

# **Children's Funeral Fund – Stakeholder briefing**

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019

The Prime Minister has intervened to establish the Children's Funeral Fund for England (CFF). Under the scheme, bereaved parents, guardians or carers will no longer pay the fees charged for a cremation or burial of a child under the age of 18, or certain associated expenses. Fees and expenses will be met instead by government funding with providers (burial/cremation authorities and funeral directors), in the main, claiming from the CFF the fees and expenses they would have otherwise charged to families.

## **Top-lines**

- The objective of the CFF is to provide practical support to bereaved parents with the fees arising from their child's burial or cremation.
- The Regulations were laid in Parliament today and the scheme will come into effect on July 23<sup>rd</sup>
- To be eligible for the CFF, a child must be under 18 at the time of death or stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy, and the burial or cremation must take place in England.
- The Fund will be available regardless of a family's income, and will also offer £300 towards the price of a coffin.
- The government developed the scheme with the support of key stakeholders and is continuing to work with them ahead of the Fund coming into effect.

## **Key stats**

- Every year in England an estimated 3,800 children die under the age of 18, and there are a further 2,700 stillbirths.
- Typical burial and cremation fees for children can range from around £500 to £1,000. However, in some cases, they can be upwards of £1,500.

## **How it works**

- The Fund has been developed on the basis that, wherever possible, providers will apply to the scheme for reimbursement, making provision free for bereaved families at the point of need.
- The scheme is not means-tested and all parents who want to make use of it will be able to do so.
- Burial authorities and cremation authorities and funeral directors will be able to apply to the CFF on GOV.UK. All providers of burial and cremation services - local authority, private, and faith-based providers - will be eligible for CFF provision, as defined in the scheme.
- Parents who choose not to use a funeral director will be able to submit a claim directly for the expenses a funeral director would normally handle.
- Non-digital means of claiming (including by phone and by post) will also be available.
- The only conditions for the scheme are that the child is under 18 at the time of death or is stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy, and that the burial or cremation takes place in England. There are no residency or nationality requirements.

- Both the Welsh Government and the Scottish Government have established schemes, under devolved powers, to make financial support available to providers of burial and cremation for children.
- The MoJ has paid due regard to the obligations laid out in the Public Sector Equality Duty in developing this scheme, and is satisfied that the foreseeable impacts of the policy proposal on those who share any of the nine protected characteristics, including religion, have been considered. Any bereaved family, regardless of religion or belief, will be eligible for CFF provision, providing that the qualifying age requirements are met and that the disposal takes place in England. No direct adverse impacts were identified as resulting from this policy for persons sharing protected characteristics.

### **Other Available Support**

- Those on qualifying benefits remain eligible to apply to the Funeral Expenses Payment Scheme (FEP), operated by the Department for Work and Pensions, for additional financial support with paying for their child's funeral. The FEP scheme offers an additional £700 for other funeral expenses.
- In April 2018, the Government reformed FEP Regulations to allow recipients to receive contributions from relatives, friends or charities without those monies being deducted from FEP.
- The Government is taking forward implementation of the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018, which makes provision for parents who lose a child under the age of 18. We expect the new right to apply from April 2020.
- The DWP has also introduced a shorter application form for claims relating to children's funerals from the Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payment scheme