

My apologies for the slight delay in responding to you.

I sincerely hope you will take on board our views.

Firstly, I endorse everything that the ICCM has submitted as being part of the board. However, there are specific issues that need to be addressed and which has a significant impact on the Muslim Community.

1. The Muslim Community is now the only community which believes in Burials
2. We have certain requirements for burials which are not being addresses by all council cemeteries
3. The Muslim population is a growing population and the needs for burial and funeral services will be on the increase
4. The majority of the funeral service is provided by local mosques who would have basic facilities to ensure that the rituals are performed in conformity to our religious requirements and hence most of the charges will be very heavily subsidised.
5. There are growing number of private funeral directors who are now coming into the market as families demand more for their loved ones. Their charges for a standard funeral service will be perhaps slightly less than what other funeral directors would charge.
6. Our concern would be that we need a charter that needs to be followed by all funeral directors irrespective of the religion or culture. A code of conduct is essential so that the dignity of the deceased is always paramount as is the need of the bereaved family.
7. I am the Chair of the National Burial Council which is an umbrella body that incorporates the majority of the organisations that provide burial and funeral service to the Muslim Community throughout the country. We are also working on a code of conduct but realise that it will be voluntary and very difficult to police.
8. The cost of a funeral service varies from £500 - £1500 generally and that will involve the cost of collecting the deceased, performing the ritual wash and shrouding, taking to the mosque for their final prayer and then to the cemetery for the burial. Most will provide a hearse or an ambulance.
9. Generally speaking, Muslim Funerals are supposed to be very simple but we have noticed that families now are demanding more and for which are they willing to pay more. However one of the

main issues we face is the disparity between funeral directors in terms of the level and standard of service provided.

10. Cost is an issue as families are struggling. typically if I use the cemetery which I am involved with, the burial charge would be £3000 plus approx. £950 for the funeral service. Therefore families would be looking to around £4000 just for the funeral. of course families than need to incur other costs, like food, looking after families that have come for the burial etc. Our greatest issue is that we have to bury our loved ones as quickly as possible (preferably within 24 hrs) and that does present a problem to families as they cannot necessarily receive the assistance from the Social Fund as it takes them 6 weeks to process an application .This means that families are having to borrow from friends , relatives or make other arrangements to pay for the funeral . We have raised this issue several times with the DWP, but there seems to be no movement.
11. This issue of funeral assistance and the level of £700 has not been reviewed for over 30 years and yet prices have increased substantially in that period. The only way our community is managing is through the assistance of the mosques and community groups. This is not sustainable. The government has to re look at the figure that they currently provide.
12. We are also having to deal with a number of public funerals for Muslims. This is another problem for us as public funerals are carried out in the cheapest grave and at times they do not even cater for the religious requirements of the deceased. We have had to step in a number of cases where we as a cemetery have undertaken to provide the burial as great cost to us.This cannot be right . Every deceased person should have an automatic right to be buried in accordance with their religious requirements and with dignity.
13. Burial space is a big concern, and we urge planning authorities to relax the rules for new burial cemeteries just as they are for new Crematoria's.

I am happy to discuss any of the above in more detail should you wish to.

We are the largest Muslim cemetery in the country and have buried over 11000 Adults and about 3000 children, still birth and miscarriages in the 16 years of operation.

Once again sorry for the slight delay.

Kind Regards

Mohamed Omer
Board Member- External Affairs

