



2023

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Annual Review
2023

The NAFD's Mission is to be an inclusive and progressive advocate for the funeral profession and bereaved people in all four nations of the United Kingdom.

Welcome

If you look back through the three Annual Reviews that precede this one, you will notice something of a pattern. Each of the presidents who commended that year's Review has described how the Association has responded to a uniquely challenging set of circumstances in which the funeral profession and NAFD have found themselves in that particular year.

The first two reviews were introduced by our pandemic president, David Barrington, who rose to the challenge of supporting a profession across 24 months of an extraordinarily challenging global pandemic. He was followed by Kate Edwards, NAFD President from 2021-22, who oversaw a return to normality, encouraging members to meet again.

Whilst my year in office has been very different from the particularly turbulent ones of my two immediate predecessors, it has been no less engaging, exciting, or rewarding.

Nor has it been any less challenging. A change in NAFD leadership, as we said farewell to Jon Levett and welcomed Andrew Judd as the new NAFD Chief Executive; an evolution of IFSO in light of changing government priorities for the regulation of the sector; the introduction of funeral plan regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority; and a cost-of-living crisis which added to the Association's financial challenges just as it did our own businesses – to name but a few.



During the year, the Governing Board was advised that Independent Chair Jonathan Rees would not be seeking to renew his four-year term of office. I would like to thank Jonathan for his service and efforts on behalf of NAFD.

I would also like to thank both Jonathan and interim CEO Elaine Walder for successfully shepherding the NAFD through the Autumn 2022 period prior to Andrew's appointment.

There has been much to be celebrate. NFE 2022 drew thousands of people to Stoneleigh for one of the most enjoyable, successful, and profitable shows the NAFD has ever organised. The second NAFD Summer School provided a valuable opportunity for leaders in the profession to step away from day-to-day pressures to think about the future of the sector. Across the year, hundreds of NAFD members have gathered in meeting rooms across the United Kingdom to engage in debate, share stories, learn, and enjoy each other's company at NAFD local and area association meetings – and it has been a privilege to join as many of them as I could.

It has also been a pleasure to spend time with graduates of the NAFD's education programmes, together with their tutors and examiners.

One notable event, that came as a complete surprise, was an invitation to Buckingham Palace to meet His Majesty King Charles III along with a small group of NAFD past presidents and volunteers. The event was held to recognise the contribution of small businesses to the UK economy, and I feel honoured to have been nominated to represent members at the reception – and privileged to share it with nine extraordinarily dedicated NAFD colleagues.

In accepting the honour of being National President, I had an overriding objective: in common with each of the 118 presidents before me, to make my mark in a positive way for the benefit of members and bereaved people. For me, an important step towards that goal was to improve conversations about death and dying in UK society – particularly among young people.

In October, with the support of the NAFD team, we published a petition on the UK Government website calling for bereavement to be added to the National Curriculum.

Although the NAFD has a great history of public campaigning, I did not expect the second half of my presidential year to be quite so jam-packed full of interviews on television and in the national press, podcast interviews and invitations to speak. The petition secured more than 11,000 signatures and support from right across the funerals and bereavement sector, culminating in a commitment by the Government to review the matter.

All in all, it has been a very busy year for the NAFD, and I commend this Annual Review to you as a record of all that the Association has achieved on behalf of its members.

I wish Barry Pritchard, who succeeds me as President for 2023-2024, an enjoyable, insightful, and productive term in office and I look forward to supporting him and the work of the NAFD as Immediate Past President.

'Onwards – Together'

John Adams
DipFD
NAFD President 2022-2023



CEO Overview

Andrew Judd DipFD
Chief Executive

I have been privileged to lead the NAFD as its Chief Executive Officer for four months. In looking back at the twelve months gone by, it is important that we assess the progress we have made – through activities, campaigns, events, and educational programmes – in the context of the NAFD's Five-Year Strategy.

The NAFD's overarching ambition is to be "an inclusive and progressive advocate for the funeral profession and bereaved people in all four nations of the United Kingdom." Alongside this mission statement are four values by which the NAFD asks its members to judge our actions. Four statements of intent about the kind of trade association we seek to be: **Progressive. Knowledgeable. Inclusive. Trustworthy.**

We should regularly measure our progress against this mission statement and core values, and the Annual Review provides a perfect opportunity to do just that.

Have we been progressive, on behalf of members, in the past year?

Recent years have seen a pace and level of change in our sector unwitnessed for generations; we all have had to adapt and change to an ever-evolving commercial landscape and 2022-23 has been no exception. Just as it was in 1905, when the Association's founding fathers set out a commitment to "watch over legislative measure which may affect the best interests of members of the Association," the NAFD continues to campaign on a wide range of issues affecting member firms with the NAFD team currently working on more than 40 live issues, from the introduction of regulation to the forthcoming consultation on formaldehyde and its implications for the care of deceased people.



The NAFD not only exists to ensure members are alerted to the myriad of changes that could affect them, but also to engender a spirit of innovation and diversification in the sector; in response. Our investment in consumer insight on key issues such as direct cremation – and involvement in a wide range of industry forums and progressive partnerships across the last twelve months – should give members confidence that we always have an eye on the interests of our members and how they might need to adapt in response to rapidly changing times.

Can our members count on us to be knowledgeable?

The NAFD has access to a wealth of knowledge, expertise and hands-on experience that touches all parts of the UK end-of-life sector; enabling us to remain primed and ready to answer questions or to seek a resolution for members, no matter what kind of help or support is needed. If we don't know the answer, we find it. We are directly and regularly in touch with all the relevant governmental departments in a rapidly changing and challenging policy and regulatory framework. We will remain tuned-in and agile, able to update our membership first hand and in real time. Through our education programmes, which provide support for those at the very start of their careers in the sector through to the leaders of the funeral profession, we educate and share learnings across the profession for the betterment of all.



Is the NAFD inclusive?

Funeral directors are there to care for all deceased and bereaved people – without judgment, discrimination, or exclusion. Every bereaved family or business you supply matters and, in exactly the same way, all our members matter to us in equity and importance.

All are welcome here at NAFD if they operate to the levels of service, standards, and integrity commensurate with all we stand for. Indeed, it is this broad-church approach that gives NAFD its unique and privileged position in the sector; where all people matter.

There is always more that we can do and, as you will see in this review, the NAFD's Membership Committee is working hard, through our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives and through a review of membership criteria, to ensure the NAFD is structured, accessible and compelling to all funeral firms that seek to provide the highest possible level of service to bereaved and deceased people in their care.

Is the NAFD a trustworthy organisation?

Trust is hard earned and should be a treasured prize because it can be easily lost. The NAFD has served the funeral profession for 118 years, through world wars, recessions, pandemics, governments, and monarchs and has been trusted by the nation too – not only a times of crisis, such as during COVID-19 but also on matters of national importance, such as the 1920 retrieval and burial of the Unknown Soldier from the battlefields of France.

