

## [Press release: 'Pint sized' Scottish satellites launched into orbit](#)

The Glasgow built satellites, funded by the UK Space Agency will monitor weather and help combat global climate change.

---

## [Press release: 'Pint sized' Scottish satellites launched into orbit](#)

The two 'first of a kind' 5kg satellites which were designed and built by Spire Global are unique due to their function, tiny size, low cost and quick build time.

This style of satellite could revolutionise work in space, which has traditionally been slow and expensive for business and science to access.

Both satellites, which were developed under the European Space Agency's (ESA's) ARTES Pioneer programme (the UK is the largest funder to ARTES), will aim to prove the value of 'nanosats' in weather monitoring, by using them to measure refracted radio signals passing through the Earth's atmosphere.

Graham Turnock, Chief Executive, UK Space Agency said:

These incredibly clever pint-sized satellites built in Glasgow could slash the complexity and cost of access to space, presenting an exciting opportunity for the UK to thrive in the commercial space age.

Through our £4m development funding in ESA's ARTES programme, the government's Industrial Strategy and by working closely with our international partners, we are helping Scottish businesses transform their ideas into commercial realities, resulting in jobs, growth and innovation.

Experts can use the satellite's measurements to glean temperature, pressure and humidity information for weather forecasting and climate change monitoring.

Khalil Kably, Pioneer Programme Manager for the European Space Agency said:

We saw a gap in the market for what we call Space Mission

Providers: companies that offer all aspects of a space mission to validate a new technology or service for the benefit of others.

ESA is always looking to champion innovation in the space industry, and the idea of Pioneer is that these Space Mission Providers can help this by being a one-stop-shop for in-orbit demonstration and therefore reduce the barriers and complexity that can stifle new ideas.

Peter Platzer, CEO of Spire Global said:

Spire has been focused on developing unique data sources with high frequency updates for the entire Earth and has over 60 LEMUR-2 class satellites deployed in space with a complementary global ground station network.

Under Pioneer, we can offer our extensive experience in manufacturing and managing small spacecraft like these to those who cannot afford to waste money and time to do it themselves.

This work with ESA helps further support the global development of commercial aerospace's potential to make space access universal.

Today the satellites were launched from Sriharikota, India, but from the 2020s, these home-grown spacecraft could be launched from the proposed spaceport in Sutherland, Scotland.

The UK Space Agency is also supporting a space incubation centre in Glasgow and has provided support over several years to the Scottish Centre of Excellence in Satellite Applications, based at the University of Strathclyde and working across the whole of Scotland.

The Centre's role is to raise awareness of the potential of satellite services and data to be used in new and improved products and services in other "space enabled" markets – including, for example, offshore renewable energy and aquaculture.

The UK Space Agency is driving the growth of the space sector as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy with major initiatives including the £99m National Space Test Facility at Harwell, and the UK continues to be a leading member of ESA, which is independent of the EU.

---

[\*\*Press release: CMA proposes major\*\*](#)

# funerals probe after identifying serious concerns

Today's interim report presents the issues the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has identified since launching a Market Study into the funerals sector 6 months ago.

Its initial work indicates problems with the market that have led to above inflation price rises for well over a decade – both for funeral director services and crematoria services. The scale of these price rises does not currently appear to be justified by cost increases or quality improvements.

Given the nature and significance of the issues the CMA has identified, it believes the full powers of a Market Investigation – carried out by an independent group of CMA panel members – are required. Issues include that:

- Today, people generally spend between £3,000 and £5,000 organising a funeral, and the price of the essential elements has increased by more than two-thirds in the last 10 years, almost 3 times the rate of inflation. Organising a funeral would now cost those on the lowest incomes nearly 40% of their annual outgoings, more than they spend on food, clothing and energy combined.
- Customers could save over £1,000 by looking at a range of choices in their local area. However, people organising a funeral are usually distressed and often not in a position to do this – making it easier for some funeral directors to charge higher prices. Prices are also often not available online, making it difficult to compare options.
- While some smaller funeral directors have sought to keep their prices low, other providers – the larger chains in particular – have implemented policies of consistently high year-on-year price increases. A number of these have now introduced lower cost funeral options, but this doesn't go far enough to make up for years of above inflation price hikes. The CMA's evidence also indicates most people who organise a funeral remain extremely vulnerable to exploitation and future rises in charges.
- Cremations account for 77% of funerals, yet there are limited choices for most people in their local area and fees charged by crematoria have increased by 84% on average in the past 10 years, more than 3 times the rate of inflation.

Andrea Coscelli, chief executive of the CMA, said:

People mourning the loss of a loved one are extremely vulnerable and at risk of being exploited. We need to make sure that they are protected at such an emotional time, and we're very concerned about the substantial increases in funeral prices over the past decade.

We now feel that the full powers of a market investigation are required to address the issues we have found. We also want to hear from people who have experienced poor practices in the sector, so that we can take any action needed to fix these problems.

The CMA will now be consulting on the potential market investigation reference and welcomes any views on the issues identified in its report by 4 January 2019.

It would also like to hear from people involved in the industry and others, who may have observed instances of poor quality standards in the back-of-house facilities of funeral directors. Details on how to respond are available on the [funerals market study page](#).

## Notes to editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. The average price of the core elements of a funeral is now £4,271 (2018) and the average cremation fee is £737 (2017). Funeral director prices increased by 68% and crematoria fees rose by 84% over the most recent 10-year periods for which we have data. By comparison, inflation (CPI) increased by around 25% over this time.
3. In parallel to the CMA's market study, the Government (HM Treasury) has been [seeking evidence](#) to aid in the design of a more appropriate regulatory framework for the pre-paid funeral plan sector. Because of this, the CMA is not looking at the pre-paid sector.
4. Enquiries should be directed to the [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk), on 020 3738 6460.
5. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on the markets cases.

---

## [Press release: CMA proposes major funerals probe after identifying serious concerns](#)

The CMA is consulting on a major funerals probe because of concerns over large price hikes, hitting people at their most vulnerable.

---

## **Press release: Charities encouraged to bid for £15 million Tampon Tax Fund**

Thousands of women and girls across the country are set to benefit from a new £15 million round of the Tampon Tax Fund