

# Planning a funeral

If you'd like to start making plans, you may wish to use the following outline as a guide:

**Name of deceased:**

**Name by which they're known by friends or family**  
(if different from above)

**Type of funeral:**

Burial or Cremation  
Religious/Non-religious/Spiritual

**Family members and relationship:**

**Readings or poems wanted:**

**Music wanted:**

**Any other requests?**

## Springhill Hospice

Broad Lane  
Rochdale  
OL16 4PZ  
01706 649920

[www.springhill.org.uk](http://www.springhill.org.uk)

Incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee No 2325905  
Registered Charity No 701798

**Further advice is available from:**

The National Association of Funeral Directors  
0845 230 1343 [www.nfda.org.uk](http://www.nfda.org.uk)

The Bereavement Advice Centre  
0800 634 9494 [www.bereavementadvice.org](http://www.bereavementadvice.org)

## HOW MUCH WILL A FUNERAL COST

This depends on what is wanted at the funeral so it is a good idea to set yourself a budget and to appoint someone to get various quotes from different funeral directors. Many funeral directors now have pre-payment schemes.

## CAN I GET HELP WITH THE COSTS?

You may be able to get a Funeral Payment but it depends on any benefits you receive, your relationship with the deceased and any other money (other than your personal savings) that may be available to help with cost. The Department of Work and Pensions or your local Citizens Advice Bureau should be able to give you detailed advice.

## DOES IT HAVE TO BE RELIGIOUS?

There is no legal requirement for the funeral to be conducted by a religious official. Many people choose to have a non-religious or humanist ceremony, while others opt for a 'spiritual' ceremony, one that is not aligned to any particular faith or religious tradition.

## CAN IT BE A 'GREEN' OR 'ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY FUNERAL'?

Yes it can. Options include: the type of coffin (cardboard, bamboo, willow, banana leaf), where the burial takes place (eg: woodland), and whether your loved one is embalmed or not (this is not always necessary).

## WHERE WILL THE CEREMONY TAKE PLACE?

If you are a member of a faith tradition then it is usual for a ceremony to take place in your local church, mosque, gurdwara, synagogue etc. before burial or cremation. Some people opt to go straight to the crematorium or cemetery chapel but you can hold a funeral ceremony almost anywhere with permission of the owner of the land or building.

## WILL IT BE A CREMATION OR BURIAL?

Some faith traditions forbid cremation while others forbid burial. If you are a member of a faith then you should speak to your faith leader or representative about this.

Most people can choose either and so you might want to consider:

- if you decide on cremation is there a choice of crematorium? (one may be more pleasant than another or give a longer ceremony time).
- if a burial you can choose between a churchyard, cemetery, woodland burial, possibly private land or sea.

## EULOGY/ TRIBUTE

Do you wish family or friends to deliver the tribute or the person leading the ceremony? (You can have both.)

## WHAT READINGS, SONGS, ETC. DO I WANT IN THE CEREMONY THAT WILL REFLECT THE LIFE AND LIKES OF MY LOVED ONE?

Religious traditions will have readings from their Holy Scriptures at funerals but alongside these there may be room for passages or poems from other sources. For those who chose a non-religious or 'spiritual' ceremony the choice of readings is up to you.

With regards music, some faith traditions have the custom of singing hymns or devotional songs. Most crematorium and cemetery chapels have a CD player and many have an organ.

## WHO CAN HELP ME PLAN THIS?

If you are a member of a religious faith then your own minister or faith leader will be able to plan a fitting and appropriate ceremony for your loved one. If your wish is to have a non-religious or non-traditional funeral then a funeral director will be able to put you in touch with someone who will be able to help you plan this and conduct it for you.

The Humanist Association has a list of approved celebrants who can assist you in drawing up your plans in who can conduct the ceremony. Contact numbers can be found in telephone directories and on the internet.

## IS THERE A SET TIME BETWEEN DEATH AND THE DATE OF THE FUNERAL?

Some religious communities have customs regarding the length of time required between death and the funeral. Many communities however have no such customs and legally there is no time limit (although if a post mortem is required this may cause a slight delay).

Therefore you do not need to let anyone rush you into any decision regarding the date of the funeral or the type of ceremony that you want.

## DOES THE FUNERAL HAVE TO BE 'PUBLIC' OR A LARGE EVENT?

This is the decision of the deceased's next of kin. Some people prefer to have a quiet 'family only' funeral and a more public memorial ceremony at a later date. Those who help you plan the funeral will also be able to assist you in planning this occasion.

## PERSON CONDUCTING THE CEREMONY

You may know someone who you'd like to conduct the ceremony, either from your faith community or someone else you know. If so it would be good to invite them to conduct it for you and then ask for their assistance in planning the ceremony. Otherwise, you may prefer to let the funeral director arrange someone for you.