

The BIFD information guide



The British Institute of Funeral Directors
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Look for the Licence!!

The BIFD code of ethics

All Members of the Institute have agreed to be bound by the following Code:

- A Fellow and a Member shall not conduct herself/himself at any time in a manner likely to prejudice her/his professional status as a Funeral Director or the reputation of her/his profession.
- A Fellow and a Member will treat with respect each dead human body.
- A Fellow and a Member will pledge a complete confidential relationship to those she/he is called upon to serve.
- A Fellow and a Member shall not solicit funeral orders nor employ any person to do so on her/his behalf, nor shall she/he either offer or give any reward for any recommendations.

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What is the BIFD?

The British Institute of Funeral Directors was formed in 1982 by a group of highly experienced, qualified funeral directors to provide an organisation, which cares for professionally qualified individuals working within the funeral service. The main aim of the Institute is to promote education within the profession.

Education

The Institute provides fully trained tutors for those wishing to study for the Foundation Certificate, the Diploma in Funeral Directing. From 2012, to ensure the best quality of provision, all tutors will be required to hold the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS), or equivalent.

The Institute holds a 'Register of Professionally Qualified Funeral Directors' and issues its own Licences to Practice to those members who are committed to Continuous Professional Development.

Administration

The Institute's National Office is in Ware, Hertfordshire, where membership records and all administrative matters affecting the Institute as a whole are undertaken.

The United Kingdom is divided into regions, each with its own chairman and committee, which organises meetings and social events for their region, usually quarterly. Each region elects a representative to sit on the Board of Directors, that meets four times each year. The board has overall responsibility for the Institute, including matters such as membership, education, professional practices, discipline, public relations, finance and promotion of the profession.

The Board of Directors, through the Publications Committee and the Editor, is also responsible for the production of a Journal that is published quarterly and distributed to Members and Student Members free of charge.

A career in funeral service

Introduction

A career in funeral service may not be the obvious choice for many people. However, as with many occupations involving personal interaction, it can be extremely rewarding. Helping the bereaved at such a distressing and vulnerable time is a privilege and honour. This publication is intended for those considering entering the funeral profession. Following reading this publication, should you have any further questions, the Institute will be glad to assist.

The work of the Funeral Director

Every year in the United Kingdom over 500,000 deaths occur and it is to the funeral director that the bereaved turn, to arrange the funeral and conduct the burial or cremation ceremony. There are between 3500-4000 funeral director's offices in the UK; the majority are owned and managed by a family or by independent firms, while the remaining businesses are parts of larger groups.

The funeral director's first contact with the bereaved is usually - but not exclusively - after death has occurred. When the family arrange the funeral a decision has to be made about burial or cremation, transport requirements, a religious or non-religious ceremony, music, which crematorium or cemetery, death notices, flowers, catering, charitable donations and many other considerations. A coffin will be selected before a written confirmation of the details and an estimate of expenditure is presented. The deceased is then brought into the care of the funeral director, a coffin/casket is prepared and embalming (an effective temporary preservative treatment involving the injection of fluid into the arterial system) may be carried out before presentation in the chapel of rest.



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On the day of the funeral, transport is provided for the journey to the cemetery or crematorium where the committal takes place; this may be via a church or other place specified by the family.

In addition to providing a funeral service many firms also offer monumental masonry, floral tributes and pre-paid funeral plans. Repatriations to and from overseas destinations and exhumations and burial at sea can also feature within the typical work of a funeral director.

The term 'funeral director' can be slightly confusing; in generic terms it is used to describe any person employed under the umbrella of the funeral service. However, within the occupation a number of job titles are used for those who carry out a particular function; this is often the case with the larger organisations.

Chauffeur / bearers are responsible for driving funeral vehicles such as the hearse or limousine. They also carry or bear the coffin or casket (usually at shoulder height, depending upon weight) into the church, cemetery or crematorium and lower the coffin into a grave at a burial. Vehicle cleaning is a function routinely carried out in addition to basic maintenance tasks. Driver/chauffeur bearers may also convey the deceased from the place of death, such as a home, or a hospital or coroner's mortuary, usually in a purpose-built removal vehicle. This may require participation on a duty rota covering day and night (including weekends and public holidays).

Coffin finishers prepare a coffin for the deceased. Most coffins used today are factory made from materials such as MDF, chipboard, solid wood and occasionally wicker, or cardboard. Caskets are also available and differ from the coffin due to their rectangular shape. The coffin finisher secures handles and other ornaments to the exterior of the coffin/ casket and trims the

interior with a lining. An engraved nameplate is then fastened to the lid, for identification purposes. Finally, the coffin finisher will assist in placing the deceased into the coffin for presentation in the chapel of rest or other viewing facility.

