



Funeral planning check-list



A guide to funeral planning

Introduction Planning your own funeral is a task that is easy to put off until later; however it is a generous act to whoever has the responsibility of carrying it out. It is also true that the worst time to plan a funeral is when someone has died. Shock and grief do not help in making decisions that can not be undone later. If possible, it is helpful for all those directly involved to talk together about what is wanted; although this is difficult it can prevent much unhappiness and ill-feeling later on. Many people have found it an opportunity to take stock and say how they felt that a weight had been lifted.

There is no right or wrong way to hold a funeral. What is important is that those concerned leave feeling that they have said their farewells and given thanks in a way that is right and meaningful.

Funeral wishes, whether in a Will or as described below, are not legally binding after death. It is, therefore, sensible to identify who will give instructions for your funeral, so you feel confident that your wishes will be followed. If you have a partner to whom you are not married and they are not appointed your executor, consider their needs carefully. It is not unusual for parents to take control when a unmarried person dies, and the partners wishes ignored. It is also helpful, and often therapeutic, if your partner, family and friends can follow your wishes after death. Meeting your wishes is part of the grieving process for them, and forms part of their separation from your life. It is also a process in which you can consider their needs and perhaps integrate them into the funeral in some way. Having his or her names mentioned at the service might help, or perhaps someone might like to be a bearer or read a eulogy at the service. Once these opportunities have passed, they can never be recovered.

This document also enables you to ask pertinent questions about the kind of funeral you want, and ensures that you have some control over the arrangements. There is nothing worse than having to ask these questions at the 'crisis' time of a death. You will also be able to price the various options. The costs will arise in two areas. The first is 'disbursements' - the sums you will pay to doctors (*for cremation*), the cemetery or crematorium and the minister. The second area is the 'funeral' arrangements made by the funeral director, assuming you are using one. These include the cost of collecting and handling the body, the coffin, viewing, the hearse and cars, and all the professional arrangements. If you are using a funeral director, obtain some quotes as soon as you have decided what you require. In general, the more you use the funeral director or the more complex the funeral, the more expensive it will become.

Keep this document with your Will, or somewhere known to the person arranging your funeral. This point is important! It is not unusual to have the wrong type of funeral because the Will, which contained funeral directions, was not read until after the funeral. You can amend this form however you wish, and add pages if you need to. Delete sections that do not apply. The form can be photocopied.



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Details for the funeral of:

Full Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Preliminary details

(1) I have/have not written a Will - location of Will _____

*If there is a Will, please treat this document as expanding on the wishes expressed in that Will,
with the Will taking legal precedent if relevant.*

(2) My next of kin is: _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____ Tel No. _____

(3) If different from the above, the person arranging the funeral will be:

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____ Tel No. _____

*If you have a Will, and this person is not the executor, then any executor must agree to the arrangements
in this document.*

(4) Do you wish to donate your body to medical science? **YES/NO**

If YES, this must be arranged in advance.

(5) Have you completed a 'Living Will' **YES/NO**

*This document directs your doctors over recovery from serious illness. If you answer YES, a copy should
have been lodged with your GP, and you should state the location of the will when asked at the end of
this directive.*



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Are you using a Funeral Director

- (6)** Is the person arranging your funeral going to use a funeral director? **YES/NO**
If YES, and you have a particular funeral director in mind, enter their name below

If you do not enter a name, it will be assumed you will leave the choice to the person arranging the funeral. Information on using a funeral director (from the Charter for the Bereaved) is available.

- (7)** Do you have a pre-paid Funeral Plan? **YES/NO**
If YES, and a nominated funeral director must direct the funeral, enter their name

Funeral Plans vary in what they include. Please ensure that the Plan covers the costs of what you include in this directive.

Funeral details

- (8)** Is it your wish to die at home? **YES/NO**
If YES, do you want to have your body retained at home until the funeral, if this is possible? **YES/NO**

- (9)** If you should die in hospital/nursing home, do you want your body to be returned home prior to the funeral? **YES/NO**
If YES, indicate how long for

- _____
- (10)** In most situations, nurses lay out the body at the time of death. Where it is possible, would you prefer someone else to do this, or perhaps assist? If yes, give name and contact details

- _____
- (11)** Do you wish your body to be embalmed? **YES/NO**

If you choose woodland burial, embalming is not preferred, as the formaldehyde used is not environmentally friendly. Embalming is often called 'cosmetic' or 'hygienic' treatment by the funeral profession, and a charge is made for the service. It is not an essential process prior to burial or cremation.

Funeral details
cont.

(12) Do you wish for your body to be viewed? **YES/NO**
This is usually arranged by funeral directors using their chapel of rest (or repose). Most bodies are viewed in the coffin, although other settings can be arranged. A fee is charged for viewing at agreed times. Costs may be higher if more than one viewing is arranged.

