEATHS

The statutory duty to report deaths to the Coroner in Northern Ireland is wide. It falls upon:

- police officers
- doctors
- Funeral Directors
- owners of residential homes

Although not under a legal obligation to do so, mortuary staff are also expected to notify the Coroner of cases which they believe should be investigated. Registrars may also report deaths. Family members and members of the public may contact the Coroner if they have concerns about a death.



The duty to report arises if a medical practitioner has reason to believe that the deceased person (to include a foetal demise in utero, beyond the legal limit for viability (24 weeks) and considered to be 'then capable of being born alive') died directly or indirectly,

- as a result of violence, misadventure or by unfair means;
- as a result of negligence, misconduct or malpractice (e.g. where a medical mishap is alleged);
- from any cause other than natural illness or disease, for example;
 - o homicidal deaths or deaths following assault;
 - o road traffic accidents or work-related accidents;
 - o injury, direct or indirect (including birth injury);
 - o deaths associated with the misuse of drugs (whether accidental or deliberate);
 - o any apparently suicidal death; or
 - o all deaths from industrial or occupational disease e.g. asbestosis.
- from natural illness or disease if the deceased person had not been seen and treated for it by a registered medical practitioner within 28 days prior to death; or
- in other circumstances that may require investigation; for example,
 - o the death, although apparently natural, was unexpected;
 - o Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI);
 - o as the result of an operation, following a procedure or where a person has had an accident or adverse incident in the hospital environment;
 - o as the result of the administration of an anaesthetic, e.g. hypoxia, circulatory failure, drug reaction, (there is no statutory requirement to report a death occurring within 24 hours of an operation – though it may be prudent to do so).

Doctors should also consider the Extra-statutory list of causes of death that are referable to the Coroner. If in doubt, seek advice from the Coroner's Office.

1. Industrial diseases or poisoning and other poisonings

- A. Industrial lung diseases e.g. asbestosis, pneumoconiosis, extrinsic allergic alveolitis.
- B. Other industrial diseases e.g. mesothelioma, leptospirosis.
- C. Industrial poisoning e.g. heavy metal, chemicals.
- D. Other poisonings e.g. Food poisoning, Tetanus.

2. Death resulting from an injury

- A. Injury e.g. Asphyxia, Drowning, Intracranial Haemorrhage.
- B. Indirect injury e.g. pneumonia following a fractured femur.
- C. Birth injury.
- D. Operation / Anaesthetic.

The statutory duty on Police is slightly different. If the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) attend a scene they act as the Coroner's agent for reporting the death. They take possession of the body and must gather and report evidence. The 1959 Act requires that if a death occurs which is unexpected, unexplained or suspicious, or if a body is found, the Superintendent for the District concerned must immediately notify the Coroner for that District in writing.

Deaths in prison or custody should also be reported.

For Funeral Directors, embalmers and care home managers a death should be reported where there is suspicion that death is due to:

- violence;
- misadventure;
- unfair means;
- negligence;
- misconduct;
- malpractice; or
- natural illness or disease if not seen and treated for it by a doctor within 28 days prior to death.

In the case of care home managers, the duty would fall to them only if a doctor or police officer had not already taken on the responsibility. Funeral Directors and embalmers are encouraged not to assume that a doctor or police officer will spot everything which may require reporting.

Further guidance on matter relating to the coroner can be found at the Department of Health website:

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidelines-matters-relating-coroner

REMOVAL OF BODIES FOR THE CORONER

Where a death is reported to the Coroner, the Coroner immediately has custody of that body and nothing should be done to it without the Coroner's consent. This extends to not undressing the body.

Where the case is not suspicious and the police officer feels that once the GP is contacted, he or she may be able to issue either a pro-forma letter (PFL) or a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. There is discretion for the attending police officer to permit removal to a local mortuary, or a Funeral Director's premises if he/she has suitable storage facilities. The principle of non-interference with the remains should be observed. Family may ask for their own Funeral Director to do this or, if one is not nominated, the Coroner's contracted Funeral Director may affect the removal. The contracted Funeral Director will also affect onward carriage of the remains if so required for a post-mortem examination.

In other cases, the body will be removed to the Northern Ireland Regional Forensic Mortuary which is located adjacent to the Royal Victoria Hospital Mortuary in Belfast by the Coroner's contracted Funeral Director.

Should police permit a Funeral Director to take the body into their care pending GP contact, on behalf of the Coroner's Service, they are entitled to remuneration at the rate prescribed by the service. This remuneration includes the first 20 miles of the journey from the scene of death to either their premises or the closest mortuary. This removal does not usually attract waiting time as the body should be ready for removal when they are tasked. Reasonable costs for remuneration for the cost of a body bag will be met.

The Funeral Director arranging the funeral may also recover the cost of subsequent collection from the Northern Ireland Regional Forensic Mortuary either to their premises or the family home again at the prescribed rate. As before, this remuneration includes the first 20 miles of the journey. There should be no waiting time as the mortuary staff will contact the Funeral Director once the body is ready for collection and the body will be released in a body bag.

ACTION BY CORONER

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death / Coroner's Proforma Letter

It may be that the bar to a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death being issued is simply that the deceased person had not been seen by a doctor within 28 days. Nevertheless, a doctor would have been treating the person for the condition from which they died.

Where a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death cannot be issued, the Coroner may use the Pro-Forma system. This is used where:

- the death is due to natural causes but not causes for which the deceased person was seen and treated in the last 28 days;
- death is not due to natural causes but the cause is not suspicious; or
- death is not due to natural causes but the cause had already been diagnosed, such as an earlier fall at home.

The deceased person's GP completes the pro-forma, stating over what period they had the person as their patient, any pre-existing medical condition, the circumstances of the death and what the GP believes the cause of death to be. There is further guidance for medical practitioners on completing a clinical summary for the Coroner on the Department of Health website: www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidelines-matters-relating-coroner

This document is sent to the Coroner. Being satisfied, the Coroner then issues Form 14 to the registrar, allowing the death to be registered.

Copies of the pro-forma are kept in surgeries. Where one is not available the GP may complete a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death but not sign it. That certificate is then sent to the Coroner's office accompanied by a letter setting out the circumstances and the background to the cause of death given.

The Coroner will issue either Form 19 for burial, or Form 20 for cremation on request.

POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION

Where a death is referred for a post-mortem examination, a Coroner's Liaison Officer (CLO) is assigned to the family. The family will be asked to make formal identification of the body. Prior to the post-mortem the GP is required to provide for the pathologist a clinical summary outlining the deceased person's medical history. The next of kin and other interested parties may be represented at the post-mortem, but this would always be by a doctor. They may not attend in person.

The post-mortem will be carried out at the Regional Forensic Mortuary in Belfast for adult deaths. For children's deaths, these normally take place at the Royal Victoria Hospital mortuary. However, currently (correct as of May 2019) all hospital requested children's post mortems from any Northern Ireland Hospital are undertaken by the regional Paediatric Pathology Department based at Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool, under contract with Department of Health through the Belfast Trust. If this changes we will update the Manual and advise members in Northern Ireland.

On completion of the post mortem, the pathologist provides the Coroner with a preliminary cause of death. Providing positive identification has been made and there are no issues or challenges as to who is next of kin and no possibility of a defence post-mortem being required in murder cases, the body may then be released for a funeral to take place.

Once the Coroner receives the written post mortem report, provided there is no need for an inquest the Coroner issues Form 17 to the registrar enabling the family to register the death.

Where organs or tissue have been retained the family have the option to have these returned via a Funeral Director at the family's expense, disposed of by the pathologist or retained as part of the permanent medical record, with or without permission for research and teaching purposes.

The post mortem having taken place the Coroner will issue either Form 19 for burial, or Form 20 for cremation.

INQUEST

The purpose of an inquest in Northern Ireland is to determine:

- who the deceased person was;
- how the deceased person died;
- when the deceased person died;
- where the deceased person died; and
- details required for registration.

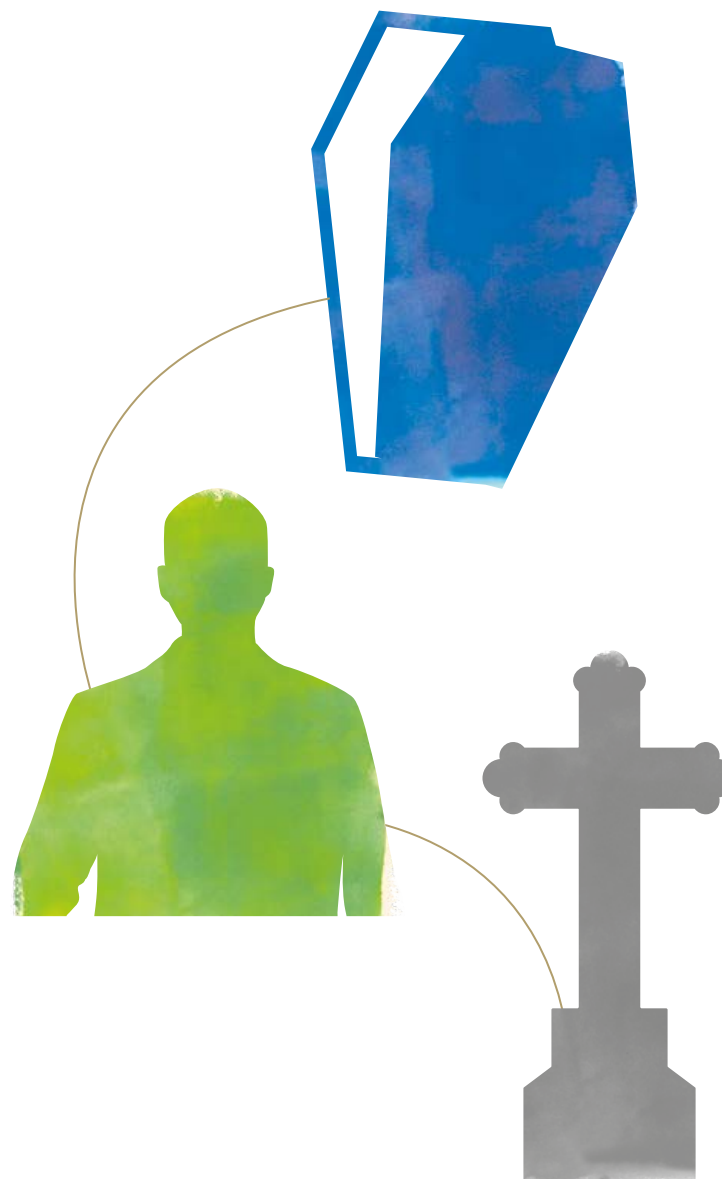
An inquest is heard before a jury if the death was in prison, has health and safety implications, involved a breach of health and safety regulations or if the Coroner deems it necessary for another reason.

Results are given as findings and will record the facts in broad terms. The Coroner may issue separately a report to an authority who could take action to prevent deaths in similar circumstances. It is not the role of the Coroner to apportion blame in an event.

Following the inquest, the Coroner issues, within five days, Form 21 to the Registrar, setting out the particulars of the deceased person and the cause of death and such other findings as may be recorded. No informant is required for registration.

Where an inquest is to be held the death may not be registered until that inquest is completed. In such cases the Coroner will already have issued Form 21A Certificate of Evidence of Death, to assist administration of the estate at the time of the post mortem examination.

For more information on the work of Coroners in Northern Ireland, please click [here](#).



Chapter 16

Burial – Northern Ireland



GENERAL

When a family decides that the chosen means of disposal is to be burial the Funeral Director is likely to encounter a wide variance both in paperwork and practice.

Broadly speaking, burials are carried out in the following locations;

- municipal (council) cemeteries
- churchyards (of various denominations)
- private cemeteries
- private land, such as gardens or farms
- at sea (see Chapter 24 - Burial at Sea (Northern Ireland))

Woodland burials, although the subject of separate guidance, are likely to be either private burial grounds or separate sections of municipal cemeteries. What is permitted in and provided by woodland burial sites varies greatly.

For all land burials, a risk assessment must be carried out prior to the burial taking place. This should include:

- establishing that there is safe access to the grave;
- the mode of moving the coffin to the grave and how this might be achieved safely;
- checking that the prepared grave has been dug in line with the known dimensions of the coffin / casket;
- the grave has been prepared appropriately, for example, that it is shored, webbing has been made available and grass mats/grave linings in place (individual burial grounds will have their own procedures regarding a grave's preparation); and
- whether the grave has been prepared in the correct location.
- the depth of the grave is suitable to the number of interments requested.

LEGISLATION

The Burial Ground Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 set out comprehensive rules for the management and administration of municipal cemeteries in Northern Ireland. These regulations follow the Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878, which empowered authorities to issue rights of burial, terms of which are set out in the 1992 regulations.

The 1878 Act has a number of provisions, including for:

- facilitating the conveyance and storage of bodies;
- making regulations for their burial grounds;
- exemption of corteges from tolls;
- laying out burial grounds;
- providing denominational sections;
- setting fees (which should be published); and
- the appointment of necessary staff.

The 1992 Regulations both enable and require councils to do certain things in relation to burial grounds under their control, including the granting of Exclusive Rights of Burial.

A council should:

- maintain the cemetery in good order;
- maintain maps showing individual grave spaces;
- keep a register of burials (this provision allows such registers to be electronic and sets out in detail how both hard and electronic registers shall record details of burials, even specifying the colour of ink to be used) and exhumations;
- allow inspection of its registers at no charge and provide copies of entries; and
- store its records safely.

A council may:

- remove unauthorized or dilapidated memorials, subject to conditions;
- recover the cost of such removal;
- reposition memorials and level graves;
- take on the maintenance of graves; and
- permit non-religious services in denominational sections of cemeteries, or services of another religion or denomination.

Detailed conditions are set out in Schedule 1.1 by which burial may take place.

This section is quoted in full below:

1. A person shall not, without the permission of the council, cause or permit-

- a) a burial to take place
- b) cremated human remains to be scattered
- c) a memorial to be erected or placed in a burial ground; or
- d) an additional inscription to be made on a memorial.

2. Subject to paragraph 3, a person shall not cause or permit-

- a) a burial to take place in a burial ground; or
- b) a body to be admitted to any place of reception of bodies previous to interment, unless the body is enclosed in a coffin of -wood or other sufficiently strong material.

3. (1) A council may permit uncoffined burials only in an area of a burial ground designated by the council exclusively for that purpose.

(2) Where the council permits uncoffined burials, any reference in the following provisions of this Part to a coffin includes a reference to the wrappings of an uncoffined body.

4. A person shall not cause or permit to be buried-

- a) a person over 12 years of age, in a grave space less than 2.7 metres long by 1.2 metres wide, and
- b) a child of 12 years of age or under, in a grave space less than 1.8 metres long by 90 centimetres wide.

5. (1) Subject to paragraph (2), a person shall not cause or permit a body to be buried in a grave in such a manner that any part of the coffin is less than 1 metre below the level of any ground adjoining the grave.

(2) A council may, where it considers the soil to be of suitable character; permit a coffin to be placed not less than 70 centimetres below the level of any ground adjoining the grave.

6. A person shall not cause or permit a body to be buried in a grave unless the coffin is effectively separated by means of a layer of earth not less than 15 centimetres thick from any coffin previously interred in the grave.

7. When a grave is re-opened for the purpose of making another burial in it, a person shall not disturb any human remains interred in it or remove from it any soil which is offensive.

8. A person shall cause or permit every walled grave or vault to be properly constructed of brick, slate or concrete or other suitable materials.

9. Within 24 hours of any burial in a walled grave or vault, a person shall cause or permit the coffin to be-

- a) embedded in concrete, and covered with a layer of concrete not less than 15 centimetres thick; or
- b) enclosed in a separate cell or compartment of brick, slate, stone flagging or precast concrete slabs of a 1:2:4 mix (cement: sand: aggregate), in any case not less than 5 centimetres thick, in such a manner as to prevent, as far as may be practicable, the escape of any noxious gas from the interior of the cell or compartment.

10. A person who causes or permits a body to be buried in a grave in respect of which an exclusive right of burial has been granted shall, as soon as convenient after the subsidence of the earth has been completed, cause the surface of the grave to be covered with a memorial in respect of which a right has been granted by the council or any of its predecessors, or with fresh turf, or, where the council permits, with flowering plants, or other suitable material.

11. In this Part, "walled grave" means a grave the sides of which are lined with walls

It is worth noting here that Section 4 specifies the dimension of grave required.

Additional legislation around burials comes from the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. Under article 30, instruction is given that any person who has control over or effects interments at a burial ground, and allows the burial to take place without sight of Form GRO21 – Authorisation to Bury or Cremate, must, within 7 days of the interment, give notice to the Registrar in the sub-district which the death occurred or in which the body was found, that a burial has in fact been carried out. (See also GRO Form 27 in the Registering a Death chapter - also Regulation 29 of the Civil Registration Regulations (NI) 2012)

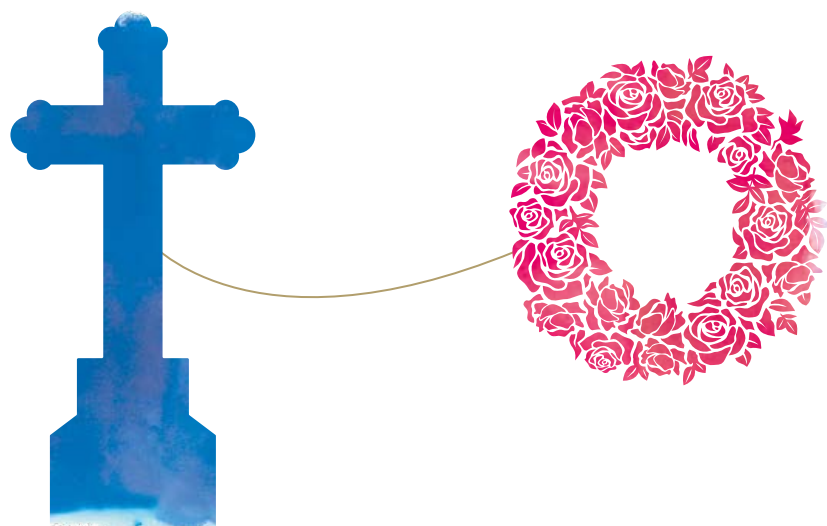
EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL

There is provision in the legislation for the issuing of Exclusive Rights of Burial to a grave. Such rights provide for action and entitlement in both directions.

At its simplest, the grant provides that the owner, and only the owner, may carry out certain actions in respect of the grave, such as instructing that it be opened for burial, or that a memorial be erected. The council in turn must cooperate with the owner and not act on the instruction of another party (unless the owner is deceased).

It is worth noting, and worth Funeral Directors drawing to their clients' attention, that granting of the right does not convey ownership of the land. Councils are entitled to prescribe such matters as what type of memorial may be erected; one of the most common areas of challenge.

It is also worth noting that not all councils issue Exclusive Rights of Burial. Where one does exist, it makes the matter of who may instruct the Funeral Director with a burial in an existing grave very much more simple. Where one does not exist, the Funeral Director, and the council for the cemetery concerned, proceed on the basis of good faith. Both should ask: is this a right and proper person to order the burial?



Exclusive Rights of Burial may be in perpetuity or time-limited. Full details must be kept in a register by the issuing authority. They may be transferred to another party either by notice in writing or by bequeathal in a Will. Such transfer must be recorded by the issuing authority.

No interment may take place without the written consent of the grantee, save for the interment of a person named in the right or an endorsement to it.

A memorial may be erected by such person as satisfies the issuing authority that they are, or are acting on behalf of, the person buried in the grave and cannot trace the owner of the grant.

Where a grave is in a denominational section, interment or scattering of cremated remains may be declined by the council at the request of that denomination.

It is clear that the Funeral Director, particularly when re-opening a grave, must know who is the owner of the right, if one has been issued. It is also worth the Funeral Director considering and discussing with the family who should be the owner of the right when one is purchased for the first time.

Where a spouse or partner is to be buried the only way the surviving spouse or partner can ensure their own burial in that grave and that their right to erect a monument may be exercised is by having the grant in their name, rather than that of another party.

Notwithstanding the provision for rights to be bequeathed in a Will, those wishing to assume the right should expect to do so formally by such mechanism as the issuing authority prescribes. Such mechanisms for transfer can vary significantly.

Some areas permit and others require that more than one person is named as owner of an Exclusive Right.


FEES

Within the legislation there is discretion to set fees. The Funeral Director can expect significant variance not only in the fees themselves but in the things which may attract a fee. For example in some areas the first interment and the purchase of the exclusive right may be a composite fee.

In some there might be both an interment fee and a digging fee (possibly to a third party, where the cemetery concerned does not have its own grave diggers). In some areas, the fee for an additional inscription is implied in the granting of the first inscription. These are all areas which depend either on local knowledge or investigation.

Fees might be levied for such diverse items as:

- purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial (possibly varying according to type, or for adult or child)
- interment
- gravedigging
- use of chapel
- provision of bier, matting or other accessories
- duplicate deeds
- transfer of deed
- memorial permits, both initial and additional
- removal of memorials
- register searches
- plot selection
- purchase of vaults or mausolea



The Funeral Director
can expect significant
variance not only in
the fees themselves
but in the things which
may attract a fee.

GRAVE TYPES

The following grave types might be encountered:

Lawn Graves

Where the space in front of any memorial is laid to lawn. This provides ease of maintenance from the cemetery or church's point of view. Memorials may be inset to the ground rather than being a headstone. In the example (below) memorials are erected and bodies buried head to head, rather than in the traditional east-facing orientation. Sometimes (again as in this picture) the memorials are on a concrete platform extending the length of the cemetery section. This removes the need both for earth settlement prior to installation and for removal of the memorial prior to re-opening.



Traditional graves

Here a kerbset or coverstone is permitted, covering the whole area of the grave.



Bricked graves

Here the grave is dug and the interior bricked then capped. In some cases a pre-cast trough may be used. This is sometimes the case when burial is required quickly, such as for Muslim burials.

Where the grave is to be bricked, consideration should be given to the timing of the ceremony in order to carry out the bricklaying. Some cemeteries have appointed bricklayers, but the Funeral Director may need to engage this service directly.



Mausolea

An above ground chamber. In this example, individual chambers may be purchased. Upon use the particular aperture is bricked up and a tablet placed in front of it.



The example below has both above and below ground chambers in a single construction. Upon use of the lower chamber slabs and cement close over the interment. A coverstone of matching material then closes the upper chamber.



Vaults

Here a memorial building sits above burial space below ground. Typically these are family-owned with individual niches or shelves for coffins.



Woodland graves

Woodland graves can vary significantly. In this example, graves are prepared around trees in existing woodland and simple wooden markers provided. At other sites, a grave is prepared and a tree planted on it. The family may have the choice of tree planted.

In some areas, such as the example below, no planting or memorialisation of any type takes place and the land remains a meadow. The cemetery authority will maintain a grid identifying the precise location of individual graves.



Unpurchased/Common Graves

This type of grave is not available in all cemeteries but some areas may provide the applicant with the choice of whether or not to purchase the grave. When unpurchased, the only fee payable is the cost of the interment. If an unpurchased grave is requested, the following must be made clear to the client:

- other deceased persons may already be buried in the grave;
- those other deceased persons may not be members of their family;
- no guarantee can be provided that room will be left in the grave for another member of the family to be interred at a later time;
- no form of memorial can be placed on the grave; and
- the person responsible for the interment will normally be requested to sign the appropriate section on the interment form acknowledging they are aware of these criteria

MEMORIALS

- It is extremely important, when arranging a burial, that the Funeral Director discusses with the family their intentions for a memorial before a burial location is chosen.
- It can be a cause of great distress if the question is not asked until after the burial has taken place and the family subsequently discover that the memorial desired is not permitted in the location of the grave.
- Cemetery authorities usually publish details of any memorial restrictions and Funeral Directors are urged to become familiar with the requirements at all cemeteries in their local area.