The NAFD is a trusted partner of the funeral profession and many other organisations in the end-of-life space. It is also a trusted partner of the UK's four governments, providing counsel and maintaining confidentiality in key discussions affecting the sector. And it seeks always to be a trusted partner to each, individual NAFD member; at their side throughout the challenges faced by funeral directors every single day. We seek to earn that trust anew each year and that is something that is at the heart of my plans for the NAFD going forward.

Looking ahead

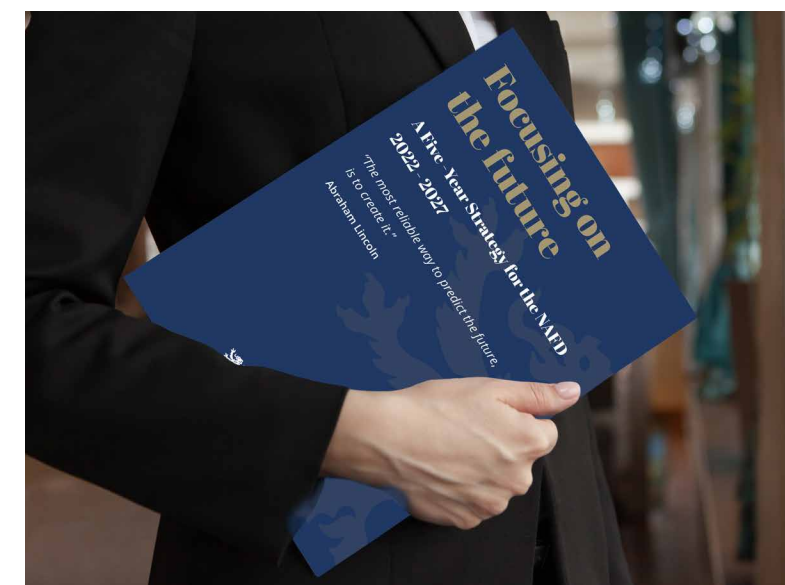
Over the coming twelve months, and as we head towards 2025 when the NAFD will turn 120 years old, we will reach the midpoint in the NAFD's Five-Year Strategy, and you will start to see it evolve into a longer-term plan to secure a robust future for the next century of the Association's service to the funeral profession

Through this evolution, we will strive to ensure that the NAFD remains a uniting force – not only within its membership, but within the wider funeral sector; campaigning for and caring about all kinds of businesses, from the very smallest to the very largest.

Through this work and in all that we do, I look forward to supporting all NAFD members to be able to continue providing their exemplary service to the people of the United Kingdom.

Andrew

Andrew Judd
DipFD
Chief Executive Officer



NAFD governance and strategy

Underpinning all NAFD activity is a robust governance and management structure, which seeks to ensure that the NAFD team remains attuned to the changing environment in which members operate, works closely with elected representatives to take effective and timely decisions – and is both supported in, and held to account for, performance against the strategy.

How the NAFD is governed

The NAFD Governing Board focuses on the running of the Association and delivery of the Annual Plan. It comprises the four Officers of the Association, the Chief Executive and, by invitation, a small number of co-opted members who can offer valuable expertise on particular topics.

Working alongside the Governing Board, the NAFD Executive Committee plays a strategic counsel role, focusing on longer-term strategic developments in the funeral sector and how the NAFD and its members should respond. The Executive includes representation from all parts of the membership, ensuring all four UK nations and all sizes of membership firm have a seat at the table.

Reshaping Governance for the future

Good governance should always continue to evolve, to ensure the NAFD keeps pace with changes and developments in both the external and internal environment. One additional step planned for implementation during 2023 is the introduction of a Finance Committee, drawn from elected representatives and the wider membership, which will report to the Governing Board, and will act as an advisory group to support Association financial reporting.



Financial reporting

Following governance reform, agreed by a member vote in November 2020, the financial year end for the NAFD moved to 31 March and the audited accounts for January 2021 - March 2022 were reported on at the 2022 Autumn General Meeting.

At the meeting, it was reported that, although there was a negative outturn for 2021-22 and would be for 2022-23 due to issues relating to IFSO, education and the rising cost of key NAFD member benefits, the financial health of the NAFD remained sound, and an expected overall surplus in 2022-24, underpinned by steady income and strong reserves.

A 98 percent membership renewal rate, achieved in January 2023, supported this position. From April 2024 onwards, membership renewal will align with the financial year.

Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer

In January 2023, following the departure of previous CEO Jon Levett, Andrew Judd, a former member of the NAFD Executive Committee, President of the NAFD Western Counties Area Federation and operations director for Dignity plc, was appointed by the NAFD Governing Board to be the Association's new Chief Executive.



Upon his appointment, Andrew said: "The NAFD is rightly recognised, by Government and others, as the only truly representative association for the entire funeral profession. My roots and connections with small independent firms, background at Dignity and Co-op Funeralcare, and volunteer experience in the NAFD enables me to understand how all parts of this profession think and how to bring the different parts of the membership together, to ensure we deliver for all of them and the bereaved people they care for."

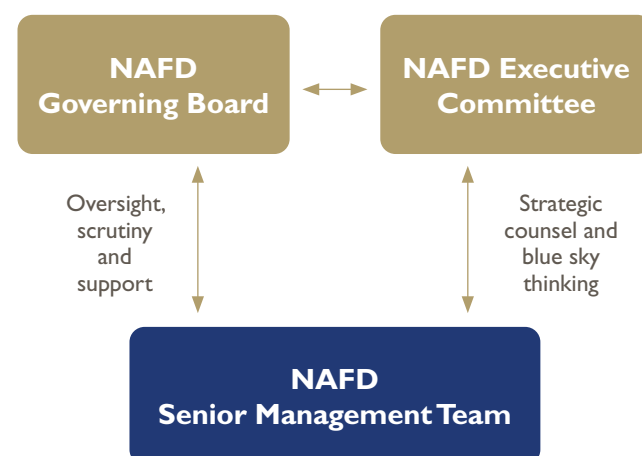
Progress against the Five-Year strategy

The fifteen-month period from January 2022-March 2023 covers the period of transition from the previous Association financial year to the new one and represents the first full period of delivery against the NAFD's Five-Year Strategy.

Called *Focusing on the Future*, the strategy covers the period 2022-2027 and encompasses bold and innovative plans for the Association to ensure it is well-equipped to support members through the myriad of issues facing the profession.

Progress against the strategy is monitored by the Governing Board at each meeting and reported on both through this Annual Review and through the reports which accompany Association General Meetings.

