



Position Statement: Regulation of the Funeral Directing Profession

The NAFD believes that the introduction of a system of proportionate and tailored statutory regulation of the funeral sector would be in the best interests of our members and the families they serve.

As the largest standards body for the UK funeral profession, the NAFD has always advocated for the effective scrutiny of all funeral directors. At present we are only able to scrutinise - and provide an independent complaints service to customers of - those 4,000 funeral homes that are in NAFD membership, as trade association membership is not currently compulsory. In our view, it is unacceptable that some firms are currently able to escape scrutiny by refusing to join a trade association.

We are aware of a perception that the regulatory function of the major trade associations is incompatible with our separate role as advocates for our members. In spite of the many safeguards we have put in place to ensure the independence of our complaints, disciplinary and quality assurance procedures, we recognise that more needs to be done to ensure public confidence in our ability to enforce standards is maintained. One option we are considering is the potential separation of our regulatory and advocacy functions.

We have supported Government led regulation in Scotland and worked closely with the Scottish Government throughout the introduction of the Burial and Cremation Act, helping to ensure that regulation in Scotland will be proportionate, based on firm foundations and will work in the best interests of both the consumer and the funeral profession. Whether a similar model represents the best option for England, Wales and Northern Ireland is not yet clear but the NAFD intends to lead this conversation and stands ready to play its part in finding a solution that is robust, proportionate and fit for purpose.

Whatever form statutory regulation takes, such a significant change will likely have implications for not only thousands of businesses across the UK, but also the bereaved families they care for and so it's vitally important to get it right.

National Association of Funeral Directors

December 2018