

## Standards in the funeral industry – fact sheet

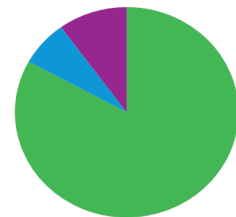
### Background

TCC's members are various faith groups, community groups, and schools from across North East Wales. We tackle social injustice by supporting diverse communities to gain the power they need to enact change. We do this through community organising: bringing together local groups so they can set their own agenda, take action, and improve their communities.

We work with those in power to ensure the community has an input into the decisions made about them. The issues we work on are very varied, as they come from the direct experience of our members.

This fact sheet is aimed at community groups and campaigners who may wish to take action on funeral issues in their own area .

*How was your last experience dealing with a funeral director?*



Good—83%  
Bad—7%  
OK— 10%

### The issue

TCC's members found that when many people were arranging a funeral they were unable to get any estimate of the price from several funeral directors. With funerals easily costing several thousands of pounds, not knowing the price was a big concern for many families. At the time of arranging the funeral, many went along with whatever the funeral director suggested, only to be shocked by the size of the bill which arrived after the funeral had taken place.

*96% think there should be mandatory regulation so that funeral directors have to adhere to the same standards.*



TCC members researched the issue, and were very surprised to find that no license is needed to become a funeral director, and that there is no regulation in the industry. Some funeral directors are members of trade associations, which have their own codes of conduct. However, if the trade association finds that the funeral director is not adhering to the code of conduct they can only remove trade association membership; they cannot stop a funeral director operating.

*“There should be no opportunity for rogues or people with slack standards to be able to set up in business as funeral directors.” “Quite shocked to find that you do not need a licence or qualification to set up as a funeral director, there definitely should be!”*

We also asked our member groups to take part in a survey to find out how much local people knew about the funeral industry, and what their own experiences of dealing with funeral directors had been.

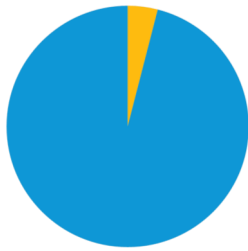
TCC invited all local funeral directors to attend a forum to discuss the issues directly, and to hear the funeral directors' point of view. Several funeral directors attended who were very enthusiastic about working with the local community, and said that they themselves had been calling for better regulation of the industry for many years, as the un-professional funeral directors were giving the industry as a whole a bad name.

***Was the pricing made clear to you in the first meeting with the funeral director ?***

*"Some have been very upfront, others have not."*

*"Yes but only when we asked directly."*

*96% don't know what impact being in a trade association has for a funeral director.*



Eventually TCC succeeded in getting an agreement with every funeral director in the county, committing them to giving out their prices before the funeral takes place.

TCC members also presented their findings to the Welsh Government's cross party group on funerals and bereavement, and gained their support for better regulation of the industry. The cross party group is now working to promote the benefits of using funeral directors who work to an enforceable code of conduct, such as those who are members of the National Association of Funeral Directors or the Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors.

## What you can do

The first step should be to make contact with funeral directors in your area to find out where they stand. Luckily the majority of funeral directors are very professional and do adhere to high standards, so it likely that most will be supportive and helpful.

You could also get commitment from funeral directors in your area to always give out prices their customers, before the funeral has taken place. Make sure you publically thank funeral directors who agree to this, and follow up afterwards with phone calls to each funeral director to make sure they are giving out their prices.

You can raise awareness of funeral trade associations such as the NAFD and SAIF, and write to your MP, asking that better regulation be brought in for the funeral industry.

For more information or support, please contact TCC.



*TCC members meeting with funeral directors in Wrexham*