



Your options when someone dies

Information gives you choice

In Scotland it is legal to ...

keep someone at home who has died, arrange burial or cremation yourself, buy a coffin, transport someone in your own vehicle and bury someone on your own land.

Your options ...

Do everything
yourself

Do some things yourself and
pay a funeral director, or
someone else, to do others

Employ a funeral
director to do
everything

Some reasons why

... people employ a funeral director ?

- this has, in recent years, become the traditional thing to do,
- they don't have the time, knowledge or strength to do it themselves,
- they value the service funeral directors offer,
- they are not aware they have a choice.

... people do some things, or everything, themselves ?

- the loving care they can put in to arrangements can be healing and helpful in their grieving,
 - they can save money/avoid going into debt,
 - they want to carry out someone's wishes.
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Funeral directors are experts in arranging funerals.

You are the expert on what's best for you and those close to you.

At the moment when someone dies people will react differently ... some will get busy and others will be quiet. People may also have very different views about what to do next. Before employing a funeral director, discuss these decisions and think about who is best to carry them out.

Your first decision ...

... is usually

keep the person who has died in your care

OR

employ a funeral director to take the person into their care

Your instinct may be to keep someone close after they die, especially if you have been caring for them. It's important to wait until you are ready before handing someone over. If your instinct is to keep someone close, and you don't have the experience of doing this, please ask for advice.

Keeping someone in your care is usually possible and was the norm until recently. It can help slow everything down and give you time to decide what to do next without incurring any expense.

Your other main decision...

is whether to have a ceremony or service and whether it will be at the same time/place as the burial or cremation. Your options are

no ceremony or service

a ceremony or service at the crematorium or graveside

a ceremony or service before or after the cremation or burial *

Either option could also include one or several private gatherings for close loved ones eg at home or a special place, at any time.

*This could take place anywhere that suits you e.g. at home, in a local hall or hotel or a place of worship. "Before" is usually immediately before but does not have to be. "After" could be hours, days, weeks or months afterwards.

Sources of practical information and support

For advice on caring for someone at home after death

* In Scotland contact Pushing Up The Daisies, based in Moray, on 0300 102 4444 www.pushingupthedaisies.org.uk

* UK-wide contact The Natural Death Centre on 01962 712690 www.naturaldeath.org.uk They produce the Natural Death Handbook, available in some libraries.

For advice on Funeral Options

* Down to Earth www.quakersocialaction.org.uk 02089835055

* The Good Funeral Guide, available in some libraries, or at www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk

These general free guides are also helpful:

* What to do after a death in Scotland www.gov.scot 0131 244 3581

* When someone dies www.mariecurie.org.uk or 0800 090 2309