

Charter for the bereaved

The charter was produced in 1996 by the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration. Consultations took place with cemetery and crematorium managers, bereaved families, professional and charitable groups in order to produce a Charter to specifically improve funerals.

The charter:

- is a commitment to improving the service by confronting rather than disguising the death experience, and by reducing ignorance
- is intended to define the rights of every individual who experiences bereavement
- will set standards of service related to burial, cremation and funerals generally. It is a written statement of what can be expected and this can act as a measure for judging the service received
- recognises that bereavement services are critical to the health of the nation. That the benefits of a meaningful funeral are immeasurable, influencing both the physical and mental wellbeing of us all
- will give the bereaved greater influence over the arrangement of funerals, thereby controlling costs and offering more satisfaction

The charter member agrees to identify the thirty three rights of the charter and shall be available at all times.

Wyre Council identifies and provides:

Burial procedure

- i. Organised and conducted in a dignified and orderly manner supported by competent, professional and caring cemetery staff
- ii. The right to inspect statutory cemetery records by appointment

Grave choice

- iii. The right to purchase a private grave for 50 years, the purchase cost and burial fee payable
- iv. The right to choose to be buried in an unpurchased grave

Cemetery memorials

- v. The right to place a memorial within regulations
- vi. The right and responsibility to maintain the memorial for 50 years
- vii. The right to use an approved memorial mason

Baby and infant graves

- viii. The right to be offered an individual grave for a baby or infant
- ix. The right to purchase an adult grave for the burial of a baby or infant and allow sufficient depth for adult burials

Burials in private land

- x. The right to receive factual information on burial in private land, for example: gardens, farms and orchards

(xi, xii, xiii – do not apply as no crematorium)

Ceremonies and belief

- xiv. The right to hold a burial service and to define the type of music and ceremony
- xv. The right to define the type of religious or secular format of service

Coffins and alternatives

- xvi. The right to choose the type and design within the constraints of availability, regulations and safe materials
- xvii. The right to obtain coffin via member

Communication

- xviii. The right to receive a prompt response to any form of communication
- xix. The right to be given cemetery fees upon request

Environmental issues

- xx. The right to be made aware of known environmental issues relating to bereavement services

Social and community aspects

- xxi. The right to receive service recognising needs, without unfairness or discrimination for example: religious belief, ethnic needs and disability

Funerals without a Funeral Director

- xxii. The right to organise a funeral without the use of a funeral director
- xxiii. The right as executor to be given the body by a mortuary, hospital, in order to carry out a funeral
- xxiv. The right to be given a leaflet by a member describing how to arrange an independent funeral

Maintenance of grounds and gravedigging

- xxv. The right to be shown a specified standard of grounds maintenance and the right to complain when not met

Regulations

- xxvi. The right to be given the list of regulations used by the member
- xxvii. The right to be given a written explanation of the reasons why a regulation has been used to restrict or otherwise influence rights

Staff and expertise

- xxviii. The right to receive quality service by trained and qualified staff
The right to question level and receive assurances regarding ability

Inspection

- xxix. The right to inspect the cemetery at a reasonable time
- xxx. The right to be given a copy of “Guiding Principles of Burial and Cremation Services”

Grievance procedure

- xxxi. The right to use grievance procedures if dissatisfied about any service provided by member

Using a Funeral Director

- xxxii. The right to be given a copy of “Information on using a funeral director”

Embalming

- xxxiii. The right to be given a copy of “Information on Embalming”

For any further information or advice please contact: Bereavement Services on www.wyre.gov.uk Tel: 01253 891000