



Diploma in Funeral Arranging and Administration

Module 1	Unit 2	Client Care within the Funeral Service
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Purpose and Aim of the Unit:	The purpose of the unit is to develop learners' understanding of good client care within the funeral service.
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This unit has 7 learning outcomes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	
The learner will:	
1.	Understand the purpose and role of a funeral directing business.
2.	Understand the principles and practice of good client care.
3.	Know the skills required for good client care.
4.	Understand the principles of Emotional Intelligence.
5.	Understand the National Association of Funeral Directors' (NAFD) Code of Practice.
6.	Know how to deal with conflict situations.
7.	Understand the Funeral Arbitration Scheme (FAS).



Introduction

Client Care means many things to many people and is something often noticed more by its absence than its presence.

Clients have more options than ever before and feel less loyalty. That means that the competitive advantage is now in your ability to keep clients and encourage repeat business.

The use of social media makes it even easier for client to spread out their dissatisfaction. One unhappy client can very quickly create a nasty story and share with ten friends, who have another ten friends who hear all about your poor service or mistakes that have been made at Mrs D's funeral, and within no time, you are perceived to be working for a lousy firm to do business with.





Learning Outcome 1

Understand the purpose and role of a funeral directing business.

This part of the module explores at the role of the funeral director and funeral arranger in the context of the role of a funeral directing business.

We start with a word of clarification. Reference to the funeral director and the funeral arranger means those persons who are personally responsible for dealing with the bereaved for the purpose of arranging a funeral.

The responsibility for the end-to-end process including 'Conducting' the funeral is normally that of the funeral director. However, as funeral arranger plays a significant role throughout the process in ensuring detailed arrangements are taken and planned in accordance with clients' wishes.

Either the funeral arranger or funeral director may initially meet with and speak with the bereaved, and subsequently take instruction for a funeral – both automatically. Attention to detail; Accuracy; Sensitive Questioning; Active Listening; are just some of the key qualities are essential. The efficiency underpinning the information gathered even at this stage, can impact on the planning and organising a funeral to the satisfaction of the client. In effect, Funeral arrangers / directors draw up detailed plans to ensure that the funeral is representative of the deceased and the client's wishes.

Historically, funeral directors have always been an integral part of their community, sharing families' bereavements over the generations. This has evolved into the formation of close bonds and an understanding between funeral businesses and their local population.



Learning Outcome 2.

Understand the principles and practice of good Client Care

client care

What do we understand to be good Client Care?

The first question to ask is, “What do we understand to be good client care?”

If the client is not satisfied with a service that has been supplied, then that service was not up to standard. This is the most important thing about client care; it does not matter what the provider of that service thinks or how hard they have tried, or how much they have done, the only judgement that counts is that of the client.

Another most important truth about client care is that good care must not come as a surprise. If clients get the service they were expecting, they will not necessarily be impressed, after all they expected to get that degree of service; so to impress them, clients have to be given more than they expect, which implies that improving client care is ongoing and that Funeral directors have to understand their clients thoroughly and know what is expected of them.

Good Client Care is about being Organised!

An efficient funeral arranger / director should be prepared to provide clients with information on a range of subjects. This information falls into three categories, according to availability.

1. Information which can be given from memory or which is so commonly required that full details must be carried in the arranging case.
2. Information which is kept in the office.
3. Information required from outside sources.



Through experience most funeral arrangers / directors have found that a self-compiled local reference book is ideal for retaining information that is frequently used in the course of arranging funerals. Such a book takes time to prepare, however the effort is worthwhile in order to give an efficient service to the client.

Since such local information is subject to change it is best to have a loose-leaf book of a size that can be easily accessible. Sheets should be typed for clarity. If thought is given to the matter, everything can be tabulated and reduced to one handy book enabling it to become an essential tool for the funeral director who compiled it.

