

17/05/21

Dear Sir

JC Atkinson- As a leading maker of coffins to the funeral trade, making around 75,000 coffins per year. I am writing with regards to the request for submission following the publication of the Notice of Intention to Make an Order (15.4.21) along with supporting documentation.

In the document “Draft Order for Consultation” (15.4.21), page 20 outlines a draft proposal for a standardised price list. One item here is the provision of the coffin, the service of which is described as “Providing a coffin suitable for burial or cremation – this will be made from [insert description of the coffin].

However, in the document, The Funerals Market Investigation – the Funerals Market Investigation Order 2021 – Explanatory Note, page number 28 specifically mentions a wood veneer coffin, “Providing a coffin suitable for burial or cremation – appropriate means a wood veneer coffin or higher-grade coffin”.

The CMA Funeral Market Investigation Transparency Remedies, Qualitative Research Report, April 2021, recognises that there are different materials used for coffins, stating on page 4 that the price for the service should be described as “Provision of an appropriate coffin suitable for burial or cremation – this will be made from [insert description of coffin. e.g. wood veneer].”

The specification of a specific type of material for a coffin has the potential to increase the cost of coffins supplied the general public when there is a less expensive material currently available and offered to the public via the vast majority of funeral directors, that been a wood effect coffin. The wood effect is a printed paper which mimics real wood and is then laminated onto chipboard. This is also similar to the way real wood veneer is laminated onto chipboard.

Wood effect veneer is the preferred choice of funeral trade for simpler funerals, as its less costly and is more efficient to manufacture than real wood veneer.

**Environmentally** -Wood effect veneer is manufactured within the UK, as opposed to real wood veneer which is sourced from Europe or the US. Wood effect veneer requires less (>50%) finishing polish thus saving emissions. (Climate changing volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Both choices are suitable for cremation as the wood acts as secondary fuel, and both are biodegradable which is suitable for Burial. However, care could be taken with burial to ensure no plastic, wood handles and natural (no synthetic plastic linings) as these are biodegradable.

Best Regards

Julian Atkinson

Managing Director