

HELPING YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

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## Arranging a Funeral



Dignity Funerals  
[www.dignityfunerals.co.uk](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk)

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Losing a loved one is one of life's hardest moments. Having to plan a funeral at this upsetting time can be stressful and overwhelming. We're here to ease the burden of arranging a funeral and help you through the process.

Visit [dignityfunerals.co.uk](https://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk) for more advice and information on this topic.

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# Introduction

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Losing a loved one is one of life's hardest moments. Having to plan a funeral at this upsetting time can be stressful and overwhelming. We're here to ease the burden of arranging a funeral and help you through the process.

This step-by-step guide to arranging a funeral will help you to think about everything from the type of funeral you want, through to how to personalise it, what to expect on the day and everything in between.

If someone has just died and you need to **understand the first steps**, including who to call and how to register the death, please visit [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/when-someone-dies](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/when-someone-dies) or call us on **0808 231 7126**.

Once you have appointed your funeral director, they will be there to help you providing you with advice and support, every step of the way.

Our website is full of additional information, which you may find useful.

Visit [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk) for more helpful guides and practical information.





# Choosing a funeral director

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Choosing an experienced and professional funeral director will help ease the burden and stress of arranging a funeral. This is crucial to ensure that your loved one receives the send-off and ceremony that best commemorates their life. A good funeral director should be honest, open, compassionate and supportive.

- Choose a funeral home that will help and support you every step of the way. From caring for your loved one, personalising and coordinating the funeral arrangements to keeping in contact, walking you through the process, collecting donations and dealing with ashes, your funeral director will manage the process from start to finish.
- Check if they have an industry-recognised qualification or recognition. Membership of recognised bodies such as the National Association of Funeral Directors is an indicator that your Funeral Director strives to achieve the highest possible standards for funeral services, giving you the confidence that they will do a good job.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions. A good funeral director will be ready and willing to help. If you need help with understanding funeral rites and customs, assistance negotiating the paperwork associated with registering a death, are unsure how best to personalise the service, or need help choosing coffins or deciding what to do with ashes, your funeral director is there to help.

Our online guide to useful tips when selecting a funeral director can be found at [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/funeral-home](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/funeral-home).







## FIRST STEPS AFTER SELECTING A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

### Bringing your loved one into our care

Once you've decided which funeral director you want to use, they will need to arrange to collect your loved one from wherever they are resting.

Before your funeral director can start to make funeral arrangements, they will need the certificate of registration of death and the green certificate for burial or cremation. The registrar will give this to you once you have **registered the death**.

Once they are in the care of your chosen funeral director, it is totally up to you whether you wish to visit them or not. If you choose a Dignity Funeral Director, we can provide private and tranquil **Chapel of Rest facilities** and can accompany you during your visit to offer support. We can also offer ritual washing facilities, if required.

### The first meeting

The next step is to gather some more information about your plans. Our first meeting can take place in the comfort of your own home, or you can visit us in our offices.

Our friendly funeral directors will do their best to put you at ease and make the process as simple as possible. They'll talk to you about your options, explore costs and look at possible dates. It can be helpful to have given some thought into what you'd like and dates before the meeting. The next pages of this guide will help you to consider the options available.

## SETTING A DATE FOR THE FUNERAL

There is no set rule, which dictates how long after **death the funeral should take place**.

While the average is anywhere between 1-3 weeks (sometimes less for religious purposes), setting a date for your loved one's funeral may depend on a number of factors. These can include funeral director and crematoria availability, religious beliefs, family circumstances or the complexity of the arrangements you choose. If the timing of the funeral is important to you, make sure you talk to your funeral director.

### Contact your nearest Dignity Funeral Director

Our Funeral Directors pride themselves on providing unequalled support, reassurance, and attention to detail when arranging a funeral for your loved one. At Dignity, we spend time getting to know you and will help you create the most fitting tribute for the person who has passed away.

Find your local Dignity funeral director by calling us on **0808 231 7126** or visiting [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/find](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/find)





# Type of funeral

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One of the first decisions to make is the **type of funeral service** that you would like. The choice may be influenced by many factors such as religion and culture, the wishes and lifestyle of the person who has passed or family tradition.

To make an informed decision, you can find out more by visiting [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/types](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/types). We can provide all types of funeral services, from traditional religious services to colourful celebrations of life, woodland funerals to burials at sea.

## CREMATION

A cremation is a type of funeral service where intense heat transforms the remains of the person who has died into “ashes”. The cremation is usually accompanied by a memorial service, giving you the opportunity to commemorate your loved one.