(13) If you answered YES to viewing, are you content that anybody who wishes is allowed to view your body? **YES/NO**
 If you circled NO, list here who should not be allowed, or state that you will attach a list of these people to this document

(14) What type of coffin do you require? **STANDARD/PURE WOOD/GREEN/OTHER**
***Standard coffins** from funeral directors are made of veneered chipboard with plastic handles and lining, with costs from £180.00. **Pure wood coffins** and 'caskets' are available from funeral directors but can cost in excess of £600.00. **'Green' coffins** made of cardboard, pure wood, wicker and bamboo are available from £180.00 upwards, as well as a wool shroud (burial only). Check for availability and prices before you decide, as some funeral directors may not use and/or supply green coffins.*
Other types - if you require an unusual, or artist painted coffin, details of the supplier, design and size must be discussed. You can make your own coffin, if you prefer.
The Natural Death Centre in London offers advice on coffin construction, green funerals, etc.

(15) There is no need to have a funeral cortege with a hearse and following limousines. At Memorial Woodlands the coffin can be placed in the chapel before the service, and the family arrive in their own vehicles.

Do you wish for a cortege? **YES/NO**

Do you wish to be placed in the chapel before the mourners arrive? **YES/NO**

Or do you want your body transporting in (please tick):-

A hearse An estate car Horse drawn hearse

Other (please describe) _____

Funeral details
cont.

(16) Do you want following limousines for the immediate family? **YES/NO**
Traditional funerals have at least one limousine, often more. A charge applies for each car. Mourners can use their own vehicles if they own them, or a mini-bus can be hired, etc.

(17) Bearers - would you prefer family bearers? **YES/NO**
Four are needed, to 16 stone in weight, and six above that. Although male bearers are traditional, there is no reason why women cannot perform this final act.

Or bearers provided by a funeral director? **YES/NO**
A charge will apply for bearers

(18) Flowers - do you want to leave wreath choice to mourners? **YES/NO**

Or do you want family flowers only? **YES/NO**

Or no flowers? **YES/NO**
Some people see flowers as a waste and prefer donations and others prefer to provide them from their garden. Most wreaths are made of plastic frames, oasis and plastic wrapping.

(19) Donations – do you want donations at your funeral? **YES/NO**
Where people oppose flowers, want family flowers only or feel strongly about supporting the local hospice or charity, they choose this option. This is an important source of funds to these organisations. The donation must be announced in any obituary and the money sent by post, or a collection taken at the funeral service.

(20) Obituaries – do you want an obituary in a local publication? **YES/NO**

If YES, which publication(s)? _____

And: How many entries? _____

(21) Do you have any special requests? **YES/NO**

If YES, please describe _____

This might include a letter or photo to be placed in coffin, special route for the hearse, jewellery left on your body, etc.

The funeral service

(22) Do you require a funeral service? **YES/NO**

A service is not a legal requirement and your body can be taken directly to the crematorium or cemetery without ceremony. If you chose NO, and have a partner or family, please ensure they agree. It is sometimes difficult for people to grieve where no service is held.

(23) If you chose NO, briefly describe how your body will be delivered to the cemetery or crematorium.

(24) If you chose YES to a service, complete either **part (A)** or **part (B)** below:

The service is divided into two parts, the 'main service' which can be held in a crematorium chapel, any church or chapel, at a funeral directors or any place you have permission to use, and the 'committal' (about 4 – 5 minutes). These are combined if all the service is held at the crematorium. For burial, the 'committal' occurs when you get to the graveside.

Cremation

(A) Where will the main service be held? _____

Burial

(B) Do you want the entire service at the graveside? **YES/NO**

OR the main service in the chapel (*Fee applies*) and the committal at the graveside **YES/NO**

OR the main service at _____

followed by the committal at the graveside?

The Format of the Service

(25) Is it important that the service should be conventional? **YES/NO**

(26) What religion/spiritual belief/philosophy will the service be based upon?



**The format
of the
service** cont.

(27) Do you have a minister, humanist officiant or person in mind to take the service? **YES/NO**

If YES, please give the name _____

This can be a friend or relative, if they agree. Memorial Woodlands have contact details for humanist officiants and other ministers. If you answered NO, it is assumed you will leave the choice to the person arranging the funeral.

(28) What format would you like the service to follow?

Most religious services follow a set format, although ministers vary over how much variation, pop music, poetry, etc. they will allow. Secular (non-religious) services are entirely your prerogative.

If you have any preferred wishes, enter them here:

Music entering: _____

Music leaving: _____

Hymns: _____

Any tapes, CD's during service: _____

Any text or poems: _____

Please ensure that the music is available and known to whoever is making arrangements.

