

# Lincolnshire Co-operative Funeral Services

## The Funerals Market Investigation Order 2021

### Response to Consultation Questions

Lincolnshire Co-operative is an independent retail co-operative owned by its 280,000 members, and which operates in Lincolnshire and parts of surrounding counties. It has a purpose of *'Bringing together ideas, energy and resources to make life better in our communities'*. It does this by applying all of its profits (earned through its trading activities in Food Stores, Filling Stations, Post Offices, Pharmacy, Funeral Services, Travel Agencies and Property) into various initiatives, charities, community groups and other worthy causes, as well as reinvesting in the business, issuing dividend to members and a profit share to colleagues. This is a very different model to most other businesses operating within the funeral service market and we ask that this is borne in mind when considering our responses.

1. The standardised price list does not, in our opinion, provide for an improvement for the consumer. For example, the requirement to itemise the cost for viewing of the deceased. Our current practice is to make no additional charge for viewing of the deceased but rather consider that this is provided for within our professional charge. Having a separate charge for this may discourage consumers from taking the opportunity to view the deceased by virtue of a perception that they will be paying more for this. For many consumers viewing the deceased is cathartic and hugely important to them in assisting the onset of a healthy grieving process. This disaggregation could have unintended consequences on the wellbeing of the bereaved. It is our opinion that applying a price to a bereaved family for viewing their loved one is in bad taste. This item should be combined into either Part B 9 or 10.
2. Part B 12 & 13 to some extent duplicate one another and, in our opinion, should be combined into one simple item. The same applies to part C 20 & 21.
3. See response 1 above.
4. £250 would seem an appropriate level. We would want assurance that Lincolnshire Co-op's everyday support for causes run by its Membership and Community team are not hindered, nor required to be recorded unless they are specifically given in the name of, or on behalf of the funerals business area specifically.
5. Yes – nothing to add.
6. Nothing to add.
7. Yes
8. We do not consider that three months is sufficient for many businesses to implement the necessary changes. A longer period of implementation may allow changes to be made within the normal timetable of a firm's annual review of its pricing and product offer, and therefore save costs and afford a greater degree of compliance across firms.

DAVID DERNLEY  
HEAD OF FUNERAL SERVICES  
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