

CREATING CHANGE TOGETHER



WITH THE FUNERAL PLANNING INDUSTRY
CONTINUING TO GROW, AND CONSUMERS
BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE
BENEFITS OF PLANNING FOR THEIR FUNERAL
- BOTH FINANCIALLY AND PRACTICALLY
- I BELIEVE THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR BOTH
THE FUNERAL AND FUNERAL PLANNING
INDUSTRIES TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAXIMISE
THIS OPPORTUNITY AND CREATE CHANGE.





But what do I mean by opportunity?

Well, firstly, it is the chance to educate consumers that planning in advance for their funeral can often alleviate both emotional and financial pressure on their loved ones. And, if these consumers choose to plan in advance by purchasing a funeral plan, collectively encouraging them to use a registered provider will mean they have the added reassurance that our Rules and Code of Practice offer.

One of our key aims for 2018 is to increase consumer knowledge and understanding of what the Funeral Planning Authority (FPA) is and does – and how using a registered provider helps and protects them. Our communications programme is expanding, and this is where I am asking for your help.

Are you working with FPA registered providers yourselves? In branch, online and in conversations, are you recommending those firms that have subjected themselves to our annual compliance checks and our on-going scrutiny? Do you, yourself, know and understand how the FPA works, and do you understand the risks of working with non-FPA registered firms to your business and customers?

You can help spread the word about the FPA as increased communication from every angle (what about your firm's website?) will help consumers to make informed choices when buying a funeral plan.

By working together, I truly believe we can make strides towards what the FPA sees as the second opportunity – raising standards.

By taking further steps in 2018 we hope there will be sufficient commercial pressure on providers to seek registration because the market (consumers and funeral directors) will not want to work with non-FPA registered providers. Consumer choice is the ultimate market force, and their buying power can be harnessed to motivate change for the better.

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Consumers who buy from an FPA-registered provider and deal with funeral directors who also work with them are, in my experience, destined to receive a much better level of care and service. If they don't, they have an easy route to make a complaint through the FPA. In turn, these consumers will have improved perceptions of our industries and help to spread the word about those who have dealt with them in a professional, fair and compassionate way – ultimately bringing in future business.

Whilst I am asking for your help in raising both awareness and standards, I acknowledge that the FPA can, and always will, strive to do better. As a result, there are many things on the horizon for 2018, such as an ambitious programme of regulatory development, which will include a review and update to our Rules and Code of Practice to ensure they meet the requirements of today's market. We will also look at the market's approach to complaints, the sanctions we may need and the potential for a compensation scheme.

As you can see, we have ambitious and proactive plans and I hope that many of you will help us to deliver our aims.



Graeme McAusland