A funeral arranger/receptionist meets the bereaved to arrange the funeral. This may be at the premises of the funeral director or at a private residence. Details of the funeral service are discussed, alternatives and options outlined, a date and time are booked and financial matters are settled. The instructions are then communicated to those involved, such as service officiant and the cemetery or crematorium. Funeral arrangers/receptionist are also often responsible for escorting the family into the chapel of rest, in addition to the on-going running of the office.

The funeral director / funeral conductor has overall responsibility for the arrangements of the funeral and in particular the co-ordination of events and guidance and support for the family on the day of the funeral. Other duties involve, the supervision of the driver / bearing staff and liaison with others externally involved in the funeral, such as the clergy, cemetery or crematorium staff.

Personal characteristics

While the funeral profession does not require formal entry qualifications, it is the personal characteristics of the individual that should be considered essential. Commitment to the work is required in addition to being a good communicator (including the key skill of listening), having patience, tact, personal integrity and a sympathetic manner. An appreciation of the nature of grief is also important as the circumstances surrounding death (including child and multiple deaths) may affect people in differing ways. All staff must be able to work to a high standard at all times. For funeral directors and funeral arrangers

/ receptionists a high standard of written English is required; for some organisations computer literacy is desirable. For drivers / chauffeur bearers a full UK driving licence is required.

Career opportunities and training

Vacancies for career opportunities within the industry may be advertised in the trade press, a local newspaper or job centre and frequently on-line. Positions may be full-time, part-time or on a casual basis. Writing to firms with a letter and a covering CV is recommended. However, it should be noted that some firms operate under different trading names. To avoid sending multiple applications, telephone contact should be made to enquire to ask for a contact name and/or head office address. The names of firms grouped in one advertisement will often indicate their association. Some firms may be able to offer work experience to school leavers. Others may suggest to those considering a career in funeral service that they spend a day in the organisation to appreciate the culture of the working environment. The Foundation Certificate in Funeral Directing is regarded favourably by many employers seeking suitable staff.

Many aspects of funeral service are taught on a mentoring basis. Depending on the position and size of the organisation this varies in formality, delivery, duration and structure. Some firms operate in-house training schemes such as client care skills, product knowledge and technical matters; others offer a training scheme based on a period of experience in the different tasks, such as coffin finishing, driving, funeral arranging and funeral conducting.

The Diploma in Funeral Directing, awarded by the National Association of Funeral Directing (NAFD) (see useful addresses), is the main qualification for funeral directors in the UK.

It is taught by suitably qualified tutors. (A list of Registered Tutors is available on the Institute's website). The diploma course can be taught through class-based instruction, *distance learning (*does include face to face discussions) or a combination and commences with the Foundation Certificate before progressing to the main Diploma course. The syllabus comprises areas such as registration of death, cremation, burial, exhumation, infant deaths and all other relevant areas. The Diploma in Funeral Directing is awarded to those gaining a pass in the written paper, oral examination and coursework. In addition to being employed in funeral service for two years and having personally arranged 25 funerals. Further details can be obtained from the BIFD and NAFD. Holders of the NAFD Diploma may apply to become Full Members of the British Institute of Funeral Directors.



Benefits

- Access to training by qualified tutors
- Up to date educational material
- Educational journals
- Professional status
- Members' directory
- Access to professional advice & assistance throughout U.K.
- Opportunity for continuous professional development
- Licensed membership brings increased client confidence
- Display logo and qualifications
- Attend regular local meetings
- Enhance career prospects
- Improve performance in your current job
- Education and training days
- Tax relief for professional fees and subscriptions
- Social events
- Register of professionally qualified funeral directors
- National Office for advice and assistance
- Promotional items
- HMCA - Hospital and Medical Care



Tax Relief for Professional Fees and Subscriptions

Members paying their own fees are entitled to tax relief (for up to five years) on subscriptions. Please visit the link <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/relief-subs.htm> for more information.

Regional Meetings

One aspect, which proves beneficial to the wider membership of the Institute, is the opportunity to 'get involved' with regional activities.

Although not an immediately obvious benefit to an employer, it gives members experience of event management, secretarial and governing roles, as well as becoming a chairman of a region outside of their usual domain, which can have a developmental benefit to the individual.

By being engaged in such roles, members can feature in local media - thus differentiating a business from that of a competitor within the same community.

Corporate Benefits

The Board of Directors are currently exploring collaborations with corporate partners that allow individuals to enjoy benefits usually only available to much larger organisations, due to economy of scale. Hotel accommodation, car hire and similar discounts are being considered.

Employers

In acknowledging that the majority of benefits are for members rather than employers, we still offer tangible benefits in relation to added value for employers - who generously agree to pay the subscriptions for their staff.