Before preparing such a book it may well be worthwhile deciding how large a geographical area it is going to cover. A good guideline is to cover any place where funerals are to be conducted several times a year, although in some large conurbations, due to the number of cemeteries and churchyards, it may be necessary to be more selective.

Further information can be found in the 'STATIONERY FILE'! Module 4 Unit 13

Client care is also about detail.

It is all about getting many small things right as well the overall picture. Quite often the goods and services offered by competing businesses are not all that different.

What makes the difference is the detail, even if it is only offering a good cup of tea or coffee to the family when they come to a Funeral director's premises.

As the saying goes, a business is only as good as the people it employs.

The importance of promoting a professional and positive image can be demonstrated by Funeral Arrangers / Funeral Directors by conveying commitment, and a sense of purpose to assist and communicate with the client from the initial contact, through to the final conversation and last task to be completed on their behalf.



Developing a comprehensive knowledge of funeral service products and services, including a range of client options is paramount, along with demonstrating Ethical Behaviour and creating a Professional Image. Your knowledge, your actions and the way you present yourself, including your behaviour speak volumes.



Principles and Practice of Good Client Care.

Clients of today aren't always interested in a traditional funeral anymore. They also want to be listened to, respected for their views and ideas, and to be treated as individuals.

The art of listening to find out what the client wants, and questioning for clarification is essential. (Unit 3 Communicating with Clients within the Funeral Service) will explore this topic in more detail. A well designed funeral service should celebrate the life of the deceased appropriately; create the opportunity for shared memories and should assist the family in reflecting on the past and look to the future. Good client care can be demonstrated by being open to trying new things, by thinking outside-the-box, and involving the client in every stage of the decision making process to plan the funeral.

Planning a funeral can be fraught with decision making. In Unit 1, Understanding Bereavement and Grief, you will have already learned about the effects of grief on the



bereaved, and the impact upon their decision making. The art of good client care is to sensitively facilitate discussion, and to assist the client to make their own choices. Work with your client to create a package of services that is realistic, reflects the life of the deceased, and meets the limitations of your client's budget. This will help you build a trusted relationship with families and guarantees they will think of you again.

During the Oral Examination at the end of this qualification, you will be expected to demonstrate your knowledge of how to accurately arrange a funeral to specifically meet the needs of the client; how you facilitate discussion and gather information from the client; how you adhere to regulation and legislative requirements; and how you are able demonstrate your client care skills to the examiner. Therefore, start to plan ahead, and practice your approach to client care, and your skills in your place of work throughout the duration of your training!

An experienced funeral arranger / funeral director can take away the anxieties, and make clients' and members of their families feel confident – all they have to do is listen, plan, check and deliver. In effect, your role is to help families celebrate a life lived, and take the strain out of the planning process, and ensure you have accurately gathered and recorded all relevant information.

Clients are also entitled to expect that funeral arrangers / funeral directors will demonstrate an acceptable level of care and respect. This includes:-

- Safe, dignified and respectful care of the deceased
- Unbiased and ethical verbal and non-verbal behaviour
- Sharing of objective and professional advice, based on up to date funeral service knowledge and professional judgement.



Any personal views or prejudice about the deceased, or the client, will impact on the level of care or service provided and will damage the reputation of the business. Comments and personal perceptions and views relating to any or all of the following should be avoided:-

- cultural background
- disability
- race, ethnic or national origin
- gender
- lifestyle
- marital or parental status
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- social or financial status of the deceased, or of the client.



Clients must be able to trust you and your colleagues. In order to justify that trust, it is important for funeral arrangers / funeral directors to pay particular attention to the following aspects of professional practice:-

- Ensure professional and ethical behaviour is demonstrated relating to the care of the client and of the deceased as part of demonstrating good Client Care.
- Ensure professional knowledge and skills are current and reflective of up to date funeral arranging and funeral service practice.
- Avoid unfairly discriminating against the client, by allowing personal views and prejudices to adversely affect the professional relationship, or in caring for the deceased.
- Treat the deceased as an individual, and show respect for their dignity at all times.
- Treat the deceased and the client politely and considerately at all times.



