

Goodbye Gracefully

Funeral Arrangement Checklist

Arranging a funeral can feel like an overwhelming task. We have created this step-by-step checklist to help you stay organized, keep track of costs, and ensure your loved one gets the send-off they deserve—safely and on your terms.

Phase 1: The Immediate First Steps

- ☐ **Locate the Will (if there is one):** Check if they left specific instructions for their funeral or named an "executor" who is legally responsible for making arrangements.
- ☐ **Check for Pre-Paid Plans or Insurance:** Look for paperwork indicating a pre-paid funeral plan, over-50s life insurance policy, or savings.
- ☐ **Obtain the Medical Certificate:** You need this from the GP or hospital before you can register the death.
- ☐ **Register the Death:** Take the medical certificate to the local Register Office (within 5 days in England/Wales, or 8 days in Scotland) to get the "Green Form".
- ☐ **Determine your Budget:** Before speaking to any funeral directors, have a clear idea of what you can afford. Explore government or council support if funds are tight.

Phase 2: Choosing a Funeral Director Safely

Remember: You do not have to use the first funeral director you call. Take your time.

- ☐ **Ask for a Full Price List:** By law, funeral directors must provide a standardized, itemized price list before you agree to anything.
- ☐ **Check the Facilities:** Ask directly: "Where exactly will my loved one be resting?" A trustworthy director will be fully transparent.
- ☐ **Verify Credentials:** Check if they are members of recognized trade associations like the NAFD or SAIF, which require premises inspections.
- ☐ **Discuss the "Third-Party" Costs:** These are costs the director pays on your behalf (crematorium fees, doctors' fees). Ensure these are outlined.
- ☐ **Sign the Contract:** Only sign when you understand every single cost on the estimate.

Phase 3: Making the Core Decisions

- ☐ **Burial or Cremation:** What were their wishes?
A "Direct Cremation" without a formal service is a dignified, lower-cost alternative.
- ☐ **Choose a Venue:** Will the service be at a crematorium, a church, a natural woodland site, or somewhere else?
- ☐ **Set the Date and Time:**
Tip: Early morning or weekday slots at crematoriums are often significantly cheaper.
- ☐ **Choose Who Will Lead the Service:** Religious minister, a civil celebrant, or a family member/friend?
- ☐ **Select a Coffin:** You do not have to buy an expensive wooden coffin. There are affordable options like cardboard, wicker, or bamboo.

Phase 4: Personalizing the Service

- ☐ **Order of Service:** Outline the schedule. Will you have printed booklets for the guests?
- ☐ **Eulogy and Readings:** Decide who will write and deliver the eulogy. Choose any poems or readings.
- ☐ **Music:** Select the entrance music, a song for a moment of reflection, and the exit music.
- ☐ **Flowers or Donations:** Decide if you want family flowers only, or charitable donations in their memory.
- ☐ **Clothing:** Let the funeral director know what you would like your loved one to be dressed in.

Phase 5: Informing People and The Wake

- ☐ **Notify Guests:** Let friends and family know the date, time, and location.
- ☐ **Plan the Wake/Reception:** Decide on a venue (a local pub, village hall, or your home).
- ☐ **Arrange Catering:** Decide if you will hire a caterer, ask the venue to provide food, or ask family to help.

Phase 6: After the Funeral

- ☐ **Collecting Ashes:** If they were cremated, arrange when and how you will collect the ashes.
Do not feel pressured to buy an expensive urn from the funeral director.
- ☐ **Thank You Notes:** (Optional) Send a brief note to those who attended, sent flowers, or helped.
- ☐ **Start the Estate Process:** The executor can now begin valuing the estate, applying for probate, and closing accounts.

Provided by Goodbye Gracefully — Empowering you with clarity, transparency, and support.