NAFD Governance Structure



NAFD Boards and Committees 2022-23

Executive Committee (and directors of NAFD CLG)

President: John Adams
Perry & Phillips (chair)

First VP: Barry Pritchard
Barry Pritchard Funeral Services

Second VP: Mark Adams
Central England Co-operative (part year)

Immediate Past President:
Kate Edwards
Pathway Associates

Gerard Boyle
Dignity plc

Darryl Smith
Heart of England Co-operative

Jenny Gilbert-Trigg
AJ Adkinson

Sam Kershaw
Funeral Partners

Julian Hussey
A.G. Down

William Millar
Ivan Murdock

Gillian Stewart
Co-op Funeralcare (part-year)

Mike Pengelly
Co-op Funeralcare (part-year)

David Barrington
Barrington's Funeral Services

Committee for Professional Standards

Philip Blatchly
Philip Blatchly & Son

David Barrington
Barrington Funeral Services
(Executive representative)

Karen Hussey,
A. G. Down

Rhys Price
Gwilym Price

Richard Van Nes
Funeral Partners

Michael McCulley
(independent lay member)

Clive Townend
(independent lay member)

Mark Adams
Dignity plc
(co-opted)

Membership Committee

James Schofield
Raddcliffe Funeral Services

Darryl Smith
Heart of England Co-op

Jenny Gilbert Trigg
AJ Adkinson

Abi Pattenden
Freeman Brothers (Co-opted)

International Examinations

Board Of Embalmers

Karen Caney

Michael Liddle

Churches' Group on Funeral Services

Vacant

FIAT-IFTA

Emerson De Luca

Directors of NAFD Ventures Ltd

John Adams

Kate Edwards

Jeremy Field OBE

Andrew Judd

Governing Board (and directors of NAFD Limited)

Andrew Judd
(NAFD Chief Executive)

John Adams (chair)
Perry & Phillips

Barry Pritchard
Barry Pritchard Funeral Services

Mark Adams
Central England Co-operative

Kate Edwards
Pathway Associates

David Barrington
Barrington's Funeral Services
(co-opted)

Sam Kershaw
Funeral Partners
(co-opted, part-year)

Disciplinary Committee
Linda Ford and Barry Picken
(co-chairs, lay members)

Gerard Boyle
Dignity plc

Jim Brodie
Brodie's Funeral Services

Emily Houghton
Rosedale Funeral Home

Abi Pattenden
Freeman Brothers

Board of Education

Alison Crake (Chair)
Crake and Mallon

Kate Edwards
Pathway Associates
(Vice Chair)

Louise Williams
CJ Williams

Emily Houghton
Rosedale Funeral Home

Actively supporting members in challenging times

The NAFD is a true trade association, not a special interest group. We represent all funeral businesses equally regardless of size or structure. This inclusivity gives us authority and credibility to speak on behalf of the whole profession, secure a seat at the table for important discussions – and negotiate valuable, tangible benefits for member firms.

Proactively evolving to meet member needs

The NAFD has been there to support its members since 1905. We monitor, anticipate, and respond to both current and future changes affecting all firms operating in the funeral sector; continually reviewing and evolving the support we provide in response.

Across the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023, members contributed to a survey covering a range of questions about member benefits, education, events, communications, and aspirations for the future. In addition, the NAFD team and members of the Executive called hundreds of members to hear, at first hand, their views on what they most value from their membership of the NAFD.

There were some consistent themes coming out of the survey feedback and, as a Membership Committee, we are now working under seven core headings in response to member feedback. These are: engaging with members, communication, reviewing commercial partnerships, delivering value for money, being accessible and inclusive – and developing must-attend national, local and online events.

There has also been significant progress with development of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion external working group, with expanded membership across the NAFD and development and a work plan. During the year we also launched NAFD Pride.

We are working with group members to reach out to non-NAFD funeral firms to understand how we can make NAFD relevant and compelling to them.



“The NAFD works hard for its members, in challenging times, delivering tangible financial and strategic benefits and offering unrivalled support. The NAFD team stands ready to help your business to thrive, your people to excel and your clients to know they are in safe, capable and compassionate hands when they need you most.”

Elaine Walder, Commercial Director and Interim CEO (Sept-Dec 2022)



Key benefits of membership

Priority access to essential information affecting funeral businesses

The NAFD is on standby seven days a week, monitoring the funeral sector and anything that could have an impact on it. We work closely with governments to verify information and advice, to make sure it will help your business – and then send it straight to you via an email briefing.

£5 million professional indemnity insurance

Professional Indemnity Insurance of up to £5m is automatically included as part of NAFD membership. This critical cover safeguards members against claims from customers alleging inadequate advice or service. Protection also extends to the legal costs and expenses in defending such a claim.

Quality standards inspections and support from IFSO

With the CMA regulating how funeral firms promote prices and services, the Financial Conduct Authority regulating funeral plans and the prospect of further intervention on quality standards, the IFSO quality standards inspections and support are vital in helping funeral firms meet the requirements of regulators.

Parliamentary campaigning and representation

The NAFD continues to campaign extensively to ensure that regulators in all four UK nations understand the funeral sector and set requirements that are proportionate and achievable. Our proactive approach and commitment to providing robust and timely evidence and insight from the sector has enabled us to build a reputation as a trusted voice, in all four UK parliaments.

Experts on standby, when you need them

Another insurance policy, although one without all the paperwork and premiums, is the access all NAFD members have to expert support for your business if something goes wrong. If members ever have a problem which threatens how they work, or the reputation of their business, they can call the NAFD team, and we will work with them to resolve the problem.

Highlights

- Just over 98 percent members renewed for 2023-2024
- Interest in membership from new applicants remains strong
- A focus on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within the NAFD, including the launch of NAFD Pride
- A member benefit review will ensure NAFD membership remains compelling and valuable

Supporting members with PR challenges

The NAFD offers a 24/7 helpline service, actively supporting members who are subject to challenging press enquiries or negative social media comment. In the past year this has included drafting editorial to be used in local papers, briefing journalists on behalf of members and securing amendments to or deletion of inaccurate online commentary.

NAFD Resolve – recognised dispute resolution scheme

All consumer businesses are required to offer access to an independent dispute resolution service. Unlike other, similar services in the funerals sector, the NAFD fully funds the costs to you and your customer of participating in the process.



Discounted access to market-leading education and training

The NAFD's portfolio of education programmes covers everything from entry level training to university-level courses with courses for funeral operatives, arrangers, directors and business leaders. We also run a successful Summer School at the University of Durham for business leaders.

National Events

As a membership organisation, national events such as the NAFD AGM and Conference and the Autumn General Meeting are both vital to the democratic purpose of the NAFD, enabling members to build their professional networks and lifelong friendships too.

We also hold a wide range of virtual events, and, in the past year, this has included webinars with the National Medical Examiner for Wales and on Bereavement in Education.



Regional meetings

The NAFD's many Guilds, Local Associations and Area Federations offer a convenient way for members to connect with each other in their local area and discuss issues of common interest.

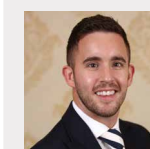
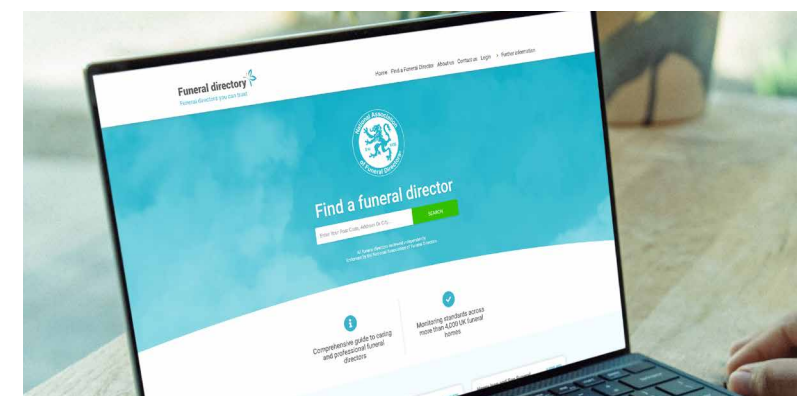
Beneficial rates on key services, products and business advice

Whether it's significant savings on breakdown insurance for your fleet, priority access to vaccinations, or legal support when you need it, the NAFD's size and breadth makes us an attractive partner for commercial looking to provide offers to funeral businesses.

