

Having read through your 133 page report I feel I must make comment.

I am an active member of the National Association of Funeral Directors (N.A.F.D.) and appreciate all the work they have been doing on behalf of the membership in response to your report.

I feel that they have made a fair summary of the situation in their response to you. This has been published in the January 2019 edition of "The Funeral Director Monthly " (F D M) magazine on pages 8,9,10 and 11. I would ask that you consider seriously the points they have identified, and work closely with them on getting a better and full understanding of our profession, thereby enabling you to resolve these issues for the benefit of all Funeral Directors, both large corporates and independents, off all sizes.

I am the owner of a medium sized independent family run funeral directors, a business I started in 1987. I am located only some 2.5 miles from the Head Office of Dignity Funerals, in Sutton Coldfield. I have therefore had to build up my business reputation in the face of very tough competition with their local branches, which share a very similar trading name as my own, over the last 30 plus years. I have been able to do this by offering a competitively priced, very personal and caring service to my local community. I also invest heavily back in my company, having spent £1.5m just 5 years ago on brand new premises and vehicles.

I feel we are in need of some form of regulating, as there are far to many new small start up businesses setting up by people who have very little ,if any training, and no qualifications, often from inadequate premises, and no capital outlay. Due to these circumstances they are able to offer what appears to be very low cost funeral services. The problem is that the public do not see behind the scenes and therefore do not know what they are buying into.

I also feel that more open pricing , especially if based on like for like products, will enable the public to make a decision based on cost, if that is of importance to them. The problem I see is that our prices may seem higher that that of a new start up business, which has minimal overheads, but we feel we invest heavily in the latest technology, latest high end funeral vehicles, and give a more " value added service " than you can justify in a simple price list.

I am pleased to see that you have also looked into the pricing structure of crematoria and cemeteries. In my area I have access to 6 crematoria, all within a 10 mile radius, whose basic charges range from £585 to £890 (Dignity owned) for the same basic services.

Again I would ask that you work very closely with the N.A.F.D. in this matter, as they are "the voice of the profession" and take on board their views and ideas, which have come from many years of experience from within our profession.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Hazel M.D.
Ian Hazel Funerals
N.A.F.D. member 1698