PAPERWORK

As there are no statutory requirements, the required paperwork for burials may also vary greatly

Some cemeteries, typically those in larger towns and cities, supply their own forms and require these to be used. Others rely on the Funeral Director to provide suitable paperwork. Others are more relaxed even than that. Where no paperwork is required, it is recommended nevertheless that the Funeral Director uses and submits, whether in hard copy or electronically, an in-house form so that a paper trail exists and future parties may know the instructions given. The minimum statutory form required to affect the burial is the authorisation to proceed with a burial issued by the District Registrar when the death is formally registered (Form GRO 21) or the Coroner's Certificate (Order) to authorise disposal by burial.

A typical set of cemetery forms, where these are formally issued, might include:

- Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial/Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial
- Preliminary notice of interment
- Notice of Interment – including coffin dimensions and combined weight of deceased and coffin
- Declaration of Loss of Deed
- Indemnity form (where the Council relies on your word that the applicant is legitimate)
- Deed transfer form
- Digging ticket (to gravedigger)
- Memorial permit application
- Common Grave waiver (to acknowledge the limitations on use of a common grave)
- Denominational or Faith Allegiance declaration (attesting that the decedent was a member of the faith or denomination for which that section of the cemetery is provided)



CHURCHES

A number of denominations have burial grounds. The constitution of non-established churches makes it difficult to give comprehensive guidance on governance and procedures, but some general guidance follows.

Church of Ireland

Churchyards of the Church of Ireland are owned by the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland. Jurisdiction locally is down to the Select Vestry of the individual church concerned. It is they who set fees and regulations for their own burial grounds, within the terms of Chapter 12 of the Church of Ireland Constitution.

In common with other churches, no Rights of Burial to graves are issued. The right to be buried in the churchyard must be understood in the light of the disestablishment of the Church in 1869 (effective from 1 January 1870). Where a Right of Burial existed in a churchyard prior to this date it would be honoured. This might extend to non-members of the Church of Ireland.

Where a churchyard was consecrated after 1 January 1870, the right to burial therein is confined to members of the church that the churchyard serves. An incumbent may exercise some local discretion, where a case to permit burial is made.

Fees for interment are paid to the officiating minister and churchwardens. The Select Vestry may appoint a grave digger who should be paid separately.

Approval of memorials rests with the incumbent and churchwardens, according to regulations set by the Select Vestry for the church.

If anyone should have an objection to a locally-made decision in respect of the burial ground there is a right of appeal to the Diocesan Court and thence to the General Synod.

Approach for a burial should be made in the first instance to the incumbent or, in the incumbent's absence, to the churchwardens.

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

There is no central administration or ownership of churchyards in the Presbyterian Church. Each congregation owns and administers its own churchyard, setting fees and regulations as they see fit. Fees are paid to the church and normally used for the upkeep of the churchyard.

Under the Presbyterian Church's constitution, responsibility for the churchyard will rest with the local church's Congregational Committee, of which the minister will usually be the chair. It should be noted that, although acting as chair and being the minister, decision-making does not rest with the minister - but with the committee as a whole. Generally Congregational Committees publish rules for their individual graveyards.

The rules may define right to burial in a Presbyterian churchyard under categories such as:

- communicant members of the church;
- those with a recognised association with the church, even if not communicant members; or
- other persons at the discretion of the Congregational Committee.

Other criteria may also be set.

In some Presbyterian congregations, rights of burial may be purchased. This may be in advance but some Congregational Committees may restrict purchase to the time of need. Whether a document is issued will depend on local practice. It may be that instead a record is kept in a register.

Correspondence with the committee should be through the honorary secretary or Churchyard Convenor but, at short notice, for instance where burial is required, approach may be made to the Minister - or Churchyard Convenor - remembering that it is the Committee that is the decision-making body. Where a memorial is requested, application should be made through the honorary secretary, for approval by the committee.

The Roman Catholic Church

Roman Catholic churchyards are usually owned by the local Diocese. An exception would be those forming part of a religious order or congregation, which would be owned by the order or congregation concerned. Discretion to approve burial rests with the parish priest. Where the request is to bury the non-Catholic spouse of a Catholic, this is likely to be given.

Fees for burial and memorial work are locally set and paid over to the parish concerned. Approach for either burial or memorial work should in the first instance be made to the parish priest or to the administrator of a cemetery if one is appointed.

Regulations governing the churchyard are also set locally, although the Diocese may issue broader guidelines.

The Methodist Church

Methodist Churches are governed by their individual Church Councils (or possibly the Circuit Meeting if the church itself is closed), which will make decisions on what is permitted in their area. The Council serves both as managing trustee for the property and charity trustee for the charity. The land itself will most probably be owned by The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, on behalf of the local trustees.

The local Church Council will decide on entitlement to burial, fees payable and the types of memorial permitted. Permission to erect a memorial is sought from the Church Council. Provision exists for the trustees to sell Exclusive Rights of Burial.

There is no universal process for booking a burial, but it is recommended that contact is first made with the local Methodist minister.



MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR A BURIAL

New graves

The Funeral Director should establish the proposed location for the burial. Qualifying criteria for churchyard burial should be addressed, as should residency in the area served by a cemetery, as penalty (out of area) fees often apply for non-residents.

Where a grave is being purchased the Funeral Director should establish in whose name the grant should be issued.

If the client wishes to select a plot (where this is permitted) the Funeral Director should broker a meeting between the client and the cemetery staff and ask to be informed of the plot selected, so this can be recorded and entered on the Notice of Interment.

The required depth of the grave should be established. There is no consistency around the country on the maximum depth allowed. Some cemeteries allow triple depth graves, some double and some only single (the latter restriction may be dictated by ground conditions).

If a cemetery, the Funeral Director should establish whether the council engages a gravedigger or whether the Funeral Director should do this. If a churchyard, the Funeral Director should establish if there is a preferred gravedigger. If so, there is much to be said for engaging that person as he or she will be familiar with the terrain. If the Funeral Director engages the gravedigger, a written confirmation should be issued containing, as a minimum, the following information:

- name and address of the deceased person
- date of burial
- location of burial (incl. grave number if known)
- time of burial
- time and location of preceding ceremony (if any)
- name and contact details for burial authority
- coffin size and shape (with handles extended if applicable)
- depth required

The Funeral Director should always ask for the location of a new grave to be marked, prior to digging by the burial authority concerned. It should never be assumed that the gravedigger will simply prepare the next plot along.

Initial booking is often made by telephone to the relevant authority, although online systems may be in use in larger cemeteries. A Notice of Interment and purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial should be issued, along with the GRO21 - Authorisation to Bury or Cremate. Different guidelines on timing are in use but delivery of papers a minimum of 48hrs prior to burial is a good rule of thumb.

If the cemetery provides its own Notice of Interment and purchase forms these should be used. If no forms are supplied the Funeral Director should issue his or her own in-house form.

At minimum this should include the following detail:

- name of deceased;
- date of death;
- age at death;
- date of funeral;
- time of interment;
- name of officiant;
- grave number if known;
- coffin size and weight (with handles extended if applicable);
- depth of grave;
- present owner of Exclusive Right (if applicable); and
- to whom the Exclusive Right should be issued (if applicable).

In some areas it is still the case that no signature from a client is required on a Notice of Interment. Good practice suggests that the form should be signed by the client. It should not be signed for the client by the Funeral Director.

A grave marker should always be left after the burial, if the burial ground permits it.

RE-OPENED GRAVES

As indicated by the section on exclusive rights it is important to establish who, if anyone, is owner of the exclusive right. Where the owner is still living, that person must sign the notice of interment. If that person cannot be contacted or is otherwise unable to sign, a waiver may be required by the cemetery authority. A waiver may also be required where the deed of grant is lost.

Where the owner is the one to be buried it is taken that interment may take place in the grave to which they owned the grant. In cemeteries where no exclusive rights are issued the Funeral Director should be satisfied, and should satisfy the burial authority, that the person giving the instruction is a suitable person to do so.

In churchyards, where no exclusive rights are likely to be issued, the Funeral Director and incumbent or other authority should be satisfied by the eligibility of the applicant.

It is important to establish that sufficient space exists in the grave to be re-opened. This may be as simple as confirming the fact with the council. However not all records are comprehensive (or even adequate). The Funeral Director's own instruction for the prior burial may show the original depth, space on a headstone may be indicative of intention for further burial, or *in extremis* rodding or a test dig may be required.

Where a memorial exists this should be removed and a form of notice issued to a stonemason requesting it. This should give, at minimum:

- the name on the memorial;
- the grave number, where applicable;
- the location in the cemetery or churchyard, if no grave number;
- the date of the original interment;
- the type of memorial (i.e. lawn, kerbside);
- the date of the coming interment; and
- contact details for the burial authority.

A photograph of the memorial prior to removal is often helpful. Removal should take place in sufficient time to allow excavation of the grave. The stonemason should leave a marker in place after the memorial has been removed.

It may be that no memorial or marker has been placed on a grave to be reopened. Where grave numbers exist, the plot may be positively identified. If not, great care should be taken to confirm the location. Adjacent memorials may indicate contemporaneous burials. Sinking of earth may show a grave or photographs taken at the time may give the clue.

It may be that the Funeral Director has to rely on the memory of the client or local knowledge of a member of the church or community. In such cases the burial authority may require an indemnity against acting on the instruction of the client. It is wise for the Funeral Director to do the same.

As before, a notice of interment should be issued along with the certificate for disposal and instructions provided to the gravedigger (where separately instructed).

CHURCHYARDS

Although churchyards are less formally run, it is still wise to issue a Notice of Interment to the incumbent or other party managing the site.

Funeral Directors may be in the habit of taking the disposal certificate on the day of the funeral to hand to clergy, rather than sending it in advance. Consideration could be given to sending the form at the same time as the letter confirming the arrangements and Notice of Interment.

Wherever papers are sent, a copy should be taken.

BURIALS ON PRIVATE LAND

When carrying out a burial on private land the Funeral Director should have regard to:

- proximity of the grave to water
- ownership of the land

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (EA) sets out guidelines on the subject of proximity to water which are

1. The site should be more than 30 metres from any spring or any running or standing water.
2. It should also be more than 10 metres from any 'dry' ditch or field drain.
3. The site should be at least 50 metres away from any well, borehole or spring that supplies water for any use.

It is sufficient that the Funeral Director satisfies him or herself that the proposed site meets these conditions. That having been said, by far the simplest and quickest way to do this is to contact the local Environmental Health Department, who should be able to provide an answer:

For further information on preventing groundwater pollution from burials, [please click here.](#)

The EA also requires

1. There should be no standing water in the grave when it is first dug.
2. The grave should not be in very sandy soil.
3. There should be at least one metre of soil above and below the body after burial.

The Funeral Director should confirm ownership of the land early in the arrangement. If the client is not the landowner, the landowner's permission should be obtained in writing. The Funeral Director should also discuss, with the landowner, the potential negative effect on the future saleability of the land of having a grave on it and the requirement for an exhumation license if the remains are to be moved.

Following the burial, unless there is another party available to do so, the Funeral Director should sign and return to the registrar the counterfoil of whichever GRO21 - Authorisation to Bury or Cremate is in use in the case. It is wise for the top part to be lodged with the Deeds to the property.

BURIAL PROCEDURES

Municipal Cemetery

- Telephone/ online booking
- complete Notice of Interment including depth and dimensions of grave
- if a new grave, a purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial is completed
- If a re-open effect any necessary deedtransfer or waiver/ indemnity
- the GRO21 – Authorisation to Bury or Cremate to the cemetery office
- any memorial on an existing grave is removed
- the council or Funeral Director engages a gravedigger; if the Funeral Director, a written instruction is issued with depth, dimensions and cemetery contact detail
- leave a grave marker with permission

PRIVATE LAND

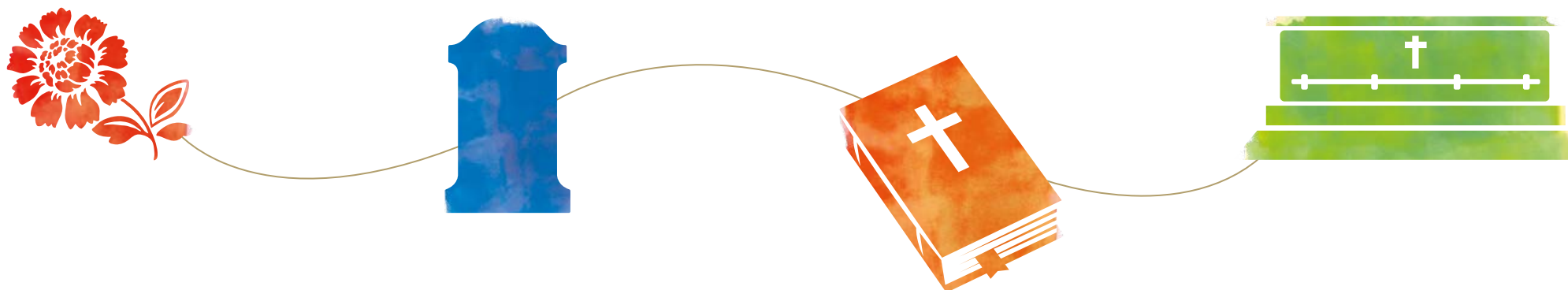
- establish land ownership
- obtain landowner's written permission
- identify grave space
- contact Environment Agency or confirm distance from watercourses
- append grave location and GRO21 - Authorisation to Bury or Cremate to property deeds
- leave a grave marker (if required)

Churchyard

- contact the Minister or parish office and make the booking
- if a new grave confirm it will be marked
- if an existing grave establish its location and whether it has a memorial
- remove any memorial
- establish the required depth of the grave
- engage a gravedigger and issue a written instruction with coffin size and the required depth
- issue written confirmation to the Minister or Churchyard Convener
- issue the Certificate for Burial/ Cremation to the Minister or Churchyard Convener
- leave a grave marker

Private Cemetery

- make telephone booking
- complete a Notice of Interment; issue to cemetery office with Certificate for Burial or Cremation
- purchase of exclusive right of burial (if applicable)
- remove any memorial from an existing grave
- effect transfer of exclusive right if necessary
- issue a digging ticket to the grave-digger if engaged by the Funeral Director on behalf of family, with depth and dimensions
- leave a grave marker



Chapter 17

Cremation – Northern Ireland



CREMATION

In 1961, the City of Belfast Crematorium, the first of its kind in Ireland, opened its doors, with the first cremation taking place in July 1961. Today, just over 20% of funerals in Northern Ireland are cremation services.

LEGISLATION

The Parliament of Northern Ireland approved a set of Cremation Regulations in 1961, the Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (Northern Ireland), 1961 that covers the rules around the staffing, maintenance and inspection of the crematorium as well as the conditions under which a cremation may take place. These have not changed since that time in spite of the many recommendations and changes within other UK governing administrations.

These NI Regulations are effectively predicated on the original Cremation Act of 1902 with some minor amendments being applied due to the New Towns Act (Northern Ireland) 1965 & the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

Since 1985 under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, local Councils in Northern Ireland have been empowered to establish their own crematoria; however, until further legislative changes are introduced and enacted in Northern Ireland, the only recognised 'Cremation Authority' under the 1961 Regulations is still Belfast City Council.

This chapter is correct as of January 2020. It is likely that the legislation will be updated. A new version of this chapter will be issued at that time and members in Northern Ireland will be notified.

DOCUMENTATION

There are, broadly speaking, two sets of documentation required for a cremation to happen:

1. Statutory Documentation

These are documents prescribed by an Act of Parliament.

2. Non-statutory documentation

These are documents produced locally. Typically, they would include a form notifying the crematorium of the details for the ceremony (commonly referred to as a Preliminary Notice or a Particulars Form.) Some crematoria also use their own documents for non-viable foetus cremation applications.

The statutory forms can be broken down into three basic categories, at least one of each of which will be required in any cremation case. To enable cremation you will always need:

1. An applicant
2. A form of medical confirmation
3. An authority to cremate from an official dedicated for that task at the crematorium

A lettered series of forms are currently in use in Northern Ireland. Those in orange are broadly categorised as Applications. Those in blue are medical certificates and those in black are authorities to cremate.

1. Form A: Application for Cremation with Statutory Declaration
2. Form B: Certificate of Medical Attendant
3. Form C: Confirmatory Medical Certificate
4. Form D: Certificate after Post-Mortem Examination
5. Form E: Coroner's Certificate
6. Form F: Authority to Cremate
7. Form G: Statutory Register of Cremations
8. Form H: Application for Cremation of Stillborn Child
9. Form I: Certificate of Registered Medical Attendant or of Certified Midwife, if no doctor was present at still-birth or has examined the body
10. Form J: Statutory Return to Registrar of Births and Deaths

Form A:

Application for Cremation with Statutory Declaration

To be signed by an executor or near relative, or other party giving a reason for the application coming from them.

The form also asks what, if any, instruction the deceased person gave for their disposal. Where the medical referee is aware of written direction that the decedent did not wish for cremation, the application for cremation shall be refused. The application must be witnessed and signed by a Justice of the Peace or Commissioner for Oaths.

Form B: Certificate of Medical Attendant

To be completed by a medical practitioner who has attended the deceased person within 28 days prior to death. If no such doctor is available the case should be referred to the Coroner. Questions run in parallel with those on the Form A, such as asking whether death occurred under anaesthetic or due to violence or misadventure. If the answer to any of questions 15-19 is yes, the case should be referred to the Coroner.

Belfast City Council has a non-statutory pacemaker removal form, which is used in conjunction with Form B and applicable to other hazardous devices.

Form C: Confirmatory Medical Certificate

This is required following Form B, even where there has been a hospital post-mortem.

The cause of death need not correspond to Form B but any discrepancy must be explained. In addition to having consulted the Form B doctor the doctor completing this form must also answer yes to at least one of questions 5, 6 & 8 (questioning a medical practitioner or someone having nursed the decedent, being a relative or some other relevant party).

Form D: Certificate after Post-Mortem Examination

Completed where the medical referee requests (or personally carries out) a post-mortem after receipt of Forms B & C, is dissatisfied with the stated cause of death or believes that there are circumstances requiring investigation.

Where such a post-mortem does not reveal a cause of death the medical referee might refer the case to the Coroner.

Form E: Coroner's Certificate

Although bearing the letter E, this form is rarely referred to as such. As Form 20 it is issued by the Coroner after a post-mortem examination has been completed.

As Form 20A it is issued by the Coroner after receipt of a pro-forma satisfying the Coroner as to the cause of death.

Form F: Authority to Cremate

Completed by the Medical Referee upon being satisfied by the submitted application for cremation and supporting medical papers.

This form is also used in the case of stillbirth, amended to include a description of the child in place of the name, address and occupation and a statement of stillbirth in place of reference to the cause of death.

Form G: Register of Cremations

When completed, this will show the date of cremation (including for stillbirth) details of the applicant, signatories to certificates and means of disposal of ashes.

Form H: Application for Cremation of Stillborn Child

The child's mother or father might apply, or other party stating the reason they are doing so.

The applicant should indicate consultation with the parents. The gender of the stillborn child is required but no name need be given. In line with the requirement of the Coroner to investigate if there is suspicion that stillbirth might not otherwise have occurred, that question is asked. As with Form A, the application should be witnessed by a Justice of the Peace or a Commissioner for Oaths.

Form I: Certificate of Registered Medical Attendant or of Certified Midwife, if no doctor was present at stillbirth or has examined the body

The form is designed to indicate why stillbirth occurred. Those completing it are required to indicate the sequence of events that led to the stillbirth.

Other conditions prevailing which may be relevant, but not contributory, are also given. The gender of the child is required, but no name is given.

Form J: Return to Registrar of Births and Deaths

Except following cremation after inquest, stillbirth, or exhumation of a party buried for more than one year, a return is made to the registrar under this form.

This should be within seven days of the cremation. It states the date of cremation, date and place of death, and the name of the decedent and applicant.

Pacemaker/Fixion Form removal form

A non-statutory form issued by Belfast City Council, requiring a statement that any such implant has been removed and made safe.

To be completed by the Part B doctor, or the Coroner issuing Form 20a. Cremation will be refused if assurance of removal or devices being made safe is not received.

Non-viable foetus

A non-statutory form is used for signature by a medical practitioner to attest birth without life of a foetus of less than 24 weeks gestation, with a corresponding authority to cremate.

This is accompanied by a consent form from the family for cremation to take place and an authority for disposal of the ashes. There is currently no application form although the Cremation Authority follows the guidelines of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.

Body parts

For the cremation of body parts, the hospital provides a statement of the tissue being released, with a covering letter to the crematorium requesting cremation and an authority for the disposal of ashes. Where the parts are being released following a Coroner's post-mortem the instruction for disposal of the ashes is signed by the family.

No Authority to Cremate is signed by the medical referee.

SUPPORTING PAPERWORK

Any application for cremation will be accompanied by:

- a Preliminary Notice of Cremation or Notice of Particulars (other names for this may also be in use)
 - o The statutory forms do not give any detail about the ceremony itself, so this non-statutory form is used and is provided by individual Cremation Authority. They vary greatly in the detail they give, but expect to include at minimum the date and time of service, the chapel in use, the name of the minister and intention for the ashes. You might also state here fine detail such as whether an organist is required, use of audio-visual equipment, witness charging, provision of a casket, the Funeral Director's statement of the construction of the coffin, whether curtains are to close and sundry other matters which will vary according to the location.
 - o Some crematoria use a further form solely for detail of music required, whether by an organist or in recorded form or by electronic means such as the Wesley Music system or Vivedia's Music Engine.
 - o Applicants may also be asked to sign their consent to the crematorium not carrying out cremation on the day of the ceremony (the procedure referred to as "holding over").
 - o There may also be a question relating to the fate of metal implants such as knees or hips which may survive cremation. Options for return or recycling may be offered.
- an authority for the disposal of ashes
 - o This must be signed by the applicant who signed Form A. Again, there is significant variance between crematoria in the level of detail. Such a form might include booking information for a witnessed scattering or simply offer the option for the ashes to be retained by the crematorium or taken away.

RESPONSIBILITIES

There are, even now, many myths surrounding cremation, amongst the most common of which are that crematoria and Funeral Directors re-use coffins and that the ashes the family gets back are not their own.

The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) and Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) have sought to address these concerns and ensure bereaved people can feel confident in the standards of service they will receive by setting out non-statutory principles that their members must adhere to.

The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) publishes a Code of Practice for Crematoria designed to address these questions. **Familiarity with the Code will be useful for Funeral Directors, to whom these questions are often addressed. In summary, offers the following assurances:**

- That staff have regard to the respect required for the occasion.
- That staff are properly trained in their duties, both technically and ethically.
- That bodies are not removed after committal without lawful reason; that coffins are cremated in a timely fashion with written consent from the applicant if this is not on the day of committal and that the whole of the coffin and its contents are cremated.
- That identification of the occupant of the coffin is satisfactory and that a proper chain of identification is followed through from receipt to disposal of ashes.
- That cremations take place separately.
- That coffin covers are only used with consent of the applicant.
- That metals surviving cremation are properly disposed of.
- That cremated remains are properly identified and treated with respect.
- That equipment is properly serviced.
- That the law is observed.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) publishes *Guiding Principles for Burial and Cremation*. Like the FBCA code, it stresses the importance of respect for the work and the importance of training. Other provisions include:

- Flexibility in working hours to ensure service is provided.
- Attention to environmental considerations, including emissions, suitable materials, recycling of grounds waste and other materials (with the applicant's permission), effective use of energy and plant in the running of the crematorium and giving advice on suitable clothes for the dressing of the deceased.
- Providing for open coffins during ceremonies, but that coffins are not otherwise disturbed or opened after committal.
- That consent is given by the applicant for the removal of metals after cremation.
- That no commercial use is made of the products or residues of cremation.
- That there is a right to inspect crematoria upon application to the manager.

