

St Margaret's
Hospice Care

Things to consider when choosing a funeral director



Choosing a good funeral director is important as it can offer you comfort and support at a difficult time. A funeral director ensures the process of planning a funeral runs smoothly, helps a family think through their choices and is a source of expertise to help you plan the right funeral for you and your loved one.

A good funeral director is someone who can be comforting and supportive at a difficult time, so it is important to choose the person you feel the most comfortable with. Every family is different, and the right Funeral Director should provide care, guidance and flexibility that reflects your personal preferences and values.

However, we recommend that any Funeral Director you choose is a member of a recognised professional association, adheres to a strict Code of Practice, and is regularly inspected or assessed to maintain high standards of professionalism and care.

The main services a funeral director provides are:

- Look after the person who has died up to and on the day of the funeral, including dressing them according to family instructions
- Help plan the service or ceremony
- Arrange and supply the vehicles and bearers
- Deal with legal documentation for the cremation or burial to go ahead
- Liaise with third parties on behalf of the bereaved

You can agree for a funeral director to provide as much or as little of the above and in some cases a funeral arranger may undertake some of these aspect on your behalf.

Your funeral director should support you in arranging a funeral that is a unique and personal day of remembrance or celebration. If you have any doubts about your funeral director you should have no hesitation in seeking another. It is important to feel comfortable with the person to whom you are entrusting this very personal responsibility. You may also like to listen to other people's recommendations.

Here are some things to consider when looking at funeral costs:

- Ask for written quotes. Prices can vary considerably according to what is included but it is possible to organise a moving and meaningful funeral with simplicity and without costly 'add ons'
- Under new regulations brought in by the CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) in September 2021, all funeral directors must display a standardised price list, both online and in their funeral home windows, to allow potential customers to make a like-for-like comparison on costs
- Don't be afraid to say if you have difficulty in meeting the costs. If you are in receipt of certain benefits you may be entitled to some Government assistance and there may be other organisations that can help. Your funeral director should be able to advise
- Ask for a breakdown of all the costs and what is included, looking out for e.g. visiting your loved one in the chapel of rest; care and preparation of your loved one; transfer out of hours
- Ask also about disbursements to third parties – e.g. payments made to doctors, ministers, crematorium
- Embalming is usually not strictly necessary. If it is suggested ask for a clear explanation of the reasoning and the cost
- Some funeral directors receive commission from florists, printers or stonemasons for supplying the business. It may be more cost effective for you to use a supplier of your own if you feel able to.


And finally, **take your time**. There is no rush to carry out the funeral immediately, unless specified by the religion or tradition of the person who has died. The most important thing, for you and on behalf of the person who has died, is that you feel comfortable with, and well supported by, the funeral director you choose.

Ann Fulton, Spiritual Care Lead at St Margaret's Hospice Care is available to support loved ones of people under the care of the hospice. Please contact Ann via: **07736 886142** or email **ann.fulton@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk**

At St Margaret's Hospice Care we work with all funeral directors across Somerset. For an up to date list of funeral directors in your area we would suggest using an internet search engine, such as Google.

St Margaret's Hospice Care Taunton Hospice,

Heron Drive, Bishops Hull, Taunton, TA1 5HA

 01823 333822

St Margaret's Hospice Care Yeovil Hospice,

Little Tarrat Lane, Yeovil, BA20 2HU

 01935 709480

 info@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk

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