

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
6 June 2024
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

FOR INFORMATION

FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND TRADING STANDARDS VISITS

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report notifies members of a letter sent to council Leaders and Chief Executives regarding the current concerns and public confidence in the funeral director profession.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Joint Advisory Board Members take note of the report and provide comment where appropriate.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 In April 2024 the Leader and Chief Executive received a letter from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC). This letter addressed the serious issues and concerns of the distressing incident at Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull and East Riding.
- 3.2 The MOJ have the responsibility for funeral homes and the DLUHC are responsible for local government. The letter stated that they were concerned that this incident could affect public confidence in the funeral sector as this sector is largely unregulated. There is currently no statutory regulation of funeral directors, so councils do not have specific powers or responsibilities to oversee these businesses.
- 3.3 The government is looking is looking to introduce formal regulation and the MOJ will be launching a call for evidence in the coming months. But for now, they want to reassure the public that the sector as a whole is safe, professional, and cares for loved ones in the way we would all want.
- 3.4 The government has asked Trading Standards and Environmental Health officers, to visit local funeral directors to ensure compliance against a framework assessment that they have produced. The assessment will help to determine any future regulatory framework will include areas such as health and safety, operational procedures and care of the deceased.

- 3.5 At the time of report, officers have booked to attend a training seminar to learn exactly what government are intending with these inspections and the process for compliance.
- 3.6 It is expected that the events in Hull and East riding are in no way typical of the funeral industry but are necessary to provide reassurance to both customers and businesses.
- 3.7 The visits were supported by the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) and the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) who have agreed that they will nominate a named, senior, and trusted funeral director within each local authority area, to be a point of contact for councils and help if needed.
- 3.8 Trading Standards will liaise with Environmental Health and our Funeral Service colleagues, the MOJ and the trade bodies as required.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Trading Standards Service expect these inspections to be carried out within the existing budget.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it affects all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing or property implications arising from this report.

Contact Officer

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