Before the service takes place, the hearse will take your loved one to the crematorium and limousines carrying family and close friends will follow in the **funeral procession**. Upon arrival, **pallbearers** will take the coffin into the chapel and the service will take place. At the end of the service, the coffin is usually lowered, hidden by curtains, or taken out of the chapel. Depending on the beliefs of you and your loved one, a cremation service can be religious or non-religious.

**Direct cremation:** Direct cremations offer a low-cost funeral that allows you to bid a respectful farewell in a simple and fuss-free way, without compromising on the quality of care. It includes the provision of a simple coffin, doctor's fees for medical papers, collection and care of the deceased and transportation to the crematorium in a specialised funeral vehicle, but does not include a minister, procession, limousines and pallbearers.





## BURIAL

A burial service is usually a short ceremony held after the main funeral service as the coffin is lowered into the ground. Mourners are often invited to attend the burial, which may include short readings and prayers, depending on religious beliefs.

Before the burial takes place, the hearse will take your loved one to the cemetery or churchyard and the procession usually follows. Depending on the beliefs of you and your loved one, a burial service can be religious or non-religious.

A burial service usually takes place after the main funeral service. It is a common tradition to scatter soil onto the coffin after it has been lowered, while other people may choose to throw funeral flowers into the grave. When the ceremony concludes, family and friends place floral tributes near the grave.

Our funeral directors will be on hand to help you check local regulations and availability when choosing a grave or burial plot, also known as a 'cemetery plot', for your loved one.

## RELIGIOUS FUNERALS

A religious funeral is a type of service, which follows specific traditions or rituals. Every aspect of the funerals can be different depending on the religion and perhaps even culture. The decision of cremation or burial may be dictated by religious beliefs or may simply reflect the requests of a loved one before they passed away. The service is usually led by a religious leader and could include prayers, religious funeral songs, hymns, poems or readings.

If you are unfamiliar with any traditions of a loved one or a funeral you're attending, you can find all the information you need by visiting [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/types](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/types).

We are highly experienced in most religious funeral requirements and can provide funeral services for all faiths and cultures. Our funeral directors also offer facilities for ritual washing and additional religious funeral support.







## NON-RELIGIOUS FUNERALS

A non-religious service is type of funeral, which doesn't have a religious undertone, even though this may follow the order of a religious service. This allows those who have passed, who didn't belong to a faith, a funeral that matches the way they lived their life.

A non-religious ceremony can be a cremation or a burial; it is totally dependant on the wishes of your loved one. Your designated funeral director will work with you to organise your loved one's non-religious funeral.

## WOODLAND AND ECO BURIALS

Woodland, eco and natural burials are funeral services, which are environmentally friendly. Woodland or natural burial grounds offer burials in natural settings such as wooded areas, forests or meadows, these eco-funerals allow you to return your loved ones to nature in a dignified yet simplistic manner. By using biodegradable coffins, this type of funeral is designed to preserve existing woodland sites and the species that live within them.

## HUMANIST FUNERALS

A humanist funeral is type of non-religious funeral, where the main focus is celebrating the life of the person who has passed. Stepping away from the traditional and religious funeral, a humanist funeral allows your loved one to have send-off, which reflects how they lived their life.

Whilst non-religious funerals don't adhere to any particular traditions or customs, they tend to follow a similar format to traditional religious services. Your funeral director will be able to offer advice and suggestions and help to recommend celebrants.

## COLOURFUL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNERALS

Colourful or alternative funerals are often viewed as a celebration of life rather than a mourning of death, this type of non-traditional funeral could include anything from encouraging guests to dress in a specific colour(s), or arranging an unusual memorial service, through to using alternative funeral transport such as a campervan.







## BURIAL AT SEA

A burial at sea is an alternative type of funeral, where your loved one is laid to rest in the sea. There are only three locations where this is permitted, although this is an uncommon type of funeral, this may be preferred for boat enthusiasts or those who served in the Navy. You will need to contact a funeral director, and they can provide all the information around rules and regulations.

While a burial at sea is relatively rare, scattering a loved one's ashes at sea isn't uncommon in the UK. There are usually no legal obstacles to overcome, as long as the ashes aren't scattered on a privately owned stretch of river without permission. When choosing to spread ashes of a loved one over water, you must also decide whether it will be done from a boat or from the shoreline. Your funeral director can talk you through things to consider.