Licence/Merchandise

Engendering a high degree of client confidence, the BIFD provide promotional items including

display cards for Licence holders. This provides a visual distinction from other offices and premises that do not.

Promoting CPD Continued Professional Development

Augmenting skills and retaining best practice within a social context - many members who pay their own fees cite this as the principle reason that they retain membership, and see the other benefits as extras over and above this.

CPD is not merely keeping up to speed. There is a requirement for demonstrable evidencing of an individual's commitment that should be expected to be translated into the working practices of the member of staff and into their workplace.

Personal Accident Plan

The PERSONAL ACCIDENT PLAN provides up to £150,000 cover, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The plan offers an excellent combination of valuable protection and low cost and is eminently suitable both at home or abroad.

Medical Plans

The HMCA MEDICAL PLANS provide private health cover with savings of up to 50% (based on savings made by members who joined HMCA using the transfer facility).

Lower in cost than other plans, the medical plans give you the freedom to choose the hospital, the specialists and the time which suit you best.

Cash Income Care Plan

The low-cost world-wide CASH INCOME CARE PLAN provides you with a daily tax-free benefit whilst in hospital due to sickness, plus Personal Accident Cover. Double benefits apply if in hospital due to an accident.



Income Protection Plan

The INCOME PROTECTION PLAN ensures that in the event of loss of earnings, because of serious illness or accident, you will still have income.

Term Life Plan

The TERM LIFE PLAN provides your family with a lump sum of up to £100,000 if you die.

Dental Plan

The HMCA DENTAL PLAN provides cover for routine examinations, hygiene, x-rays and remedial and restorative treatment with a private dentist.

Travel Plan

The TRAVEL PLAN provides medical expenses cover up to £5 million when you travel overseas. You can cover single trips inexpensively and regular travellers can have an annual contract.

Vehicle Breakdown Club

The BREAKDOWN RECOVERY CLUB gives you full cover, at a low cost, for home-starts, roadside-assistance and recovery following an accident or breakdown and has no joining or membership fee as with some breakdown organisations.

For further information please visit

www.hmca.co.uk/bifd.htm



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Joining the Institute

Why Should I Join?

If you want to belong to a growing number of funeral directors who are dedicated to their profession, committed to full qualification and anxious to learn more, then the BIFD is for you.

Keep up-to-date with changes in legislation, current practice and new developments.

Becoming a licensed member of the Institute gives you the opportunity to manage and own your personal development through a wide range of learning activities, which you can apply to work.

What Qualifications Do I Need?

All Students who have NVQ/VQ or enrolled with a tutor are eligible to join as a Student Member of the Institute. Full membership is restricted to those who have obtained:

- The NAFD Diploma in Funeral Directing
- An NVQ or VQ in Funeral Directing at Level 4
- An equivalent qualification subject to approval of the Board of Directors

How Do I Join?

Simply apply to the National Office:
Tel: 0800 032 2733
Email: enquiries@bifd.org.uk

www.bifd.org.uk

BIFD Publications

Communication is a vital link with the membership and the Institute uses three key methods to keep in touch.

Webpage

The dedicated Internet site www.bifd.org.uk serves the members with much of the day-to-day information you will ever need.

It includes notices of meetings, the president's diary and a link page to useful services. A dedicated member's area (accessed with a password) hosts details of the business aspect of our activities, including minutes of meetings and a job board, for situations vacant. There are also feature articles from the Journal archive, with the most recent edition always uploaded just after publication.



The Journal

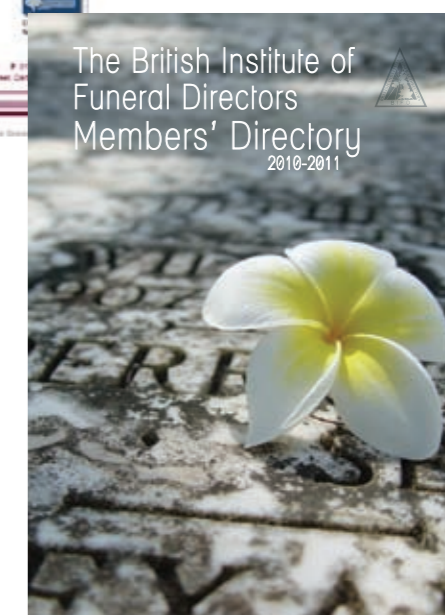
Is the quarterly publication of the Institute. It is produced in full colour for members only and contains the full spectrum of BIFD activities; regional meetings,

member's news, the latest products available to funeral directors and interesting feature articles; all delivered free to your door.

The Members' Handbook

The annual handbook contains contact information of every full member who wishes to participate and has over 99.5% of all members listed. This 68 page

publication showcases your regional director and is set out in regional listings for ease of locating a member in a different area.



For more information

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