The NAFD also provides access to expert guidance, including health & safety advice lines, support with employment law challenges, and a debt recovery service.

A free listing on funeral-directory.co.uk

NAFD members are listed on our membership database website, funeral-directory.co.uk. More than 115,000 bereaved families used it in the last year to search for a local funeral director.



“I am immensely proud to chair the Membership Committee. We have already started working on plans to examine the benefits of NAFD membership to see how we can make them even more compelling – and also address the barriers to membership that some firms feel exist.”

James Schofield, Chair of the Membership Committee

Professional development, education and training

Over the past twelve months, NAFD Education has continued to strengthen and develop the Association's education portfolio of programmes and workshops.

The NAFD team and Board of Education, chaired by Past President Alison Crane, partners with a wide range of education providers and professional specialists, to provide NAFD members with a comprehensive suite of accredited professional development programmes. These are supported by innovative continuous professional development opportunities, designed to equip the industry with the knowledge and resources to meet future business challenges, professional requirements and regulatory standards.



NAFD learning and development programmes

Despite the challenging financial landscape the UK funeral sector finds itself in, investment in the development of the greatest capital a business has – its people – remains imperative.

The NAFD continues to deliver the Frontline Funeral Service Operative Training, Certificate in Funeral Arranging and Administration and the new Level 4 Diploma in Funeral Directing, with examinations for the latter taking place twice yearly, in both March and September. The brand-new accredited Level 4 Diploma in Funeral Directing now has 87 students registered and studying for the award. A further 64 students transferred from the previous Level 3 NAFD Funeral Directing Diploma.

The first set of students to take the new Certificate in Funeral Arranging and Administration examinations in March 2023 achieved a 94 percent pass rate.

50 students registered for the Frontline Funeral Service Operative course in 2022-23. To date, 20 students have completed the programme.

External Quality Assessors are due to visit the NAFD in July 2023, as part of external accreditation process of AIM (the awarding body) for the Level 4 Diploma in Funeral Directing. This will include a sampling of the coursework relevant to the

Level 4 programme, an overview of the NAFD centre staff, tutors and examiners and schedules of work and lesson plans. This robust overview helps to showcase the NAFD's ongoing commitment to providing accredited training to its membership.

New NAFD one-day mortuary management training workshop

Launched in conjunction with NHS North Tees and Hartlepool, a new one-day mortuary management training workshop was launched in April 2023 by the NAFD to ensure that all funeral businesses can achieve consistent, quality managed standards and monitoring processes specific to mortuary operations. The workshop was developed in light of the imminent introduction of a Statutory Code of Practice and Licensing in Scotland and the heightened focus on mortuary practices and care of the deceased in England.

Continuing Professional Development

The NAFD seeks to ensure members have everything they need to demonstrate a commitment to delivering the highest standards of care in the funeral sector; providing a real differentiator between them and other funeral firms and preparing for the possibility of future independent regulation of standards in the funeral sector.

As part of this work, In 2022 the NAFD trialled access to a revolutionary learning platform, the NAFD Learning Hub, which offered the potential for flexible, tailored continuing professional development for all employees within the funeral sector. The analysis of feedback from the trial is informing next steps and the development of different types of training and learning formats to meet the needs of members.

NAFD Summer School

In July, the second NAFD Summer School brought together leaders from across the funeral profession for sessions on the future of funeral service that were rich in ideas, discussion and both personal and professional experience.

Summer school was led once again by Professor Douglas Davies, one of the countries most respected theologians. Professor Davies leads the Centre for Death and Life Studies (CDALS) at Durham University, which exists to foster and conduct research into life-values, beliefs, and practices that relate to living and dying.

The NAFD's partnership with Durham University continues into the event's third year, with the focus of sessions for 2023 around the Significance of Identity.

"The small size of the Summer School encouraged deeper conversations between members who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet."

Leanne Rookledge,
Turners Funeral Service,
part of Funeral Partners

"I would like to pay tribute to Angela Allen and Karen Burton for their achievements in support of NAFD Education over the past year. The work to strengthen and grow our education programmes continues, underpinned by collaborative working with experts across the sector, achieving accreditation for our programmes and developing a strong foundation for CPD."

Karen Van-Richardson,
Director of Education and Development



Ten years of the NAFD's Funeral Service Awareness training

The NAFD's online Funeral Service Awareness online training is designed to support anyone considering a career in the funeral profession or anyone who would like a better understanding of the profession

Launched in 2012, the course has gone from strength to strength across the past decade, helping those who are working with, or entering, the funeral profession to develop basic knowledge and awareness in the type of work and some of the daily challenges facing the profession.

Delivered online, the training has been designed to introduce the funeral profession to new starters within funeral service businesses, job applicants, and allied professionals, including the emergency services and caring professions.



Highlights

- New One Day Workshop in Mortuary Management launched
- 151 students are currently studying for their DipFD (Level 3/Level 4)
- 63 students are working towards or have completed the Frontline Funeral Service Operative programme
- 94% of students passed the new Certificate in Funeral Arranging and Administration exams
- 57 people have taken the Funeral Service Awareness course in the last 12 months



Supporting the NAFD's examiners and tutors

New NAFD examiners have been recruited and registered and, over the last twelve months, commenced their study for the NOCN Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement. This award consists of two units, coursework, and practical evidence of competence.

Proactive engagement with NAFD tutors also continues, particularly around the differing requirements for the Level 4 programme (DipFD). New tutor resources have been created and a series of tutor workshops will take place during 2023-2024, including development planning to national teaching CPD standards.



"The effective running of NAFD Education is heavily reliant on a collaborative and proactive approach from not just the education team at National Office but the members of the Board of Education, the tutors, and examiners. Much of the work of these volunteer professional colleagues is unseen by the membership, but it is a real team effort, and I would like to offer my thanks for all those who contribute to this valuable and essential work."

Alison Crane,
Chair of the Board of Education



Campaigning, representation, and advocacy

A core function of the NAFD is to shape the policy and trading environment for member firms through representation and advocacy.

The NAFD has built strong relationships with elected representatives and officials, sector regulators, charities, and campaigners. We use the unique strength of the NAFD's collective voice to raise key issues, shape policy, provide expert insight gathered from members, and campaign on all issues that affect member businesses.

How we work

Profile with stakeholders and building progressive partnerships UK wide

The NAFD meets regularly with the Ministry of Justice, Scottish Government, NI Government, Welsh Government, Competition and Markets Authority, Human Tissue Authority, and Financial Conduct Authority – among others.