### We can cater for any type of funeral service

From traditional religious services to personalised celebrations of life, our Funeral Directors will help you arrange a send-off, which reflects the life of your loved one and commemorates them in a special and unique way.

Find your local Dignity funeral director by calling us on **0808 231 7126** or visiting [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/find](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/find)





# How much does a funeral cost?

The average cost of a funeral in the UK is £4,271 - an average of £5,000 for a burial and £3,986 for a cremation. However, every funeral is unique, with the cost varying depending on the location and the choices you make - from the type of coffin to the transport and any extras such as flowers and catering.

Costs will be split into the following categories:

- **Funeral director fees:** Typically, these will cover overseeing your chosen arrangements, being present on the day, face to face contact to discuss your plans, bringing your loved one into care, preparing them for the funeral service, co-ordination of paperwork and payments to third parties. Along with a standard coffin or casket, pallbearers to carry the coffin or casket, a hearse and co-ordination of additional extras such as funeral wreaths, music and funeral service stationery.

- **Third party funeral costs:** These payments can vary depending on where you live and whether you choose a cremation or burial service for your loved one. We will prepare, collect and distribute all the required documentation and coordinate the external payments for you that are necessary for the funeral to legally proceed. Common third party costs include burial costs, minister or celebrant, burial plot and interment, scattering of ashes, maintenance fees, church fees and memorials.
- **Optional costs:** This includes extras such as memorials, catering, limousines, flowers, venue hire, order of service sheets and any other extras that you might wish to add.

We understand that funerals can be expensive and we can help tailor your plans to fit your budget. If you're concerned about cost, please talk to your funeral director. We can also help offer advice on ways to get help and reduce costs. Our website also contains a wealth of information about **support with costs**.





# Personalising your funeral arrangements

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When it comes to creating a truly memorable funeral, there are many options to add a more personal touch while still being respectful. Your funeral director will be able to talk you through the options available, but it can be helpful to think about some of the different ways that you could personalise the funeral arrangements for your loved one.

## COFFINS, CASKETS AND URNS

Choosing a **coffin, casket or urn** is an important decision when arranging a funeral. There are many options available and we understand how difficult it can be to decide when you are grieving, so we will be happy to help you select the right size, material and design for your loved one.

Coffins range from traditional and religious wooden coffins, to eco-friendly alternatives, which include cardboard, bamboo, pine, willow, banana leaf and British wool. If you're looking for a truly personalised option, you can choose from a range of picture coffin designs, which can be inspired by a special place, your loved one's favourite sport, hobby or even a personal photograph.

## FUNERAL AND WAKE VENUE

A funeral service can be held in any suitable venue. Common venues to hold a service include a crematorium chapel, place of worship, private home or village hall. Some woodland burial sites also offer venues, which are suitable for hosting a funeral service.

While the funeral service itself is usually held in one of the venues mentioned above, a **wake** can be held in any public place - from private homes to village halls, pubs, cafes and even local parks. When picking a venue for either the service or the wake, it is important to think about the size and capacity of the venue, parking and accessibility, costs and availability on the day that you want to hold the funeral.







## HEARSES AND FUNERAL CARS

On the day of the funeral, a hearse will take the coffin to the funeral service, usually followed by limousines, which carries family and close friends.

As well as the more traditional hearse options, your funeral director can arrange for the funeral vehicle to be a camper van, a motorbike sidecar, a flatbed truck, right through to a princess carriage led by horses dressed as unicorns. If you wish to make your loved one's final journey even more personal, your funeral director will be able to advise you on every option available to fulfil your needs.

As well as considering the **type of transport**, you may also wish to arrange a particular route for the funeral procession to take. Your designated funeral director will be able to offer tips and advice on planning a route, which will be a fitting tribute to your loved one.

## PALLBEARERS

When arranging a loved one's funeral, you may need to decide who the **pallbearers** will be for the service. Your funeral director can provide pallbearers who will carry your loved one in a dignified and respectful way. However, if you wish to ask friends and family, your funeral director will be able to offer advice, from thinking about the distance that they might need to carry the coffin, to the size and weight of the coffin, the height of the pallbearers and any etiquette that they might need to be aware of.

## DECIDE WHO WILL LEAD THE FUNERAL SERVICE

When you're planning a funeral, you'll need to decide **who will lead the service**. This could be a religious leader or minister, a funeral celebrant, the funeral director or a friend or relative.

