

Simple Funerals



Lewisham Bereavement Services has designed a Simple Funerals package to both provide a more cost-effective service for those that want/need it as well as cater for those who wish to celebrate the lives of their loved ones in a non-traditional way.

Simple Cremation will be the first of many new services that will be introduced within the Simple Funeral Community, it is essentially a system whereby the local authority, in partnership with a local funeral director take care of the sensitive transport of a body to the crematorium. The cremation will take place without a service and medical paperwork has been approved. It is planned that this service will appeal to those who do not wish to arrange a funeral via an official Funeral Director, which can come at significant cost even for the most basic package, or those who wish to arrange their own celebration of their loved one's life and simply need the body to be cared for in a straightforward and respectful manner.

Simple Cremations Package

- Collection and care of the person who has died from non-communicative disease
- Completion of statutory medical papers and support with arranging any legal administration
- Cremation costs
- Provision of an environmentally friendly coffin suitable for cremation
- Provision of a container for cremated remains to be kept - that can be returned to the home of the applicant by a member of staff within 2 working days of the service or kept onsite while the applicant makes further plans for disposal.

The package will not include (but can be added as an extra)

- Use of any of the chapel buildings
- Physical memorial at any of the cemeteries or memorial gardens
- Viewing of the body

A family member or friend of the deceased can simply call the crematorium office or the out of office call centre and the Cremation Authority will do the rest, calling the applicant back only to confirm information needed for statutory medical paperwork, only when the medical examiner and the Cremation Authority has been pacified will the cremation take place at the earliest opportunity. The design of the service has been highly commended by the ICCM with their CEO stating 'I think what Lewisham is proposing is excellent and represents a real saving for Lewisham residents. It's great to see local authorities hitting back against the big companies. It's also good that for your team there is not much difference in a 'normal' cremation in terms of handling of the body etc'. The ICCM have also agreed to endorse the Lewisham Simple Funerals with the statement 'The ICCM encourages legal and ethical initiatives in the current climate to reduce funeral costs for families'.

In year one the service hopes to achieve a performance standard of 140 simple cremations between April 2023 and March 2024

The price point for the service has been carefully chosen to both provide a cost effective alternative for residents while potentially improving the overall financial performance of the service. On average the full cost of a cremation in London is £3,500 to £4,500 based on service needs. The price of a Simple Cremation will be £1400 but that will cover everything for the bereaved with nothing further to pay until they wish to add more services, if so, it will be charged at a very reasonable rate e.g. £125 for the use of the chapel for a memorial service. This price is both comparable with other local authorities (Lambeth charge £1512 although this includes the use of the chapel) but also ensures that the contributions to the services income budgets are kept, as a minimum, at a flat rate.

In addition to the Simple Cremations Package, Bereavement Services also plan to introduce a 'coffin drop-off' service where families have chosen a Funeral Director to take care of a loved one's body without a chapel service, the funeral director will transport the coffin to the cremation at any time of the day/night for cremation once statutory paperwork has been approved. This service will replace the direct cremation option which was a charged service of £410 but coffin drop off could only be offered between 9am to 4pm which restricted Funeral Directors' ability to transport coffins, this service has been improved and a fee reduction from £410 to £375 applied which was approved by M&C, cremated remains will still be returned to the applicant inline with the Cremation Code of Practice.