

Thinking ahead to your funeral

Five steps to setting out your funeral wishes

Not thought ahead to your own funeral? You're not alone.

A 2016 survey of Britons by polling company YouGov found that, even though Britons say they feel increasingly comfortable talking about death and dying, a surprising 14% of Britons say that nothing would prompt them to think about their own funeral and nearly half (48%) would only be prompted to turn their attention to it when someone close to them had died.

However, this leaves the majority of families without anything to work from when they are planning the funeral of someone close to them.

Not wanting to talk about the death of a loved one or your own funeral is understandable, but it brings with it considerable distress for the family when the time does come, whether that's uncertainty as to what the person who has died would have wanted, family friction over what kind of funeral it will be or concerns over how much to spend.

Here's the NAFD's simple guide to setting out your funeral wishes.

1. Talking about your funeral doesn't make death happen.

Our members have helped people plan their own funerals decades ago who are still going strong.

Grab your favourite drink, invite someone close to you round (or switch your smartphone to record) and make yourself comfortable.



2. Do the personal stuff first.

- What kind of service would you like and where would you like it to be held? In a church? In a crematorium? In a woodland? Somewhere particularly special to you?
- What song best sums you up? As you are borne out of the funeral service what tune will those close to you be listening to?
- Who would you like to give your eulogy? Can't choose from amongst your friends or don't want your partner to have to do it? Write one yourself. A growing number of people are choosing to do just that.
- What would you like everyone to wear? Black, bright colors or even fancy dress?

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- Personal touches make it special. This could be from writing something yourself to be read out to having a theme. NAFD members have done Wild West, Star Wars, classic car, railway, pink and many other themed funerals. Would you have a theme?
 - How about a memorial - from a plaque on a local park bench to having a tree planted? Would you like a headstone? If you want to be cremated would you like your ashes to be scattered somewhere meaningful, inked into a tattoo, turned into a diamond, preserved as a DNA helix or fired into the air in a huge firework display? It's all possible.
3. **Give your loved ones some basic principles to work with.** Would you prefer burial or cremation, would you want donations to a particular charity, and is there anywhere particular you'd like your final resting place to be? It can also be as important to say what you don't want as what you do want.
 4. **Decide if you can aside funds now or if you can start financially planning for this.** If you have no savings to set aside or even no idea what you would like to do, say that too. Even just talking about your uncertainty breaks down a barrier.
 5. **Let those close to you know what you've decided.** Put your wishes somewhere safe and let your family or friends where to find the information should they need it, or give a copy to your chosen funeral director ...and then get on with living!

For further information

You can find a copy of our *My Funeral Wishes* booklet, in partnership with Dying Matters, on www.nafd.org.uk and www.dyingmatters.org.

If you would like to make more formal arrangements, you can take out a pre-paid funeral plan. You can find more information on this in our *Guide to Buying a Pre-Paid Funeral Plan*.

Please visit www.nafd.org.uk, email info@nafd.org.uk or call 0121 711 1343.

About the NAFD

For more than 112 years the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) has upheld standards and championed the needs of funeral directors, across the United Kingdom, and the bereaved families they care for.

Established in 1905, the National Association of Funeral Directors represents almost 4,000 UK funeral homes nationwide which, between them, organise about 80% of all funerals held in the UK each year.



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