Funeral celebrants typically help organise and conduct funerals, supporting the bereaved family every step of the way with the aim of celebrating the life of the person who has died. Your funeral director will be able to recommend a celebrant if required. **Continue next page** →





If you decide that the service will be led by a family member or friend, please speak to your funeral director for advice. They will be able to make you aware of all that the role entails, from deciding on readings, planning a eulogy to more practical steps that may need to be included in the funeral planning process.

### FUNERAL READING AND POEMS

Think about whether you'd like to have any readings at the funeral and whether there are any family or friends that might like to deliver them. **Poems and verses for funerals** can bring comfort during an upsetting and difficult time. There are lots of options out there - religious and traditional readings, through to emotional, uplifting or funny quotes. Think about what might be the best fit for the person who died and the family and friends left behind. If you're struggling to think of something useful, our website [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/poems](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/poems) is full of suggestions which might help.

### FUNERAL MUSIC

The type of funeral you plan to hold may have some bearing on the music played. Many funerals that are more religious will include traditional hymns, prayer calls or chants. However, those looking for non-religious **songs for funerals** will often use music as a way to personalise the funeral, opting for a favourite song, or one that reflects the personality of the person who has died. Visit [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/music](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/music) for a range of suggestions, from contemporary to classical. Most crematoria have a full digital music library available to choose from.

### THE EULOGY

A eulogy is the name given to a speech at a funeral. Eulogies help remind family and friends of the memories and legacy their loved one has left behind and are often considered an important part of planning a funeral. Have a think about who you'd like to deliver the eulogy - whether it is a family member, friend, minister or celebrant. Consider whether it will be serious or humorous, the length and the important things that you want to include. If you're still unsure about **how to write a eulogy**, we can help you through the process.





## FUNERAL CLOTHING

When it comes to clothing, there are two things to think about. First and foremost, consider which clothes you'd like your loved one to be dressed in for the funeral. You could opt to provide their favourite item or outfit, or your funeral director can provide a gown.

It is also a good idea to think about whether you'd like to have a **dress code** for the funeral. Traditionally, people have worn black to a funeral as a mark of respect. However, many people are now opting to have colourful funerals, or asking people to dress in a specific colour. It can help to give this some thought and let people know so that they can plan ahead.

## OBITUARIES AND FUNERAL NOTICES

You may want to consider having an obituary, which announces the person's death and details of the funeral. **Obituaries** are traditionally published in newspapers, but online obituary notices are becoming increasingly popular. Dignity's **online funeral notices** allow you to share funeral details online, by text or email. They also allow you to collect charitable donations.

If you're not sure what an obituary should look like or what the message should be, or would like to set up a funeral notice, your funeral director will be able to help. Our website also has examples of obituaries and funeral notices.

## FLOWERS AND CHARITABLE DONATIONS

**Funeral flowers** are a traditional way for people to express their love for the deceased.

Have a think about the most fitting flowers for your loved one, from a wreath to a coffin spray or floral arrangement. Many people opt not to have flowers at a funeral, instead choosing to ask for **donations to a favourite charity**. Whichever option you choose, your funeral director will be able to help make the necessary arrangements.







## ORDER OF SERVICE AND FUNERAL STATIONERY

A funeral **order of service** booklet usually provides a schedule of the ceremony and can be given out to mourners as they arrive or sent to people who cannot attend. It can be useful to think about what you might like to include, from hymns and songs, to poems, readings and photographs. Your funeral director can help you to create a unique commemoration of someone's life, but there are also some tips on how to structure the order of service on our website. Your funeral director can also help by providing additional funeral memorials and stationery, including books of condolence, bookmarks, memorial cards, attendance cards, religious and non-religious keepsake cards, canvas prints or in memory pins.

## PLANNING A WAKE

After the funeral, many people choose to gather together with family and friends mourners for a wake - an opportunity to share memories and condolences over light refreshments.

When **planning a wake**, it is important to think about the size of venue you'll need, who might want to attend, parking and travel from the funeral service to the wake and who will do the catering. Your funeral director may be able to suggest venues and caterers in the local area.

### Contact your nearest Funeral Director

Our Funeral Directors pride themselves on providing unequalled support, reassurance, and attention to detail when arranging a funeral for your loved one. At Dignity, we spend time getting to know you and will help you create the most fitting tribute for the person who has passed away.

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# The day of the funeral

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On the day of the funeral, we will make sure that everything runs smoothly. Our experienced funeral directors will give your loved one a dignified service, which fulfils the wishes of the family.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON THE DAY?

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Your funeral director will call you before the service to talk you through everything that will happen so that you know exactly what to expect.

