



JOURNEY'S END: BIG FUTURE OF FUNERALS SURVEY SURPRISE RESULTS REVEAL UK'S EVOLVING ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEATH

An unprecedented survey about funerals, cremation, and farewell ceremonies has drawn back the curtain on the UK public's changing attitudes towards death and mourning.

Pure Cremation, a pioneer in the growing direct cremation sector, commissioned a survey which was sent to 11,000 direct cremation plan holders to discover why they are turning away from traditional funeral arrangements.

'The Big Future of Funerals Survey' – believed to be one of the biggest in the sector – invited respondents to answer a series of questions about their decision to reject the traditional funeral formula in favour of a direct cremation – where the deceased is collected, cared for, and then cremated without a service or mourners present.

The research revealed two main reasons for choosing direct cremation either because the participants want something much more personal or they don't value current funeral rituals – the researchers were shocked to see that 24% rejected the idea of marking death at all.

One of the most striking themes to emerge is the importance placed on connections to a special place, particularly when it comes to the final placement of the ashes.

More than 35% said the final resting place for the ashes mattered to them, while just under 29% placed a priority on where the farewell event takes place. Locations that were emotionally significant to respondents were far more important than what mourners wear (4%) and decorations (3%).

The top three locations for these farewell activities had nothing to do with ceremony and formality – the most popular were home, beach and garden. This is consistent with a strong desire to change the focus from death to life, with more than a third of respondents expressing their wish for this event to 'remember the good times'.

Catherine Powell, who founded Pure Cremation with her husband Bryan five years ago, said: "These results raise provocative questions about how much people value traditional, formal funerals.

"When combined with many other investigations highlighting the vulnerability and ignorance of the bereaved, we are forced to ask - How many families end up with a funeral that has little or no meaning to them. And what is the emotional and financial cost of this?"

More surprising results were uncovered, centred around the number of respondents (35%) who found seeing the coffin, too traumatic and nearly one in 5 declaring that funerals are 'too depressing'.

This directly contradicts the widely broadcast view that seeing the deceased after death or the coffin at the funeral is a vital part of accepting the death. Grief is a highly personal life experience and therefore objective research would be a better basis for shaping grief activities than our current reliance on the customs and opinions of those in funeral service.

The survey results clearly showed that consumers would welcome a fresh approach with nearly one in five people found funerals ‘too upsetting’ and nearly half saying that the crematorium itself is ‘too depressing’ (46.8%) and ‘feels like a production line’ (44.53%). A quarter (25.30%) said they find traditional services ‘rather impersonal’ and 18.90% reported that they would ‘rather go straight to the wake’.

“The lives, beliefs and spirit of the British people are fascinating, diverse and dynamic, yet standard funeral services are so formulaic and fixed. In contrast, a Pure Cremation frees families from the ‘coffin logistics’ associated with traditional funerals, giving them the chance to create strong links to the individual’s life story and involve family more meaningfully. I would even argue that this could mean that death can be acknowledged and accepted more easily as a result.”

It came as no surprise that the survey results highlighted how concern about costs is a key factor in direct cremation’s growing popularity. More than a third (41.04%) of respondents wanted the cheapest and simplest option – little wonder when the average cost for a simple cremation using a funeral director is £3,247, similar to the cost of a fortnight’s holiday for a family of four. These costs rise to £4,267 for burial, according to figures from life insurer Royal London.

“Many of our clients take out plans because they want to protect their families from financial and emotional distress. Making your wishes clear and providing for the costs is a wonderful gift and sharing these wishes can be an uplifting and cathartic experience.”

The report concludes that public has more diverse needs and wishes than the current funeral landscape would suggest, and that the profession has been too slow to tune into these. The good news is the bereaved have already started to take matters into their own hands and Pure Cremation is proud to be a key catalyst in this funeral revolution.

The full Big Future of Funerals Survey can be found at [The Big Future of Funerals Survey Report \(yumpu.com\)](http://yumpu.com)

Editor’s Note: For further information or to arrange an interview with Catherine Powell, Director, Pure Cremation please contact Celeste Clarke at Century PR on 024 76 22881/07799064066 or email celeste@centurypr.co.uk.