



Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February

## **PURE CREMATION SIGNS FAIR FUNERALS PLEDGE COMMITTING TO PRICE TRANSPARENCY**

- National direct cremation provider Pure Cremation has signed the new 2020 Fair Funerals pledge committing to transparent pricing practices and payment terms
- Funeral industry under pressure as the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) conducts a full inquiry into the sector
- Average debt taken on by those who struggle with funeral costs has increased by 14% since 2018<sup>i</sup>
- The average UK cost for a simple funeral is £3,785 but this varies widely between regions <https://www.royallondon.com/siteassets/site-docs/media-centre/60448-national-funeral-report-2019-art.pdf>

National direct cremation provider Pure Cremation has committed to providing transparent pricing by signing the Fair Funerals pledge. The pledge has been relaunched by the charity Quaker Social Action amid ongoing concerns at the scale of price rises and the behaviour of some funeral directors in the sector, with the Competition and Markets Authority currently conducting a full scale inquiry.

The average cost of a funeral in the UK has soared in recent years leaving many families thousands of pounds in debt. According to Royal London, the average simple funeral now stands at £3,785. Last year the CMA stated that the essential elements of organising a funeral have increased by 6% each year – twice the inflation rate – for the last 14 years.

Upon the launch of the investigation last year, the CMA<sup>iii</sup> accused some funeral directors of taking advantage by charging high prices at a time when customers were vulnerable. It said the reluctance of firms to disclose clear prices, including online, and to provide comprehensive information on the quality and range of services made it hard for people to compare funeral directors. The CMA has since reported that half of the funeral director websites they audited did not contain price information.

Quaker Social Action, which provides the only UK-wide helpline for people struggling with funeral costs, has relaunched the Fair Funerals pledge to encourage funeral directors to address the national funeral poverty crisis from within the industry itself.

The relaunched Fair Funerals pledge provides customers with an online tool to check whether their local funeral director is committed to helping them find a funeral within their means, ensuring they are open about the price of their services, including any third party costs, any deposit required and when the final balance is due.

Catherine Powell, Co-founder and Customer Experience Director of Pure Cremation commented:

*“Pure Cremation has put fair pricing and complete transparency at the heart of its business so the decision to sign the pledge was a “no brainer”. We hope this initiative will help showcase those firms who already offer crystal clear information to the bereaved AND inspire the rest to do better.”*

**Lindesay Mace, manager of QSA’s funeral poverty service Down to Earth, said:**

*“Last year Royal London reported that the average debt taken on by those who struggle with funeral costs had increased by 14% since 2018. We frequently support clients who are confused and unclear about quotes they have been given; what costs are for, whether third party fees are included or simply what the total will be, having been told they will only get something in writing after the funeral. Clearly much more needs to be done and so the Fair Funerals pledge is continuing its activity as part of Quaker Social Action’s Down to Earth service. We’re very happy that Pure Cremation has signed.”*

**Richard, who recently organised a funeral, said:**

“The most important thing is the costs are transparent so the bereaved family can clearly understand what costs are needed ... and that wasn’t my experience to start with. The first company I contacted was prompting me to sort out the date and get everything arranged and I felt they were just skirting over the costs and it wasn’t clear how much it would be. When I eventually got the quote it was more than I thought. That’s the key point; there shouldn’t be any hidden costs.”

- ENDS -

**View the Fair Funerals pledge online via [fairfuneralscampaign.org.uk](https://www.fairfuneralscampaign.org.uk)**

#### **Notes to editors**

- Quaker Social Action (QSA) is a charity and a limited company, founded in 1867, which addresses poverty and social exclusion
- The Fair Funerals pledge was originally launched in 2015 through Quaker Social Action’s funeral poverty project Down to Earth, as part of the Fair Funerals campaign
- Prior to the relaunch of the Fair Funerals pledge approximately 35% of the funeral industry had signed
- The CMA recently began publishing its working papers and potential remedies, with responses due this month. After the Provisional Decision report in April/May there will then be more opportunities for responses before the statutory deadline of 27th September 2020; their timetable can be found here [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ca75517e5274a0b11854da6/administrative\\_timetable\\_funerals\\_investigation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ca75517e5274a0b11854da6/administrative_timetable_funerals_investigation.pdf)

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<sup>i</sup> Royal London 2019 <https://www.royallondon.com/siteassets/site-docs/funeral-plans/national-funeral-report-2019.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> CMA 2019 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e32d240ed915d0936551520/Funeral\\_directors\\_-\\_sales\\_practices\\_and\\_transparency\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e32d240ed915d0936551520/Funeral_directors_-_sales_practices_and_transparency_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> CMA 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-launches-funerals-market-investigation>