The funeral procession can start at any location of your choice, but typically begins at the home of the person who has passed away. Your funeral director will arrive in good time, giving you the opportunity to view any floral tributes and ask any questions. for a short distance before getting into the hearse.

Family and friends who are travelling in the limousines or guests who wish to follow the funeral procession will need to ensure that they are ready to leave when the funeral procession does.

When you are ready, we will escort you and your family to our chauffeur driven limousines.

Your funeral directors often lead the cortege on foot for a short distance before getting into the hearse.

Your funeral director will ensure every detail has been taken care of in advance, from any music you have requested to the order of service sheets. They will co-ordinate with the person who is conducting the service, provide pallbearers and oversee the arrangements to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

The funeral director will often lead you into the church or crematorium, walking either in front or behind the coffin before it is placed upon a wooden platform known as a catafalque.

We will make sure that all of the guests have arrived before proceeding with the funeral service.





## THE FUNERAL CEREMONY AND CREMATION/BURIAL

The funeral director will ensure that the ceremony runs as planned. They may stand just outside or at the back of the church or crematorium during the service, ready to escort you and your family to the committal service, graveside or to view any floral tributes. You will have time to speak to guests before being escorted back to your limousines when you are ready to leave for the wake or reception, if one has been organised.

## AFTER THE FUNERAL SERVICE

Following the funeral service, we will drive you and your family to your chosen location, be that the wake or a home address. Your funeral director will answer any final questions you may have before leaving, allowing you to gather with family and friends and continue with your plans.

If you choose Dignity, we will call you the day after the funeral to ensure everything went smoothly and the service was exactly how you wanted it to be. We can arrange to return any flowers or funeral wreaths to you, place them in the crematorium's garden of remembrance or by your loved one's grave if you wish.

If your loved one was cremated, we can arrange a day for you to collect the ashes and provide useful advice on the scattering or burying them, should you need it.

### Contact your nearest Funeral Director

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# Memorials

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Many people take comfort from choosing a memorial; these can range from mausoleums to benches to a piece of jewellery. The type of funeral may dictate the memorial options available. Your **chosen funeral director** will be able to provide advice, information and memorial ideas.

## MEMORIALS FOR CREMATIONS

If your loved one is cremated, you may wish to think about whether you want a decorative urn, a cremation plaque, a memorial vase or a headstone. A range of options are available, many of which can carry an inscription.

Many people opt to scatter the ashes in a meaningful place. This can be anywhere from a local beauty spot to your own garden or at sea. Your funeral director will be able to advise you of any rules or regulations that must be followed.

Memorial jewellery is also becoming increasingly popular, with many people choosing to incorporate their loved one's ashes into a necklace, bracelet or ring. Your funeral director can help you to explore the options available.

## MEMORIALS FOR BURIALS

Most burials will have some kind of headstone, which will carry the details of the person who has died. When choosing a headstone, it is important to think about the type of stone you wish to use, as well as the colour, shape, lettering and the wording of the inscription. Your funeral director will be able to talk you through the options and can advise on any restrictions that might be in place at the cemetery where your loved one is buried.





## OTHER TYPES OF MEMORIAL

People choose to remember their loved ones in many different ways. As well as plaques, headstone and vases, many people opt for a memorial, which will be enjoyed by the local community, e.g. planting a tree or installing a memorial bench at a favourite location.

Other people like the idea of a more personalised tribute, opting for statues or even a mausoleum. Whatever type of memorial you'd like for your loved one, your local funeral director is there to help.

### Need some help or advice?

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# Planning a funeral checklist

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There's a lot to think about, so we've broken it down into a very simple list of key tasks, which you can tick off as you go.

- Choose a funeral director
- Arrange for your loved one to be taken into their care
- Agree a time and date for the funeral
- Decide who to invite and let people know the details
- Decide what type of funeral you want to arrange
- Decide how to personalise the funeral:
  - Coffin
  - Transport
  - Venue
  - Clothing
  - Pallbearers
  - Readings, poems and eulogies
  - Music
  - Flowers
  - Charitable donations
  - Order of service
  - Obituaries and funeral notices
  - Venue for wake
  - Catering for wake

- Decide what type of memorial you'd like
- Understand what will happen on the day
- Ensure you know how costs will be covered

## ONGOING HELP AND SUPPORT

Once the funeral is over, there is still a lot to do, from **dealing with finances**, through to **managing the estate** and seeking support for **bereavement**. We are here to help. Our website is full of helpful guides, which will help with next steps and our friendly and knowledgeable team are happy to help.

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