

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

For: Funeral Director

By: North Hertfordshire District Council

Effective date: March 2023

Document owner	North Hertfordshire District Council
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Approval

Company Name of Funeral Director	Date	Description	Author
		Service Level Agreement (NHDC/Funeral Directors)	Andrew Mills/Teresa Carr

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1. Agreement overview

This Agreement represents a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Funeral Directors and North Herts Council for the provision of information and communication required to support and sustain the Burials service.

This Agreement remains valid until superseded by a revised Agreement mutually endorsed by the Stakeholders. The Agreement outlines the parameters of all the NHC responsibilities and functions covered as they are mutually understood by the Stakeholders.

2. Goals and objectives

The purpose of this Agreement is to ensure that the proper elements and commitments are in place to provide consistent service support and delivery to the customers by both the Funeral Director and North Herts Council.

The goal of this Agreement is to obtain mutual agreement for the provision of information and communication between the Service Provider and customer.

The objective of this Agreement is to:

- Provide clear reference to service ownership, accountability, roles and responsibilities.
- Present clear, concise and measurable description of service provision to the customer.
- Match perceptions of the expected service provision with actual service support and delivery.

3. Stakeholders

Service provider: North Herts Council

Customer: Funeral Director

4. Periodic review

This Agreement is valid from the effective date outlined and is valid until further notice. This Agreement should be reviewed at a minimum once per year, however, in lieu of a review during any period specified, the current Agreement will remain in effect.

The document owner is responsible for facilitating regular reviews of this document. Contents of this document may be amended as required, provided mutual agreement is obtained from the Stakeholders and communicated to all affected parties.

5. Service Agreement

Service Provider

The following detailed service parameters are the responsibility of the Service Provider in the on-going support of this document.

An NHC officer will be available between 09.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday, to give information or assistance as required.

Funeral Directors will be updated with any changes in NHC contact details as appropriate.

NHC staff and contractors will act with respect and co-operation to ensure the needs of the families are met as far as reasonably practicable.

Forms will be up-dated and the latest versions of all forms will be available on the NHC website. The most current forms will be used at all times and it is, therefore, recommended that the Funeral Director regularly checks the NHC website for any updated documentation. Forms submitted on old versions of the form will be rejected and returned to the sender.

Funeral Directors will be kept informed of any changes to procedures, terms and conditions, rules and regulations and fees in a timely manner which will be available for download from the NHC website.

The NHC website will be regularly updated to reflect these changes. It will be the responsibility of each Funeral Director to check the NHC website for any updates.

NHC will operate a book and pay in advance service for all aspects of work. Payment will be invoiced by e-mailed payment link at the point of receiving the provisional booking. Funeral Directors who wish to pay by any other means must have the agreement of the Service Manager for Greenspace at NHC. Payment MUST be received at least three working days prior to the interment. Fees not paid by the date of interment will incur a late payment penalty charge of £50.00. If the fees are still outstanding, together with the penalty charge, 14 days from the interment, than a further late payment penalty charge will be levied.

NHC will act within the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and maintain accurate interment records.

Grave spaces will be checked, marked out and excavated to the specification confirmed on the interment form and to a presentable standard. Contractors employed by NHC will be supervised and monitored under the contract conditions by NHC officers.

NHC will provide a Meet and Greet representative for each burial that will be appropriately authorised to ensure that all the required resources are available for all burials to take place as planned.

Should NHC fail to meet the expectation of the Customer, details of our Comments, Compliment and Complaints process will be provided.

Funeral Director

The following detailed service parameters are the responsibility of the Funeral Director in the on-going support of this document.

