

Bereaved parents spared children's burial and cremation costs

- move follows Prime Minister's pledge to cover children's funeral costs
- new Fund will provide additional contributions towards the price of a coffin

Families grieving the tragic loss of a child will no longer have to meet the costs of their burial or cremation, as a result of a new government scheme set up to provide financial help.

Every year in England an estimated 3,800 children die under the age of 18, and there are a further 2,700 stillbirths. Bereaved parents can find themselves facing bills of thousands of pounds for burial or cremation fees which can vary widely across the country.

The Children's Funeral Fund (CFF) will bring an end to this uncertainty and provide bereaved parents with valuable practical support at a very difficult time. The scheme aims to reduce the financial burden for families by reimbursing burial authorities, cremation authorities and funeral directors directly.

The fund will be available regardless of the family's income, and will also include a contribution towards the cost of a coffin.

Today's (30 June 2019) news comes after Prime Minister Theresa May last year pledged to abolish children's burial and cremation fees, and follows a cross-party campaign led by Swansea East MP Carolyn Harris after the tragic death of her 8 year old son, Martin.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

At a time of such unimaginable loss, no grieving parent should be faced with the stress and worry of finding the money to cover the costs of their child's funeral.

I hope the Children's Funeral Fund will bring an end to this and give families some comfort and support when they need it most.

I would again like to pay tribute to Carolyn Harris and all those who have campaigned with such devotion and dignity on this issue.

Justice Minister Edward Argar said:

The loss of a child is a tragedy which no parent can prepare for.

While nothing can ever remove the pain that bereaved families

experience, this Government is determined to do everything in its power to ease the burden on them, which is why, in line with the Prime Minister's pledge, I have developed the scheme we are announcing today.

The Children's Funeral Fund will provide bereaved parents with much-needed support and I am proud to have worked alongside such dedicated campaigners to make this important scheme a reality.

DWP Minister Will Quince said:

As a bereaved parent, I know the impact the Children's Funeral Fund will have. No one should ever have to endure the loss of a child and thanks to this scheme grieving families will now be spared the burden of meeting funeral costs.

I have been campaigning for more support for grieving families since entering Parliament in 2015 and I am proud that along with MoJ my Department and I have been able to make this fund a reality.

We want to ensure everyone is able to say goodbye to their child with love and dignity without the added fear of how they are going to pay for it.

Kate Lee, Chief Executive of CLIC Sargent, said:

This announcement is a momentous day for everyone who has supported the campaign for a Children's Funeral Fund over the last 2 years.

But most importantly this is for every parent who has been plunged into debt to pay for their child's funeral. As one mum said, no one should ever face the pain that they can't afford 'the last gift you'll ever give your child'. This Fund is in memory of every one of their children.

Regulations are to be laid in parliament tomorrow (1 July 2019) by Justice Minister, Edward Argar, ahead of the Fund coming into effect on 23 July 2019.

The fund marks a key milestone in the delivery of the government's manifesto commitment to provide bereaved parents with the support they need.

Notes to editors

- The Prime Minister announced the establishment of a Children's Funeral Fund for England (CFF) on 1 April 2018.
- Carolyn Harris MP (Swansea East, Labour) led a cross-party campaign for a fund to spare bereaved parents the additional distress of having to meet the cost of their child's funeral at an extremely difficult time. In leading this campaign, she drew on her own personal experience of

having to meet the funeral costs of her 8-year old son, Martin, who was killed in 1989.

- Under the fund arrangements, no bereaved family will have to pay the fees charged for a child's cremation or burial or for a number of prescribed associated expenses.
- The fund provides for burial authorities and cremation authorities to apply to government for the reimbursement of the fees which would otherwise be charged for the provision of the burial or cremation of an eligible child.
- It also provides for funeral directors to apply for reimbursement of certain associated expenses, including a £300 contribution towards the price of a coffin.
- If the person responsible for organising the burial or cremation chooses not to use a funeral director but makes the funeral arrangements themselves, they will be able to claim directly for those expenses from the fund.
- 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.
- The scheme is not means-tested, and the residency or nationality of the deceased child, or of the person organising the burial or cremation, will not be relevant in determining eligibility.
- 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.
- Should you wish to access case studies, or statements from charities in this sector, please contact CLIC Sargent Media and PR team on 020 8752 2812 or email mediarelations@clicsargent.org.uk. CLIC Sargent out of hours contact: 0844 848 1189. Please note that the name 'CLIC Sargent' should not be abbreviated to CLIC, and that the word 'CLIC' should always appear in capitals, as above.
- For more information please contact MOJ press office.