

Arranging a funeral yourself

A funeral can only take place after the death is registered, but you don't need to wait for the will to start being executed or anything like that. Most people use a funeral director, though you can arrange a funeral yourself.

Okay, what do I need to do?

Most funerals are arranged by the nearest relatives or a close friend. If there is no one, the local or health authority will arrange a simple funeral.

The person may have left instructions about the type of funeral and burial they wanted. There is no legal obligation for these instructions to be followed, but they usually are.

What are the costs of a funeral?

Funeral costs can include:

- o funeral director fees
- o things the funeral director pays for on your behalf (called 'disbursements' or 'third-party costs'), for example crematorium or cemetery fees, or a newspaper announcement about the death
- o local authority burial or cremation fees

Funeral directors may list all these costs in their quote.

Can I arrange the funeral myself?

Contact the Cemeteries and Crematorium Department of your local council to arrange a funeral yourself. Your adviser can also give you guidance on this.

Moving a body for a funeral abroad

You need permission from a coroner to move a body for a funeral abroad. Apply at least 4 days before you want the body to be moved.

Arrange it yourself without a funeral director

You could save several thousand pounds if you choose not to use a funeral director, but it means you have to do quite a lot more.

The total cost of the funeral will depend on **disbursement** fees and the sort of funeral you choose.

You can use the list below to help you arrange a simple cremation by yourself.

1 - Care of the deceased

If the person died in a hospital or hospice, they'll keep and care for the body for a reasonable amount of time.

They'll also normally arrange for a medical certificate with a cause of death.

However, if the person died at home, you must call for a doctor or ambulance to get the medical certificate.

If the death does not need to be referred to the coroner, you can care for the person at home.

You can lay them out in a cool space, ideally for under a week, while you buy a coffin and book the ceremony.

2 - Register the death

You must register the death at a registry office within five days. You can't make further arrangements until you do this.

You'll need to take the medical certificate, which is signed by a doctor when you register the death.

Once you've registered the death, you'll get a **Certificate for Burial or Cremation** (it's often called the 'green form'), and a **Certificate of Registration of Death** (form BD8).

You'll need the 'green form' to book the crematorium.

3 - Pick a coffin or shroud

Actually, you don't have to legally use a coffin for a funeral: using a shroud is a suitable and affordable alternative. The crematorium or cemetery can advise you on what personal items you can place with the body if you're thinking of doing this.

4 - Book the crematorium

To book the crematorium, you'll need to fill in a form at the crematorium, usually named as an '**Authority for the disposal of cremated remains**'. They might also ask you to complete a 'funeral instruction form'.

You'll need to fill in the deceased's details, and also put in your preferences for timings and music during the ceremony.

5 - Choose who will lead a ceremony if you want one

Having a ceremony is a very personal decision: Remember, you don't have to have one. However if you do choose one, you can plan and lead it yourself.

6 - Transport the body

You'll need to arrange transport to the crematorium. Remember: you don't have to legally use a hearse to do this: in fact, you can transport the coffin or shroud in an estate car or van.

If you feel that this is all too much to take on, you should consider a 'direct cremation' instead – this is somewhere between arranging everything yourself, and employing a funeral director.

Where can I get more information?

You can get more advice on arranging the funeral yourself on the [Good Funeral Guide](#) and [Natural Death Centre](#) websites.