NAFD also continues to brief elected representatives on all topics affecting the future of funerals, campaigning on more than 41 live operational, regulatory and standards matters.

Collaboration across the sector on key issues

We work constructively with partner organisations through forums like the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG). Meetings are regularly attended by representatives of the devolved administrations as well as Westminster MPs and officials.



All Party and Cross-Party Parliamentary Groups

Parliamentary groups for funerals and bereavement in all four UK nations, established by the NAFD, continue to provide an influential channel for communicating with parliamentarians. In 2022-23, meetings were held with government ministers, the Law Commission, the National Medical Examiner for Wales and the Minister for Social Security in Scotland.

Providing insight and expertise

The NAFD responds to all relevant government consultations, providing evidence to inform government policy decision making. We have also contributed our expertise to research projects on topics such as bereavement during the pandemic, the role of faith in funerals and care after death.

Key areas of focus in 2022-23

Funeral delays

In April 2023, NAFD member feedback on delays showed funeral directors unable to protect bereaved families from a fragmented death management system that is struggling to cope.

The report, entitled 'Picking up the pieces', has been sent to more than sixty MPs, government departments and journalists. It calls for joined-up engagement from Government and urgent action to resolve serious issues affecting the death management process.



Mortuary storage capacity issues

The NAFD has highlighted issues across the UK with the release of deceased people, including where hospital trusts have attempted to charge funeral directors for mortuary storage. We have raised these issues with the Ministry of Justice and supported members with local issues.

Energy crisis

In Autumn 2022, the NAFD wrote to Ministers regarding the energy crisis, highlighting the need for government support and ensuring the funeral sector was on the government's radar.

Ultra Low Emissions Zones

The NAFD is campaigning on ULEZ (Clean Air) zones, working with funeral home and supplier members to ensure that fleets are not penalised unfairly where emission zones are introduced.

RMOA on Formaldehyde

We continue to work with members regarding the Health and Safety Executive's RMOA on Formaldehyde, to ensure a decent lead-in time should the use of high index embalming solutions be prohibited.

"With the ongoing focus on standards of care in the funeral sector and review of laws governing burial and cremation, the NAFD is uniquely positioned, with a wide breadth and scale of links into every relevant department across all the UK's four governments. A reputation that it has painstakingly built up, ensuring the diversity of NAFD members' businesses and their interests are represented in discussions shaping the future of the funeral sector."

Jeremy Field OBE, CPJ Field & Co



Funeral plan regulation

Ahead of funeral plan regulation in July 2022, NAFD was heavily involved in the discussions about the impact on funeral directors and consumers. We worked closely with the Financial Conduct Authority, Financial Ombudsman Service, Financial Services Compensation Scheme and HM Treasury and we remain in regular contact with officials.

Environmental sustainability

NAFD continues to identify and meet with key stakeholders and to discuss sustainability with policy makers and politicians, attending a meeting with DEFRA Minister Rebecca Pow.

Law Commission review

The NAFD has met with the Law Commission regarding its review of burial and cremation law 'A Modern Framework for Disposing of the Dead' to discuss the issues that review must encompass to create a future-proof regulatory framework for both existing and potential new forms of disposal in England and Wales.

Medical examiners

We worked with Government and our DMAG colleagues throughout the last year in the run up to the anticipated roll out of the national Medical Examiners scheme from April 2023. This will now not be fully implemented until April 2024.

The oversight and regulation of operational standards

We continue to discuss the quality assurance framework for the funeral sector with the Ministry of Justice, which is now evaluating the effectiveness of the NAFD and SAIF self-regulatory regimes.

The Fuller Inquiry investigation into how deceased people are cared for in community settings will now be in 2024 and the NAFD will seek to ensure any recommendations are proportionate for funeral firms of different sizes and structures.

Covid Inquiry

DMAG continues to press for core participant status in the COVID Inquiry as the alternative is for the Inquiry to receive hundreds of representations from individual funeral firms and suppliers.

Audit of Hospital Mortuary facilities (HTA)

At the end of 2022, the NAFD liaised with the Human Tissue Authority regarding its audit of hospital mortuary facilities and contributed to the HTA's consultation on revised Guidance to Post-Mortem Standards.

Changes to cremation paperwork

The NAFD has liaised with both the MoJ and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management following a change to Cremation paperwork, relating to implants and medical devices.

Remote death registration

The NAFD's persistent campaigning to restore remote registration in England and Wales has borne fruit with the publication in early 2023 of the government's Data Protection and Digital Information (No. 2) Bill, which includes provision for deaths to be registered remotely. In Northern Ireland we successfully pressed the NI Government to extend COVID-era temporary provisions for a further six months.

Scottish Government regulation and licensing of funeral directors

The NAFD is represented at Scottish Government licensing group meetings as progress towards regulation continues, following publication of the final version of the draft Statutory Code of Practice at the end of 2022.

Bereavement in Education

A long-term objective for the NAFD, adding bereavement to the National Curriculum has been championed by NAFD President John Adams, with extensive media coverage and campaigning resulting in a Government commitment to review its inclusion.



"The government isn't full of experts on the funeral sector and policy can be, and often is, made without consultation with those it will affect the most. Unless the right information is right in front of policy makers at exactly the right time, then the risk of unintended consequences is very real. And that is the approach we take." Rachel Bradburne, Director of Policy and Public Affairs

Highlights

- Campaigning on 41+ live issues affecting funeral firms
- Regular meetings with Ministry of Justice, the devolved administrations, CMA, Human Tissue Authority and FCA – among others
- Active All-Party and Cross-Party Groups in Westminster, Holyrood, and Cardiff, with a Group at Stormont ready to meet when the Assembly resumes.



Supporting members through insight and communication

The NAFD works hard to help funeral firms make sense of all issues affecting their businesses through timely briefings or insight. The Association also takes advantage of all possible opportunities build understanding about and shine a spotlight on the important work of the funeral sector through extensive media and stakeholder communication.

Press coverage

It has been another extremely busy year for the NAFD's communications team. Key themes that we've dealt include the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on funerals, funeral plan regulation, direct cremation, bereavement, funeral delays, gender balance in the funeral profession, death registration, state support for funerals and bereaved people, and the role of the funeral profession in state funeral occasions – among many other topics.

During the year, we have secured interviews with all major national broadcast, digital and print media outlets to press home key messages, including:

- A half hour discussion programme on bereavement and funeral issues on BBC Radio 4's Moneybox Live.
- Coverage on the BBC of the campaign to extend COVID death registration measures in Northern Ireland.
- Coverage clarifying that funerals would continue on the day of HM The Queen's state funeral at the request of families.
- Burial space shortage and the potential for the re-use of graves on ITN News.



