

Our family, here for your family

We are a privately owned and managed family funeral business with over 40 years experience, assisted by like minded and highly enthusiastic principals and staff. We have no connection with any business outside the Sandra Homewood Group. We provide our team with training, a quality working environment, strong leadership and fairness. Our values are based on providing excellent service to our clients, transparency, fairness, good value and honesty.



When Someone Dies

Often death can be a great shock, even if the death was expected, and the emotional impact of losing someone that you care about, takes most of us by surprise.

We cannot take the pain or hurt away from you, but we will do everything we can to help you through the next few days, weeks and beyond if requested to do so, by providing you with informed choices, practical help and emotional support.

We do not impose urgency or apply pressure on you or your family. It is important that you have the time to reflect and then to decide how you wish the funeral to be arranged so it both celebrates and commemorates the life of your loved one who has died.

Below are some practical notes which we hope are of help at this time when suddenly everything is different, and you may require information you have not found or needed to use before.

What to do when you are Bereaved

If death occurs at home, contact your GP as soon as possible.

Your GP may write out the Medical Cause of Death Certificate when they call to certify the death, or they may request that you collect same from the Surgery. In the event that the GP cannot issue this certificate, the death will be referred to H M Coroner.

If death occurs in a nursing home, the staff will contact the GP on your behalf, and again you may be asked to collect the Medical Cause of Death Certificate from the Surgery.

If death occurs in hospital, the ward will make an appointment for you with the Bereavement Office at the hospital. They are able to provide you with information, and in some hospitals, you can register the death at the Bereavement Office.

If a death occurs suddenly or unexpectedly, whether as a result of apparent natural causes, an accident or a crime, then the death will be automatically referred to H M Coroner. This can be irrespective of where the death occurs.

Making Funeral Arrangements

Our professional service to you commences when we are contacted either by phone at any time of the day or night, or by you visiting our funeral home personally.

At the point of first contact, we would ask you for a few details, the name of the person who has died and where death has occurred. We would also like to take your name and contact phone number.

If appropriate and we have been instructed, we would then arrange to transfer the person who has died into our care as soon as practically possible.

After this initial contact we will either arrange for one of us to come and visit you or make an appointment for you to see us in the funeral home to discuss the arrangements for the funeral, and to provide more detailed information.

(Sometimes it is possible that you can be seen without an appointment but it is usually best to phone before making the journey to see us)

Visiting the Quiet Room at our Funeral Home

Relatives and friends often wish to say their goodbyes in our Quiet Room.

We would ask that you make an appointment(s) prior to visiting so that we ensure that your loved one is ready for your visit, you are not hurried in any way. Our visiting times allow an hour of privacy.

H M Coroner

When a death has been reported to H M Coroner, they will issue a Medical Certificate of Death. This form will then be sent by a Coroner's officer to The Registrar. There is no need for you to arrange to collect this certificate.

In some cases while still awaiting specialist reports from medical professionals, the Coroner may issue an interim certificate to enable the funeral to take place before they conclude their investigation.

The Registrar and how to Register a Death

Who can register:

- A close relative of the person who has died
- A relative in attendance during the last illness
- A person present at the death
- The person making the funeral arrangements

Documents to be taken to the Registry Office:

- Medical Cause of Death Certificate
- NHS Medical Card (if available)
- Birth Certificate

Information Required to be Given to the Registrar

- Date and place of death
- Full name of the Person who has died plus any other names that they have been known by, including maiden name if applicable.
- Date and place of birth
- Home address and postcode
- Occupation
- If married, full name and occupation of surviving spouse
- Please take to the Registrar, any Benefit or Pension books from the State that the Person who has died was receiving from the Government

The informant will be given the following certificates:

- A Green Certificate to be given to the Funeral Director to enable the funeral to take place
- A copy of the entry of death certificate. This certificate will be required for banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions. Additional copies can be purchased at the time of registering the Death for a nominal fee
- A Social Security Certificate

Funeral Costs, Charges and Disbursements

Please refer to our printed price list for the costs of our professional services and funeral charges.

If you need further clarification or advice regarding our prices please do not hesitate to ask.

In addition to our charges, we pay on your behalf any additional fees or disbursements to third parties to enable the funeral service to take place.