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- Respect the deceased and the client's right to confidentiality.
 - Listen to the client and respond to their concerns and preferences.
 - Be honest and open with the client and act with integrity at all times.
 - Avoid discriminating unfairly against clients' or the deceased.
 - Never abuse or jeopardise the clients' trust in you or the public's trust in the profession.

Clients naturally consider the individual funeral arranger / funeral director to be in a position of responsibility, and as such, may attach added importance to their opinions or comments made. A professional boundary between the client, or anyone closely related to the deceased should be maintained at all times.

The client should also have a right to expect information about the deceased, and their own personal information to be held strictly in confidence.

Remember, the funeral arranger can by his or her appearance engender a feeling of confidence in them by the family, or not, as the case may be. The air of mourning and deep solemnity in dress is now outdated and often an unwelcome intrusion. It may well assist families if the funeral arranger / director is dressed in a sober rather than a sombre manner.

Suitable business attire should be worn at all times when in face to face contact with clients, in order to present a professional and image.

Always remember, the experiences of any one client will have a ripple effect. A good experience will lead to a positive recommendation, a poor experience, will also lead to recommendation, unfortunately to go elsewhere!

Learning Outcome 3

Know the skills required for good client care.

The Qualities of a Funeral Arranger and a Funeral Director.



Four specific characteristics can be ascribed to the funeral director and funeral arranger, all of equal inter-related importance, and all of which present an image to the client of the business taking care of their loved one.

The funeral arranger and funeral director should be **technically competent** in all funeral arranging aspects of funeral service to enable him or her to cope with the needs of the bereaved.

In addition the funeral arranger / director must continuously **take responsibility** for update of their own knowledge by checking up to date information via the funeral service websites, attendance at training seminars and reading the relevant trade periodicals. Information should be openly available to relevant staff.

Both the funeral arranger/ director must have **good inter-personal skills**.

Funerals focus on the needs of people and the funeral director/arranger must be able to relate to those who call upon them in their time of bereavement.



For example, when conducting the funeral the funeral director needs to give clear instructions to those present, guiding and explaining the procedures to them. This calls for clarity of expression in a manner appropriate to the occasion and sometimes calls for firm but polite team leadership. Where it is evident that, due to the emotional effects of loss, the bereaved become over extravagant or practically over demanding, the funeral director must try to advise them as to their best interests.

The funeral arranger / director needs to be flexible in style of approach and manner. People react to loss in different ways. Some may disguise grief with humour, others may be extremely angry, while others may become withdrawn. This calls for tact, calmness and patience on the part of the funeral director/arranger in order that decisions can be made to suit the needs of the family being served.

As one of the primary caregivers to the newly bereaved it is essential that the funeral director/arranger expresses the qualities of empathy rather than sympathy, along with sensitivity. By showing empathy to the family, the funeral director/arranger is showing that they are trying to appreciate the sense of loss being experienced. By demonstrating sensitivity, respect for the feelings of the bereaved is shown.

How you treat your client can make the difference between a loyal returning client who will, through conversations and story-telling become an ambassador for your business and a lost opportunity or negative influence for your company, somebody more likely to use your competitor's services in the future



Standing out from the Crowd –Good Client Skills				
Positive Behaviours				
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
efficiency	helpfulness	prompt reactions	personal interest	reliability
care	courtesy	confidence	adaptability	ability to smile
sensitivity	friendliness	professionalism	smart appearance	fair prices
quality goods	approachable	good after-care service.	flexibility	attention to detail

Having good client service orientation is the ability to keep clients happy, by doing some of the following things effectively:

- Being responsive to the client
- Treating them with respect
- Keeping clients informed, and responding to their requests promptly and efficiently.
- Being able to deal with requests in an appropriate manner.
- Asking lots of questions so you can understand your client’s specific needs in order to deliver the best service.
- Remaining committed to helping
- Taking into account the clients needs rather than your own



How many times have you been disappointed in the way you have been treated by a business? Or a person! Think about everyday life. Maybe you had to wait to be served for a long time, or the person serving you didn't smile at all. Perhaps you received an unapologetic response to something which went wrong. You were probably so disappointed that you have not used their services since.