If you are using the organ, ensure that your requests can be played – most classical music cannot.

Any other details: _____

This might include not closing the committal curtains at the crematorium, using flowers to decorate the chapel, items placed in the coffin (no glass and dangerous items if cremation is chosen), items placed on the coffin, photographs displayed in the chapel and any form of symbolism or ritual you might prefer.

The format of the service cont.

(29) Do you want an address (eulogy) at the service about your life? **YES/NO**

If YES, is the text enclosed? **YES/NO**

If NO, who will devise the eulogy? _____

Is there somebody you would prefer to give the eulogy at the service? **YES/NO**

If YES, give their name _____

(30) Is the service open to all? **YES/NO**

If NO, please state who is not to attend _____

(31) Are there any particular person(s) you wish to be invited to the service that might otherwise be omitted? **YES/NO**

If YES, say whom _____

After cremation

(32) After cremation, where would you like your cremated remains placing?

Cremated remains pose no threat to the environment and can be strewn in fresh or saltwater. If strewn on the land, perhaps at a favourite spot, the permission of the landowner is theoretically necessary but rarely obtained.

(33) If an urn or casket is required, do you require a specific type? **YES/NO**

If YES, what type _____

If the cremated remains are taken away for strewing somewhere, a low cost cardboard container is used although some people dislike these containers! Bamboo or wood caskets are usual for burial although some churches will not allow any container. Bamboo, stone, ceramic & bronze urns can be purchased for keeping cremated remains at home or in storage.

(34) Do you require any form of memorial after cremation? **YES/NO**

If YES, please state type _____



Burial details (35) Which cemetery do you wish to be interred in? _____

If you are using a new grave, state type _____

(36) If more than one, how many burials will occur in the grave? **ONE/TWO**

Please name the other burials, if you can? _____

(37) If it is to be a new grave, who will be the owner? _____

Making a child (over 18) or other survivor the grave owner will avoid the need to change the ownership after your death. If you have a partner, have the grave deeds in both names to ensure that you are both buried together.

If you are being buried in an existing grave, state cemetery: _____

State the grave number _____

Where are the grave deeds located? _____

Is it a grave 'reserved' in advance (*with no burials*)? **YES/NO**

If NO, give details of the last burial: date _____ name _____

(38) Do you have a specific memorial in mind? **YES/NO**

If YES, please give details of the memorial _____

Please ensure that your preferred memorial is permitted on the above grave

Have you a preferred mason to supply and fix the memorial? **YES/NO**

If YES, please state who _____

Have you chosen the content and format of the inscription? **YES/NO**

If YES, is a copy enclosed with this document **YES/NO**

If NO, it will be assumed you will leave this decision to the person who arranges the funeral.



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Subsequent memorial service (39) Do you require a memorial service after your death? **YES/NO**
This could be in church, or some sort of gathering, perhaps when the cremated remains are placed, or a tree planted.

If YES, please give details (or state where located) _____

Commemoration (40) If you require a form of commemoration after your death, please give details:

This may include a donation to the hospice or charity, endowment, gift to parish or church, the planting of a tree or placing of a seat. If the information is given in a Will or is confidential, there is no need to give details here.

Last wishes (41) Is there any last wish, or words unsaid you wish to say now? **YES/NO**

If YES, state here or say where located _____

(42) Have you left letters, instructions, etc. for reading after your death? **YES/NO**

If YES, state location _____

And to whom addressed _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Full name. _____

Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Completing Your Estate

The following items will be required by the executor or your family to complete your estate. This is particularly important if you live alone. Answer the following questions and/or indicate where the items are. Ensure you cross out what does not apply:

Personal

1. NHS Card and/or NHS Number
2. Marriage certificate
3. Birth certificate or date of birth
4. Maiden name if married woman
5. If married, name of spouse
6. If married, occupation of spouse
7. Present or last employer
8. Present or last occupation
9. Mortgage details
10. Home insurance details
11. Life insurance details
12. Rent books
13. Gas supplier details
14. Electricity supplier details
15. Water supplier details
16. Telephone account details
17. Car details
18. Details of your GP
19. Any medication? (state location)
20. Solicitors details

21. Living Will

22. Organ donor cards

Financial Details

23. Bank account

24. Building Society Account(s)

25. Credit card(s)

26. Unit trust(s)

27. ISA Fund(s)

28. Share(s)

29. Premium Bond(s)

30. State pension

31. Occupational pension

32. War pension

33. Hire purchase agreement(s)

34. Accountant

35. Stockbroker

Donating body to medical science

36. Location of agreement

Pacemaker

37. Do you have a pacemaker or similar battery powered appliance fitted **YES/NO**