

# Direct Funerals.

## **What is a direct funeral?**

A direct funeral is the term used for a very, very basic cremation or burial which is:-

**Unattended by the family.**

**Without a religious service or ceremony.**

**Carried out at a time convenient to the specialist company or funeral director.**

**Payable up-front.**

This option is an appropriate choice for all sorts of reasons. Personal, ethical, financial, practical or just because it was the wish of the deceased. Often a separate memorial ceremony or party is held elsewhere on another day at a better, time rich venue or at a gathering when the ashes are scattered/buried or a tree is planted.

## **Where can I get a direct funeral?**

Most companies now offer this service, however, prices can vary hugely between the specialist companies and regular funeral directors.

## **How much does a direct funeral cost?**

They can be as low as one quarter of the standard funeral cost. Prices and services vary according to where you live and who you use. Using a direct funeral specialist is often the most economical choice; their prices start at around £1000 for a direct cremation. Please do your homework, shop around and ensure you ask if there are any additional costs involved. For example: immediate or out of hours collection of the deceased, mileage or courier charges for sending ashes back to the family.

When you understand that many crematoria fees alone are now over £900, you will appreciate how most funeral directors are unable to compete with the pricing of the specialist companies, many of whom own their own crematoria. However, the industry is changing all the time, so shop around. Our helpline receives more requests for information about direct funerals than anything else, so you are not alone in considering this option.

Direct burials are increasingly taking place at the natural burial grounds. Family or friends are able to arrange a tree or flower planting ceremony at a later date. This is especially helpful at the current time when the numbers attending funerals are limited. As a rule of thumb you should be able to find a funeral director who will offer an A to B burial service, unattended, to include a cardboard coffin for around the £800 mark. Burial ground prices vary across the UK but on average the natural burial grounds charge £1100 including the grave digging.

## **One last thing ...**

A funeral service or ceremony is considered by many to be an important part of the grieving process. Having a direct funeral without this part may be what you desire but if you have family and friends be mindful that they may not agree with you. We advise you to discuss this with everyone, ensuring that your extended family, your neighbours and your friends understand that this is your preferred choice. If they were not aware that a direct funeral was your wish they may think your next of kin or executor disrespectful or mean for arranging such a send off. Let them all know now.

Another good reason for discussing your wish for a direct funeral is that it spreads the word about this option. Many, particularly the elderly or those strapped for cash, are often worried about the cost of funerals, knowledge of this option might come as a huge relief to them.

Please look at the Natural Death Centre website [www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk) for a list of good, flexible funeral directors who can also offer a direct funeral in your area if keeping things local is important to you. Or give our helpline a call 01962 712690.

**Warning:** There are some ex-con' cowboys setting up as *direct specialists*, be careful, always check what you are getting. For example where will the cremation take place, where will the body be stored up until the cremation and how long will the delay be between their engagement and the cremation/burial actually taking place.

If not locally you may wish to consider the increased carbon footprint of using a company who transport bodies from one end of the UK to the other! As always our advice is shop around. Companies vary hugely in price, mission and standards.

*(NB. Most will charge extra for a non-hospital or out of hours collection and if the deceased is very large.)*

If you are anyone you know is unsure what to do with cremated remains, ashes, we have created a website listing all the options. C.R.I.B. The Cremated Remains Information Bureau. [www.crib-ndc.org](http://www.crib-ndc.org)