Standing out from the Crowd – Poor Client Care Skills

To go into a little more detail about client care and the associated skills, all of the following have been found consistently to have a negative effect on a client's view of the service received:

indifference	rudeness	not listening
delay before and during response	untidiness	incompetence
disinterested	reluctance to help with or accept a problem	poor quality of goods
poor value for money	unclean environment	poor after-care

Unless you have no choice in the matter it is unlikely that you would want to use their services again. But in the majority of cases now we do have a wider choice, and with the funeral business becoming more visible in the high street, as well as communications being a lot easier, clients also have better access to funeral service products and services.

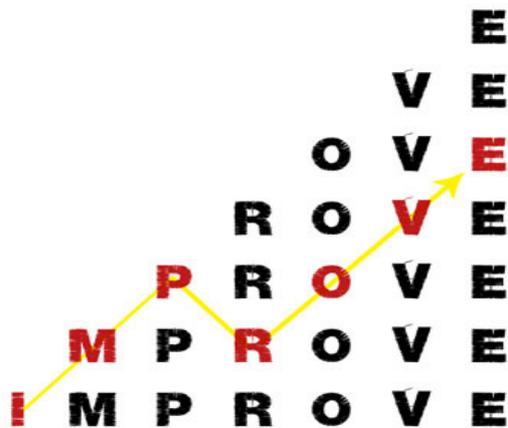


If you take time to understand your clients, you can better determine which of your funeral products or services are more suitable for them and you can even develop and deliver a more tailored and personalised service. How can you show you have this competency?

Think of a situation you have been in where the client has gained satisfaction.

- ❖ What did the client want and how did you respond?
- ❖ What was the positive thing you did which made them content? If you can answer these questions with different examples then you can demonstrate a good client service orientation.

If you have difficulty in remembering a situation where a client has gone away gratified, take a look at the following tips on how to improve your skills.



How to improve your client care skills.

- Make sure you fully understand about the funeral service product or service you are offering.
- Develop a positive, yet sensitive rapport with the client.
- Exceed client expectations. If someone asks you the direction to the Registrars Office or Crematorium for example, don't just give them directions, explain how to get there.
- If you cannot answer a client question, find somebody who can.



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- Just because you are an expert at something it doesn't mean the client is, so bear this in mind. Be prepared to explain the service you are able to offer in detail.
 - If you have a client query, reply as promptly as possible, don't leave them waiting: the longer you leave them waiting, the more frustrated they will get, and may lose confidence in you and your employer.
 - Smile, and treat your clients as you would like to be treated. If they don't get any respect from you, how can they respect you and your employer?
 - Don't just assume what a client needs; make sure you ask lots of questions to ensure you are delivering the exact service they require. Use your knowledge to think through what would be best for the client.
 - Offer choices, and let your client decide.
 - Ask for client feedback when appropriate to do so. Without this you won't know if you are delivering an effective service or not.



imagine

Imagine, for example, a client waiting in reception to see a Funeral arranger / director and consider the extent to which that person's view of the overall service is influenced by the quality of personal service given during the wait - a friendly word, a smile, an explanation as to the reason for the delay, an estimate of how long the wait is likely to be, an offer of refreshment.

It has been shown that a client remembers the treatment received during the first five minutes of any initial contact, whether it is by telephone or face to face. These crucial minutes influence the client's view of the overall service received and whether they have received value for money.

Internal v External Clients

In order to consider the individual needs of clients there has to be a clear understanding as to who the clients of the funeral director are.

There are two types of client, those **external** to the funeral director and the company such as the next of kin or the person responsible for making the funeral arrangements, together with the companies or services associated with the arrangement of the funeral such as hospitals, nursing homes, police, clergy and officiants.