The full guidelines can be downloaded from www.iccm-uk.com/iccm

Funeral Directors have duties too and it is in the interests of all parties that the Funeral Director is mutually cooperative with the cremation authority.

The guidelines the FBCA offer includes:

- Delivering papers to the crematorium on time.
- Providing sufficient staff to carry out the funeral.
- Providing a coffin of sturdy construction that is appropriate for cremation (please see section below on coffins suitable for cremation).
- Only placing items in the coffin which will safely and cleanly cremate (this specifically excludes materials like glass and copper).
- Providing ashes caskets of sufficient size to accommodate the cremated remains

Infant cremation/cremation of body parts

It is important to notify applicants for the cremation of infants, foetal remains and body parts comprising only soft tissue about the likely volume of cremated remains that may be produced.

It is important that families are sensitively advised that, in most cases, there will usually be some cremation remains that can be returned to the family. However, in some cases of extreme prematurity and/or where a bio-degradable or similar cardboard coffin has been selected, there may be no retrievable remains. Some Funeral Directors gently advise families to place something suitable for cremation in the coffin with the child (such as a teddy or blanket) to increase the likelihood of cremated ashes being available.

It is advisable for Funeral Directors to read the [Report into Infant Cremations at Emstrey Crematorium \(England\)](#) and [Report of the Infant Cremation Commission \(Scotland\)](#) and to check with the crematoria concerned, prior to advising families in this regard.

Appropriate coffin choice

Not all crematoria accept all types of coffin and not all coffins are suitable for cremation. Having good local knowledge and undertaking research prior to accepting a client's choice of coffin for a cremation is therefore imperative.

Funeral Directors may be aware that currently two coffin accreditation schemes exist, managed independently by The Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers Association (FFMA) and The Coffin, Casket and Shroud Association (CCSA). These schemes aim to ensure that coffins brought for cremations are fit for purpose and cause no problems to cremation authorities, Funeral Directors or bereaved people.

Accredited coffins will have undergone a range of tests carried out by recognised test houses, with those that pass the tests receiving accreditation by one or the other scheme. The tests include those for strength, roller/ball bearing functionality, auto charging, ignition, radiant heat, ash volume and residue. Coffin lining materials will also be tested.

Funeral Directors are encouraged to purchase accredited coffins in order to provide a safe and secure product for their clients that is fit for purpose and trouble free.

For further information about the two accreditation schemes, please click the links below.

[The Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers Association \(FFMA\)](#)

[The Coffin, Casket and Shroud Association \(CCSA\)](#)

ARRANGING A CREMATION

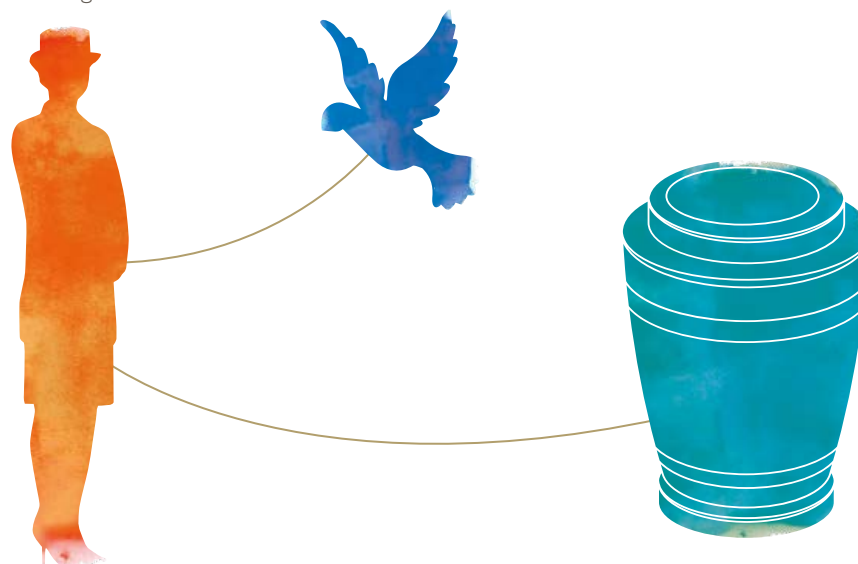
As with many aspects of the Funeral Director's role, different locations will have their own procedures and requirements. However, a generic method for arranging a cremation is offered below.

Initial questions

At an early stage you should seek to establish what paperwork will be required. This may depend on such factors as whether the Coroner is involved.

It is also important to establish who is to be the applicant. Particular regard should be given to the implications this has for the cremated remains, as only the applicant can authorise their disposal by the crematorium. Authority for disposal of the ashes by the Funeral Director rests with the Funeral Director's client, with whom the Funeral Director has a contract. This may not be the applicant for cremation. It is important to note that acceptance of an instruction for the disposal of ashes from a party other than the Funeral Director's client may constitute a breach of contract, even if the instruction comes from the applicant for cremation.

You may be working in an area served by more than one crematorium, so will need to know the services on offer so that you can advise the client on their options. These may include cost, service length, capacity, availability, geography and aesthetics. You need to know what music facilities are available, which may also inform the client's choice of location. For example, if only digital music is available, the client may prefer to choose a location where a live organist can be used.



Key questions include:

- Who is to be the applicant?
- Is the Coroner involved?
- Are implants to be removed?
- Preferred crematorium
- Preferred date/time
- Will a single timeslot be sufficient?
- Music (to book organist or electronic system, such as Wesley or Obitus, if applicable)
- Are religious symbols applicable?
- Size and construction of coffin (to ensure the crematorium can accommodate the cremation and the materials are suitable for cremation)
- Is charging to be witnessed?
- Method of ashes disposal and when this is to take place
- there are robust and auditable records in respect of procedures followed for:
 - o If ashes are required for interment or scattering the same or next day for religious reasons, the crematorium should be notified as they may need to keep a cremator available. Otherwise, where holding over is practised, the client will need to be advised that it may be 2-3 days before ashes are available for collection from the crematorium. Consideration should also be given for the timing of the ceremony to ensure that sufficient time is available to carry out cremation.
- Method of metals disposal
 - o Applicants are entitled to have metals returned to them, but many crematoria now offer the facility for metals to be recycled to charitable benefit.

To these may be added other things according to local practice. For example, it may be that you as Funeral Director have to establish means of signalling that committal is about to take place, whether it be by curtain, movement of the coffin, use of gates, voile or other means.

Having established these basic details it is then necessary to put the process in hand.

Procedure

- Book the crematorium
 - o This might be done in a number of ways, whether it be by telephone, through an automated system or online. Crematoria often issue an email confirmation of the booking which should be checked and kept with the file
- Order papers
 - o You will have established what papers will be required for the case. Now is the time to put these in hand if it was not done following the First Call. This may involve contacting a surgery or hospital, or contacting the Coroner to notify them of the proposed cremation. If not already known you should at this time also confirm the method of payment for any papers.
- Collect Form GRO21 (if applicable) from client (this will be issued to the client by the District Registrar once the death has been registered)
- Obtain signatures from applicant on any or all of the following forms:
 - o Application for Cremation
 - o Authority for Disposal of Ashes
 - o Confirmation of Holding Over / Metals Disposal / Acceptance of Local Regulations
 - o Authority for Recording or Webcasting
 - o Implant Removal
- Book an organist (where not provided by the crematorium) and advise of music requirements, or book from the digital music service any music not already on the crematorium's system.
- Complete Notice of Particulars and any separate music instruction form
- Ensure necessary implants are removed
 - o Requirements and procedures for this are at the end of this section
- Unite and despatch papers to the crematorium
 - o Once the set of paperwork is complete they should be sent or delivered to the crematorium. If fine details such as music or the method of committal remain to be settled these may be confirmed subsequently. It is preferred that papers are not sent by post but if this must be done Special Delivery is recommended (bearing in mind that if the 9.00am service is used this may arrive before the crematorium office opens and the papers may be held at the sorting office).

DISPOSAL OF ASHES

After cremation the crematorium will provide a Certificate of Cremation. This should accompany the ashes at all times and be handed to the authority where final disposal takes place.

The NAFD publishes guidance for the handling of cremation ashes alongside its Code of Practice.

1. All funeral firms should ensure they have written instructions from the applicant for cremation with regard to the disposal of the cremated remains and, when this involves the Funeral Director collecting the remains from the crematorium, a stringent audit trail should be recorded. It may be of use to keep a photocopy of the preliminary application form for future reference of applicant and final details.
2. A form should be produced with instructions for the collection and release of cremated remains and be completed by a member of staff to record the following information - this should be a separate sheet for each container of cremated remains for data protection and client confidentiality:-
 - details of the deceased;
 - remains collected from where, when and by whom;
 - remains stored at what location and in what container;
 - instructions for the release/disposal of the remains;
 - name, address and telephone number of the applicant for cremation.
3. A record sheet or register should be kept within the funeral home with an account of all cremated remains within the premises.
4. Identification of the remains should be checked each time an entry is recorded and the Certificate of Cremation should be retained with the remains at all times.
5. The Funeral Director should release ashes or accept instruction for their disposal only from his or her client, with whom there is a contract. The client may not necessarily be the Applicant for Cremation. Identification of the client should be checked before releasing the remains and, if they are to be released to a third party, written authority must be obtained from and confirmed with the client before release.
6. When cremated remains are released a record should be made of who collected them (name, address and contact details), when they were collected and in what type of container. This should be signed by the person who collected the remains and the member of staff who released them.

Options for disposal of ashes

Over the last few years the options available for the disposal of ashes has increased dramatically, with new options reported in Funeral Director Monthly and exhibited at the National Funeral Exhibition, as well as widely available on the internet.

Options include:

Scattering at a crematorium

- Where ashes are scattered at the crematorium of cremation the applicant's signature of authority to do this is sufficient. If the applicant or other party wishes to witness the scattering this is arranged with the crematorium direct or provided as a service by the Funeral Director. It is unlikely that there will be any charge for this from the crematorium.
- Where ashes are scattered at a crematorium other than that where the cremation took place a separate disposal application will be required and a fee may be payable.

Interment in a cemetery or churchyard

- Where ashes are interred the Funeral Director should follow the same procedures as for burial, replacing the disposal certificate with the Certificate of Cremation provided by the crematorium.
- It is worth drawing to the client's attention that where ashes are interred this interment carries the same status as interment of a body and that an exhumation licence or Diocesan Faculty would be required for exhumation. No license or faculty is required for the removal of ashes from an above ground chamber such as a columbarium or memorial vault.
- Clients should also be advised, as with full burial, of the regulations relating to memorials before going ahead, which in Gardens of Rest may be quite prescriptive.

Placed in a columbarium

- Either in the crematorium itself, or in another location, there may be wall-mounted niches holding one or more sets of ashes, enclosed by a memorial tablet. Purchase of such a niche may be via a memorial permit application direct with the crematorium, which contracts the work to a particular stonemason. Alternatively, the Funeral Director or a separate stonemason may be able to carry out the work. Practice varies, requiring local knowledge or research.

Scattered or interred privately

- The family may wish to scatter or arrange interment of the ashes privately. In such a case, the applicant signs an ashes authority either to collect the ashes direct from the crematorium, or for the Funeral Director to collect them in the first instance for release to the applicant.
- The crematorium is likely to have a policy on how long they will retain ashes before scattering or charging for storage. Funeral Directors may also have such a policy and the NAFD provides guidance to support this. **Please see section below on uncollected ashes.**
- The Funeral Director should release the ashes only to their client (who may not be the Applicant for Cremation), unless they have written authority from the client to release them to another party.
- A signature and identification should be provided by the person to whom ashes are released.
- Funeral Directors should advise the client that permission must be sought from the burial authority or landowner, prior to interment or scattering of ashes and that the Cremation Certificate should be presented to that person.

Burial at Sea

- Please see Chapter 24 Burial at Sea.

Keepsakes or memorial events

- The range of keepsake or memorial event options which include a portion of ashes is vast, including jewellery, paperweights, vinyl records, vases, ornaments, fireworks and many others. Funeral Directors should keep themselves updated and ready to advise and assist clients with selection of these services.
- The client should be made aware that such options utilise only a small portion of the ashes and that a disposal option will be required for the balance.

CARRIAGE OF ASHES TO ANOTHER PARTY

If the Funeral Director is asked to dispatch ashes to another party, a reputable carrier should always be used. The weight of the consignment will be required. The ashes should be securely and protectively wrapped and identified, accompanied by the Cremation Certificate.

Where ashes are being dispatched internationally, the crematorium may provide an overseas certificate.

The Funeral Director should always follow proper Consular procedure when sending ashes internationally, which will include the Funeral Director's own declaration of contents:

[date]

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I [name], Funeral Director of [firm name and address] declare that this container holds only the cremated remains of the late [name] who died at [location and address] on [date]. The cremation took place at [crematorium and address] on [date].

Signed:

[name]

There are several NAFD supplier members who provide secure carriage (within the UK and internationally) of cremated remains.

UNCOLLECTED ASHES

It is not uncommon for Funeral Directors to find that they have in their keeping ashes for which the cremation took place some considerable time ago.

Sensitivity is required in handling this situation. It should not be forgotten that the subject of final disposal is an emotionally challenging one. Nevertheless, it is vital that it is addressed during the arrangement meeting and the need for a final decision made clear. Funeral Directors should always be ready to hold ashes pending a decision, but it is reasonable that some parameters should be set for the timing of that decision.

Where ashes have been held for some time and the Funeral Director feels that continued retention is not a possibility, or contact with the client has been lost, you may wish to follow the NAFD's guidelines on how to proceed.

For these guidelines to apply, the ashes must have been in the funeral firm's possession for a **minimum of five years**, with all previous attempts of returning the ashes to the client having proved unsuccessful.

- The funeral firm should satisfy itself that all reasonable efforts have been made to identify and trace the legal owner of the cremated remains.
 - All company records should be researched and reviewed in an attempt to establish ownership.
 - Every reasonable attempt should be made to contact the family, i.e. the last known address of the deceased or signatory of the cremation papers should be visited if practicable.
- The signatory/person who arranged the funeral (if known) should be advised in writing via Royal Mail Recorded Delivery that, unless instructions are given to the funeral firm within twenty-eight days, the cremated remains will be scattered at the firm's discretion or returned to the nearest crematorium.
- An appropriately worded advertisement should be placed in local newspapers giving twenty-eight days' notice of scattering.
- If there is still no contact from the legal owner or another interested party, you should either:
 - Return the ashes to the local crematorium for scattering in the garden of remembrance (if possible) or; alternatively, within curtilage of the funeral home, if appropriate.
 - Purchase a single plot in the local cemetery/churchyard for interment.
 - Scatter the ashes at local beauty spot, with landowner's permission.
- The funeral firm should seriously consider whether or not to achieve positive PR by publicising any subsequent 'scattering event' and involving local media.
- In order to avoid a recurrence of untraceable ownership of cremated remains, it is essential that, for the future, comprehensive documentation is maintained, clearly stating details of ownership and giving instructions for disposal/retention. Always obtain a signature for the instructions.

Whilst the National Association of Funeral Directors recommend these guidelines be followed, they are only guidelines, representing best practice rather than any legal requirements, and so the decision rests with the Funeral Director concerned. The NAFD cannot take responsibility in the event of any action being brought against a member company or individual.

REMOVAL OF IMPLANTS

Below is a list of implants which may be hazardous during cremation.

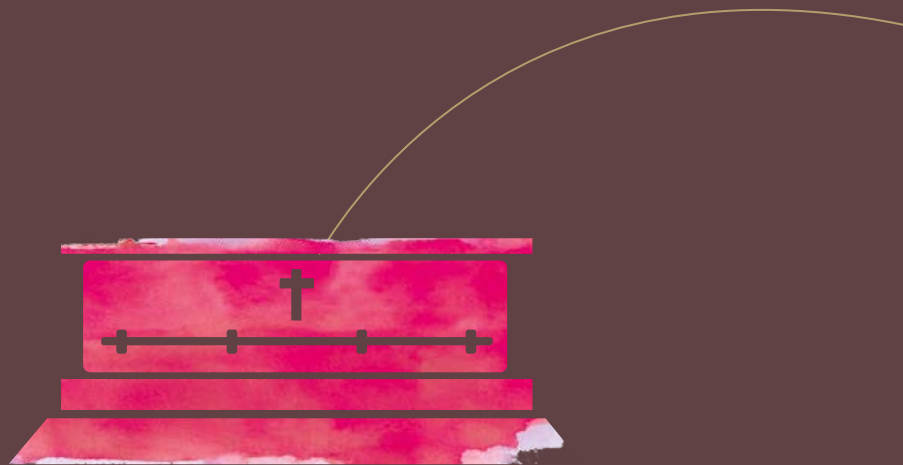
It is recommended that, to ensure the health and safety of colleagues, a medical practitioner be requested to remove the implant and the client advised of any charge that will be made for carrying out this service.

- Pacemakers
- Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators (ICDs)
- Cardiac resynchronization therapy devices (CRTDs)
- Implantable loop recorders
- Ventricular assist devices
- Syringe drivers
- Bone growth stimulators
- Neurostimulators
- Hydrocephalus programmable shunts
- Other battery powered implants
- Fixion intramedullary nailing system
- Brachytherapy (usually to prostate or thyroid)
- Silicon implants

Dental mercury amalgam is also on the list, but unless present in significant quantities (e.g. more than in dental fillings) it is unlikely to be problematic.

Chapter 18

Paying Last Respects



INTRODUCTION

Bereavement is in itself a traumatic experience and may affect people in many different ways. The thought of going to see a loved one in a Chapel of Rest may raise a sense of fear. However, the natural desire to see a loved one for the last time often leads them to seek to overcome their feelings in order to make the visit.

Providing the funeral home prepares for visits well, experience shows that they can prove to be a comforting experience to the bereaved and should be encouraged by the Funeral Director, wherever possible. As long as facilities permit, mourners should be encouraged to arrange a visit at their convenience. Some Funeral Directors issue a card to the family showing visiting hours, or include these details on the confirmation form/letter, to help them choose when they would like to visit.

It is also recommended that Funeral Directors openly discuss the care and treatment of the deceased person with the family, for example embalming the deceased person with the family's permission, presenting them in a gown or clothing selected by the family. All of these factors can help clients to understand that they have nothing to fear by coming to see a deceased person and can provide peace of mind that the Funeral Director is caring for their loved on professionally and with compassion.

This chapter describes procedures for welcoming bereaved people to the Chapel of Rest and preparing the Chapel of Rest for their visit.

For the sake of consistency, reference has been made throughout to "Chapel of Rest". All funeral homes have a room or rooms set aside for family to see the deceased. Although these rooms serve the same purpose they may be known by different names depending on the business.



WHEN MOURNERS ARE EXPECTED

Before showing any mourners through to the Chapel of Rest it is recommended the following checks are carried out:

- If there are more than one Chapel, double check which one the correct deceased person is resting in?
- Check that the correct person is in the correct coffin.
- Check that the coffin is clean, undamaged and the name plate is correct.
- Check the deceased person is nicely presented – the eyes, mouth and hands are so positioned as to give a natural posture.
- Check the deceased person is wearing the correct clothing as requested, or supplied.
- Check that any flowers in the chapel are fresh and well displayed, similarly if the flowers are artificial that they are not dusty or untidy. Check also that provision is made for any flowers that the visitors may have brought with them.
- Check that any religious symbols in the Chapel are in accordance with the religion of the deceased person.
- Check that the lighting is set at the correct level and whether candles, if supplied, should be lit.
- If the Chapel is large enough, check whether sufficient seating is available.
- Check the contents of the coffin (e.g. photographs, rosary) and/or any jewellery are correct and either in place, or have been removed, according to instructions.
- Check that no unpleasant smell is apparent.
- If a name is displayed on the chapel door, check it is the correct one.
- Check that any background music is appropriate and set at the correct volume.

WHEN MOURNERS ARRIVE

When family or friends arrive to pay their last respects, it is recommended they be shown into a private room, which could well be an arranging room.

An offer of a cup of tea or coffee might be welcomed.

Careful brief questioning should establish the names of the visitors, along with the name of the deceased person they have come to see, and their relationship. Unless instructed by the client, it is good practice to refer to the deceased in formal terms, for example, as "Mrs James" or "Mr Lewis."

Before showing mourners through to the chapel, a check of the funeral arrangement form for any instructions regarding viewing should be made. The client may have given explicit instructions that no one is to see the deceased or only certain people be allowed to visit. If this is the case the Funeral Director may be faced with a difficult situation which can only be resolved by contact with the client, or the visitors going away and obtaining consent to visit at another time.

If the Funeral Director in charge of the funeral is available, he/she should have been advised of the visitors. All other members of staff should also be informed that clients are on the premises. The Funeral Director may be the best person to conduct the visitors to the chapel, depending on local protocols. As a minimum, if available, he/she should speak to them before they leave, particularly if there are some detail of the funeral still to be confirmed.

For those mourners visiting alone they may welcome being accompanied by the Funeral Director.

Whoever is going to take the visitor to the Chapel should then proceed to the waiting room, assure them that all is well and that the deceased person looks at rest. After showing them in he/she should wait for a moment to check if they are okay and then offer to take his/her leave, assuring them they are near at hand if needed or are happy to remain with them if preferred.

It may be that before entering the chapel a brief explanation of the internal layout is thought advisable, so that the visitors know what to expect.

Whilst the visitors are in the chapel, the arrangements file can be checked again in order to see whether further information is required, or if there are instructions regarding any valuables.

If the visitors do not leave of their own accord after a few minutes, it is probably best to check that all is well, at the same time reassuring them that they can stay as long as they like. Some of the family may wish to come out and leave some members to go in individually.

Once the visitors leave the Chapel they should be offered the opportunity of returning to the waiting room to compose themselves, deal with any outstanding matters or just sit and talk. Tea and coffee should again be offered and fresh water and glasses should also be available. A box of tissues might also be made available in this room and in the Chapel.



AFTER MOURNERS HAVE LEFT

Once the visitors have left the funeral home, the chapel should be checked to see if any flowers left by the family need to be properly displayed; the coffin checked with regard to the tidiness of the clothing and furnishings and for any personal items that have been left. It may be necessary to contact the client if something has been left to check if it is to remain with the deceased person, or be removed prior to the funeral.

Also, at this stage, it is prudent to ensure that nothing has been removed from the deceased person. The lights and music should be turned off (unless otherwise instructed) and everything left ready for any further visits.

Chapter 19

Managing and conducting the funeral



CONDUCTING THE FUNERAL

The funeral service is the culmination of the work that has taken place since the death occurred. Although this is only one of the many functions of the Funeral Director, to many people, the sight of a funeral cortege, is probably the one most associated with the work of the profession.

The majority of the public will not have seen the many hours of planning and organising done by the Funeral Director to incorporate all the wishes of the deceased person and their family. Therefore, because the funeral service itself is the funeral profession's most public face, it must be perfectly planned and executed with precision. The conductor, drivers and bearers may not always be part of the same team, but they must show the teamwork of a group that works together every day.

THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR AS CONDUCTOR

The person leading the funeral takes on the role of conductor – a 'master of ceremonies' which carries out the task of guiding, directing and overseeing the smooth running of the funeral.

The role of the conductor is a supervisory one, overseeing the work of the entire funeral service team. The conductor may not have met the family prior to the day of the funeral, but must be fully aware of all the requests and arrangements the family have made in connection with the funeral service.

Although common sense and experience will dictate the way in which a funeral is conducted, each conductor will generally develop their own personal style of leading funerals.

Whichever style is adopted, the conductor must be, at all times, calm, efficient and dignified - inspiring confidence in their team and ensuring the client family and other mourners are properly and professionally supported in saying farewell to the person that has died.