We also support the NAFD's parliamentary campaigning programme with supporting media coverage on key issues. During the year this has included:

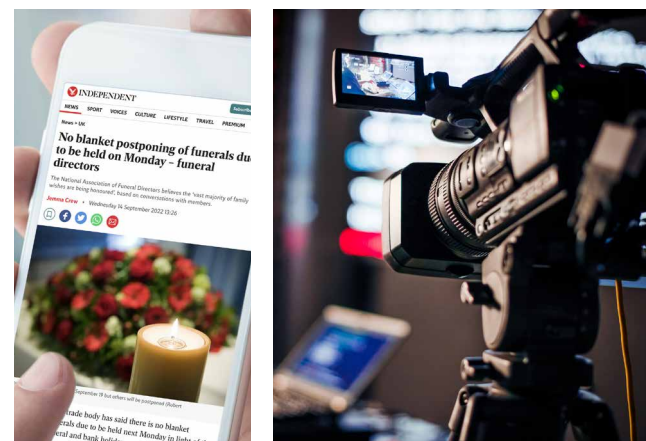
- Interviews with BBC Breakfast and ITV News on the Bereavement in Education campaign.
- Stories about the impact of delays to funerals with Sky News, the Sunday Times, and the Sunday Mirror.
- Exploration of direct cremation and its impact on grief in The Economist.

Just as important as our work to develop the stories that do appear are our efforts on those enquiries which never make it into print. A key role of the communications team is to educate journalists such that some of the enquiries brought to the NAFD which include outdated tropes, unsubstantiated claims, or falsehoods about the funeral sector, are recognised as such and so do not go on to become stories.

FDM

One of the NAFD's most valued member benefits, a new design for FDM was launched in February 2023. The magazine was redesigned from the ground up to ensure each edition feels fresh and more likely to keep readers turning the page.

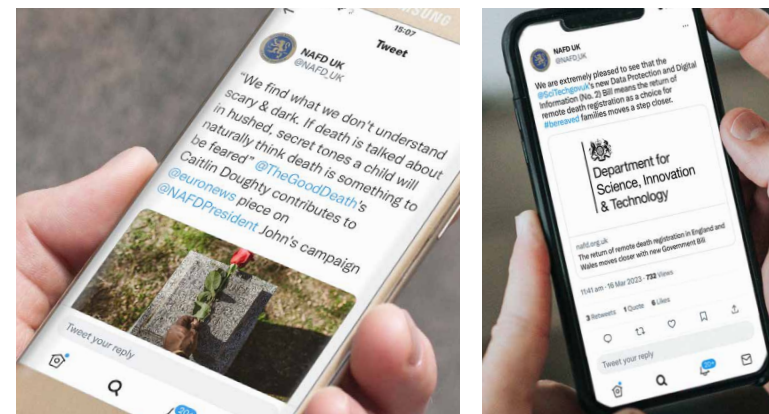
Changes include an easier-on-the-eye column and page layout format, more akin to consumer publications; use of graphics as well as photography to add variety and emphasize key points; clearer labelling of member benefits and guidance features to help ensure members identify articles of importance to them.



Social media

The NAFD's social media channels have been positively buzzing in the last year, with significant growth on all channels and some of our highest-ever profile posts in the ten years that the NAFD has been on social media.

The NAFD on Twitter typically reaches between 20-30,000 views per month and LinkedIn reaches around 22,000 people a month, while Facebook continues to outpace our other channels with 7,500 followers and at least 2,000 people viewing every single post.



The NAFD's social channels were the subject of huge focus of attention in late August, early September in the run up to the Queen's funeral. We received more than 400,000 impressions on Twitter alone in the two-week period.

Other topics during the period have included the Bereavement in Education campaign, which delivered high visibility and offered opportunities to engage and partner with bereavement organisations, education providers and partners across the funerals sector – as well as the public. Other topics included promotion of NFE 2022 to the funeral profession and International Women's Day to the public, for which we once again highlighted the role of women in funeral service, backing the #EmbraceEquity campaign, which has also seen the Association launch the NAFD Pride group on Facebook as a discussion space for funeral professionals who are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

We also use social media to directly engage with the public, demonstrating the NAFD's proactive stance as an upstander for bereaved and deceased people. For example, a member of the public, raised concerns via Twitter about a disturbing video published online purporting to show human tissue deriving from a post-mortem. We responded to the tweet, highlighting our concerns and bringing the Association of Anatomical Pathology Technicians and Human Tissue Authority into the conversation.

Highlights

- 1.6 million people reached on social media in 2022-23



- Media coverage on BBC Breakfast, ITV, Sky, Sunday Times, Sunday Mirror, Economist, BBC Radio 4 and many more

Focused and timely email briefings

The NAFD continues to use email briefings to deliver timely updates and information on a wide range of topics, from regulatory changes to member offers.

For example, a Policy Briefing was distributed in March, highlighting the two major campaign wins – the Government response to the Bereavement in Education petition and the announcement of a Government Bill signalling the re-introduction of remote registration in England and Wales – and signposting members to resources relevant to the Fuller Inquiry.

Up to seventy percent of members open and engage with these emails and they consistently rank in the top five most popular benefits of membership.

Insight – Direct Cremation

Across 2022-23, the NAFD has undertaken a two-part research project on the impact of direct cremation – and opportunities for member firms. The first part of the project, research with NAFD members, was presented at the 2022 Autumn Meeting and sent to all members. The second part, a major piece of consumer polling, was completed in April 2023 and presented to members in May 2023.

The aim of the research is to help members understand public perceptions of direct cremation and shape their own service provision in response. It will also be used to craft press and social media relations activity timed to coincide with Dying Matters Week in early May, focusing on the importance of consumers involving their loved ones in decision making about funerals.

Value statements

Reporting back on the work of the NAFD, on behalf of its members, is vitally important. In addition to producing the Annual Review and sharing campaign and activity updates in FDM, in 2022-23 the NAFD also produced tailored value statements – setting out the work we do in all four UK nations.



Vibrant and engaging events

From individual guild, local and area federation meetings to the National Funeral Exhibition and NAFD Conference the NAFD delivered a wide range of events for members to tap into over the past twelve months, providing expertise, insight, and networking opportunities for funeral firms of all shapes and sizes. As well as in-person events, the organisation also arranged webinars on key topics and livestreaming of Association general meetings.

Regional member events grow in strength and number

During 2022-23, the number of local association meetings taking place in-person returned to almost pre-pandemic levels. However, increasing numbers of them are now routinely hybrid in structure with the opportunity to dial in to these meetings making them more accessible to a greater number of members. There were lively and extremely well attended meetings and social events for a wide range of regional NAFD organisations across the year, many of which were attended by the President or Chief Executive.



The Yorkshire Area Federation piloted a new weekend event combining their Annual General Meeting with education, the installation of officers and a dinner dance, while NAFD Scotland saw a record attendance, in the room and online for their first General Meeting of 2023.

With no active area association in the Northwest, the NAFD also piloted a virtual meeting in July 2022, with support from both the Mersey and District Association and the Greater Manchester Local Association – with a small but engaged group of members joining the discussions online.



“Thank you - this was one of the best conferences we have attended. You have all worked so hard.”

Marian Sinclair,
Motorcycle Funerals

Care of deceased people on agenda for Annual Conference

Held under sunny Welsh skies at the Celtic Manor Resort in the Usk Valley, Newport, in May the rhythm of the NAFD year returned to something reassuringly close to normal in 2023 with the first in-person NAFD Conference in three years, hosted by NAFD President Kate Edwards at the end of her year in office.

