



The British Institute of Funeral Directors  
Clive John Pearson (1<sup>st</sup> Vice National President)  
Manchester Road  
Marsden  
Huddersfield  
HD7 6EY

16<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Dear Mr Cuthbert-Kerr,

**Re. consultation on a proposed bill relating to burial and cremation questions 83 – 84.**

I write in response to your online consultation regarding legislation of the funeral service questions 83 – 84, on behalf of our Scottish Members of the British Institute of Funeral Directors.

I am the First Vice National President of the British Institute of Funeral Directors, the only educational funeral organisation in the United Kingdom for qualified professional Funeral Directors. The institute was set up to provide education for the Funeral Profession and is the only provider of a level 4 qualification in the United Kingdom, namely the Certificate and Diploma in funeral service with both courses awarded 30 credits from Greenwich University who externally mark the course. We also have links with Birkbeck University and are currently working to get links with Edinburgh and Ulster Universities. Once a Funeral Director is qualified they can then become a member of the institute and receive a licence should they have carried out the minimum number of hours of Continual Professional Development. This certificate can then be placed on the wall to reassure the public they are dealing with a professionally qualified Funeral Director.

The public seem to have the opinion that all Funeral Directors are qualified and become quite alarmed that there is nothing in place to prevent this from happening.

It has always been upsetting for our profession that anyone can set up as a Funeral Director with no qualifications and also as an embalmer with no qualifications, and be given the task of looking after someone who has passed away. The other annoyance is that people can set up and not have proper premises or work tools for the job. Eg. No refrigeration, no proper facilities to embalm a deceased.

To serve a family is a privilege and the way they are looked after can have a lasting effect on the grief process, something which many unqualified Funeral Directors are not bothered about.

For many years we have been asking Westminster for recognition for qualified Funeral Directors and to bring in some kind of licensing to prevent unqualified people setting up, so we welcome the Scottish Government's consultation and would hope that once something has been put in place the rest of the United Kingdom will follow.

With regard to question 83, "Would regulation of the funeral industry be beneficial?". I believe it would be beneficial not only to the profession but to the families who are served in time of grief. Depending how it was carried out it would prevent people with no qualifications from setting up, and trading with inadequate premises. The only two disadvantages to the profession I can see is if it was not set up correctly to begin with, and the cost to Funeral Directors which may be passed onto bereaved families depending on the cost pushing up funeral prices.

In regards to question 84, I would say that for a minimum standard the Funeral Director should be qualified and then be required to carry out a minimum hours of Continual Professional Development relevant to the funeral profession to keep their license.

Self-regulation has been tried for many years to no avail, mainly because if someone has stepped out of line nothing could ever be done about it.

With regard to question 85 if self-regulation was not an option then a separate inspector to the crematoria would be preferable as although both crematoria and Funeral Directors serve the bereaved, they are two entirely different professions.

I look forward to hearing the outcome of your consultation and if the British Institute of Funeral Directors can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

C J Pearson Dip.FD. LMBIFD. MBIE  
First Vice National President British Institute of Funeral Directors