

If all else fails

If all else fails, the law has a provision under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, to ensure all people that die are buried or cremated.

The responsibility for this lies with the local council authority where the person has died. Often the health authority will assume this obligation if the person dies in hospital. Typically the council will have a contract arrangement with a local funeral director to arrange a very simple burial or cremation. Although a service will usually be given, to which mourners may attend, there is little interaction with the mourners in respect of the arrangements. The service will usually be first thing in the morning. The council will only take on this obligation when there is no other way of the funeral being paid for.

Interestingly, under this Act, the family may insist upon burial rather than cremation against the council's wish but may not insist upon cremation rather than burial.