As well as Association business at the Friday morning Annual General Meeting, a key focus for the event was care of deceased people, with education sessions on mortuary make up, the medical examiner system and the science of decomposition, with five-year-old victim recovery dog Sid completely stealing the show demonstrating his superior detection skills.

NFE 2023 – “Best show ever!”

Over three sunny days at Stoneleigh in June, the funeral profession came together to do business, explore new ideas, create partnerships, and spend time with colleagues as friends as the 2022 National Funeral Exhibition opened its doors.



Over the course of three days, more than 4,500 people came through the doors of the show, with visitors from Europe, the US, New Zealand and South America joining UK funeral professionals from all four home nations for the event.

There were seminar sessions running in both the lecture and product showcase theatres and demonstrations happening on stands across both halls. The brand new NFE Dining Club offered exhibitors and visitors a chance to enjoy the sunshine as they took a break from the show floor for coffee and lunch – and the exhibitors' reception on Friday was packed to the rafters as people chatted to friends, swapped pandemic experiences and compared notes on what had caught their eye at the show.



NAFD Summer School

In July, the second NAFD Summer School brought together leaders from across the funeral profession, at St Chad's College, University of Durham, for sessions on the future of funeral service that were rich in ideas, discussion and professional experience.

Lively debate dominates the NAFD Autumn Meeting

In November, almost 200 NAFD members gathered for the Association's Autumn General Meeting, with challenging economic conditions, lively debate, online snap polling and a focus on care of the deceased dominating the agenda.

Reports presented to the meeting highlighted the sheer scale of activity and events undertaken by the NAFD team and volunteer members, with the Association in dialogue with more than 40 different organisations, government bodies, regulators, and groups on more than 41 live operational, regulatory or policy issues.

Highlighting that the long-term financial health of the NAFD remained sound, the meeting discussed short term financial challenges for the NAFD, with a member vote on a subscription increase, although approved, not achieving the necessary margin to pass.



Extraordinary Meeting and vote decide membership subscription for 23/24

A short Extraordinary Meeting, chaired by President John Adams and livestreamed to the membership, was convened a few weeks after the Autumn Meeting at which member subscriptions for 2023-24 were re-proposed with a secure online vote, across the day, seeing them pass successfully.

Highlights

- More than 4,500 people attended NFE 2022
- Webinars were held with the National Medical Examiner for Wales and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme among others

NFE



“The summer school was very enjoyable. I learnt so much and my other highlight was mingling with others, learning from each other, and sharing our experiences. We had a lot of laughs too.”

Natalya McLackland, Regent Funeral Services

A welcome return for the Celebration of Success

In December, NAFD students gathered with their friends and family to mark the completion of their studies in the NAFD's annual Celebration of Success graduation event.

Readying the audience to cheer the graduates, NAFD Board of Education chair Alison Crake told attendees: “For many of the students, they continued with their studies whilst the funeral profession responded to COVID 19 and the additional pressures around working during a pandemic. They are to be credited and admired for maintaining their focus throughout.”

The event was attended by students, their families, NAFD tutors, examiners, and members of the Board of Education – representing a joyful celebration of the hard work of the students.



“The awards evening was brilliant and gave us all a chance to celebrate everyone's hard work and achievements.”

Jack Sunderland, Caldecott & Sons Ltd.

Virtual events provide new opportunities to engage

In addition to live streaming all NAFD general meetings, the NAFD arranged several popular webinars during 2022-23.

These included a very popular session on the Bereavement in Education campaign, hosted by President John Adams; a session for members across Wales with the National Medical Examiner and his team; a meeting of funeral plan providers in NAFD membership; and facilitation of a webinar on behalf of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Setting standards and monitoring regulatory requirements

External oversight and regulation

The Law Commission review of burial and cremation law gets underway

Almost seven years after being first announced, the Law Commission review, designed to bring the law governing how bodies are disposed of after death in England and Wales commenced in January 2023. The NAFD has had several meetings with the Law Commission, both as part of the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG) and individually to ensure that the views and experience of NAFD members will be fed into the review.

Entitled 'A Modern Framework for Disposing of the Dead,' The Law Commission acknowledges that the law is "outdated, piecemeal and complex" and "unfit for modern needs". It also acknowledges issues relating to family disagreements and that there are new methods of disposal, such as resomation and human composting, that are now legalised and in established use in other countries.

The review will not consider the regulation of funeral directors, death certification, preservation of bodies (such as by cryopreservation), or the criminal law relating to the desecration of a body.

CMA Funerals Market Order marks first anniversary

On 16 September 2022 the funeral sector marked one year since the Competition and Markets Authority's Funerals Markets Order came into force.



The vast majority of NAFD members continue to work hard to meet all requirements of the Order; however, a small number of funeral businesses were identified as flouting the requirements of the Order. It is now a small minority – but nevertheless, it is hugely frustrating for those firms who are fully compliant and are making a significant effort to remain so -when competitors down the road are doing nothing.

In January the NAFD was provided with a list of wholly non-compliant firms by the Independent Funeral Standards Organisation (IFSO) team and is now in contact with non-compliant members, with a final offer of help, prior to starting a disciplinary process against them for non-compliance with the Order.

Regulation of pre-need funeral plans comes into force

From 29 July 2022, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) assumed oversight of the regulation of funeral plan sales and administration. Across the year, both prior to and following enforcement of the new regulations, there has been significant work to support NAFD members in steps they need to take, through briefings, webinars and answering individual member questions. The NAFD also highlighted concerns to Government about the vulnerability of both plan holders and funeral directors through the transition process.

The NAFD continues to be proactive on this topic, participating in a compliance forum along with plan providers and supporting the development of a new trade body for the pre-need sector.

Assessment of voluntary regulation in the funeral sector

The NAFD remains committed to strong independent regulation of the funeral profession, in the public interest, including a statutory requirement for all UK firms providing funeral services to be subject to independent oversight of their standards of care, whether in a trade association or not.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) assessment of the voluntary standards regulation regimes run by NAFD and SAIF is now underway. We stand ready to support the government with this work.

The second phase of the Fuller Independent Inquiry into the crimes of David Fuller, which will also consider some of these important issues, is running significantly behind schedule and is not expected to report until 2024.

Statutory Code of Practice and introduction of licensing in Scotland

Having consulted on a Statutory Code of Practice in early 2021, the final draft was published in early 2023 and the NAFD has met with the Scottish Government regarding its future implementation, together with the planned introduction of licensing of funeral directors.

The Scottish Government has also indicated that a consultation paper on introducing alkaline hydrolysis in Scotland is being prepared and the responses will inform the development of relevant regulations.



Maintaining high standards within NAFD membership

IFSO adapts to external policy changes

In September, Natalie McKail, the former Inspector of Funeral Directors in Scotland, was appointed as chair of the Independent Funeral Standards Organisation as part of a wider reset for IFSO's operational structure in response to ongoing developments in the external policy environment.



