

Ref. No: 1823
Date: 11/06/25
Subject: Good Funeral Guide

REQUEST

The Good Funeral Guide CIC is a not-for-profit organisation, dedicated to supporting, empowering and representing the interests of dying and bereaved people living in the UK.

We are currently looking at the impact of the rise in numbers of direct cremation in the UK, with particular focus on online direct cremation companies.

We are committed to ensuring that open and transparent information about what a direct cremation involves is available to the public, so that they can make informed choices. We also want to explore any potential impact on the emotional health and wellbeing of bereaved people where a relative has chosen a direct cremation rather than a funeral.

We are keen to understand the full picture of the process between death and cremation where an online direct cremation company is used.

It has come to our attention that, in some instances, online direct cremation providers are particularly slow to collect the bodies of deceased patients from hospital mortuaries.

We are concerned that delays in collection of deceased people from hospital mortuaries, and therefore an extended wait until the cremation takes place, can lead to significant additional distress for bereaved people at an already difficult time.

We also understand that such delays in collection inevitably lead to issues with hospital mortuary capacity, which, in turn, has meant that some online direct cremation providers have accrued significant financial liabilities in unpaid charges for the storage of deceased people in hospital mortuaries.

We are writing to NHS Trusts throughout the UK under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to attempt to ascertain the veracity of this information, and the extent of any impact that it may be having across the country.

We appreciate commercial sensitivity, so we are not asking for individual companies to be identified, however we would like to understand the scale of

the problem if it exists, and therefore we would like to ask the following questions:

1. In the last five years, has the Trust noted a particular issue with the length of time elapsing before collection of deceased patients by direct cremation companies?
2. In the last five years, have delays in collection of deceased patients by direct cremation companies created issues for the Trust with mortuary storage capacity?
3. Does the Trust have a policy of charging for deceased patients remaining in the care of the Trust after a certain period of time?

If the answer is yes:

- a) After how many days is this policy implemented?
- b) What is the current daily rate charged?
- c) In the last financial year, what was the total amount charged to direct cremation companies for mortuary storage?
- d) Of this total amount, how much remains unpaid?
- e) Can you advise how the Trust is addressing any such outstanding debts?

RESPONSE

- 1. In the last five years, has the Trust noted a particular issue with the length of time elapsing before collection of deceased patients by direct cremation companies?**

In the last 5 years, we have noticed an improvement with the length of time elapsing before collection of deceased patients by direct cremation companies to that which is now comparable to regular funeral director services.

- 2. In the last five years, have delays in collection of deceased patients by direct cremation companies created issues for the Trust with mortuary storage capacity?**

We have no mortuary storage capacity issues related to delayed collection by direct cremation companies.

3. Does the Trust have a policy of charging for deceased patients remaining in the care of the Trust after a certain period of time?

No

If the answer is yes:

- a) After how many days is this policy implemented?**
- b) What is the current daily rate charged?**
- c) In the last financial year, what was the total amount charged to direct cremation companies for mortuary storage?**
- d) Of this total amount, how much remains unpaid?**
- e) Can you advise how the Trust is addressing any such outstanding debts?**