LEADERSHIP

The Funeral Director is a leader of people and, in their role as conductor on the day of the funeral, their leadership of their team must be exemplary.

In the funeral service, this leadership must combine supervision, technical training in the key functions of the role, motivation and leading by example. It is essential that anyone who conducts a funeral is given the proper training in people leadership and management to ensure they are supported in being the best leader they can be.

There are many effective management courses on offer for people new to leadership. In addition, the NAFD's Diploma programmes include modules on leadership and management, with specific reference to funeral service.

For further information, please visit: www.nafd.org.uk/qualifications-training/

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME MANAGEMENT

Precision timing is not only important on the day of the funeral, it is also important in the planning stages.

For example, it is important to consider the availability of vehicles and staff, how long a particular funeral will take and if the fleet and team can continue on to another funeral to ensure effective use of the organisation's resources. Equally, any aspect of a funeral service which appears hurried or unprepared could cause the client to have concerns about the Funeral Director's ability.

Time is a very important part of successful funeral practice and should be treated as such.

DRESS

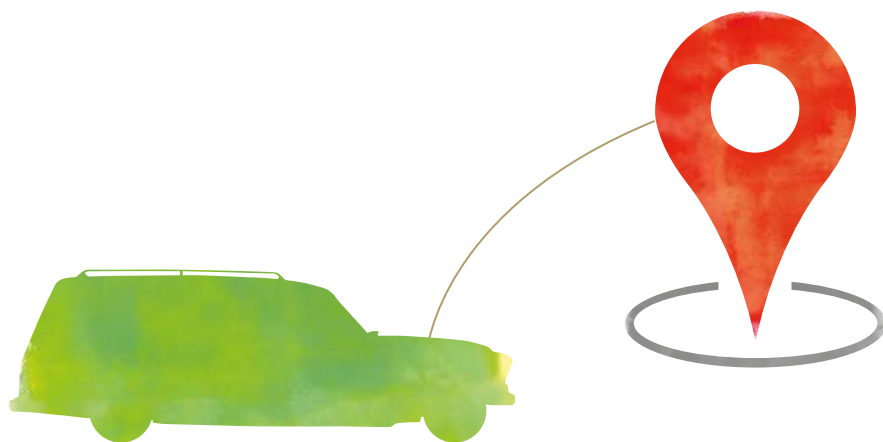
Although company policy may make certain stipulations, no set rules exist regarding the dress of the conductor and as with clothing worn when making arrangements. Black is not essential, many funeral firms are innovating in the colours of their uniforms and families are increasingly requesting bright colours – even from their funeral service team. The main criterion are smartness and cleanliness.

It is helpful if the conductor is distinguishable from the other team members. The rest of the team should be smart and, whether a uniform or suit is worn, it and the team should be clean and smart. Company policy may dictate the standards required.

PLANNING THE ROUTE

The route of the funeral cortege from the Funeral Director's premises, via the chosen residence (if requested), to the venue can be one expressed specifically by the family or left to the Funeral Director.

It is always wise to research the route that is to be taken and if necessary a "dry run" undertaken, especially if the venue is unknown to the conductor. With resources such as Google Maps 'Street View' available, the route or location can be easily described to the other drivers in the funeral cortege.



PREPARING THE SERVICE VENUE

There are elements of the funeral that need to be in place before the cortege reaches the venue. Seats may need to be reserved for the members of family, hymn sheets / orders of service need be distributed to those attending, including the officiant, the organist and family. Any music requested to be played at the venue needs to be there in advance, tested if possible and the officiant informed of the music to be played.

If it is custom for the names of those attending to be recorded, then those recording the names or handing out cards need to be in place before anyone arrives and boxes placed near the exit for the cards to be collected in afterwards.

If donations have been requested, has a collection plate(s) and suitable notice(s) been placed in the Church or at the place of committal? Some churches will allow donation boxes for the chosen charity to be placed either inside or outside of the church, however this should always be checked upon with the church wardens or clergy prior to the funeral.

Depending on the time of the funeral, it may be appropriate to check whether there are to be any further mourners wanting to pay their last respects, any alterations to the number of vehicles required, delivery of the family flowers or timings.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE CONDUCTOR

It is useful to have at close hand the following information:

- a copy of or sufficient details extracted from the arrangement form;
- any necessary certification and fees needed;
- a copy of the confirmation sent to the officiant;
- if a funeral with burial, confirmation that a risk assessment has been completed (see Chapter 16 - Burial chapter for more information);
- a plastic wallet or envelope containing flower cards, in case the family require extras;
- a large envelope to place the floral cards in should the family request them to be collected from the tributes; and
- cards to accompany flowers when requested to be delivered after the funeral.

LAST MINUTE CHECKS

Once the conductor is conversant with the details of the funeral the following checks should be made:

- Ensure no last minute changes have been made to the arrangements.
- Are there any special instructions with regard to the route, 'No Parking' signs etc?
- Jewellery – any to be removed and/or returned to the family.
This can either be done prior to, during or after the service.
- Has the client asked for the coffin to be shouldered?
NB this, as an option, is often down to company policy and procedures.
- Flowers – check main tributes have arrived and are not damaged.
- Identity check – correct deceased person, coffin and coffin plate.
- Check coffin is undamaged and polished.
- Do colleagues understand their responsibilities with regard to destination, route, special instructions, place of return?
- Is the team and any vehicles being used, smart and clean?

In addition to checking the work programme, it is also necessary to run through the following before leaving the office:

- Has the officiant ask to be collected en route?
- Is an urn or casket to be taken to the crematorium?
- Do you have everything with you need for the service?
 - o service sheets
 - o photographs
 - o CDs
 - o attendance cards and pens
- Has special music been ordered for the crematorium (e.g. Wesley system)?
- Are trestles, wheel bier, webs, a pall, grave struts or putlocks required?
- Flowers that have arrived at the funeral home should be checked to ensure they are not damaged.

DRESSING THE COFFIN AND FUNERAL VEHICLE

Once the above checks have been carried out, the coffin should be dressed with the main floral tribute/s and these firmly secured in place either by using floral wire or non-slip matting for example.

Before placing the coffin in the hearse, there should be sufficient staff/manual handling equipment available to safeguard the movement of the coffin into the hearse. Careful consideration should be given to make sure no damage to the coffin or floral tribute/s occur during this process.

Unless otherwise arranged, the coffin will be placed feet first into the hearse and care taken to guarantee it is being held safely until the whole of the coffin has entered the hearse, at which point it should be secured by whichever method is available to do so, in the hearse.

Once the coffin has been placed in the hearse, any remaining flowers arranged tastefully around the coffin inside the hearse and depending on the quantity and weather conditions, any extras placed on the roof and secured to the flower rails. If there are a large number of flowers expected, a flower car may have been arranged and this also should be loaded carefully.

Flowers should not be placed in the boots of vehicles, as they can be damaged or forgotten, however; this may be unavoidable due to flowers being at the house or church in larger numbers than anticipated. In such cases the conductor must make a note of the fact and ensure that the flowers are removed, and displayed, at the same time as the rest of the flowers.

FAMILY BEARERS

During the arrangement process, it should have been established whether any members of the deceased person's family or friends wish to carry the coffin at any stage of the funeral.

If, after health and safety considerations have been taken into consideration, family and friends are to act as bearers, the NAFD would recommend that a risk assessment is undertaken and consideration is given to the following:

- the number, height, weight and lifting capacity of the proposed bearers;
- the opportunity to 'rehearse' and to provide simple manual handling training guidance; and
- the involvement of funeral staff to maintain a safe lift – and any insurance implications this might have

Ultimately, the Funeral Director must take responsibility and sanction whether the family bearers are safe to carry the coffin. It is advisable to provide sufficient colleagues to attend the funeral to carry the coffin themselves, should the family bearers either decide they cannot do so, or sufficient numbers do not arrive.

ARRIVING AT THE HOUSE

The cortege must arrive at the house with enough time allowed before the service begins so as not to place the family under any time pressure. If the deceased has been resting at home over night, there should also be ample time for the coffin to be closed and to be sure that all those present have finished paying their respects.

There may also be extra floral tributes to contend with and possibly anyone arriving late and parking their cars. The conductor must identify and introduce themselves to the client or principal mourner and, as well as checking if they have any questions or issues that need to be resolved, should discuss the following:

- Ascertain whether all the mourners are present and, if so, check there are sufficient seats in the following cars, identifying any private cars which may be following and instructing the drivers of those cars as to route and parking arrangements.
- Tell the principal mourner what time the cortege should move off from the house.
- Ask which flowers should be placed on the coffin, if they are not already on it.
- Add any additional flowers at the house to the flower list, if there is time.

The assembling of mourners travelling in any following limousines can sometimes call for considerable tact, especially when the arrangement is left to the conductor; as they have to interpret the wishes of the client.

It is helpful to discuss with the family whether they wish to prepare a list in advance and some Funeral Directors supply a car list showing the number of places available in each vehicle. A little thought given to this point beforehand may avoid awkward situations on the day and also ensure that sufficient cars are provided for the numbers known to be attending.

When no list is available, loading may be difficult - especially when the mourners all leave the house together; but this can often be overcome by having an assistant tactfully controlling the exit from the house and limiting it to a car load at a time.

Alternatively, and less formally, all cars may be loaded at the same time without moving them up to the gate one at a time. Increasingly, there is only one following limousine with the remainder of the mourners using their own cars.

The conductor must ensure that no vehicle carries more than the number of passengers for which it is insured and if there are any children as passengers they must have their booster seats, if required, securely placed by their parents. Remember it is against the law for small children to travel on an adult's lap - and it is the driver of the vehicle who may face prosecution, not the business.

Before the last person leaves the house, ensure that someone is responsible for locking the premises and that the key is available for getting back in upon return.

THE CORTEGE

The timings for funerals should be as precise as possible and the conductor should know exactly how long it takes to get to the place of service.

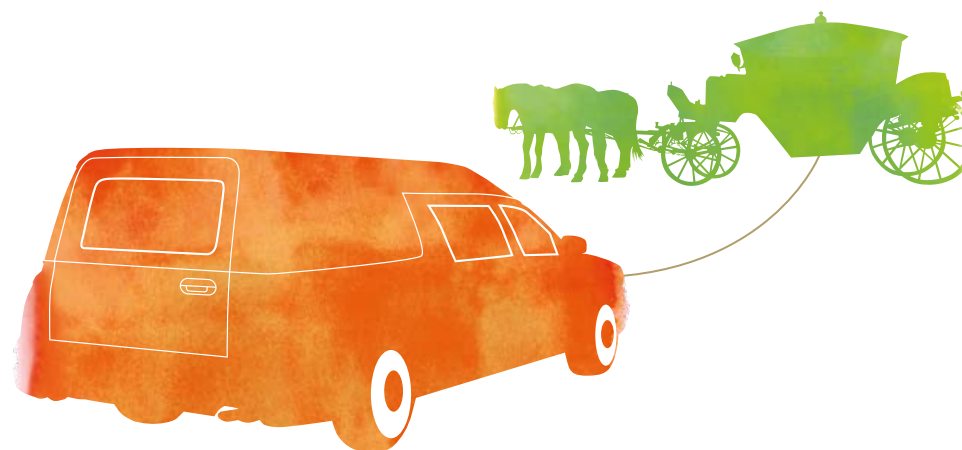
The cortege should arrive with enough time to allow any last minute checks. However, given that other services may be taking place, it is as important not to arrive too early as it is to arrive too late.

The speed of travel of the funeral cortege varies according to local custom.

General points, however, which should be watched, are as follows:

- All acceleration or deceleration must be gradual.
- Vehicles must travel close together (as long as it is safe to do so) to make it difficult for other vehicles to cut in.
- The hearse driver must endeavour to get the whole cortege out of turnings or through traffic lights as a unit; if the cortege is split up then he/she must go slowly until it reforms.
- The number and appearance of private following cars should be noted. However, the family should be warned that the funeral cortege may not be able to keep all private following cars together.

Walking or paging funerals is very much a matter for local custom and practice. In many parts of the country there is no walking or paging at all. In other parts walking or paging is done for a matter of 30/50 metres when leaving the house and, again, just before reaching the place of service.



ARRIVING AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE VENUE

On arrival at the place of the ceremony or service, the conductor or a team member should indicate to the drivers of private cars where they should park, allow the principal mourners to descend from their vehicles to speak with any friends.

If unable to do so prior to the arrival of the cortege, the conductor should follow these general procedures:

- Greet the officiant and discreetly deal with any financial matters or certification, including confirmation of the order of service.
- Check access to, and layout of, the church if visiting an unfamiliar church or chapel.
- Check on the correct siting of the trestles or wheeled bier.
- Instruct bearers to place flowers in church if requested to do so.
- Check service sheets and/or hymn and service books, also attendance cards are in pews or will be handed out.
- Check arrangements for music.
- If any donations have been requested, are the collection plate(s) and notice(s) in position?
- Ensure that all expected mourners are present.

When all is ready, the principal mourners are, according to their wishes, either escorted into the church or chapel and shown to their places, or invited to follow the coffin and all other attendees are invited to take their seats.

The bearers then respectfully shoulder the coffin, or place it on a wheeled bier and the officiant may lead the procession into the venue, followed by the conductor, the coffin and mourners. Some conductors may find it more appropriate to follow the coffin thus putting them in a better position to assist the bearers in lowering the coffin on to the trestles or the correct placing of the wheeled bier.

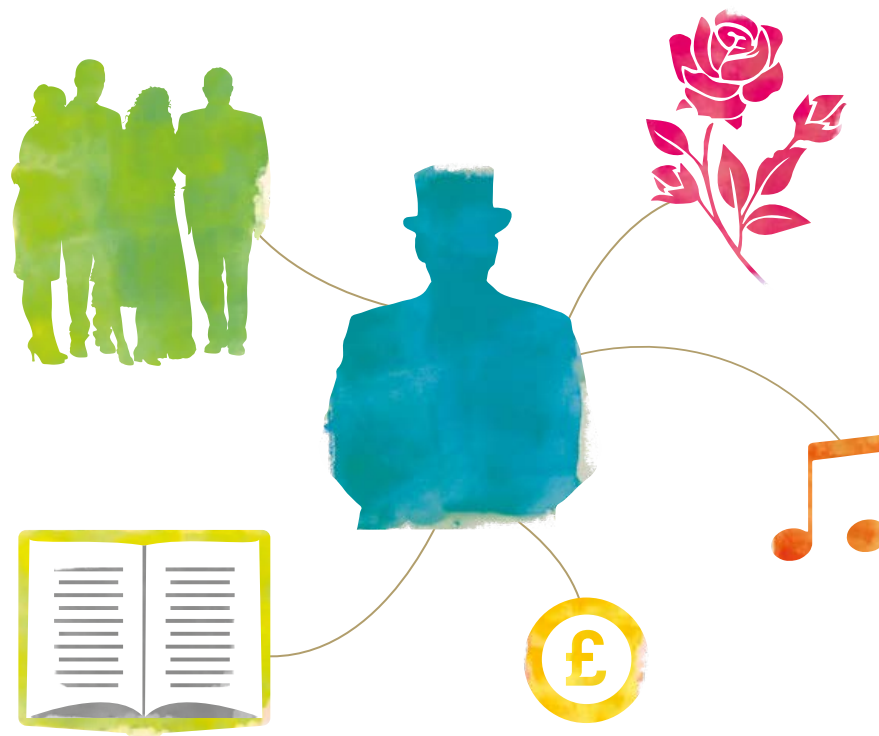
The conductor and bearers may then bow to the coffin and the conductor will turn to indicate the first pew for the principal mourners.

The bearers should quietly seat themselves in a pew already allocated to them or leave the church by a side aisle to attend to their vehicles and any flowers, depending on instructions given to them. It is always recommended the conductor remain in the church or chapel to be able to make sure of the smooth running of the funeral service and be available to mourners who may have queries or require assistance.

At the end of the service, the conductor must be ready to lead their bearers forward and supervise the turning and/or shouldering of the coffin. If you are not used to working with the officiant leading the service, do confirm with them beforehand an agreed signal.

Having done this the conductor can turn their attention to the mourners who should be standing and waiting for a sign to leave the church/chapel. As the principal mourners often go into the pew first, followed by several others, the conductor should ensure they have time to position themselves in the right order. The conductor will need to supervise the placing of the coffin in the hearse, check that any additional flowers have been noted and loaded and that all principal mourners are seated in the cars, ensure that the minister/officiant has left the church and is with the cortege, or has their own transport and arrange for someone to collect any surplus service sheets and attendance cards, if used.

It may be practical to arrange for written directions to be handed out to those wishing to attend the committal. If the committal is to take place in the churchyard or cemetery attached to the chapel and there is a distance to the graveside, it may still be convenient to use the cars. It is important to control the speed of the vehicles so that any mourners following on foot may keep pace.



AT THE GRAVESIDE

It is desirable that arrangements should have previously been made for the grave to be lined, either by the business' own staff, the cemetery staff or the gravedigger. The conductor should know whether the lowering will be done by his/her own staff or the cemetery staff and whether they have to provide lowering webbings.

Other points to check are:

- The most convenient/ safe approach to the grave?
- Which is the head of the grave?
- Is soil, in a suitable container; available for use at the time of committal and who casts it?
- Is any certificate or documentation required to be handed over to the burial ground supervisor?
- Is the officiant required to sign any record book?

Once these checks have been made, the conductor will usher the mourners around the grave, always considering their safety, and ensure sufficient space is left for the coffin to be placed on the struts over the grave or on the webbings previously laid out in readiness.

Consideration should have already been given as to what flowers, if any, should be left on the coffin. Once the mourners, the officiant and the coffin are in position, the committal service will commence and the conductor, conforming to the wishes of the officiant, will give the signal for the lowering of the coffin into the grave.

Safe manual handling at the graveside can depend on the weather conditions that day and the situation of the grave. Whenever it is possible and if this is usual procedure for the business, the main tribute may remain on the coffin until it rests over the grave.

Depending upon the local area the coffin is placed on pudlocks/putlocks, stays, struts or wooden battens. Whenever possible, these should be already in place over the grave to receive the coffin.

The standard procedures may be:

- All lowering tapes/webbing must be checked before use, any damaged or worn tapes/webbing must be discarded.
- The tapes/webbing must run under the coffin and through the coffin handles, this is to stop the tape from sliding off the end of the coffin during the lowering procedure.
- Each individual bearer will decide on his method of lowering the coffin, making a judgment on the weight and conditions.
- The coffin will be lowered at the conductor's instruction, hand over hand, ensuring that it is lowered in a level and dignified manner.
- Once the coffin is in the grave, the bearers making sure that any remaining tapes/webbing are neatly at the side of the grave, bow to the coffin (if that is usual custom) and are dismissed by conductor; to stand behind the officiant until the service has finished.

Once the committal ceremony is over; if customary, soil or petals should be offered for sprinkling on the coffin by the mourners.

The bearers will discreetly retire and give attention to the arranging of the floral tributes at a convenient spot near to the grave, grouped with an eye for effect and with cards readily readable, so that the mourners may look at the flowers before leaving the graveside.

The mourners should not be hurried at this point, and the gravediggers should, if necessary, be discouraged from approaching the grave until the mourners choose to leave. The bearers, before leaving the grave, should check that all equipment to be returned to the funeral home e.g. if the webbing/tape is recovered and placed in the vehicle.

Before leaving the grave, a note should be made of any memorial on the grave in the event of later instructions from the family, and the number of spaces, if any, still available in the grave.

Alternatively a temporary grave marker may be placed on the grave if the family requires it and the burial ground permits it. The mourners should then be escorted to the cars, and, before they move off, a check must be made on the return address, as an un-notified change of plan in this respect is quite common.

AT THE CREMATORIUM

Every crematorium has different times between each service, but the conductor must ensure that the cortege arrives with sufficient time allowed for the following procedures to be carried out regardless of whether there has been a prior church service.

Increasingly, fines are being levied for late-starting or overrunning services at crematoria and, whilst this is not always under the control of the Funeral Director, it is important that the family are made aware of such a possibility and, if necessary, a longer service time booked.

- Indicate car parking facilities for those driving their own cars.
- If meeting the family at the crematorium, identify and greet them, enquiring if everyone expected has arrived.
- Greet officiant and discreetly deal with any financial matters, introducing them to the family if necessary.
- Greet chapel attendant, checking on instructions for music - hymns, voluntaries, tapes, CD's - also on agreed committal procedure.
- Arrange for service sheets or attendance cards, if any, to be handed out and availability of seating.
- Escort mourners to seating or invite them to follow the coffin into the chapel. At the appointed hour and on the direction of the officiant, assist the bearers to move the coffin from the hearse and into the chapel, shouldered or using the wheeled bier, and place it on the catafalque.
- If mourners are following the coffin, show them to their seats.
- At the conclusion of the service, choose the moment to lead the mourners from the chapel.
- Direct mourners to where the flowers have been laid out by staff during the service.
- Instruct staff to collect any flowers from the chapel and place on display.
- Collect any service sheets, attendance cards, tapes, CDs etc. that may have been used.
- Offer to remove cards from the floral tributes at a later time and check if the flowers are to be returned to a family grave or other place.
- Attend to any specific points, such as choosing the site for the scattering or interment of cremated remains, if the client is not able to call in at the office at a later date.

If the cremated remains are to be buried elsewhere, the Funeral Director will probably have arranged for a casket or urn to be used, in which case they need to ensure that this is left at the crematorium for collection at a later time or collected in a simple container provided by the crematorium.

For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

LEAVE TAKING

Once the mourners have been accompanied to their returning venue the conductor, having sought assurance that everything was carried out to the satisfaction of the client, can take their leave - unless they have already done this at the place of committal.

It is seldom desirable to discuss any business at this juncture and the client should not be troubled with details that can be dealt with at a later date. If some point does need to be resolved, it is better to make an appointment to deal with the matter at another juncture.

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

There are a few occasions when even the best laid plans go awry.

There will be items left behind, for example, if a floral tribute is left at the premises, arranging for the flowers to be brought to the service and being available for the family to see will quickly rectify the situation. However a hearse that will not start cannot easily be remedied and there are very few companies who have back-up hearses available to bring out at a moment's notice.

However, honesty and decisiveness will diffuse most situations that the conductor comes across. If things do go wrong, the majority of families simply require recognition of this and an apology by the conductor. If the client wishes to make a complaint, try to resolve it through your company complaints process in the first instance, however the NAFD is on hand to provide support with its free complaints and adjudication/conciliation process. Please see Chapter 2 - Standards for further details.

RETURNING TO THE FUNERAL HOME

On returning to the funeral home, it may be advisable for the conductor to attach a report to the instructions, recording that everything was in order, and any issues that were encountered, together with any additional instructions that may have been received with regards to matters such as disposal of flowers, memorialisation, cremated remains, cars returning to a different address, donations etc.

All equipment used should be cleaned for future use.

Finally, as team leader, the conductor should conduct a debrief, enabling team members to discuss what went well, what could have been done differently and any questions or concerns they may have.

Chapter 20

When a Child Dies – Northern Ireland



WHEN A CHILD DIES

INTRODUCTION

An increased level of care and sensitivity is required when arranging the funeral of a child, whether it is a non-viable foetus, a stillborn infant or a young adult.

Parents need to be given the choice to participate in the care of their child as much as they wish. Arrangements, like any other funeral, should not be rushed as parents can often change their minds. The Funeral Director should ensure that all options regarding the types of funeral available are presented and that those making the arrangements are not pressed for an immediate decision.

