

TO ARRANGE A PRIVATE FUNERAL – (NO FUNERAL DIRECTOR)

DIY funerals can be less expensive and can also help you come to terms with your loss. Some people feel this is one final thing they can do for their loved one, others value the chance to create a highly personal ceremony. Doing it yourself can involve smaller elements such as using relatives as pall bearers or doing everything from laying out the body to delivering it to the crematorium and backfilling the grave.

Most of us are happy to hand funeral arrangements over to a professional. However, there is no legal reason to do so. While those who do it themselves generally start out with little or no knowledge of what has to be done, it can turn out to be a really rewarding experience. But if you are thinking of doing it all yourself you should start with a thorough understanding of how complex a funeral is. Although you may have attended several yourself, actually putting one together is quite a responsibility.

You will find all your legal obligations in a booklet published by the Department of Work and Pensions. It guides you through the essential steps of getting a medical certificate, registering the death and sorting out property and possessions. To get a free copy, visit your local benefits office or go online:

- **D49 What to do after a death in England and Wales**
- **D49S What to do after a death in Scotland: Social Security Supplement**

There are very few regulations covering the disposal of a body in the UK. You must undertake either to bury or cremate it and you must have a death certificate signed by a doctor and a Certificate for Burial or Cremation from the Registrar of Deaths. This last document is very important and most hospitals and mortuaries will not release the body until they have seen it.

If you are doing it yourself, you will have to hunt for information that is obvious to professionals. Some Funeral Directors offer advice, for which they may charge, but if the burial or cremation is at a cemetery or the Crematorium managed by us we can advise you on how to proceed.

Either way there are certain things you will need to sort out for yourself, such as deciding whether the service is to be at a cemetery or in our crematorium chapel or another religious building. You will be required to contact us to book a service 'slot' and appoint and brief an officiant to deliver the service. However, you may choose to do this yourself. You will need to arrange music (if required), and transport for the coffin, possibly a press announcement providing details of the date and time of the service. You will also be required to arrange for bearers to carry the coffin to the graveside. If using the chapel for a cremation service we can provide a mobile bearer.

You can save some money by providing your own transport. The transport should be any dignified vehicle such as a hearse, estate car or horse and carriage, as long as it is big enough. If you are considering a particularly unusual mode of transport, please check with us first.

You will need to check the journey time between the starting point and the crematorium or cemetery as this is critical. You should allow for traffic conditions at different times of the day. Check the route in advance.

You may be able to purchase a coffin from a Funeral Director and ask the staff at the local hospital to put the body into it. Environmentally friendly coffins are available. However, you must consult us regarding your choice and if it is suitable for cremation. All parts must be of natural materials. No plastic or synthetics are suitable for cremation. The name of the deceased and date of death must be clearly marked on an inscribed plate on the coffin.

When booking a cremation you must ensure that you complete Cremation Form 1 and that Statutory forms 4 and 5 are completed by 2 independent doctors and delivered to the crematorium at least 72 hours prior to cremation. You will also need to complete an Instructions for Cremation. All these forms are available from us. For a burial you will need to complete a Notice of Interment form. Also available from us. You must ensure that prior to making any other arrangements that the time you would like is available at the crematorium or for burial. If you are not leading the service yourself you will need to appoint someone who will and ensure that they will be available at the time agreed. A simple but effective way to personalise the service is to ask someone who knew the deceased to conduct the ceremony. They do not need special qualifications, just the confidence to hold the ceremony together.

Many people take comfort from traditional religious services with familiar hymns and prayers. However you can hold a non-religious service with your choice of words and music past or present supplied by the crematorium using the Wesley Music System. Please ask us for more details.

If you choose a burial service you can have a graveside service or hold the service in a church or in our Crematorium chapel. You will need to check on ownership of the grave into which the deceased is to be interred if the grave has been pre-purchased or already has one interment. We can help provide you with the details and possibly arrange for a transfer of ownership. Alternatively you can purchase a new grave from us.

Any memorials on the grave will need to be removed prior to interment. You must contact us regarding grave ownership and the removal when making the initial enquiry/arrangements.