

Funeral Services Bill

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TO

Require the Secretary of State to undertake a review of funeral affordability and costs; to require the providers of funeral services to offer a Simple Funeral Service; to require the Secretary of State to make certain arrangements relating to Funeral Payments; and for connected purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Review of funeral affordability

- (1) The Secretary of State shall undertake a review of funeral affordability and factors affecting funeral costs.
- (2) The Secretary of State shall make arrangements for a public consultation on the matters to be considered by the review. 5
- (3) The scope of the review shall include, but not be limited to—
 - (a) the operation of existing State support including Funeral Payments and Budgeting Loans, and the speed with which claims are processed;
 - (b) public health funerals;
 - (c) the relationship between funeral affordability and the availability of— 10
 - (i) burial space, and
 - (ii) crematoria;
 - (d) public awareness of and information on funeral planning and available support; and
 - (e) regulations to establish a Simple Funeral Service. 15
- (4) The Secretary of State shall lay a report on the review and public consultation before both Houses of Parliament within six months of the completion of the review.

2 Establishment of a Simple Funeral Service

- (1) The Secretary of State shall make regulations requiring funeral directors to provide a Simple Funeral Service and setting out the components of a Simple Funeral Service.
- (2) A funeral director must provide to a customer an itemised price list for a Simple Funeral Service before selling that customer any funeral. 5
- (3) The individual components of the Simple Funeral Service must be provided to the customer at no more than the listed price if the customer requests them.

3 Orders and regulations

- (1) Any power to make regulations under this Act is exercisable by statutory instrument. 10
- (2) A statutory instrument containing regulations under section 2 may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament.

4 Duty to carry out eligibility check for Funeral Payments 15

- (1) The Secretary of State must carry out a preliminary check of a potential applicant's eligibility for a Funeral Payment if requested.
- (2) The Secretary of State may request from an applicant indicative information which the Secretary of State deems necessary to make a reasonable estimate of that applicant's eligibility. 20
- (3) The Secretary of State shall inform the applicant of whether, on the basis of the information provided, they would qualify to receive a Funeral Payment through the Social Fund.
- (4) The Secretary of State must inform the applicant that the preliminary check of a potential application does not represent a final decision. 25
- (5) A person who requests a preliminary check of eligibility for a Funeral Payment must receive the outcome of the check within two working days.

5 Requirement to provide an invoice as part of a Funeral Payment application

An applicant for a Funeral Payment shall not be required to provide an invoice in order for the application to be processed. 30

6 Financial provisions

There is to be paid out of money provided by Parliament –

- (a) *any expenditure incurred under or by virtue of this Act by the Secretary of State, and*
- (b) *any increase attributable to this Act in the sums payable under any other Act out of money so provided.* 35

7 Short title, commencement and extent

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Funeral Services Act 2015.

- (2) This Act shall come into force 6 months following the date of Royal Assent.
- (3) This Act extends to England and Wales and Scotland.

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*Ordered to be brought in by
Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck, Steve Rotheram,
Ian Mearns, Julie Hilling,
Meg Munn, Pat Glass, Ian Lucas,
Andy McDonald, Mr David Anderson,
Graeme Morrice, Jim Shannon
and Sir Peter Bottomley.*

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to be Printed, 9 December 2014.*

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