For example, the fees of a Minister, Priest or Officiant, the organist and the vergers if we are going into a Church, together with the Cemetery or the Crematorium fees. If the person who has died is going to be Cremated, then we pay on your behalf the necessary fee to the two doctors who complete and sign the Cremation Certificates which allows the Cremation to take place.

Our Principals

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Our Staff and Vehicles:

The hearse and following limousine/s on the day are an important part of the service that we offer to our bereaved families.

All of our staff wear uniforms and where ever possible our fleet comprises of matching vehicles.

Our staff normally carry the coffin in the traditional way on their shoulders. This we believe is the ultimate way to show respect and reverence to the person we have been entrusted to look after.

If it is wished that family members are to act as coffin bearers, then our full staff will still attend to advise and assist them. Please note if the deceased is to be buried, our experienced staff will resume their duties at the graveside, as a matter of safety, and we would ask family members to fully respect this point.

Consult a Solicitor

It is generally advisable to contact a Solicitor who can help with any concerns you may have. They can advise and assist with wills, problems of intestacy, debts, letters of representation and other important matters.

If a Will has been made it may be with personal papers, the contents can then be checked quickly to ensure that we are carrying out their wishes.

If the Deceased has contacted a Solicitor in recent times it is important that you contact them as soon as possible.

A Solicitor may save you time, money and avoid unnecessary trouble.

We can provide you with a list of local Solicitors if requested, however the executor/s can deal with Probate matters if preferred.

Probate

When a person dies, somebody has to deal with their Estate, including their money, property and possessions. They have to pay all the debts of the Estate and distribute the funds of the Estate to those entitled in accordance with the Will

The Probate Registry issues the document called the Grant of Representation

There are three types of grant:

- Probate issued to one or more executors named in the Will
- Letters of Administration (with a Will) when there is a Will but no executor named or the executor is unable to deal with the Estate
- Letter of Administration, where no Will has been left or the Will that has been left is invalid

The Grant is necessary because:

Organisations holding money in the Deceased's name need to know to whom the money is to be paid. The distribution of the Estate is the responsibility of the Person named on the deed.

Sometimes the Grant is not necessary if the Estate is of small value and there are no complications. It is prudent to check with the Probate Office in all cases first as legislation can change.

Memorials

After making arrangements for the funeral, thoughts may turn to a lasting tribute. A memorial or headstone is one of the ways that this can be done.

If we have removed an existing memorial to allow a further burial to take place, we send you a comprehensive report on the memorial that has been removed and will then await your instructions on a further inscription and any cleaning or restoration work that is required.

For new graves, or graves that are re-opened that do not have a stone, we will send you our memorial brochure and price list after a few weeks, unless you request us not to do so.

We are happy to discuss all memorial matters at any time during office hours.

There is also comprehensive memorial information on our website at homewoodfunerals.co.uk

Donations to Charity

If donations are requested in lieu of flowers we will accept and administer them on your behalf through MuchLoved.com within our standard professional fees. If alternative arrangements for the administration of donations are requested, there will normally be a charge for this service.

Help with the Costs

You may be eligible to receive help with the funeral costs if there is not enough money to pay for the funeral and you are responsible for making the arrangements.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) may assist if you or your partner are receiving Income Support, Housing Benefit, Family Credit or Council Tax Benefit. There is no guarantee that DWP will contribute towards the funeral account.

So please check to see if there are sufficient funds from:

- The Estate of the person who has died
- Any savings in your name or that of your Spouse/Partner
- Insurance policies, pension schemes or other funeral savings plans
- A Pre-Paid Funeral Plan

Please note if you instruct us to make all the necessary funeral arrangements on your behalf, then you are taking financial responsibility for settling the funeral account in full.

If you know that you will experience financial hardship in meeting the cost of the funeral, please advise us when instructing us. We are here to help and guide you as much as we can.

Pre-Paid Funeral Plans

We offer our clients a bespoke Pre-Paid Funeral Plan.

Further information and full details upon request.

Finally if there is anything else that we can assist you with regarding any aspect of our services, please do not hesitate to call us on 01869 208 000 or contact us by email info@homewoodfunerals.co.uk

Thank you, from the Principals of Sandra Homewood Funerals.

Useful Telephone Numbers

