

Funeral industry faces controls after price rise investigation

The funeral sector has been ordered to bolster price transparency and cut links with public services to encourage referrals from bereaved families, the competition watchdog has announced.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [launched an investigation](#) in 2018 amid complaints that “extremely vulnerable” consumers were at risk of being exploited.

It noted, at that time, that the price of organising a funeral had risen by more than two-thirds over a decade with families typically spending up to £5,000.

Following an in-depth market investigation into the sector, we've ordered funeral directors and crematorium operators to make prices clearer for customers.

Read more: <https://t.co/qjdXQWXUxy> pic.twitter.com/GWuHmJjYmf

– Competition & Markets Authority (@CMAgovUK) [June 16, 2021](#)

Funeral directors and crematorium operators were later put on notice that price action was on the way but the regulator confirmed in August last year that it could not act while the industry was at the forefront of the [COVID-19](#) pandemic.

The public health emergency has forced up costs for providers through safety measures and restrictions.

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But the CMA said on Wednesday – following a consultation – that they must show a standardised list of prices at their

premises and on websites from September onwards.

That was because prices for similar services “differed considerably between funeral directors and the way that information was provided made it hard for families to compare prices and choose the right combination of services for their loved ones”, the CMA said.

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It added that from Thursday funeral directors could no longer pay hospitals and health institutions to encourage customer referrals or solicit business through coroner and police contracts.

CMA inquiry chair, Martin Coleman, said: “We urge funeral directors and crematorium operators to start making these changes now.

“We will be keeping a close eye on the sector and stand ready to take action if firms don’t follow the rules.”