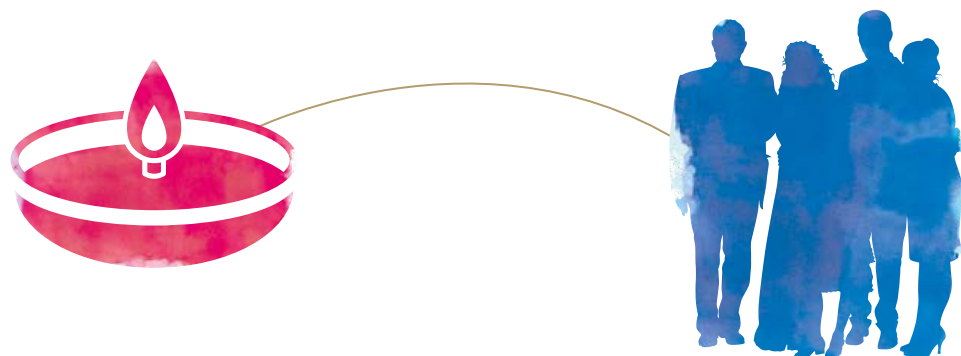
It is worth noting that parents who have lost their child during any stage of pregnancy, or shortly after the birth, can decide whether the funeral is arranged through the hospital or privately. Hospitals generally have a contracted Funeral Director to provide this service on their behalf and their policy can dictate whether they offer a cremation only or a choice of burial or cremation.

Communication with the family in these cases is mainly with the appropriate officer at the hospital. However, many hospitals provide the family with a date and time of the service on request so it may be that, at the time, the family will make contact directly with the Funeral Director.

IDENTIFICATION

Identification procedures for a child, regardless of stage of development or age, should be the same as those followed for an adult.

With regards to identification of the child it is important to ensure continuity in details across all documentation as well as the coffin nameplate.



For any updates please email: manual@nafed.org.uk

HOSPICE DEATHS

For children that have died from life-limiting illnesses, it is likely that they will have had some involvement with their local children's hospice and that parents may wish the hospice to play a role in caring for their child prior to the funeral. Staff may have formed a strong bond with the child and their family, and this additional support will likely be invaluable for the parents.

A hospice will sometimes have facilities for caring for a child, which could include a cuddle cot, refrigerated viewing chapel or bedroom with adjoining family accommodation, so that parents can remain close to their child up until the funeral. They may also have additional support services, such as counselling.

Removal of the child

When you are asked to bring a child into your care you may wish to give consideration to the type of equipment you will need and the type of removal vehicle you will use (depending upon the age of the child).

If the death occurs in a hospice, they may have particular procedures that they wish you to follow.

Please refer to Chapter 11 The First Call for further information and guidance.

Initial Care of the child after death

Advice of a British Institute of Embalmers qualified embalmer may be sought. Depending upon the age of the child embalming may not be required, but in all cases general care of the child can include:

- keeping the child cool
- moisturising soft tissues using an everyday moisturiser to prevent dehydration – mainly hands, face, lips and eyes
- Formaldehyde cream can be used (under the advice and supervision of a BIE qualified embalmer)

It is important to understand some special considerations when caring for the child. For example, a child with a neuro-disability can lose the ability to close their eyes, even during sleep, so prior to death their eyes may not be closed. Therefore, because the parents are used to seeing their child sleeping with their eyes open, it may not be appropriate to close them on death. It may also not be seen as necessary to close a mouth. Where appropriate, the hospice staff may be able to offer some guidance.

ARRANGING THE FUNERAL

Refer to the child by name – this is just as important after death. Recognise that there is sometimes a need to repeat the same explanation or information several times. Parents under stress may only absorb a little of what you have explained, so enough time must be given for them to ask questions. Some questions may be extremely difficult for parents to ask, particularly if they think it is an unusual request. However, these questions may be important, not only to inform and empower parents but to allay their fears. Information should be honest and clear – use simple explanations where possible and do not make assumptions about what parents might know or want to do.

As with any funeral arrangement, it is always best to assume nothing. Discuss the type of service that the parents would like, whether that is to be a religious or non-faith service. Have information to hand on the local options available, for example, children's graves in local cemeteries or ideas on personalisation of the service, such as appropriate readings, music etc.

As outlined in the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM) policy and guidance for baby and infant funerals:

<http://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/index.php?pagename=Baby%20and%20Infant%20Funerals>

Parents have a right to arrange a private funeral, whether it be burial or cremation.

If cremation of foetal remains, a baby or young child is intended, they must be advised that there may be no ashes.

If burial is intended, the parents may request that a child be placed in a purchased adult grave, specifying that sufficient depth be allowed for further interments. Other options may be the purchase of a child's plot or in a shared grave. If this is the case, a discussion around memorial regulations is advised.

There is a wide range of coffins for babies and children to choose from - cloth covered, individual colourful designs, willow, etc, and although many Funeral Directors offer an option which often isn't charged for, parents still need to be given a choice. It should be noted that children's coffins may be shaped at the shoulders, oval shaped or rectangular. As parents often wish to place toys or other possessions in the coffin, it should be of sufficient size to allow for this.

Parents and other family members/friends may wish to spend time with the child prior to the funeral. Great care should be taken with the preparation of the child before a visit to the funeral home.

Some parents may like to be involved in washing their child and choose clothes for them to wear, and siblings may also like to be involved in the choice of clothes. In the case of a baby, the family may request they rest in their own Moses basket or carrycot. Parents can find considerable benefit in holding the child, and may also wish to take photographs, so they need reassurance that it is usual to wish to record these last memories.

If members of the family wish to hold the child it is advisable for the Funeral Director to pick up the child and hand him/her to them. In the case of a baby, cradle the baby, supporting the head, just as you would if the baby were alive. Fathers and mothers may not know how to be with their child, particularly if it is their first one. Watching you and observing your tenderness can guide them. Ask parents if they would like you to cut a lock of their child's hair – never do anything without the permission you would afford the parents of a live child.

On the day of the funeral, depending on the size of the coffin a number of options are open. If there are a large number of flowers a normal hearse could be used, an estate type vehicle may be suitable, the coffin could be carried on a platform in the front passenger seat of a limousine or one of the mourners may like to carry the coffin in the rear of a limousine or suitable saloon car. If siblings will be attending the funeral, be aware of the laws for child restraints for children up to the age of 13.

As with all deaths, referral to the Coroner may be required under certain circumstances. Regardless of the child's age and depending on whether the family may require a burial or cremation, usual Coroner procedures will apply (see Chapter 15 Coroner Procedures Northern Ireland).

DEFINITIONS

There are medical definitions but, for our purposes, put in simple terms these are as follows:

Non-Viable Foetus – a child born before the 24th week of gestation that is not capable of surviving outside of the womb.

Stillbirth – a child born dead at or after the 24th week of gestation.

Livebirth – a child born alive irrespective of gestation

Non-Viable Foetus

A non-viable foetus is not recognised under current legislation and, therefore, registration of the death of a non-viable foetus is not required. As there is no specific statutory legislation for dealing with the burial or cremation of foetal remains either, it is a matter for each burial or cremation authority to consider how such remains may be disposed of.

Again, the ICCM, in consultation with the Stillbirth and Neonatal death charity (SANDS), has issued guidance on how foetal remains should be handled. This information can be found on the ICCM's website - <http://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/index.php?pagename=foetalremains>.

Paperwork Required:

Cremation:

Certificate of Medical Practitioner/Midwife

Form A – Application for Cremation

Particulars of Cremation and Disposal of Ashes

Burial:

Certificate of Medical Practitioner/Midwife

Notice of Interment and Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial (if a new grave is to be purchased within a Cemetery). This is not required if the child is to be interred in a shared grave. Grave deeds would also be required if the child is to be interred in an existing grave within a Cemetery. If the wish is for the child to be interred in a Churchyard, permission must be sought from the relevant authority prior to any arrangements being made

Stillborn

Under the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) order 1976, it is required that stillbirths be registered within one year from the date of the stillbirth. Registration can take place at any District Registrar's office within Northern Ireland.

Qualified Informants

The following persons are deemed as qualified to give information concerning a birth providing they have knowledge of the particulars needing to be registered:

- the parents of the child
- any aunt, uncle, grandfather and grandmother of the child
- the occupier of the house in which the child was born
- any person present at the birth
- any person having charge of the child

It is worth noting that if the child's parents are not married (to one another) the Registrar will be unable to register and record the father's details without:

- a joint declaration being made by both parents that the stated father, is in fact the father of the child.
- if the mother of the child is unable to attend, she may, using a prescribed form, declare that the person wishing to register is the father of the child and the father of the child, must confirm this is the case.

There are a number of other procedures to be followed should the child's father wish to register the birth but is not married to the child's mother. These can be found listed under Section 14 (Registration of father where parents not married) of the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

This Act can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk>.

What to take to the Registrar

The Registrar will require from the informant:

- the Medical Certificate of Stillbirth issued by a registered Medical Practitioner or registered Midwife that was present at the stillbirth or has examined the body of the stillborn child.

Information Required for Registration

The informant to the Registrar is required to provide the following information:

- date of stillbirth
- district and place of stillbirth
- gender of child
- full name of child
- the forename(s) and surname of child (if wished)
- mother's full name and maiden name (if applicable)
- mother's usual address
- mother's date of birth
- occupation (or last occupation)
- father's full name
- father's date of birth
- father's occupation
- father's usual address

Registrar will issue:

- Stillbirth Certificate (this is a short certificate showing that the stillbirth has been registered, provided free of charge). Alternatively, the family may purchase a Certified Copy of Entry.
- G.R.O. 34 – Certificate of Disposal

Paperwork Required:

Cremation:

G.R.O. 34 – Certificate of Disposal

Cremation H –

Application for Cremation of a Stillborn Child

Cremation I –

Certificate of Registered Medical Attendance or Certified Midwife in Attendance

Cremation F – Authorisation for Cremation of a Stillborn Child by Medical Referee

Particulars of Cremation and Disposal of Ashes

Burial:

G.R.O. 34 – Certificate of Disposal

Notice of Interment and Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial (if a new grave is to be purchased within a Cemetery). Grave deeds would also be required if the child is to be interred in an existing grave within a Cemetery. If the wish is for the child to be interred in a Churchyard, permission must be sought from the incumbent before confirming any arrangements made.

Clarification should be sought on charges from other third parties, such as privately operated crematoria/burial grounds/cemeteries or officiants, together with any fees charged for your funeral directing services, so that an accurate estimate of any costs can be provided.

Fees for the funeral of a child

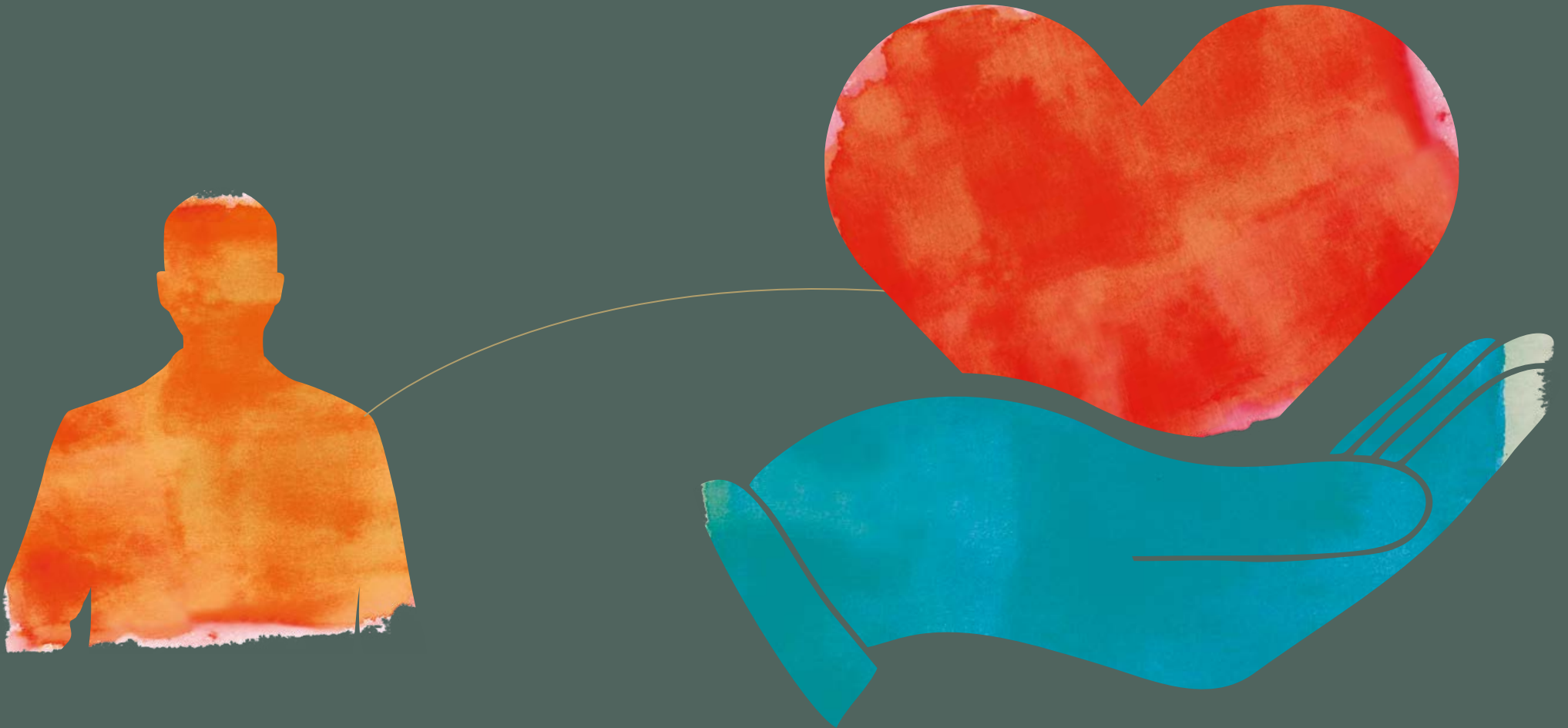
Very often, funeral businesses will have their own written policy in regard to charging for children's funerals

Clarification should be sought on charges from third parties, such as crematoria/burial grounds/cemeteries or officiants, together with any fees charged for your funeral directing services, so that an accurate estimate of any costs can be provided.

In England, Scotland and Wales, local authority burial and cremation fees for children are no longer payable, however at the time of writing (July 2019) there was no clarification as to whether a similar scheme would be extended to Northern Ireland.

Chapter 2I

Bequeathal – Northern Ireland



DONATION OF A BODY FOR ANATOMICAL EXAMINATION

INTRODUCTION

Some people would like their body to be of use after their death. One way can be to donate it for medical research. Donating bodies (referred to as cadaver in the Medical School) can be a valuable resource for educating medical students and healthcare professionals about the structure and function of a human body. In addition to their structural value, donated bodies can also be utilised by clinicians for more specialised training courses.

Donated bodies may be used for:

- anatomical research
- education or training relating to human health
- research in connection with disorders, or the functioning, of the human body

Donated bodies are not used for research into specific diseases, nor will organs be donated for transplant.

There is no upper age limit for an application to bequeath a body, but potential donors must be over seventeen years old.

REGULATION

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) - (www.hta.gov.uk) - regulates the use of bodies donated for anatomical examination within a legal framework as set out in the Human Tissue Act (2004). The HTA receives around 2,000 enquiries a year about donation.

The HTA does not collect or receive bodies or other human materials, but it licenses and inspects the organisations that do, making sure that these organisations remove, store, and use brains, bodies and tissues in an appropriate, respectful and well-managed way and that the wishes of individual patients and their families are respected.

Within Northern Ireland, Queen's University Medical School is the sole recipient of body donations.



PROCEDURES PRIOR TO DEATH

Queen's University can only consider donations from people resident in Northern Ireland.

A useful leaflet is available from Queen's University on their website, [by clicking here](#).

If you are asked for guidance by someone wishing to donate their body, they will need to contact Queens University which will provide them with consent forms, which must be completed and signed in the presence of a witness.

Centre for Biomedical Sciences Education (Anatomy)

School of Medicine, Dentistry & Biomedical Sciences

Queen's University Belfast

Whitla Medical Building 97 Lisburn Road

BELFAST BT9 7AE

Tel: (028) 9097 2131 **Email:** anatomy@qub.ac.uk

The applicant should return one completed consent form to the Centre Office (Anatomy) and retain the other with the Will/personal papers.

Under the Human Tissue Act (2004), there is no limit on the length of time a donated body can be retained for examination. The Queen's University Medical School normally retains donated remains for a period of 1-3 years. However, if an applicant wishes to restrict the time that the entire body is retained, they have an opportunity to do so in the consent form (under question 1).

Under certain circumstances parts of the body are very useful for teaching and therefore the medical school may want to retain such parts following the conclusion of anatomical examination. This is done only with the express permission of the donor. If permission is given for parts of the body to be retained, it should be noted that the medical school will not return any retained body parts or notify relatives of their disposal.

The donor is also asked to consent to the medical school taking and retaining images of a donated body. **This may be useful for the receiving institution to prepare images of parts of the body for:**

- education or training relating to human health; or
- research in connection with disorders, or the functioning, of the human body.

The taking and displaying of images (including photographs, films and electronic images) is outside the scope of the Human Tissue Act 2004. The HTA however does endorse good practice principles set out in guidance issued by relevant professional and regulatory bodies.

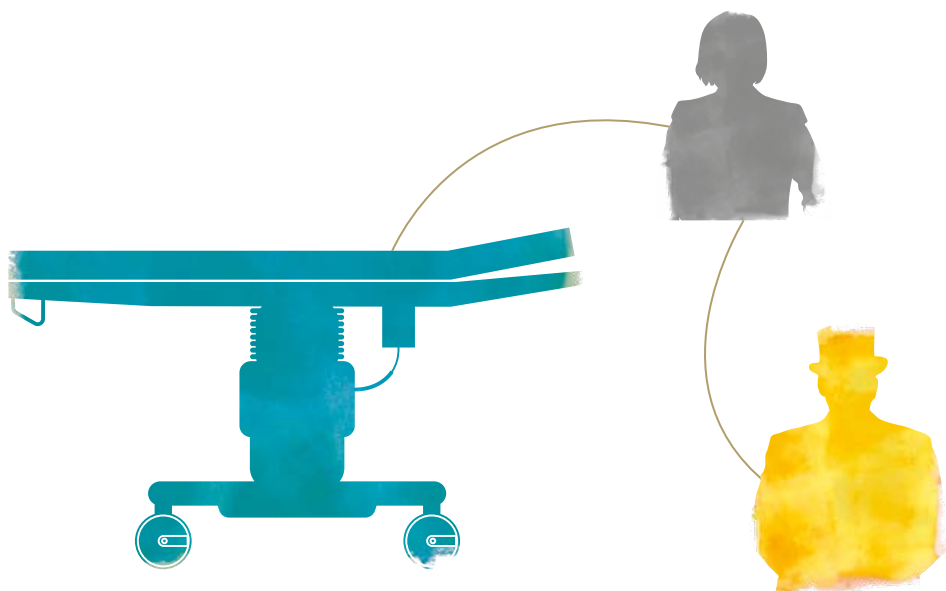
Donors are given assurance they will not be identifiable in any images taken. For further information, a donor (or the Funeral Director on their behalf) can refer to the HTA's Codes of Practice which is available on their website.

Expenses connected with the removal of the body and its cremation or burial are normally borne by the Medical School. Provision is made for a simple funeral with cremation at Roselawn Crematorium or interment in Roselawn Cemetery, Belfast.

The Next of Kin/Executor will be expected to meet the extra costs arising from any special funeral arrangements.

It is not always possible for the medical school to accept a body donation and the donor should ensure that his/her relatives are informed of this as it may become their responsibility to make and pay for funeral arrangements.

Donors are also able to change their mind at any stage and should contact their chosen medical school in writing to confirm this, together with advising relatives and whoever may be holding their Will.



PROCEDURES AFTER DEATH

The doctor who attended the donor during his/her last illness should be asked to provide a **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)** as soon as possible after death. It is important to inform the doctor that the deceased has donated their body to the Medical School Queen's University, Belfast.

The death should be reported as soon as possible to the Centre Office (Anatomy) at Queen's University, Belfast telephone number: (028) 9097 2131 (during working hours).

If a death occurs during the night, notification should be given as soon as possible the following morning.

Outside of normal working hours (including weekends and bank holidays) when the Centre Office is closed, the switchboard operator at the Belfast City Hospital (028) 9032 924 1 will provide the appropriate number to contact. The Medical School will contact the doctor who has certified the death and together they will make a decision as to whether or not the donated body can be accepted.

Although not exhaustive, the following is a guide to reasons for non-acceptance:

- post mortem examination
- transmissible diseases (such as Hepatitis, HIV, AIDS, Septicaemia, Tuberculosis (TB));
- sudden onset of senile dementia/Alzheimer's disease/CJD;
- infective jaundice;
- MS (Multiple Sclerosis): depending on the severity of the condition, cases of MS may or may not be suitable;
- recent history of C. Difficile I MRSA;
- severe peripheral vascular disease and oedema;
- recent operations: where the wound has not healed.
- arthritic deformity (e.g. severe deformity of joints).
- obesity: excessive weight
- extensive Cancer
- organs donated for transplantation: Where organs have been donated for transplantation, the body will not be accepted; the only exception being the donation of the corneas of the eyes; and
- skin condition: The doctor will be asked about the condition of the donor's skin, and in particular about the presence of bedsores. Small sores may be acceptable, but deep sores are not.

In addition to the medical exclusions, it is not possible for the medical school to accept a donation if a death occurs abroad or if a death occurs over the Christmas or Easter periods when the medical schools are closed. This is because of time delays in getting the deceased into the care of the medical school. Normally a period of up to three days, in refrigerated conditions, is considered an acceptable period of time.

If the donation cannot be accepted, the relatives or executors will be informed as soon as possible as the responsibility for arranging and funding a burial or cremation may, at this point, rest with them.

If the donation is accepted, the medical school will arrange for the University's Funeral Directors to collect and transport the body to the Medical School, QUB.

The Next of Kin/Executor should take the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) to the office of the local Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages and advise him/her of the wishes of the deceased. The Registrar will issue a Disposal Certificate (Form GRO 21) which must be returned to the Centre Office (Anatomy).

The Next of Kin/Executor will be sent additional forms which will need to be completed and also returned to the Centre Office (Anatomy). It is very important that the university receives these documents as soon as possible.

THE BEREAVED FAMILY

Arranging and holding a service for a loved one can help the grieving process when a body has been accepted by a medical school. Consideration should be given as to how the Funeral Director can help the family remember and celebrate the life of a loved one. This might include suggesting a memorial service - indeed some medical schools arrange services of thanksgiving themselves.

There are some potential emotive issues that the Funeral Director may need to consider surrounding bequeathal:

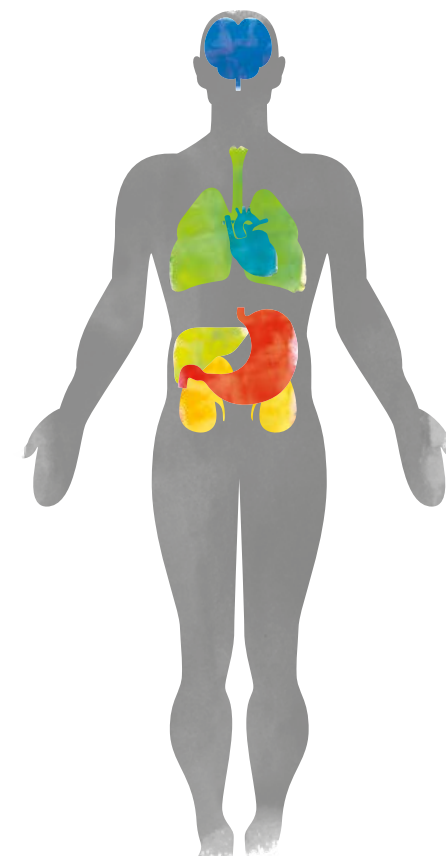
- it may be that the next of kin were not in agreement with the deceased's decision to donate their body;
- if the body isn't accepted, a family may have to both arrange and fund a funeral unexpectedly – something they are not prepared either emotionally or financially to do;
- is it possible to arrange viewing if the family wish this in the short time frame between death and acceptance by the medical school;
- if the body isn't accepted, the family have the emotional issue of not being able to carry out the deceased's wishes.

