

## Continuity of care

You go to the funeral director. You see a nice person called an arranger who listens to you, advises you and takes you through the funeral planning process. Over the next ten days or so you get to know each other pretty well and build warm relationship.

It would be nice if, when you got to the unfamiliar and forbidding crematorium on one of the most difficult days of your life, that person was there for you with a reassuring smile.

But this essential continuity of care is not offered by a great many funeral directors. On the day of the funeral you are looked after by a stranger, called a conductor, whom you may not have been introduced to. Even if the arranger wanted to come to the funeral to see the job through and be there for you, they wouldn't be allowed.

There's a good economic reason for this separation of roles. You can employ funeral arranger on low wages, part time. Funeral arranging is not rated a specialist activity; funeral conducting is. This may make good money sense to the funeral director but it is likely to impair your experience of the funeral.

All the big chain funeral directors, Co-operative Funeralcare, Dignity, LM and Funeral Services Partnership, separate the roles of arranger and funeral director. So do a great many independents. This makes them more efficient as businesses but they don't pass the saving on to you.

In life, the hand-built car is the one we want, the production line car the one we can afford. But when it comes to funerals, the handbuilt funeral is normally no more expensive, and very often cheaper, than an impersonal production line funeral.

The best funeral directors pride themselves on offering continuity of care. They make sure that the first person you see is also the last person you see. That person is there for you from beginning to end.

If this is important to you, it is important to ask the following question when you are looking for a funeral director:

*Can you guarantee that only one person will make arrangements with me, get back to me personally every time I ring and be the conductor on the day of the funeral?*

**ENDS**