

Funeral Director and Crematoria Services Market Investigation

Introduction

1. Following its initial review of the funerals industry, on 28 March 2019 the CMA commenced an in-depth market investigation to further examine the competition concerns identified in the course of the review and decide what action, if any, may be appropriate.
2. Unless there are special reasons, the CMA is required to publish its report on the market investigation within 18 months of the date of the reference, ie by 27 September 2020. We will shortly publish an administrative timetable on our website setting out our timetable and key milestones. If changes are made to our timetable, we will update this on the website.

Our approach to gathering information

3. This investigation involves a large number of potentially interested parties and third parties, many of whom have relevant information. These parties include (but are not limited to):
 - Funeral directors, including independent/small firms
 - Private crematoria operators
 - Local authorities, including local authority crematoria operators
 - Trade associations
 - People who have arranged a funeral, and organisations representing the bereaved
 - Consumers and organisations representing consumers
 - Other parties operating in, or with links to, the funerals industry.
4. Given the variety of potentially interested parties, we recognise that we will need to engage with different parties in different ways. Initially, we are focussed on gathering information, as explained below:

- We will issue 'First Day Letters' to some large funeral directors and private crematoria operators and will follow up with requests for information and data.
 - We will engage with, and seek information from, the main funeral director trade associations. We will also engage with other parties with access to a network of funeral directors.
 - We will seek to engage with a sample of independent funeral directors
 - We will seek information from local authority crematoria operators.
5. In due course, we will also be seeking information from a range of other parties. This information will be sought in stages over the coming weeks and in a variety of ways, including via meetings, surveys and research, questionnaires and data requests.

Publishing information and opportunities to comment

6. We aim to be transparent in conducting our investigations. In accordance with our administrative timetable and disclosure policy, we will publish many key documents on our website. The first of these key documents is the **issues statement** which we anticipate publishing in early April. This will set out:
- our initial hypotheses concerning which features of the supply of services by funeral directors at the point of need and crematoria services may be adversely affecting competition; and
 - which potential remedies may be suitable to address any adverse effect on competition that we may find.
8. We will be inviting submissions in response to the issues statement within one month of its publication. The early findings of our analyses will be set out in **working papers** and later on we will publish our **provisional findings**. Interested parties will have the opportunity to comment on these documents.