- We confirm that we are in possession of adequate and current Public Liability Insurance and are able to produce the insurance certificate if requested to do so **(this box must be ticked)**
- We confirm that we are in possession of an up-to-date Risk Assessment for carrying out all interments and are able to produce the Risk Assessment if requested to do so **(this box must be ticked)**.
- We confirm that we have the policies and procedures in place to ensure that our client/clients are fully aware of how their data will be used so as to progress their instructions with reference to a grave or interment at a cemetery managed by North Hertfordshire Council **(this box must be ticked)**.
- We confirm that we have a Risk Assessment in place to enable us to conduct our business in a COVID safe manner **(this box must be ticked)**.

To check availability for an interment and to make a provisional booking for a burial or interment of ashes, please use the online booking form on the NHC website using this link <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/community/births-deaths-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/burials-and-cemeteries>

A provisional booking requires the following information:

- Service to be held at
- Chapel requirement (as appropriate)
- Cemetery
- Burial type
- Back-filling required?
- Religious Denomination
- Date of burial
- Start/end time
- Name/address of deceased
- Contact details

Burials must be confirmed with all supporting documents including the signed and completed Notice of Interment and a copy of the Burial, Cremation or Coroner's certificate and the payment, **a minimum of 3 working days before the date of interment**. Failure to do so could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the booking and a late payment penalty charge.

The Funeral Director will provide the following additional information when submitting the completed notice of interment form:

- Full name of deceased
- Any previous address for the deceased
- Deceased's age
- Confirm deceased was an NH resident
- Type of grave
- Grave number
- Name of previously interred person
- Confirm if removal of memorial has been arranged and by whom
- Depth of grave
- Burial type – burial/ashes
- Size of coffin/ashes casket
- Back-filling requirements (i.e. West Indian full back-fill etc./travellers)
- Attendees at the interment
- The relevant Section A, B or C on the form must be completed and signed

Please do not submit incomplete interment forms without coffin/casket sizes because these are a necessary requirement to confirm the booking and enable appropriate instructions to be issued to contractors; any incomplete forms will not be processed

The time appointed for an interment must be punctually observed, otherwise the interment may be postponed until other funerals have taken place. An additional fee may be charged to cover any costs incurred by the Council. It is the Funeral Director's responsibility to inform NHC of any late arrival at the cemetery.

No burial may take place before 9:00am or after 4:00pm. In winter months due to limited light, the latest burial time available will be 3:00pm. (If back-filling of the grave is requested, the latest bookable time in winter months will be 2.00pm).

No burials may take place on Sundays and Bank or Public holidays. Funerals may be arranged on Saturdays before midday only and will be charged at double fees and will be with the approval of the Burials Team prior to booking.

Prior to making a provisional booking with NHC, the Funeral Director must ascertain who the Grave Grant Owner is, either by confirmation from the family in the form of a Deed for the grave space or contacting the Burials Team to check the database. If the Grave Grant Owner is deceased, the Funeral Director must advise the family that a Grave Grant Transfer may need to be done in order for the interment to take place. The family must be directed to the Burials Team for advice on the forms required.

The information received should be accurate and timely and on the appropriate up-to-date form available from the NHC website.

It is the responsibility of the Funeral Director to provide adequate staff to carry out the interment, including lowering of the coffin.

The back-filling instruction requested at the time of booking must be adhered to as changes to the back-filling request cannot be accommodated once on site for the interment.

Funeral Directors will issue to customers the relevant cemetery's Rules & Regulations (which should be signed by both parties that they have been issued and received) and actively point customers to the NHC Burials website pages for information. Up-to-date copies of the Rules & Regulations can be downloaded from the NHC website.

It will be the responsibility of each Funeral Director to check the NHC website for any updates.

It will be the Funeral Director's responsibility to determine the wishes of each family and refer these to the Burials Team for consideration regarding the selection and location of the burial plot.

Payment for interments should be made within the terms of NHC's financial regulations set out in the previous section.

Funeral Directors and those employed by the Funeral Directors should be respectful to NHC Officers and NHC contractor staff at all times.

By signing below, all Approvers agree to the Terms and Conditions outlined in this Agreement

Approver's Name	Approver's Job Title	Signed	Approval date