

Funeral arrangements

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Guidance on how to arrange a funeral and things to consider.

When the registrar issues the death certificate, they will also give you a certificate authorising the funeral. You should feel comfortable and confident with your funeral director. They may be known to you personally, be recommended by a friend, GP or religious adviser, or just have a good reputation.

The [National Association of Funeral Directors](#) [3] and [Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors](#) [4] all have a code of practice. They should give you an estimate of costs - their own and any fees they will pay on your behalf and add to the account. You can ask for this estimate in advance and it's a good idea to get quotes from different firms to compare costs.

Your funeral director can make all the funeral arrangements, whatever your choice - burial or cremation, religious or secular service. The director can also advise on everything you need to register the death. [This website](#) [5] lists some funeral directors.

If you are considering a headstone, most cemeteries advise you to wait approximately six months before placing it. However, we suggest contacting your preferred choice of monumental mason as soon as possible to avoid any unnecessary delay after this period.

Non-religious services

You do not need to have a religious ceremony, or any other ceremony at a funeral. People who are not religious may prefer a humanist ceremony.

This type of ceremony, as with a religious funeral, is a dignified and respectful celebration of the life of the person who has died. Instead of a minister, an officiant or celebrant is commonly employed at a humanist ceremony to conduct the proceedings. The ceremony can involve readings of prose, tributes by attendees or the officiant and the playing of appropriate music.

The [British Humanist Association](#) [6] offers advice on all aspects of humanist ceremonies and produces the booklet *Funerals Without God: A Practical Guide to Non-religious Funerals*.

Celebrants are trained professionals who can officiate at funerals, weddings, namings or any other rite of passage. If you don't want a ceremony at all, members of the family or close friends can attend the committal, which can be in silence or with some music being played.

Non-Church of England funerals

If you have to arrange a funeral for someone who is of a faith different from your own, it is important to contact the equivalent of the local priest of the denomination to find out what needs to be done. Please find below a brief word on the practises of other faiths:

Muslim: Most Muslim communities appoint one person who is responsible for making funeral arrangements. It will be their job to advise you on the rules and to select a suitable funeral director.

Hindu: Hindus are always cremated, and never buried. There are many possible variations of rites, depending on the deceased's form of Hinduism. The Asian Funeral Service can give advice on and arrange Hindu funerals. They can be contacted on 020 8909 3737 or via email on asianfuneralservice@btinternet.com [7].

Jewish: Jewish funerals are usually arranged by a dedicated Jewish funeral agency. Alternatively, the local community may have a contract with a Gentile funeral service, which will be carried out under strict rabbinical control.

The [Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service](#) [8] offers support and can be contacted on 020 8349 0839.

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