DOCUMENTATION

Some of the documentation required for bequeathal is mentioned above.

In summary these are as follows:

- Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)
- Disposal Certificate (Form GRO 21)
- Certified Copy of an Entry (Certified copy of Death Certificate)
- Queen's University Medical School consent form
- HTA(A) 1 – this form is completed upon donation of the body and is the authorisation for use of a body for anatomical examination, education, training and research.
- HTA(A) 3 – this form is completed by the deceased's GP confirming the identification of the deceased and that he/she was not suffering from a notifiable infection immediately prior to their death
- HTA(A) 5 – this form is issued by the medical school to the Registrar confirming the deceased has donated their body.
- HTA(A) 6 & HTA(A) 7 – these forms are for the 'giving and receiving' of the body by the medical school. For example, the Funeral Director transferring the deceased to the school would sign the HTA(A) 6 to confirm the body has been delivered and the representative of the medical school would sign the HTA(A) 7 confirming the body has been received.
- Cremation Form A – Application for Cremation
- Cremation Form F – Authority to Cremate – Issued by Medical Referee

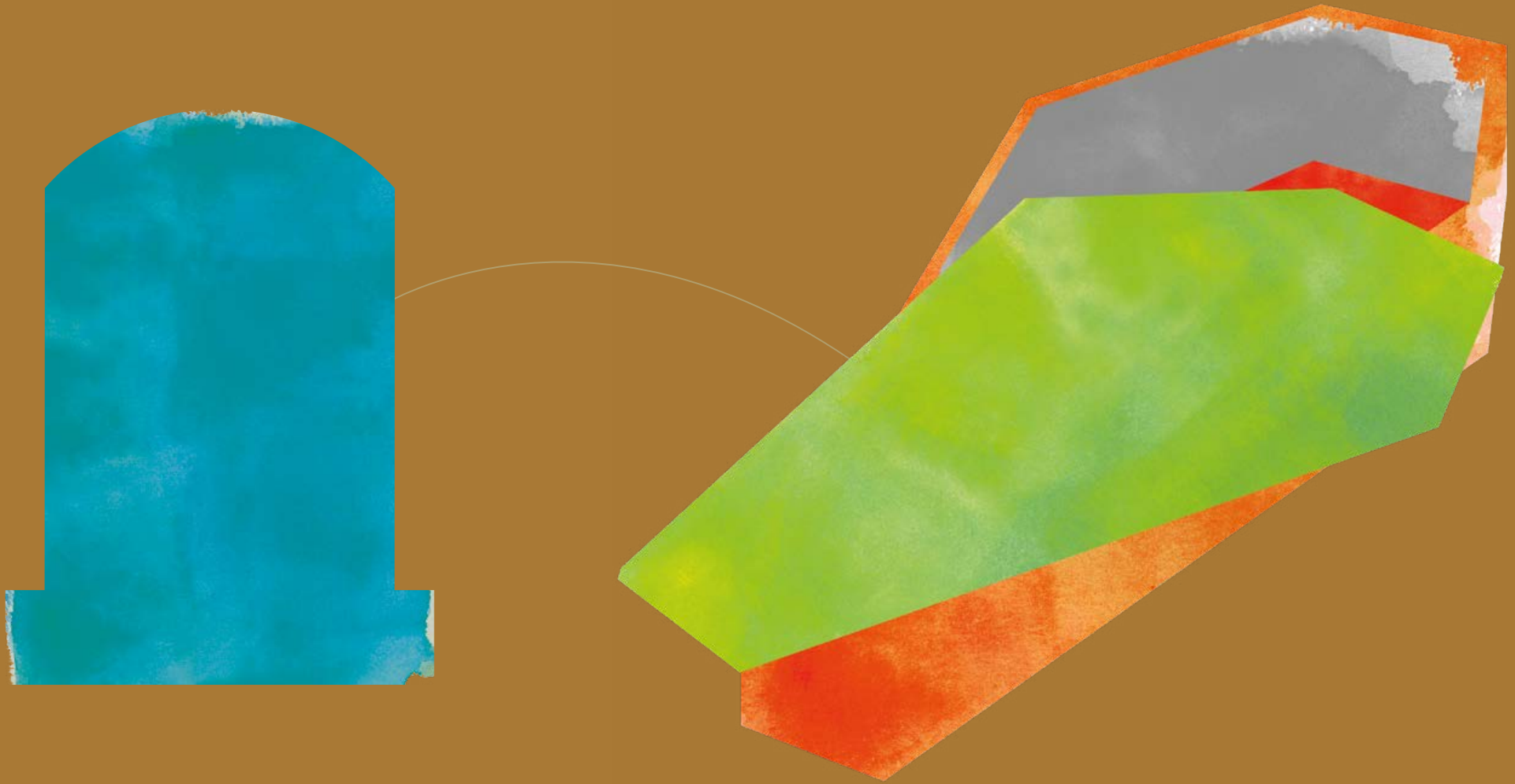


For further information on bequeathal in Northern Ireland, please click here:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/mdbs/Workwithus/BodyBequest/>

Chapter 22

Exhumation – Northern Ireland



INTRODUCTION

Exhumation is defined as being the removal of a coffin containing human remains, or cremated remains, from the place where they were interred.

Both ecclesiastical and secular law start from the central assumption that once human remains (including those remains that have been cremated) are buried they should not be disturbed. Should there be any cause to move or examine the remains after this point, an exhumation license is required.

Exhumations happen very rarely and cannot go ahead without the necessary legal authorisation. Funeral Directors are often contacted for guidance and support should a family wish an exhumation to take place, and should ensure they follow the steps below.

It is important to ensure the cemetery is contacted in the first instance to ascertain what their procedures are relating to an exhumation, as there are no legally-required standards and they may vary from cemetery to cemetery.

An exhumation may be requested for a variety of legitimate reasons:

- to identify a body;
- to transfer a body from one grave to another;
- to cremate a body;
- to recover jewellery, documents or other artefacts;
- for the purpose of holding a first, or further, inquest;
- for purposes of health;
- to enable road schemes to proceed; or
- as part of criminal proceedings.

REGULATIONS

The Burial Ground Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 states

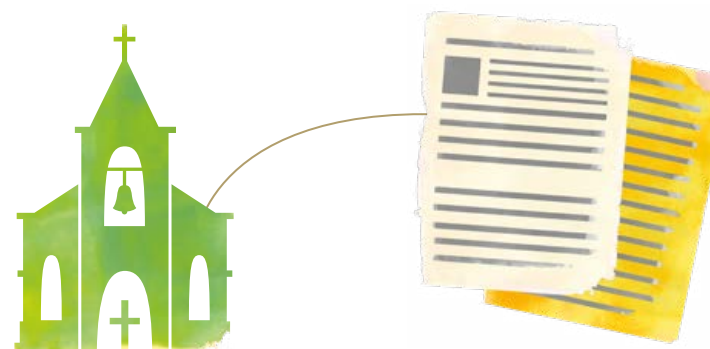
'a person shall not cause or permit a body or the remains of a body, other than the cremated remains, to be removed from one place of burial to another or to be exhumed unless that person –

- (a) first obtains the written consent of the Department and
- (b) carried out the removal or exhumation in accordance with Part III of Schedule 1'

Part III of Schedule 1 states:

- (a) The removal or exhumation of a body, or the remains of a body, shall be conducted with due care and attention to decency under the supervision of an environmental health officer appointed by the council and in accordance with such conditions as he may, after consultation with the Director of Public Health, impose with respect to matters affecting or likely to affect the public health.
- (b) The sub-divisional commander of the [Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)] sub-division in which the burial ground is situated shall be notified of the date and time of the exhumation by the person who applied for the written consent of the Department.

Section 11(4) of the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 provides that a Coroner 'may direct the exhumation of a body which has been buried within his district and the consent of any other authority or person to any exhumation so directed shall not be required'.



WHO CAN REQUEST AN EXHUMATION?

1. Personal representative of the deceased.

The consent of the next of kin is normally required, unless under exceptional circumstances (e.g. they are unable to give consent through illness or frailty, or the whereabouts of the next of kin are not known).

For the purposes of an exhumation licence, order of kinship is detailed below:

- a. Spouse of civil partner
- b. All children and both parents
- c. All brothers and sisters
- d. All grandchildren and grandparents

2. A divorced partner or unmarried partner is not considered next of kin.

3. The Coroner.

The Coroner may order an exhumation of a deceased person who is buried within the Northern Ireland where it appears necessary for the body to be examined. This may be for the purpose of holding an inquest into the person's death, or for any criminal proceedings in respect of the death. A Coroner's warrant to exhume would be required in this circumstance.

4. The Local Authority

5. The Department for Transport

AUTHORISATION TO EXHUME

Coroner's Warrant to Exhume

Schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 states:

A senior coroner may order the exhumation of a person's body if sub-paragraph (2) or (3) applies.

(2) This sub-paragraph applies if:

- (a) the body is buried in England and Wales (whether or not within the coroner area for which the coroner is appointed), and
- (b) the coroner thinks it necessary for the body to be examined.

(3) This sub-paragraph applies if:

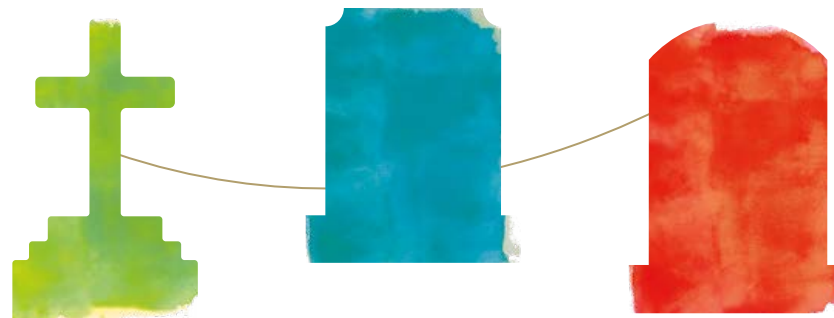
- (a) the body is buried within the coroner area for which the coroner is appointed, and
- (b) the coroner thinks it necessary for the body to be examined for the purpose of any criminal proceedings that have been instituted or are contemplated in respect of:

- (i) the death of the person whose body it is, or
- (ii) the death of another person who died in circumstances connected with the death of that person.

Ministry of Justice

As mentioned above, under the Burial Act 1857, Section 25 (as amended), a licence is required to exhume a body or cremated remains from unconsecrated land. Both the application for a licence and attached guidance notes are available at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/326818/application-exhumation-licence.pdf



Ecclesiastical faculty

It is an offence to remove any human remains from consecrated ground unless the following is complied with:

- the body or remains is or are removed in accordance with a faculty granted by the consistory court of the diocese.
- the body or remains is or are removed in accordance with the approval of a proposal under the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 by the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England or a fabric advisory committee. If an exhumation from a churchyard is requested, the Incumbent of the churchyard should initially be contacted for guidance on the procedure to follow to obtain a Faculty Licence. A fee will apply.

If an exhumation from a Churchyard is requested, the Incumbent of the Churchyard should initially be contacted for guidance on the procedure to follow to obtain a Faculty licence. A fee will apply.

WAR GRAVES

The website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) can be found here:

<http://www.cwgc.org>

Contact details are available through the site. Any enquiries regarding an exhumation from a war grave should initially be made through the CWGC.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

For multiple exhumations, where relatives or representatives of the deceased person are not involved, generally a single licence will suffice for each burial ground. Normally these grounds tend to be unused and over a century old.

Where relatives wish to exhume members of the family under the above regulations, single licences are required for each grave - though not necessarily for each person in that grave - each case being treated on its merits. The Ministry of Justice requires that the remains are interred in as similar a manner as possible to the original interment.

Before removing any human remains, or disposing of any tombstone, monument or other memorial of a deceased person, Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Churches, Places of Worship and Burial Grounds) Regulations 1950 requires the person in whom the land is vested to:

- a) publish, in a local newspaper, a notice of intention so to do at least once during each of two successive weeks with an interval between each publication of at least six days and display a like notice in a conspicuous place in the burial ground;
- b) serve a like notice on the appropriate denominational authority;
- c) if the remains were interred in, or the memorial placed on, the land within twenty-five years prior to the date of the first publication of the said notice, serve a like notice on the personal representatives or next of kin (or in the event of their being untraceable any known relative) of the deceased person.

PROCEDURE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Funeral Directors are often contacted for guidance and support should a family wish an exhumation to take place.

It is important to ensure the following:

1. A letter of authorisation from the applicant requesting the exhumation is obtained.
The wording should clearly state that the Funeral Director is able to act "in all matters relative to the proposed exhumation" on their behalf.
2. Guide the applicant (if requested) through the application form to ensure all accurate details are obtained.
3. Ascertain positive reasons for exhumation.
4. It should be explained that if the owner of the grave is not the applicant, they will also need to provide their permission for the grave to be disturbed. Deeds should be made available to ensure the accurate location of the grave.
5. Advise that if the remains are to be exhumed from a 'public' grave, the consent to the disturbance of the other remains and their subsequent re-interment must be obtained in writing from the nearest surviving relative of each person buried in the grave.
6. If exhumation is requested to enable the remains to be cremated, the law requires that statutory forms Cremation 4 – Medical Certificate and Cremation 5 – Confirmatory Medical Certificate be completed, if the remains have been buried for less than one year. In view of the difficulties that may be experienced in obtaining these forms, it may be prudent to defer any action until the year has elapsed after which a Secretary of State's Order to Cremate will be required.
7. Once Part A of the application has been completed, the application must be sent to the burial authority involved, who completes Part B of the form. The completed form is then returned to: Coroners, Burials, Cremation and Inquiries Team, 102 Petty France, London SW1H 9AJ. There is no fee required to accompany the application.
8. The application would normally be decided within 20 days of receipt. The Ministry of Justice however will consider, with a valid reason, the application as a matter of urgency.
9. Once permission for the exhumation has been granted, the Superintendent of the cemetery or the Church Incumbent will set a time and date and advise the Funeral Director who should, in turn, communicate this information to their client. Normally, the first condition of the licence is that 'the removal shall be affected with due care and attention to decency, early in the morning'. It may be prudent to notify the police of what is to occur; rather than have someone reporting unusual happenings in the cemetery at first light.
10. The exhumation itself is normally carried out by the cemetery staff and, generally, the coffin/casket becomes the responsibility of the Funeral Director. The Funeral Director will be asked to ensure that, on attendance at the exhumation, they provide a new coffin of sufficient size to accommodate the original coffin that is to be removed from the grave. If the original coffin is still intact, the deceased's body is not removed from that coffin but both the body and coffin is lifted out of the grave and placed into the new coffin, ready to be transported.
11. The local Environmental Health Officer must be notified as the cemetery/churchyard may insist they be present, particularly in view of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Adequate protective clothing and on-site washing facilities may also be a requirement.
12. The area of exhumation must be screened from public view for privacy purposes, allowing access to authorised personnel only.
13. If the re-interment is to be at another place, that grave should also have been prepared, making allowance for the size of the new coffin.
14. If the exhumation is to recover jewellery or other valuables, it is a wise precaution to have a witness present e.g. the cemetery superintendent.
15. The cemetery or churchyard should ensure that enough time is allowed for the work involved and that adequate lifting materials are available.
16. An exhumation may be witnessed by a personal representative appointed by the next of kin/applicant.

It is important that, throughout the exhumation procedure, the privacy and respect for the deceased person is maintained at all times. It is equally important to ensure that members of the public are not caused distress through the witnessing of an exhumation.

EQUIPMENT

As a general rule, the following equipment may be required:

- a coffin large enough to hold the first coffin and all contents;
- a sieve, to ensure any small parts that have broken away can be captured;
- personal Protective Equipment (PPE) e.g. gloves;
- appropriate outdoor clothing/footwear;
- shovels;
- webbing;
- appropriate vehicle to transfer the deceased person, either back into the care of the Funeral Director or to the secondary location;
- privacy screen;
- sawdust;
- on site washing facilities; and
- disinfectant – to cover the surrounding area of the open grave



Chapter 23

Repatriation – Northern Ireland



REPATRIATION

When someone dies in a different country (or legal jurisdiction within the United Kingdom) to the one the funeral will take place in, the Funeral Director will more than likely be requested to arrange transport (repatriation) of the deceased person to the place where the funeral will be held.

Sometimes there is insurance in place which covers the cost of repatriation. However, in about 10% of cases there is no cover at all.

In cases where insurance exists the Funeral Director will be informed by the repatriating company either that the coffin containing the deceased person will be available for collection at a specified airport, at a particular time, or that it will be delivered direct to the funeral home. Where no insurance cover exists, the Funeral Director can either use one of the specialist companies dealing with repatriation or carry out the arrangements themselves.

Before undertaking repatriation, the Funeral Director should ascertain whether the client has the means to pay what can become an expensive account. An option that may be available in such circumstances is for the deceased to be cremated in the country of death (where cremation is allowed) and the cremated remains returned to this country.

Please note, there are email scams which occasionally circulate with regards to repatriation. The sender purports to have a deceased relative abroad and asks for details of costs to repatriate. Some even ask for bank details and even send a copy of a 'death certificate.' Be very careful to check out the details carefully – if a certificate is received, forward it to the relevant embassy for verification and never give company bank details out.



For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

Asking for specialist assistance

Within the NAFD there are a number of repatriation firms, including smaller one-man and family businesses; medium-sized experienced specialist firms offering international and domestic repatriation services; and large international businesses, offering repatriation as one of a number of service areas. This choice offers NAFD members the flexibility to choose the firm that's right for them, depending upon client circumstances.

You can find details of these supplier members in the NAFD Buyers Guide and also via the NAFD website which has a Supplier search facility at the following link:

<https://nafd.org.uk/about-us/supplier-members/>

In addition, Rowland Brothers International operates the NAFD Repatriation Helpline for member firms. You can contact them as follows:

UK Freephone 0800 917 3585

RBI Helpline +44(0)20 8684 2324

info@rowlandbrothersinternational.com

www.rowlandbrothersinternational.com

A GUIDE TO REPATRIATION

Receiving a deceased person after repatriation

On receipt of the first call, the Coroner for the area where the deceased person will be lying, or where the burial or cremation is to take place, must be informed that a deceased person from abroad will be lying within their jurisdiction.

Upon being told of the arrival of the deceased person, by air, for collection by the Funeral Director, make sure you request the flight details and, if possible, the Air Waybill number must be obtained - this is a number given to all air cargo items and is the only accepted means of identification recognised by airlines.

If possible, you should request a full set of copies by fax or email from the overseas Funeral Director, in addition to the originals accompanying the deceased. It will be necessary to take a vehicle that is large enough to take the zinc lined coffin containing the deceased person. The Funeral Director should also be prepared to apply for and pay Customs Clearance and Airline Handling Charges.

NB. It is essential that the imported remains of any deceased person be positively identified.

Upon receipt of the deceased person and accompanying documents, a check should be made to see if the documents are translated into English. If not, in many instances (but not all) they will have to be translated by an acknowledged translation service – the NAFD Repatriation Helpline can provide this service - or a School of Languages may help. The documents should then be taken to the Coroner for the area in which the deceased person is lying, or in which the funeral is to take place.

If the death was sudden, unexpected, accidental, violent or where there is no clear medical cause of death, the Coroner will take jurisdiction and an inquest may be necessary and the Coroner's Burial Order (Form 101) or a Coroner's Certificate for Cremation (Form Cremation 6) will be issued.

In cases where a number of deceased persons are being brought into England and Wales following, for example, an air disaster, it is likely that the Coroner at the port of entry will initiate the necessary enquiries; in any event the relevant coroners will confer to arrange a central venue for the inquest.

It should be noted that all Coroners, once they have been advised of the death, will issue Form Cremation 6 for cremation if a death is due to natural causes and they are satisfied with the certificates which have been issued in the country of death. The Coroner would not issue Form 101 if the death was from natural causes. It would be necessary to seek a Registrar's Certificate of No Liability to Register.

In a situation where a Coroner does not think it necessary to order a post-mortem and/or hold an inquest, attendance at the Registrar for the sub-district where the burial is to take place is required to obtain a Certificate of No Liability to Register but only after the Coroner has issued a letter to that Registrar stating that:

"I write to confirm that, so far as I am concerned, the body of the above named may be disposed of and you may issue a Certificate of No Liability to Register." The Certificate of No Liability to Register must be handed to the cemetery or burial authority prior to the burial.

NB. A Certificate of No Liability to Register is not required when the Coroner has completed any of the sections of Cremation 6.

For any updates please email: manual@nafd.org.uk

Deaths in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles

If a person dies in Northern Ireland and is being repatriated back to the UK mainland then the death needs to be registered in Northern Ireland with the Form GRO21 issued by the Registrar's Office along with copy Death Certificates. Application will also need to be made to the Coroner's Office for an Out of Country Authorisation Form to be issued (Form 18) to allow the deceased to leave the jurisdiction.

Should the families chosen means of disposal be that of cremation, then the Belfast Crematorium Form B (The Medical Certificate) and Form C (which verifies the information on Form B) will be required to be completed by a doctor in Northern Ireland who last attended the deceased - OR a Form 20A (Coroner's Authority for Cremation). The Belfast City Council form, providing information on whether a hazardous implant is present and whether it has been removed must also be completed by the doctor who completes Form B or by the Coroner

The Coffin:

If burial is requested, the grave should not be prepared until the dimensions and shape of the coffin have been determined.

Where cremation is requested, the coffin must not be zinc lined and must be of a size suitable to enter the cremator. The majority of coffins and caskets from overseas are finished with a lacquer and therefore it may be necessary to re-coffin the deceased person, in a coffin or casket acceptable to the Environmental Protection Act.

Registration of deaths occurring abroad:

Where a death took place overseas, that death cannot be registered in the UK. One of the reasons being that British consular mortuary staff are not permitted to record a clear medical cause of death on a translation.

A Register of Deaths of British Subjects is kept at many British Consulates and High Commissions abroad. Registration is not compulsory but the advantages of such registration are that a British form of death certificate is then available, and a record of the death is afterwards kept at the Nationality and Treaty office in the United Kingdom.

If Registration is required, an application form should be obtained, completed and returned to the:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
Consular Division,
King Charles Street,
London SW1A 2AH
Tel: 020 7008 1500

Alternatively, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/register-a-death>

Before the application is processed, the Registration Officer must be satisfied as to the national status of the person whose death is to be registered. Documentary evidence of this must therefore be provided and should accompany the application. The Registration Officer will need to see:

- (i) The civil death certificate issued by the local authorities
- (ii) Evidence of the deceased's claim to British Nationality, e.g. full birth certificate or full British certificate of naturalisation or of registration as a British national.

These documents must be the originals - as photocopies are not acceptable. However, they will be returned to the applicant, as soon as possible. To ensure their safe return applicants should consider enclosing a suitable prepaid "Recorded Delivery" envelope.

The current fees for the registration of a death is £105.00 and each certified copy of entry document is £65.00. This means that, to register the death and obtain one registration document, will cost £170.00. Additional copies of the entry can be obtained at a cost of £65.00 each. Payment is only accepted via bank draft or postal order made payable to "The FCO."

The Funeral Director may act as the applicant on behalf of the client, in which case the Consular Certificate(s) will be sent direct to them. Each certificate will contain all the information as on a Registrar's 'Certified Copy of an Entry.'

As registration is carried out by a British Consulate overseas it normally takes at least a month from receipt of a properly documented application before the consular death certificate is available.

NB. Applicants wishing to produce original documents in person may do so, however the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should be contacted to arrange an appointment in advance.

