

Complaint Record 20 – [Redacted] – May 2021

Update: 02/06/21

From: Findlater G (Gordon) <Gordon.Findlater@gov.scot>

Sent: 02 June 2021 12:30

To: Swanson R (Robert) <Robert.Swanson@gov.scot>

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: Complaint regarding [Redacted] and Donald McLaren Funeral Directors

Hi Bert

I've just had a lengthy conversation with [Redacted] Donald McLaren Funeral Directors, Coatbridge regarding the payment of the costs for the removal and storage of the remains of a [Redacted]

[Redacted]. He has now written to Neil Gray MSP who I presume is his local MSP, [Redacted]

I appreciate that this is all speculation on [Redacted] part but given that he is not going to let this go and that MSP's are getting involved, I thought you should know what is going on.

[Redacted]

Complaint made by Family Regarding the Behaviour and Attitude of Funeral Director

A complaint was received on Tuesday 27th April 2021 from [Redacted], daughter of the late [Redacted] who had died unexpectedly just before midnight [Redacted] 2021. I [Redacted] in the evening of the 27th April to establish the facts of the complaint.

[Redacted]

On hearing this, [Redacted] Donald MacLaren, contacted [Redacted] to ask for the name of the funeral director who was now going to conduct the funeral which she refused to do. He then told her that because they were no longer conducting the funeral, the cost of keeping [Redacted] in their care would increase to £100/night until his remains were collected by the new funeral director. There was also the suggestion made that they would not release the body of [Redacted] until the bill was paid.

On the same day as making the complaint, Tuesday 27th April, [Redacted] received an invoice from Donald MacLaren's for the cost to date of having [Redacted] in their care which was to be paid that day and that should it not be paid, court action would be taken against her.

On the morning of Wednesday 28th April, I contacted Donald MacLaren Funeral Directors and spoke to [Redacted], who refuted most of what [Redacted] had said.

Contrary to what [Redacted] said, he said that a full explanation of the costs involved were given to the family in advance of any forms being signed and that this was standard practice as they were 'fed up' of taking bodies into care and then finding that people were not prepared to pay for the service provided.

After taking [Redacted] back to their premises, he says that they had no further contact with the [Redacted] family despite numerous attempts at doing so. It was not until the evening of Saturday 24th April that they finally managed to speak to [Redacted] who informed him that they were no longer wishing Donald MacLaren to conduct the funeral. It was because of this that the cost of keeping [Redacted] in their care was going to rise to £100/night. When I asked about payment being due immediately on receipt of the invoice, he said that that was the case as the [Redacted] family were no longer their clients and were therefore no longer subject to previous terms and conditions. He did not appear to think that there was anything wrong in the way they had conducted things.

[Redacted]

She was however satisfied that her complaint had been dealt with, that Donald MacLaren Funeral Directors had been made aware of her family's dissatisfaction with the way they had been treated and that as much as could be done had been done given the limited powers that are in place at the moment.

Gordon Findlater
Inspector of Burials, Cremations and Funeral Directors
30th April 2021

From: Findlater G (Gordon) <Gordon.Findlater@gov.scot>
Sent: 03 May 2021 15:19
To: Swanson R (Robert) <Robert.Swanson@gov.scot>
Cc: Burial & Cremation <BurialandCremation@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Complaint by family about a funeral director.

Thanks Bert. Your comments as always are very helpful.

Best wishes
Gordon

Professor Gordon Findlater
HM Inspector of Anatomy

Please direct all enquiries in the first instance to anatomy@gov.scot

From: Swanson R (Robert) <Robert.Swanson@gov.scot>
Sent: 03 May 2021 10:21
To: Findlater G (Gordon) <Gordon.Findlater@gov.scot>
Cc: Burial & Cremation <BurialandCremation@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Complaint by family about a funeral director.

Hi Gordon,

Thanks, a fair and accurate account as given by both sides.

I believe the funeral director is, or at least claims to be, a member of NAFD. [Redacted]

Regards
Bert

From: Findlater G (Gordon) <Gordon.Findlater@gov.scot>
Sent: 03 May 2021 10:10
To: Burial & Cremation <BurialandCremation@gov.scot>
Cc: Swanson R (Robert) <Robert.Swanson@gov.scot>
Subject: Complaint by family about a funeral director.

Please find attached my report on a complaint received on Tuesday 27th May 2021 by a daughter who felt that her family had been dealt with insensitively and inappropriately by the funeral director asked to conduct the funeral of her father.

Please feel to get in touch should you have any questions about this report.

Best wishes

Gordon

Gordon Findlater
IBCFD

Please direct all enquiries in the first instance to anatomy@gov.scot