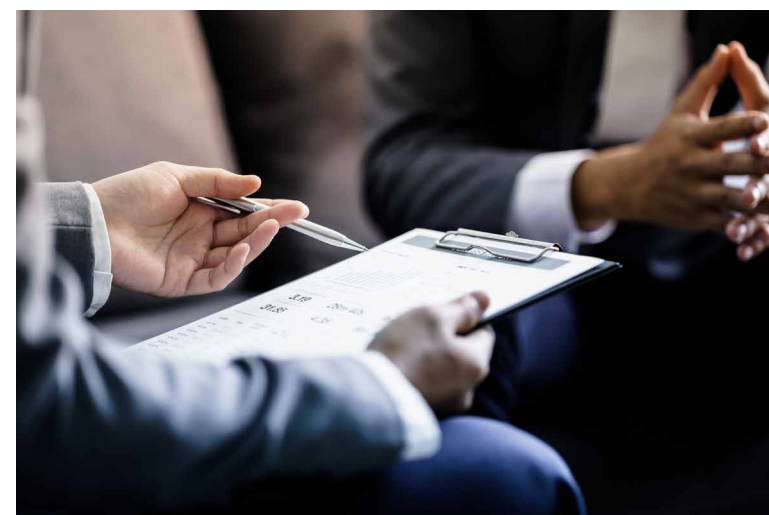
Despite this reset, IFSO's provision of independent standards monitoring was unaffected with hundreds of inspections being carried out during the past twelve months by IFSO's team of Quality, Risk and Compliance Managers, led by Nigel Cooper. Looking forward, it also enables IFSO's pace of growth and operating costs to continue to adapt in response to changes in the external policy environment, while continuing to provide an independent quality assurance model.

NAFD members targeted for disciplinary action over CMA non-compliance

In the early part of 2023, the NAFD began targeting the small number of NAFD members who had taken absolutely no steps to comply with the CMA's Market Order; in line with the approach taken by the CMA.

As set out in the process, members must take steps to comply or face referral to the Committee for Professional Standards and, ultimately, the Disciplinary Committee which has the authority to remove companies from membership.

Telephone calls with offers of assistance helped to bring the total down, significantly, but several enforcement letters have now been sent. One firm left NAFD membership due to their unwillingness to comply with the CMA's legal requirements.



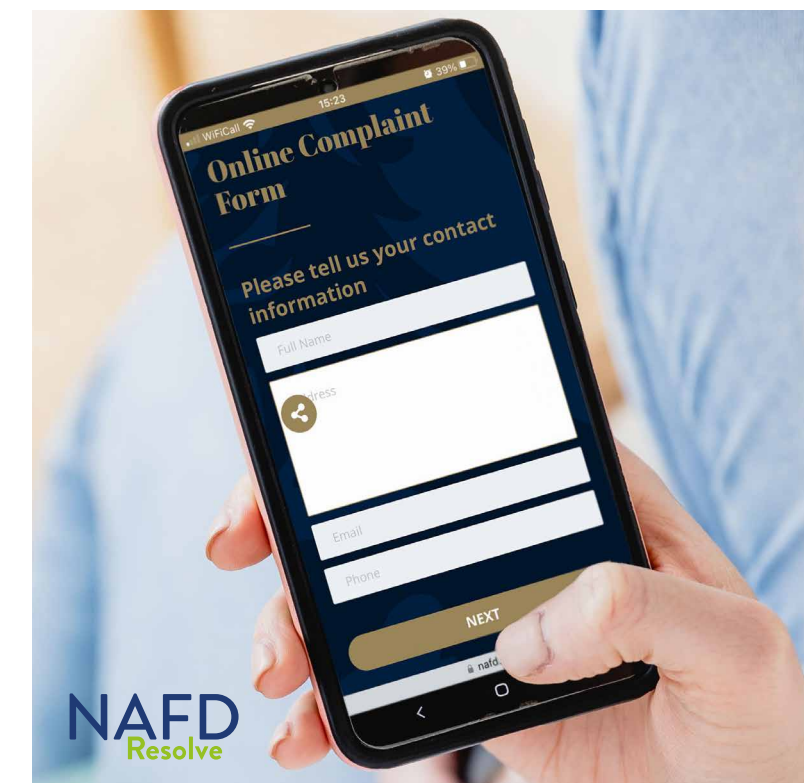
"Standards matter in the NAFD. It's what the logo stands for and the Committee for Professional Standards works hard to address all issues where a member is bringing the profession into disrepute."

Philip Blatchly, Chair of the Committee for Professional Standards

NAFD Complaints management

The NAFD provides two routes through which complaints can be addressed, NAFD Resolve, for clients of member firms, and the Committee for Professional Standards, for all other complaints relating to possible breaches of the Funeral Director Code.

Fully funded on members' behalf, NAFD Resolve is independently operated by IDRS Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution, a Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) approved ADR body.



During 2022-23, the Association received 87 complaints that were addressed through the Committee for Professional Standards and 214 complaints that were addressed through NAFD Resolve. This is a small increase over the previous year. In addition, we logged a further 111 complaints that were not within criteria for taking forward (e.g. anonymous, relating to a non-member or not about a funeral).

Assessing the validity of complaints is a significant aspect of the work of the Complaints Manager, so it is important that they are recorded and reported. They also provide valuable trend data about the funeral sector.

Meet the NAFD team



Contacting the NAFD

If you need the support of the NAFD team, please do get in touch.

General enquiries

Phone: 0121 711 1343
Email: info@nafd.org.uk
Website: nafd.org.uk

Membership

Email: su.lewis@nafd.org.uk

Education

Email: education@nafd.org.uk
Website: nafdeducation.org.uk

Complaints

Email: complaints@nafd.org.uk
Webpage: nafd.org.uk/standards/nafd-resolve/

NAFD Events

Email: events@nafd.org.uk
Websites: nafdconference.co.uk
nationalfuneralexhibition.co.uk

Policy and Public Affairs

Email: rachel.bradburne@nafd.org.uk

Press and media

Phone: 0121 393 3625
Email: pr@nafd.org.uk

Scotland and Northern Ireland - enquiries

Email: scotland@nafd.org.uk
northernireland@nafd.org.uk

Sales

Email: sales@nafd.org.uk

Get social!

Why not stay in touch with the NAFD on social media?



Twitter:

[@nafd_uk](https://twitter.com/nafd_uk)
[@NAFD_SCOTLAND](https://twitter.com/NAFD_SCOTLAND)
[@NAFD_Wales](https://twitter.com/NAFD_Wales)
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[@NAFDPresident](https://twitter.com/NAFDPresident)
[@funeral_exhibit](https://twitter.com/funeral_exhibit)



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Instagram:

[nafd.uk](https://www.instagram.com/nafd.uk)



LinkedIn:

National Association of Funeral Directors



Youtube:

The National Association of Funeral Directors

“We needed help from the NAFD in dealing with a difficult previous client and briefing the local press, resulting in no complaint, the story not appearing and negative social media comments being deleted.

We’ve fortunately never had to use the NAFD’s advice before. It was reassuring to know that the NAFD was there to support us after all these years.”



Progressive
Inclusive
Knowledgeable
Trustworthy

nafd.org.uk