DEATHS AT SEA

Immediate disposal at sea

The Master of any ship has the full authority to decide whether, for health reasons, a body should be immediately disposed of at sea or whether he/she should keep the body for disposal according to the wishes of the relatives or executors of the deceased.

However, the usual practice is to bring the deceased person back to the nearest port.

Registration procedure

In cases of death at sea in British-registered ships, the Master of the ship must record all the facts and particulars of the nature of the death and must deliver them to the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen on arrival at any port in the UK or at any port outside the UK as directed by the Department of Trade and Industry. For deaths on foreign ships, the Superintendent of the port where the crew of the ship is discharged is required to make enquiries into the cause of the death and record in the official log whether the cause of death as recorded in the Ship's Log is considered to be true or otherwise.

In all cases of deaths at sea, where the body is brought into a British port the death is reported to the Coroner in whose jurisdiction the port is located. He/she may decide to hold an enquiry in which case the body cannot be moved without the Coroner's authority.

The actual registration of the death is the prerogative of the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen at Cardiff, South Glamorgan, to whom all reports are sent. Copies of the entry in the Register may be obtained from this office for probate or insurance purposes.

For persons who die at sea and are brought back to England or Wales for disposal, the same procedure with the Registrar/Coroner is required as for deaths abroad. Before issuing a 'Certificate of No Liability to Register' the Registrar for the sub-district where disposal is to take place will require some evidence as to the circumstances of the death. This can be obtained by applying for a copy of the entry in the Ship's Log from the shipping company owning the ship or from the Superintendent of the port of entry.

Deaths in the air

When a death occurs aboard an aircraft, the principle is that the appropriate registration authority in the country of registration of the aircraft is notified as well as the police authorities at the next landing stop.

This is usually initiated by the aircraft commander contacting the authorities at the next stop and entering the details on the General Declaration that is handed over to the Duty Officer on arrival. It is then up to this official to ensure that the appropriate national and commercial authorities are informed. Subsequent action concerning the disposal of the body is then according to local arrangements.

As far as Funeral Directors in the UK are concerned, on receiving notification of such a death, the normal procedure for repatriation, according to the law of the country where the body is removed from the aircraft, should be followed, UK regulations applying regarding its subsequent disposal in the UK.

REPATRIATION OF DECEASED PERSONS FROM ENGLAND AND WALES

Funeral Directors may be asked to repatriate residents of the United Kingdom to another country for their funeral.

Action to be taken:

On receipt of the 'first call' the Coroner for the area in which the deceased person lies must be notified of the intention to remove the body out of England and Wales, as the following requirements are laid down by Section 4 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 and the Removal of Bodies Regulations 1954, as amended in 1971:

"The body of a deceased person must not be removed from any place in England or Wales to any place out of England and Wales until notice has been given to the Coroner within whose jurisdiction the body is lying and the prescribed period has elapsed after the giving of that notice. Any person contravening these requirements is liable to prosecution."

The notice to the Coroner must be given on a 'Form of notice to a Coroner of intention to remove a body out of England or Wales' (Removal Notice Form 104). The prescribed period which must elapse after the receipt of the notice by the Coroner is four clear days, except that, if the Coroner states in their acknowledgement of the receipt of the notice that they are satisfied there is no necessity for them to make further enquiries concerning the death, the body may be removed at any time after the acknowledgement has been received by the person to whom it is addressed.

In any case of urgency, therefore, where the parties would prefer not to wait the full period of four clear days, they may be enabled to remove the body earlier if, by personal attendance upon the Coroner or otherwise and by furnishing them with all the information which they may require, they are able to satisfy the Coroner forthwith that there is no necessity for them to make further enquiries concerning the death."

In a case where the Coroner has not previously been informed the notice (104) must be accompanied by a copy of the registrars Certified Copy of an Entry of Death as the Certificate for Burial or Cremation will not be issued by the registrar once notified of the wish to remove the body out of England or Wales.

The Coroner acknowledges receipt of Form 104 by issuing Form 103 'Form of acknowledgement by Coroner'.

NB. Where a death occurs in one Coroner's jurisdiction and the body is lying at the Funeral Director's premises in another Coroner's jurisdiction the following would apply:

1. When a death has occurred and the attending Doctor cannot issue a Certificate of the Cause of Death, the case would be referred to the Coroner in whose district the death has occurred and, provided at that stage it is realised that the final disposal is to take place out of England and Wales, then the Coroner in that district should issue Form 103.
2. When a death has occurred and is reported to the Coroner but it is not known at that stage that the funeral is to take place out of England and Wales, either a Cremation 6 would be issued by the Coroner or a 'Certificate for Burial' would be issued by the Registrar; once the decision is made to move the body out of England and Wales these Certificates would be returned to the relevant Coroner or Registrar and the Coroner in whose district the body is then lying should be approached for an 'Out of England' certificate.
3. In the situation where the death is registered without the involvement of the Coroner, the 'Out of England' Certificate should be requested from the Coroner in whose district the body is lying at the time the application is made.

At the same time as notifying the Coroner, the Funeral Director must contact the Consulate of the country concerned to ascertain what is required as to:

- Documentation
- Whether permission is required from the Burial Authority involved
- Coffining of remains (including attendance at the Consulate and application of seals).

Likely requirements as to documentation are:

(a) A BODY NOT EXHUMED:

- Acknowledgement from Coroner – Form 103
- 'Certified Copy of an Entry' from the Registrar or Coroner's Interim Death Certificate
- Permission from the Consulate and/or Country for disposal
- Freedom from Infection Certificate showing cause of death, and a declaration from the Doctor stating that "as far as the sanitary regulations are concerned, there is nothing to prevent the body being exported."
- Certificate of embalming
- Funeral Director's declaration as to the contents of the coffin, stating the cause of death, flight details, consignee and the documents accompanying the declaration.
- Passport of deceased person and a 'Laissez-Passer' (Mortuary Passport) if the deceased person is being taken by road. If not required a photocopy of the front page of the passport, showing the photograph and details of the deceased person, may be useful.
- Route details - destination; flight number; Air Waybill Number; date and time of departure and arrival at destination.

NB. Some Consulates will need all the requirements listed above, some may need additional documentation whilst others may require next to nothing.

(b) EXHUMED BODIES:

In addition to the possible requirements in (a) above, the following may be required:

- Copy of Home Office Licence (DCA) for Exhumation
- Letter of acceptance in principle from carrier
- Letter of acceptance from Consulate of receiving country
- Letter of acceptance from recipient Cemetery abroad

Cremated remains:

The normal requirements are:

- Certificate of cremation
- 'Certified copy of an Entry' from Registrar
- Funeral Director's declaration as to contents

NB. As some countries treat cremated remains in exactly the same way as a body, the Consulate of the receiving country should be advised in order to find out if they have any special requirements, particularly France and Italy.

Once the Coroner and Consulate have been contacted, the Funeral Director must decide on the method of conveyance to be used.

International Funeral Directors, some of whom are members of the National Association of Funeral Directors, will be conversant with all the requirements, are regularly in contact with the various Consulates and are able to assist in documentation, and so the use of their services may be most helpful in arranging transportation.

Due to the distance involved, the majority of deceased persons are shipped by air. The airline chosen will need to be contacted to ascertain their particular requirements as to:

Packing: whether there is a need for the provision of a zinc lining / Cadseal lining and whether the coffin should be crated or wrapped in hessian. Some carriers now insist on bubble wrapping and/or cardboard packing of the coffin/casket.

Embalming: the importance of embalming all cases must be stressed. Although not universally requested, the extra time required to complete all the arrangements necessary, and to avoid unpleasant conditions during transit and arrival at destination is the responsibility of the Funeral Director.

Size/Weight: the packed coffin/casket size/weight must be checked to ensure that it is acceptable, particularly if there is to be onward transmission by a smaller aircraft later in the journey. Some idea of the approximate weight of the consignment may be needed when making your initial booking.

Documents: the original documents will be handed to the airline to accompany the coffin in the flight manifest. The Funeral Director will retain a copy of all documentation forwarded and a second set of copies should be firmly fixed to the outside of the packed coffin/casket to ensure that, in the event of the originals being mislaid, the identity and destination will still be known.

Payment: payment will need to be made on arrival at the airport

AIR CARGO SECURITY MEASURES

From 2006 additional security measures were introduced by the Department for Transport in that human remains were no longer exempt from security screening and were classified as “unknown cargo” and therefore subject to normal screening, including X-ray.

The Freedom From Infection Certificate (FFI) is normally a statement made on headed notepaper, by the issuing doctor or Coroner, confirming that the deceased is free from any infectious diseases.

Useful links:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coping-with-death-abroad

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/death-abroad-bereavement-packs>



Chapter 24

Burials at Sea – Northern Ireland



BURIALS AT SEA

Created by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) licenses, regulates and plans marine activities in the seas around England so that they're carried out in a sustainable way.

BURIAL AT SEA SITES

There are three designated burial sites at sea:

1. Off the Needles, Isle of Wight.
2. Between Hastings and Newhaven on the south coast.
3. Off the Northumberland coast, near Tynemouth.



In addition, it is possible to secure a licence for additional inshore areas of England or in certain offshore areas of Wales and Northern Ireland.

COSTS (CORRECT AT 2 APRIL 2019)

A licence for burial at sea costs £50 if you want the burial to be off The Needles, Isle of Wight, between Hastings and Newhaven or off Tynemouth, North Tyneside.

If you want the burial to be somewhere else in England or in the offshore areas of Wales or Northern Ireland, the licence will cost £175.

Please note, if the burial will be more than 3 months after you apply for a licence, the licence will cost £175.

Arranging a burial at sea (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

Take detailed instructions from the client and ascertain whether the service is to be held on land followed by committal at sea or whether the whole service is to be held at sea. It is important to advise the client that burials at sea can be expensive and may take time to arrange, given the need to secure a licence, the specialist coffins and the need for the hire of a vessel, lifting equipment etc.

Apply for the licence

1. Apply online for the licence at
www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-get-a-licence-for-a-burial-at-sea-in-england

The following documents and information will be asked for during the application process:

- Name and contact details of the applicant.
- Name and contact details of Funeral Director.
- Proposed date of burial.
- Proposed burial site.
- Copy of Death Certificate.
- Free from Infection Certificate (FFI) from GP/Hospital.
- Notice of intention to remove a body from England (available from Coroner as a replacement for a Certificate of Disposal provided by Registrar (green)).

2. If all documents have been received, the fee has been paid and the district MMO office is satisfied, a licence can be issued normally within two days. However if the application varies from the norm and greater consideration and consultation is required then this period will be extended. If resolution cannot be found then a licence will not be granted.
3. Once the licence has been granted, an email will be sent to the applicant, notifying them of the decision and any conditions. Once the terms have been accepted, by logging in online, the licence will be digitally signed and available to download. In the event of the applicant wishing to vary the details of the licence, this can be done online and, if the new arrangements are agreed, a new licence will be issued.

All applications are published on the [public register of marine licence applications and decisions](#).

If an applicant does not have access to the internet, they should contact the MMO at:

Tel: 0300 123 1032

Email: info@marinemanagement.org.uk

CONDITIONS TO BE OBSERVED

There will always be certain conditions attached to a burial at sea licence and in particular circumstances there may be additional conditions. For example:

1. The licence holder must give one day's notice to the MMO of a burial at sea.
2. The MMO reserves the right to inspect the body and coffin and will give at least one day's notice of intention to do so.
3. Bodies must not have been embalmed, to facilitate the speedy decomposition of body tissues.
4. If the burial cannot take place on the date specified on the licence, through adverse weather conditions or other circumstances, the licence holder must obtain an amendment to the licence from the MMO.
5. The body may be lightly clad, commensurate with modesty in biodegradable materials
6. A band of plastic, or other durable material, should be locked around the neck of the deceased and this band should be indelibly marked with telephone number or reference number that would allow the remains to be positively identified, should the need arise.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE COFFIN

The coffin must be made of solid softwood and must not contain any plastic, lead, copper or zinc.

It must have:

- between 40 and 50x50mm (2 inch) holes drilled throughout;
- corners butt-jointed and strengthened with mild steel right angle brackets screwed internally, or substantial wooden bracing struts 50 x 38mm;
- about 200kg of iron, steel or concrete clamped to the base of the coffin with brackets of 10mm mild steel bar; or blocks of weak concrete mix;
- weight distributed evenly to prevent the coffin from turning to the vertical;
- 2 long mild steel bands running from the top to the bottom of the coffin;
- several mild steel bands across the coffin at about 30cm intervals along its length.

The coffin and any inner box or liner must be made from natural, non-toxic and biodegradable materials. They must both be able to withstand any impact and be able to carry the body quickly to the seabed.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A coffin which is prepared for burial at sea is much heavier than a normal coffin and so considerable thought should be given to preparation and transportation. The coffin should be covered with a suitable pall up to the time of committal.

There are several organisations offering burial at sea services. Alternatively, you can contact the local Harbour Master; who may be able to advise you of suitable vessels for hire.

If any difficulty is experienced in finding an appropriate Minister; a Chaplain of the local [Mission to Seafarers](#) may be able to help.

BURIAL OR SCATTERING OF CREMATED REMAINS AT SEA

The MMO encourages burial or scattering of ashes at sea over full body burial at sea.

All material put into the sea should be biodegradable and weighted so that it sinks. No documentation is required to bury or scatter at sea.

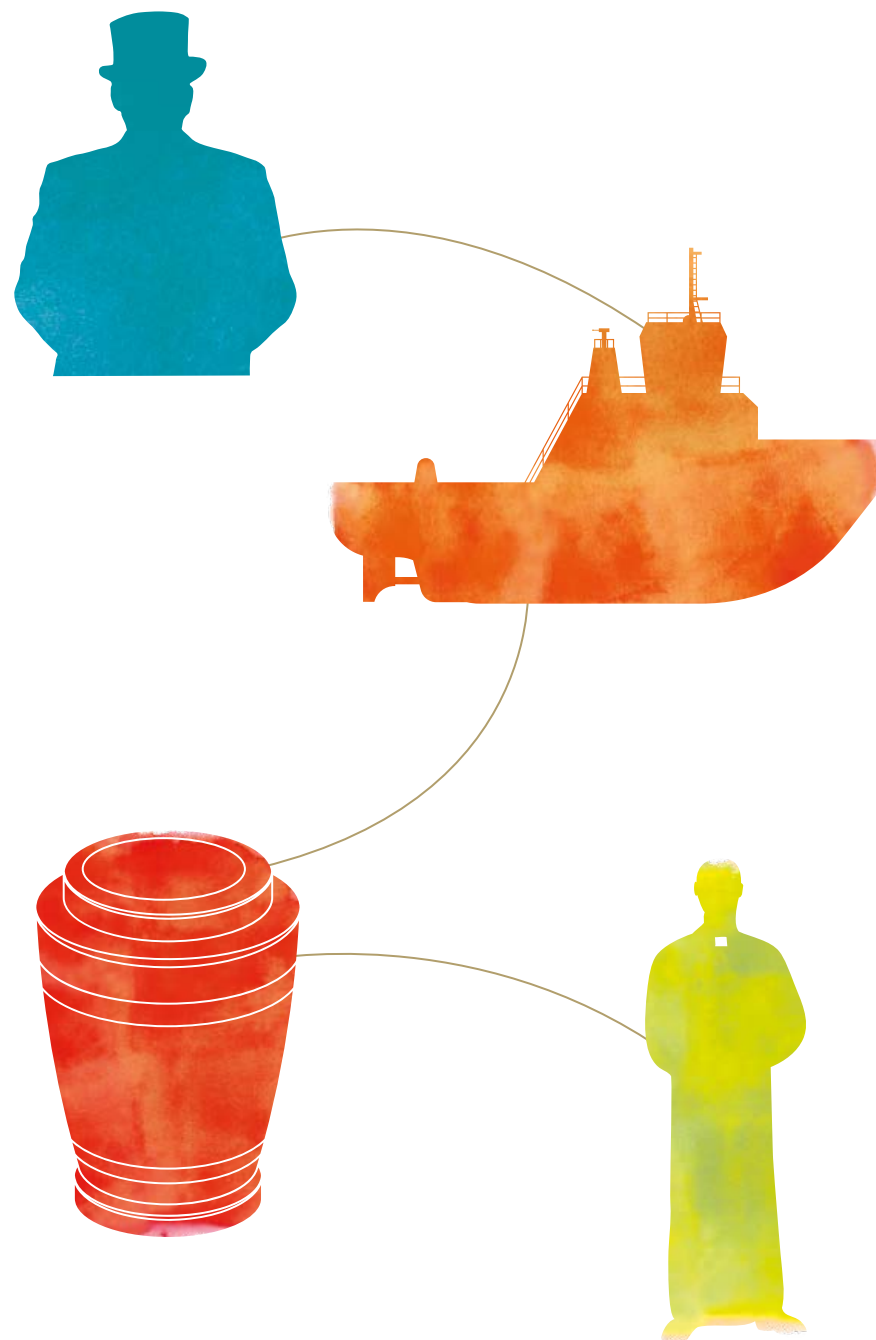
If burying a casket containing cremated remains, adequate weights should be placed inside the casket and sufficient holes bored to allow the casket to sink.

Plastic bags must not be used inside the casket.

One original way of disposing of cremated remains at sea is to place them in an un-kilned pot which, when thrown, should be twice as thick as normal and the bottom would need to be at least two inches thick in order to make sure that it sinks when placed in the sea.

The cremated remains can then be placed in the un-kilned pot and sealed with a lid of the same material. On entry into the water the pot will gradually disintegrate ensuring that the contents are dispersed in a dignified manner.

Urns made of various degradable products, including compressed salt, are also now available for the dispersal of cremated remains in the sea.



| Glossary



| GLOSSARY

A

Absolution

The formal forgiving of sins. In the Catholic Church it is also the name given to the ceremonies and prayers that take place around the coffins, following a Funeral Mass.

Acolyte

A server attending a Roman Catholic priest celebrating Mass.

Account

The total of the charges of the Funeral Director and the disbursements submitted to the client for payment.

Acknowledgement

A notice of thanks inserted in a newspaper after a funeral.

Adjournment

An inquest can be opened and adjourned i.e. deferred, primarily to establish (of an inquest) the identity of the deceased, to receive medical evidence and issue certificates for disposal of the body if allowable by the Coroner.

Administrator

A person authorised to deal with the affairs of a person dying intestate by taking out Letters of Administration.

Agnostic

A person who neither believes nor disbelieves absolutely in the existence of God or in anything beyond the material universe.

Aisle

The passageway between the seating in a church or chapel.

Altar

A table or stand used for sacred purposes in a place of worship.

Altar boy

A colloquial term for acolyte.

Aneurysm Hook

A hook shaped metal instrument used in first offices and embalming.

Anglican

A comprehensive term for the Church of England and all equivalent churches of the same communion in other countries.

Anglo Catholic

High Church Anglican,

Anthem

A piece of sacred music usually based on words from the Bible.

Antiseptic

A substance which by its action inhibits the action of micro-organisms.

Applicant

The person who completes the application for cremation (cremation consent form). Usually a close family member of the deceased person – their partner; or child.

Apse

An arched semicircular or polygonal projection of a building, especially one at the east end of a church, with a domed roof.

Arrangement meeting

A meeting with a client to plan and discuss the details of a funeral.

Aseptic Sterile

Free from the presence of bacteria.

Assembly room

A spacious anteroom in a Funeral Director's premises, usually adjoining the chapel, where relatives can assemble before a service, and to which they can retire after a service.

Atheist

A person who totally disbelieves in the existence of God or any other higher deity.

Autopsy

See post-mortem.

B

Baptist Church

A protestant church distinguished by baptizing, as opposed to infant baptism, and doing so by complete immersion (as opposed to affusion or aspersion).

Bariatric

Baros means "weight" in Greek and describes equipment and practices relating to obese deceased persons.

Bearer

A person who conveys the coffin or casket during the funeral service. May be an employee of the funeral firm or family/friends of the deceased person

Benediction

A blessing or thanksgiving.

Beneficiary

A person receiving some part of the estate of a deceased person

Bequeathal

The donation of a body for Anatomical Examination.

Bereavement

The feelings and emotions associated with the death of someone (including, but not restricted to, a relative, friend - or pet).

Bier

A moveable or fixed stand on which a coffin is placed

Biodegradable

A material that is capable of decaying through the action of living organisms.

Body Bag

A waterproof bag, usually with a full length zip fastening, which enables the deceased to be transported without leakage

Book of Remembrance

A book commonly used at crematoria to display memorial inscriptions, usually with a page opening for each day of the year

Burial

A method of final disposition wherein a dead person or animal is placed into the ground.



C

Cadaver

Medical term for a dead human body.

Canon

A Christian priest with special duties in a cathedral.

Catholic Church

Sometimes referred to as the Roman Catholic Church, it is the largest Christian church in the world. Headed by the Bishop of Rome, known as the pope, its central administration is the Holy See.

Carriage Master

Supplier of funeral vehicles and trained drivers/staff to support funeral directors in carrying out funerals

Casket

A rectangular container for the body, an alternative to a shaped coffin. A container for cremated remains. (See also 'Coffin').

Cassock

An ankle length sleeved garment worn by ministers, vergers and choristers.

Catafalque

A stand with enclosed sides, usually in a church, chapel or crematorium, on which the coffin rests during a funeral service.

Celebrant

A person who performs a rite.

Cenotaph

A monument honouring a dead person/group of people whose remains are somewhere else.

Chancel

That part of a church around the altar; reserved for the clergy and choir.

Chancellor

The law officer in a diocese appointed to assist the bishop in of a Diocese dealing with questions of ecclesiastical law.

Chapel

(i) Any building erected within the precincts of a cemetery or burial ground for the performance of the burial service. In a crematorium the central feature in which the funeral service is performed.

(ii) A room, usually dedicated, within a funeral home set apart for the holding of funeral services.

Sometimes called a Private Chapel or Service Chapel.

Chapel of Rest

A room in a funeral home, often containing religious icons.

Chapel of Repose

Relevant to the faith of the deceased person, in which the deceased may lie and be visited by family or friends prior to the funeral.

Children's Funeral Fund

Established by the UK government in 2019 and applicable only in England, the CFF provides funding towards the funeral of a child under 18 or a baby stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

Choir stalls

Seats set aside for the choir in a church or chapel.

Choral service

A service with sung psalms, hymns and, sometimes, an anthem.

Chorister

A member of a choir.

Church trestles

Extra high trestles, normally shoulder high, for use in Church.

Church of England/Wales/Scotland

The established churches of those nations. The Church of England and Church of Wales re both Anglican, while the Church of Scotland is Presbyterian.

The Church of Ireland

A Christian church in Ireland and an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion.

Church Warden

One of two officers of a parish who oversees the church, it's property and concerns. One is usually appointed by the incumbent and the other elected by the parishioners.

Client (funeral)

The person for whom the funeral director act and with whom they have a contractual relationship. This definition is intended to include former clients.

Circuit

An administrative district of Methodist Churches Citadel A Salvation Army chapel or place of worship.

Code of Practice

A set of written rules which explains how people working in a particular profession should behave.

Codicil

An addition to a Will.

Coffin

A shaped container for the body after death (see also 'Casket').

Columbarium

The building at a crematorium providing facilities for the deposit of caskets or urns containing cremated remains, being placed in niches, or recesses built into the walls. Some niches are left open, while others are closed by a grill or are sealed off completely with a memorial tablet.

Committal

The part of the funeral service when the body is disposed of by being committed to the earth (burial) or flames (cremation).

Common grave

A grave in a cemetery over which no exclusive right of burial is granted and thus no grave deeds issued.

Condolence book

A book in which mourners can add messages about the person that has died.

Consecration

The act of blessing and designating by a bishop of either the Anglican or Roman Catholic churches for the special use of his/her own communion. Within the Church of England consecration has a legal import e.g. once land has been consecrated it cannot be used except by permission of the bishop, and cannot be sold without an Act of Parliament.

