

PUBLIC HEALTH FUNERALS

Under what circumstances does Birmingham City Council arrange public health funerals

Birmingham City Council has a statutory duty to arrange the burial or cremation of people who have died in Birmingham, where there is no one willing or able to arrange a funeral.

The team also has a legal obligation to protect property under certain circumstances.



When does the Council arrange a public health funeral?

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 to arrange the burial or cremation of bodies where there is no one willing or able to arrange a funeral.

Birmingham City Council can arrange a sensitive funeral for those people who die within the city boundaries. Where someone dies in a hospital or a hospice, the Health Authority/Trust or hospice manager should be contacted to see if they have an agreement with Birmingham City Council to arrange the funeral.

What type of funeral will be arranged?

All funeral arrangements will be conducted in accordance with the known wishes of the person who has died, and we will respect their religious and cultural background wherever possible. The funeral will be by way of cremation unless the Authority believes that cremation would be against the wishes of the person who has died.

The funeral director is contracted to provide a dignified funeral and the general manner of the funeral is such that an ordinary observer could not differentiate between this and any other funeral service.

Who is the contracted Funeral Director?

The contracted funeral director, **C. Bastock Limited**, is available 24 hours for 365 days of the year and can be contacted on telephone number **0121 706 4040**.

Who will pay for the funeral arrangements?

Under section 46, the funeral expenses, after tax owed to the government, are the first call on any estate (money or property held after death). The Council is empowered under the Act to collect all sums of money due or belonging to the deceased and sell any belongings of the deceased in order to help offset the costs. Any shortfall will be met by the Council or the Health Authority/Trust.

Where the person who has died has no estate, a simple funeral is provided. Friends, family and carers will be advised of the date, time and place so that they can attend.

Where the person who has died has left sufficient funds, more flexibility is available to ensure a suitable funeral, one which more closely follows the wishes of the person who has died or those of family, carers or friends.

After the funeral arrangements have been paid, what happens to any money left over?

Where there is an estate an administrative charge will be made for work carried out and for the cost of the funeral.

Generally, after the funeral and administrative charges have been deducted, any money left will go to the Government Legal Department in accordance with their guidelines for 'Referring cases to the Government Legal Department'.

Who is the Government Legal Department (GLD)?

The Government Legal Department (GLD) deals with the administration of an estate when someone has died without leaving a will, spouse, civil partner or entitled relatives. In these circumstances, their estate becomes ownerless goods, and the GLD will carry out the administration of the estate on behalf of the Crown.

Is help available where family or friends are arranging the funeral?

Support and advice is also available for people who have not experienced bereavement before or feel that they may need help in arranging a funeral.

As the services we offer are wide ranging, anyone seeking help or advice can approach the team and receive the benefit of our experience in this sensitive area of work.

Protecting the property of the person who has died and is there a charge?

Birmingham City Council has a statutory duty to protect residential property under certain circumstances. Protection includes safeguarding movable property inside the home, when the owner has lost the capacity to do this themselves or has died and there is no one willing or able to take on this role. If valuables such as cash, jewellery, or antiques have been left in a property, or pets have been left alone, then further action may be necessary.

There is no initial charge for the service, except where repairs or locks have to be fitted, or repairs are needed to keep the property safe and secure. Gardening maintenance work to front gardens may also be done at the Council's discretion.

The Council has a duty to recover expenses where possible from the estate of the person who has died in order to minimise costs to the taxpayer.

What if I do not agree with how the Funerals and Protection of Property team have acted?

You can write to:

**Service Manager
Funerals and Protection of Property
PO Box 16519
Birmingham
B2 2FJ**

More Information

Funerals and Protection of Property Team

PO Box 16519
Birmingham
B2 2FJ

phone: 0121 675 7129

email: fpp@birmingham.gov.uk

You may also find additional information from the following organisations:

Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk
phone: 0800 169 6565

C. Bastock Ltd Funeral Directors

www.cbastock.co.uk
phone: 0121 706 4040

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk
phone: 0808 27 87 97 6 (Solihull)
0344 477 1010 (Birmingham)

Department for Work and Pensions

www.dwp.gov.uk
phone: 0800 169 0140

The Pension Service

www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/pensioncredit

phone: 0800 991 234

Government Legal Department (GLD)

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-legal-department

phone: 020 7210 4700

email: bvinfo@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Your right to be heard

If you have any comments, compliments or complaints, please contact:

Adult Social Care Directorate

phone: 0121 303 1234

If you have a hearing impairment you can contact us by using the text relay service. Details of this service can be

found on the Text Relay website: www.relayuk.bt.com/

email: CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk

Birmingham City Council Switchboard

phone: 0121 303 9944

