

## **Funeral Benefit Policy**

### **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to support individuals and families whose incomes are slightly higher than the qualifying income for support via the Government's Social Fund, but for whom the cost of arranging a funeral would be a substantial financial burden.

In these circumstances the Council's Funeral Benefit Policy may offer financial support towards the Council's charges for burial or cremation.

### **Available Benefits**

Support will consist of either a standard burial in a public or private grave at no charge, or a standard cremation at no charge (see note 1).

Support will not include, for example, any additional charges for non standard burial or cremation, including any premium for non standard times of burial or cremation; charges for the purchase of an exclusive right of burial in a private grave; the burial of cremated remains; the purchase of any memorialisation; or charges for the erection of any memorialisation.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Eligibility for consideration for benefit will be based on meeting ALL of the following criteria:

- The deceased must have been a resident of Preston (within the boundary of the City Council) for at least a year immediately preceding death.
- The applicant must ordinarily be an immediate relative of the deceased (see note 2).
- The applicant has applied and been refused funeral cost support from the UK Government's Social Fund.
- The applicant has applied and been refused a loan to pay for the funeral from Lancashire Community Finance on the grounds that they could not afford to make the repayments.
- There is insufficient value within the deceased's estate to pay for the funeral.
- The applicant has insufficient savings and no other reasonable means of paying for all the funeral costs.

## **Accessing Funeral Benefits**

Persons organising and paying for a funeral involving either a cremation at Preston Crematorium or a burial at Preston Cemetery must complete an application for funeral benefit and provide supporting evidence of meeting all of the eligibility criteria.

Local Funeral Directors will be provided with information to enable them to advise their clients on the application process.

Where necessary, Council officers will assist applicants in making their application.

The Cabinet Member whose portfolio includes responsibility for the Cemetery and Crematorium will assess each application and determine whether support should be provided under this policy.

### **Notes**

Note 1 - A public grave is a grave where there is no exclusive right of burial

Note 2 - An immediate relative means the permanent partner, parents, children or other dependent relative of the deceased. The eligibility criteria may be extended to include others with responsibility for arranging the funeral where there is, for example, no immediate relative.

Nothing in this policy shall negate the Council's responsibilities under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 for the disposal of dead bodies.