Consul

An officer appointed by a state to reside in a foreign country to promote its interests and protect its subjects

Consulate

The office or residence of a consul.

Coroner

An official in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who examines the reasons for a person's death, especially if it was violent or unexpected (see Procurator Fiscal, for Scotland).

Coroner's Jurisdiction

The area or district assigned to a particular Coroner in which he/she acts.

Coroner's Officer

An official appointed to assist the Coroner by reporting the death and associated circumstances to him/her.

May authorise the recovery and removal of a body to the Coroner's mortuary.

Corpse

A dead human body.

Cortege

The funeral procession of vehicles and people involved in a funeral.

Courtesy Cords

The lowering cords that are attached to a coffin intended for interment in Scotland. There are normally eight cords.

Courtesy Cards

A card that is given to a bearer when cords are used to lower a coffin, the card showing the position that the bearer will take.

Cremated remains

The residue of a cremation (ashes).

Cremation

The disposing of a human body by means of burning and reducing it to ashes.

Crematorium

An establishment where only human remains are cremated. Such institution must be registered and authorised by the Secretary of State.

Cremator

The name given to the furnace in which human remains are cremated.

Cremulator

A machine at a crematorium, not unlike a tumble dryer, that contains either steel or concrete balls which reduces the residue of cremation into a fine ash.

Crowdfunding

The practice of funding a project or venture by raising money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, typically via the Internet.

Crucifer

The person who carries the cross in a procession.

Crucifix

A Christian symbol being a representation of a cross with the figure of Christ crucified on it.

Curate

A clergyman, licensed by a bishop, to assist a vicar or Rector.

Customer

The person engaging the services of a funeral director (see also 'Client').

D

Deacon

Deaconess

- (i) A cleric ranking just below a priest.
- (ii) A church officer who helps the clergyman especially in secular matters.

Death

The cessation of life.

Death Certificate

Technically there is no such form as the 'Death Certificate'. However, 'The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death' and a 'Certified Copy of the Entry' in the Register of Deaths are often mistakenly quoted as the Death Certificate.

Death Doula

(Also known as End of Life Doula). Someone who is engaged to provide advocacy/support for a dying person. Doulas are often tasked with maintaining a sense of calm for the dying and those around them, and opening the conversation about death and loss.

Death notice

Often mistakenly called an Obituary - the term applied to the announcement of a person's death in the press, usually giving details of the funeral - with no eulogy given. Normally appears in the classified section of a newspaper being paid for by the contributor. AKA Press Notice (See also Obituary).

Dedication

The blessing and designation by clergy and ministers - not necessarily of the Church of England - for a particular purpose. Although there appears to be little spiritual significance between dedication and consecration, the legal positions of the two acts are quite different.

Deed of Grant

Title deed, signifying ownership of a grave.

Department of Health and Social Care

The government department with responsibility for matters such as Medical Examiners.

Department for Work and Pensions

The government department with responsibility for matters such as the Social Fund and bereavement benefits.

Direct (cremation, burial, funeral)

The disposal of a deceased person, by cremation or burial, without a funeral service or mourners present.

Diocese

The extent or circuit of a bishop's ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Disbursements

Payments made on behalf of a client to a third party and subsequently re-charged to the client.

Disinfectant

A substance which by its action kills micro-organisms or lessens their strength to an acceptable level.

DIY funeral

Funerals in which members of the deceased person's family lead/undertake the majority of arrangements and care of the deceased, with or without assistance from a funeral director (See also family-led funerals). The planning may also have involved the deceased person, prior to their death.

DoLS

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. Part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The safeguards aim to make sure that people in care homes and hospitals are looked after in a way that does not inappropriately restrict their freedom.

Drop-off

The delivery of a coffin or casket, for cremation, to a crematorium - by a funeral director - where there is to be no funeral service or family in attendance.

E

Ecclesiastical

Relating to the Christian Church or its clergy.

Embalming

See preservative treatment.

Entombment

The act of placing a body in a tomb.

Episcopalian

The term applied to the Anglican Church in Scotland.

Epitaph

A written memorial of the deceased. Often an inscription on a gravestone or maybe in a newspaper in honour or memory of the dead.

Estate

The assets left by a deceased person.

Estimate

A document setting out the costs likely to be incurred in the arrangement of the funeral as specified by the customer/client.

Eucharist

Christian sacrament in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed.

Eulogy

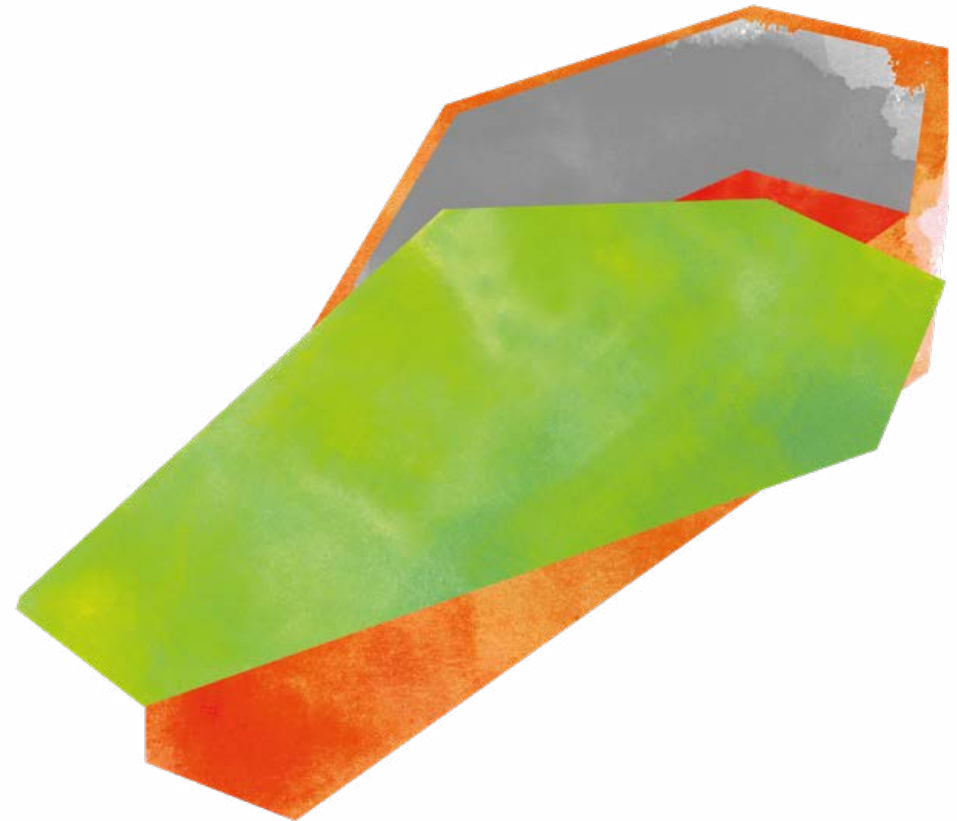
A speech, or piece of writing, in tribute to someone that has died.

Executor

A person appointed by a testator to carry out the provisions in his or her will. Executrix (feminine).

Exhumation

The removal of human remains, in whatever form, from the place where they are interred.



F

Faculty

An ecclesiastical authority for a specific purpose.

Family-led funerals

Funerals in which members of the deceased person's family lead/undertake the majority of arrangements and care of the deceased person, with or without assistance from a funeral director (see also 'DIY funeral').

First call

The telephone call from someone to a funeral director, after someone has died, to enquire about collection of the deceased/provision of funeral services.

First Offices

Care of the deceased person by a funeral director, including cleaning and washing the body, dressing them and closing the eyes and mouth.

Floral tributes

Customary term for flowers sent on the occasion of a funeral.

Flower room

The area in a funeral home in which flowers are assembled. Normally contains sets of broad slatted shelves to enable floral tributes for each funeral to be grouped as they are received from the florist or other interested parties.

Foetus Human

Embryo of eight weeks or more gestation.

Following cars

Limousines or cars which follow the hearse in a funeral cortege.

Friend

A member of the Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers.

Friendly Society

A Society or Association formed for the mutual aid of its members in sickness, unemployment, old age etc. Based on the principle that it is by the contribution of savings of many persons to one common fund that the most effectual provision can be made. Such societies enjoy certain privileges but are strictly regulated by law.

Funeral

Defined in the dictionary as the ceremony that is held when the body of someone who has died is buried or cremated. However, this is an evolving term and it is subject to challenge as to whether a funeral must necessarily include a ceremony and/or a committal.

Funeral director

A person or entity whose business consists of, or includes the arrangement and conduct of funerals.

Funeral home

The place of business for funeral directors.

Funeral Expenses Assistance

The funeral benefit of the Scottish government (see Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payment for England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

Funeral mass

A hymn, composition, or service for the dead.

Funeral plan

A contracted arrangement (e.g. insurance policy) that provides money to pay for the policyholder's funeral expenses when they die.

Funeral service

A term used to describe either the whole business of funeral directing or the actual service on the day of the funeral.

Funeral wishes

The informal communication/setting out of an individual's preferences for their funeral – in a conversation, a letter, details left with a funeral director, or other method.

G

Garden of Remembrance

An area set aside in the grounds of a crematorium, cemetery or churchyard for disposal of cremated remains. Usually laid out in lawns, flower beds or rockeries, with flowering trees and shrubs situated at points of advantage.

GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulations.

General Register Office

The government department responsible for the control of the registration of births, deaths and marriages.

Gift Aid

A scheme enabling registered charities to reclaim tax on a donation made by a UK taxpayer, effectively increasing the amount of the donation.

Grass mats

Artificial grass placed round the grave to conceal excavated earth.

Gratuity

A voluntary gift given in return for a service.

Green funeral

Term used to describe funeral arrangements which actively seek to minimise environmental impact.

Grief

Intense emotional suffering that can be experienced following a death.

H

Handy

A term used in funeral service for a delivery or removal van.

Hearse

A specially designed vehicle for the conveyance of the coffin.

HG3 BBVs

Hazard Group 3 Blood Borne Viruses (including: human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) - a virus which causes acquired immunodeficiency virus (AIDS) a disease affecting the body's immune system; hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C; BBVs causing hepatitis, a disease affecting the liver.)

Hospice

A home providing care for the sick or terminally ill.

Hospital Removal Form

A form issued by a hospital which authorises the removal of the deceased person from the hospital.

Humanism

A rationalist movement that holds that man can be ethical and find self-fulfillment without recourse to supernaturalism.

Human Tissue Authority

The organisation which ensures that human tissue is used safely and ethically, and with proper consent. It regulates organisations that remove, store and use tissue e.g. for post-mortem examination, bequeathal etc.

Hypostasis

Post-mortem discoloration of the lower parts of the body. (Post-mortem staining) This can be observed as a purplish discoloration of the skin that is caused by the gravitation of the blood into those areas following cessation of the blood circulation.



I

ICD

Implantable Cardiac Defibrillator
(one of several forms of cardiac implant) .

Imam

The person who leads prayers in a mosque;
a leader in the Islamic religion.

Implant

Various surgical devices which must be removed before
cremation (including fixation nails, silicon breast implants,
ICDs and radioactive seeds).

Incumbent

A holder of an ecclesiastical benefice such as a vicar; rector;
priest / curate in charge of a parish of an Anglican Church.

Indemnity

A legal document by which a person guarantees to relieve
another of all liability in respect of a particular action.

Infection control

The actions taken to prevent or stop the spread of
infections.

Informant

The person responsible for attending at a Registrar's Office
to inform the registrar of a death.

In memoriam, "in remembrance"

Latin for 'In Memory of' - often used as the heading of a
memorial.

Inquest

An official inquiry by a Coroner into the exact cause of a
death.

Interment

Burial of a deceased person, in whatever form - usually
earth burial by the deceased.

Intestacy

The legal term for the situation where no will has been left
by the deceased.

Intestate

Someone who has died without leaving a Will.

'Into church'

The term used where the deceased is taken into church
prior to the funeral service, usually taking place the night
before a Funeral Mass.

Introducer

Means any person, business or organisation who or
that introduces or refers clients to your business, or
recommends your business to clients or otherwise puts
you and clients in touch with each other. This definition is
intended to include market comparison websites.

Invasive Procedure

Any care procedure that involves the breaking of skin or
the opening of bodily cavities.

J

Judaism

(Jewish faith) the monotheistic religion of Jewish people.

K

Kingdom Hall

A meeting place of Jehovah's Witnesses.

L

Lady Chapel

A secondary chapel within a large church, usually behind
the High Altar, dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Lair

The Scottish term for a grave.

Last Offices

Care of the deceased by nursing staff that may include
washing and dressing.

Last Sacrament

One of the seven Sacraments of the Roman Catholic
Church in which a person is anointed with consecrated oil
in his/her last hours.

Lay-reader

A lay-person licensed to conduct certain religious services
and to perform other minor religious functions.

Lectern

A stand in a church from which the Scriptures are read
Letters of a document issued by the Principal or a District
Probate Administration Registry of the High Court of
Justice appointing a person, usually the next-of-kin, as
administrator of an intestate estate.

Lich (Lych) gate

A roofed gateway to a church where the coffin awaits the
arrival of the officiating minister.

M

Manse

The term applied by several of the Free Churches to the house of the minister.

Mattress

In Scotland - the term applied to a pad, shaped to cover the coffin lid, lowered into the grave on top of the coffin in order to deaden the sound of the earth falling on it when the grave is filled in.

Mausoleum

An ornate building erected above ground as a monument and used as a tomb.

MCCD

Medical Certificate Cause of Death.

Medical Examiner

Medical examiners are senior medical doctors who are contracted for a number of sessions a week to undertake medical examiner duties, outside of their usual clinical duties. They are trained in the legal and clinical elements of death certification processes.

Medical Referee

The medically qualified official of a crematorium who scrutinises all cremation forms and authorises cremation.

Meeting House

The place of worship of a community of the Society of Friends (Quakers).

Memorialisation

A broad term covering a wide range of memorial items, from headstones or jewellery and sculptures containing ashes, to firework displays, tattoos and works of art.

Memorial Plaque

A small bronze plate, suitably inscribed, fixed to the chamfered edging or kerbing to the paths in a Garden of Remembrance, thus enabling a large number of individual memorials to be displayed in a relatively small area.

Memorial Service

A special service, other than the funeral service, to celebrate the life and death of a person. Sometimes held after the funeral service/separate from the committal.

Ministry of Justice

The government department with responsibility for matters such as DoLS, cremation forms and exhumation licenses.

Moravian Church

A European Protestant Church with a small presence in Britain.

Mormon

A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints founded in the United States of America in 1830 by Joseph Smith.

Mortuary

A room or building in which dead bodies are kept (e.g. for hygienic storage, embalming or for examination) until the funeral.

Mosque

A Muslim temple or place of worship.

Mourn

To express or feel sorrow or grief.

Muslim, Moslem

A follower of the Moslem religion which is based on the teachings or Mohammedan of Mohammed, as set out in the Koran.



N

NAFD Resolve

The client conciliation scheme operated on behalf of the NAFD by the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution, which all clients of NAFD members have access to if they have a concern about a member firm that cannot be resolved directly.

Natural Burial

The interment of the body of a dead person in the soil in a manner that does not inhibit decomposition but allows the body to be naturally recycled.

Nave

The main body of a church, from the inner door to the chancel or choir; wherein the congregation sit.

Neonatal

A child dying within twenty eight days of birth.

Niche

A space in a columbarium or other repository for the retention of cremated remains.

Nonconformist

One who does not conform to the doctrine or discipline of an established church, especially a Protestant who is not a member of the Anglican Church.

Non-parishioner

A person domiciled outside the area of a given parish or local Non-resident authority.

Non-Viable Foetus

A child born dead before the twenty fourth week of gestation.

Notifiable disease

An infectious disease listed by the Department of Health which on diagnosis must be reported to the Local Office of Environmental Health.

Nunc Dimittis

The opening words of the Latin version of the Canticle of Simeon (Luke 2 w 29-32), "Now lettest thou thy servant depart". Frequently used at the conclusion of a funeral service.

O

Obituary

A description of the life, career and achievements of a deceased person. Sometimes called an editorial obituary. Not to be confused with a Death Notice (q.v.).

Officiant

The person who leads the funeral service (celebrant, minister, priest etc.).

Orthodox Church

The Eastern Christian Church recognising the Patriarch of Constantinople as head and represented by the national churches in Greece, Russia, Serbia etc.



P

Pacemaker

An implant for maintaining a steady heartbeat that must be removed before cremation.

Pall

An ornamental drape laid over a coffin, especially in a church.

Pallbearer

Strictly one of the mourners at a funeral who used to hold up the corners of the pall, but now often applied to one who assists in the carrying of a coffin.

Parishioner

An inhabitant of a particular parish or local authority area.

Parochial Fees Order

The order that controls the fees charged by the clergy of the Church of England for services in church and elsewhere.

Pathologist

A specialist in that part of medicine which deals with the nature of diseases, their causes and symptoms and who carries out a post-mortem examination on a body in order to establish the cause of death.

Peri-natal Death

A child which dies within seven days of birth.

Personalisation

The actions of making a funeral service specifically relevant to the person that has died.

Personal Representative

A loose term for the person who is responsible for dealing with the funeral and estate of the deceased, e.g. the executor or next of kin.

Place on

The time agreed with the crematorium at which a coffin will be placed on the catafalque, but a funeral director, for a committal - where there is to be no service, but the family wish to attend the committal.

Post-mortem

An examination of a body after death, involving critical dissection, by a pathologist, usually performed in order to establish the cause of death.

PPE

Personal Protective Equipment.

Prebendary

The term used in some Diocese in place of Canon.

Preparation room

A room in a funeral director's premises set aside as an embalming theatre and, as such, should be designed in line with the highest standards of hygiene.

Presbyterian

A part of the Reformed tradition within Protestantism, which traces its origins to Britain, particularly Scotland.

Preservative Treatment

See Embalming.

Price comparison websites

A vertical search engine that shoppers use to filter and compare products based on price, features, reviews and other criteria.

Prie-dieu

A kneeling desk for prayer.

Priest

A minister with authority to administer the sacraments, pronounce absolution and benediction.

Probate

The process by which a will is legally authenticated or proven after the testator's death, in the High Court of Justice (Probate Division) and authority given to the executors to administer the estate according to the will.

Procurator Fiscal In Scotland

A Law officer of the Crown appointed by the Lord Advocate to investigate any sudden, accidental or doubtful deaths in his/her area.

Prospective client

Any member of the public.

Psalm

(i) A sacred song or poem
(ii) Any of the songs in praise of God that make up the Book of Psalms in the Bible.

Psalter

A collection of psalms for liturgical use.

Public health funeral

A funeral paid for by the local authority, where the relatives are either unwilling or unable to pay, or where no relatives can be found.

Q

Quaker

Commonly used name for a member of the Society of Friends.

R

Rabbi

A minister or teacher within the Jewish faith.

Receiving vault

A space in a mortuary or cemetery used as a temporary repository for a coffin.

Recordia

A tablet of metal, stone or wood on which the names of the dead are inscribed e.g. a war memorial.

Registered Medical Practitioner

A person registered by law under the Medical Acts and whose Practitioner name is entered on the Register of the General Medical Council for which medical degrees or other recognised qualifications.

Registrar

The short title of the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, an official of the General Register Office responsible for the registration of births, deaths and marriages in a particular Registration Sub-District.

Registration (of death)

The act of formally notifying the State of a death (through the Registrar).

Regulation (statutory)

The action or process of regulating of being regulated by government.

Regulation (self)

The action or process of voluntarily committing to regulation by a non-statutory body (such as a trade association code of conduct).

Regulator

Any trade association you belong to, any future statutory regulator and any other entity appointed to regulate funeral directors in accordance with a Code of Practice.

Remembrance event

A service or celebration of life that takes place separate from the funeral/disposal of the deceased person.

Removal

When a deceased person is removed from the place of death.

Repatriation

Term used when a deceased person is transported back to their home country.

Requiescat in pace

Latin for “rest in peace”.

Residuary legatee

The person receiving the remainder of an estate after certain specified amounts have been paid out.

RIDDOR

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Rigor mortis

Latin for ‘the stiffness of death’. It is the name given to the stiffening of the body after death.

Rosary

A string of beads used by Roman Catholics as an aid to memory during prayer.

Rural Dean

A clergyman in the Church of England, who, under the bishop and archdeacon, has the oversight of the clergy within a given district.

S

Sacred Heart

A name applied by Roman Catholics to the Heart of Jesus Christ considered as a symbol of his/her love for humanity.

Salvationist

A member of the Salvation Army.

Sanctuary

The enclosure within the altar rails of a church.

Satellite (facility)

A smaller facility/branch within a funeral business a different location from the company's main office.

Scattering

The dispersal of cremated remains by sprinkling them over an Cremated Remains area of ground. e.g. in a Garden of Remembrance at a crematorium.

Scots Cords

The ceremonial lowering cords held by relatives at a Scottish funeral.

Server

A priest's assistant at Holy Communion.

Sexton

A church official in charge of the maintenance of church property, who is usually responsible for grave digging.

SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payment

The funeral benefit of the UK government (applicable to England, Wales and Northern Ireland). See Funeral Expenses Assistance for Scotland.

Standards

The level of service/professionalism required of a funeral firm/its employees – e.g. as set out in the NAFD Code of Practice/Code of Professional Standards.

Stillbirth

A child born dead after the twenty fourth week of pregnancy.

Stretcher

A metal or canvas appliance for carrying a body.

Synagogue

A Jewish place of worship.

Synod

The name given to any assembly of Bishops, clergy and laity, in council, including the Church of England and Presbyterian Churches.

T

Tabernacle

The term used for a chapel or meeting place of nonconformist sects, particularly in Wales. Also the instrument or holding place for the Host in the Catholic Church.

Testator

One who makes a Will.

Testatrix

The feminine form of testator.

Traditional funeral

A term typically used to describe a funeral service comprising a service (religious or secular), committal (burial or cremation) and reception afterwards for the mourners.

Transept

One of the wings or cross-aisles of a church, at right angles to the nave.

Tribute

A tribute can be a speech at a funeral, words in an order of service, or a submission to an online tribute website. A tribute is about the life of the deceased person and the relationship shared with him or her by the writer/speaker.

Treasury Solicitor

Appointed by the Crown to administer estates where the deceased died intestate with no known heirs or next of kin.

U

Unconsecrated

The term applied to that part of a cemetery or burial ground not consecrated and reserved for Church of England or Roman Catholic burials.

Urn

A container used for holding cremated remains.

V

Vault

A brick or stone burial chamber.

Verger

A church caretaker or usher. A person who carries a staff of office before a bishop.

Versicle

A short verse said or sung by a minister to which the congregation responds.

Vicar

The priest or rector of a parish authorised to give Blessings, Absolution and Celebrate the Sacrament. In the Roman Catholic Church a bishop's assistant.

Vigil

In Christianity, especially the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions, a vigil is often held when someone is gravely ill or mourning. Prayers are said and votives are often made.

W

Woodland burial

A woodland burial, also referred to as a green funeral or natural burial, is an environmentally-friendly alternative to traditional burials and cremation. Most woodland burial sites offer either a burial plot, or scattering of ashes and seek to minimise the environmental impact of the funeral by choosing sustainable options such as biodegradable coffins. Embalming is generally prohibited. (See also 'Natural Burial').

COMMON ACRONYMS

BIE

British Institute of Embalmers

CMA

Competition and Markets Authority

DHSC

Department for Health and Social Care

DWP

Department for Work and Pensions

FCA

Financial Conduct Authority

FFMA

Funeral Furnishings Manufacturers Association

HTA

Human Tissue Authority

HSE

Health and Safety Executive

ICCM

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management

MOJ

Ministry of Justice

NAMM

National Association of Memorial Masons

PHE

Public Health England