



Questions to ask a funeral director

We really recommend doing plenty of research before choosing a funeral director to help you organise a funeral for someone who has died.

You absolutely do not need to pick the company closest to you, or the one your family has always used, or the one you have seen advertised the most.

If you have a brilliant funeral director working with you, then there is every chance that the funeral you create together will be exactly what you need it to be, and do exactly what you need it to do.

Have a look through our suggested questions. Not all of them may be relevant to you and some of this information may be available on companies' websites, but the questions are designed to help you think about what matters to you and to help you find out more about a funeral director before you commit to hiring them.

You are looking for someone who will help you navigate what may be the most difficult of experiences. It's worth taking your time to find the right people to work with you and to care for your person.

General questions

- How long have you been in business? What did the owner do beforehand?
- Who owns your company?
- Is the owner involved with the day-to-day activities of the business? What role(s) do they have? Will I meet them?
- How does your company work?
- Will there be one person looking after us throughout our experience with you, up to and including the day of the funeral?
- In what ways do you differ from other funeral directing businesses in the area?
- What is your USP?

- Can you advise us on minimising the environmental impact of a funeral?
- When will we need to pay you?

The person who has died

- Who will collect and care for the person who has died?
- Whereabouts will our person be looked after? Can we see your facilities?
- Who has access to this area? What security do you have in place?
- What policies do you have in place to safeguard people who have died who are in your care?
- Who will look after our person? Are they all DBS checked? Can we meet them?
- How will our person be looked after? What do you usually do when someone is brought into your care?
- Do you routinely bathe and wash the hair of people who have died?
- How often do you check on people in your care?
- Can we be involved with caring for our person, washing and dressing them, placing them in their coffin?
- Can we come and visit our person while they are with you? Does this have to be during specific hours? Or could we come in the evenings or at weekends?
- Are there any extra costs involved if we want to spend time with our person?
- How often can we come? How much notice will you need of us visiting? How long could we stay?
- Whereabouts will we spend time with our person? Can we see this space/ room?
- What is your policy on embalming? If you encourage it, can you explain what is involved and why you feel it is necessary for our person?
- Who will close and seal the coffin? Can we do this so that we are the last to see our person?

Arranging the funeral

- Who will be responsible for helping us to make arrangements for the funeral?
- Will this person be there on the day of the funeral?
- Where will we meet to make the funeral arrangements?
- Will we meet the funeral conductor before the date of the funeral?
- Can we source a coffin ourselves or do we have to buy one from you?
- If we supply a coffin, will you charge a handling fee?
- Can we provide a vehicle to take the coffin to the funeral? If we do this, will you charge a fee?

- Can we provide people to carry the coffin, or do your staff have to do this?
- Will you be able to advise us on funeral venue choices? What do you know about the various options available in the area?
- If we have a specific date in mind, will you be able to accommodate this?
- Can you organise live streaming of the funeral online?
- What about donations to charity?

The funeral ceremony

- Who will be conducting the funeral? Will we meet them beforehand?
- What do they usually wear? If we don't want someone dressed in black with a top hat, what are the alternatives?
- What do they normally do?
- If we don't want them to do some of these things, can we do them instead? e.g. leading a procession, placing the coffin for the ceremony?
- How can we play an active part in the procession or in the ceremony?
- If we want a celebrant to lead the ceremony for us, how do we find the right person?
- Do you have a list of celebrants that you can recommend we consider? Why do you recommend these particular ones?
- What if we don't want any of the celebrants you recommend? How can we find someone more suitable for us/our person?
- What if we don't actually want a celebrant to lead the ceremony? Can you advise us how to do this ourselves? What do we need to know?
- How much do you like to know about the details of the ceremony? How closely do you liaise with celebrants? For example, do you ask for a copy of the ceremony in advance?
- How can we personalise the space we are using for the ceremony?
- What are we/aren't we allowed to do?
- What about music or musicians? Who takes responsibility for organising any music?
- Will you be sitting in on the ceremony?
- What if something goes wrong?
- If we are having a cremation, do we have the option of witnessing the coffin being placed in the cremator after the ceremony?
- What happens after the ceremony? What happens to any flowers?

After the funeral

- Do you offer bereavement support? What is involved?