Then there are the **internal** clients such as colleagues within the company. In business terms all of these people are often referred to as “stakeholders”. A stakeholder is a person or body of people who have a vested interest in an organisation’s business.

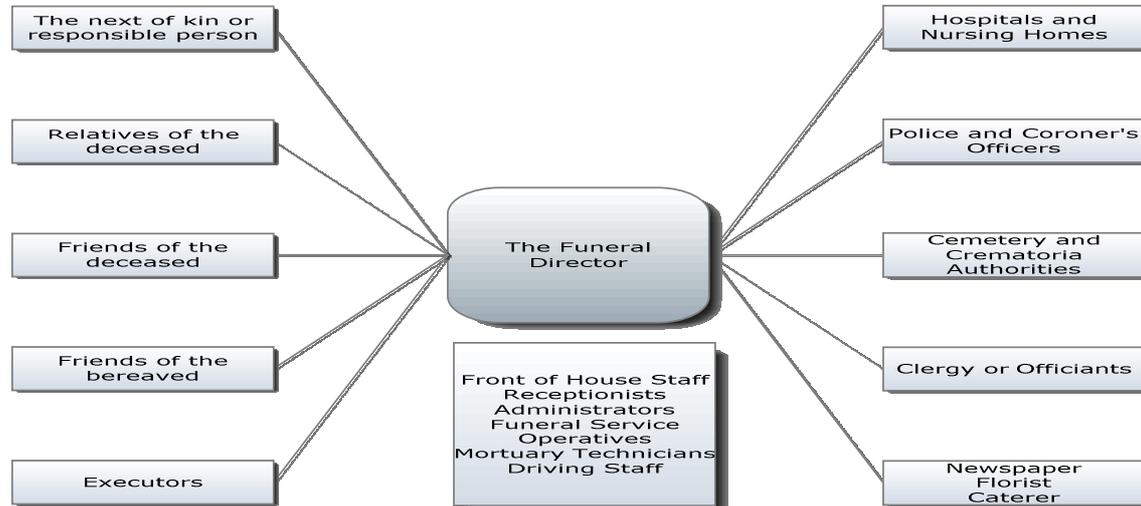
Equally as Important



External Client v Internal Client



The diagram below shows an example of the people that fall into this category:



You will see from the diagram above that the **Funeral arranger / director** effectively liaises between the person responsible for making the funeral arrangements (the client) and the various authorities he or she will need to contact to finalise the funeral arrangements.

Whilst doing so, the **Funeral arranger / director** will also liaise with other members of their organisation, their colleagues, who will also have a direct influence on the quality of service that their clients receive.

Client care concerns every Funeral arranger, Manager, Funeral director, Receptionist, Funeral Service Operative and all other staff members. Whilst all of us are giving a service to someone, Funeral arrangers and Funeral directors have a direct influence on the quality of service their external clients receive. How can this be?



Behaviour Mirrors Behaviour

Behaviour mirrors behaviour, so it follows that giving good personal service to colleagues is just as important as giving it to external clients; indeed we are all part of a process which determines the sort of service our external clients receive.

When is client care important?

As is evident, Funeral arrangers and Funeral directors are constantly 'on-show' to their clients and colleagues; by analysing their dealings with clients, it becomes apparent that every activity has an impact on client care, for example:

- ❖ at the first face-to-face contact
- ❖ on the telephone
- ❖ whilst making the funeral arrangements
- ❖ dealing with doctors, clergy, organists
- ❖ by correspondence - letters, invoices, flower lists
- ❖ during all the administration details
- ❖ when family, friends and acquaintances visit the chapel of rest
- ❖ at, during and after, the funeral.

Each and every stage is critical, even when the Funeral arranger / director is not in direct contact with external clients there is an influence on the care they receive



Client Expectations

Funeral directors are generally clear about the service a client can expect to receive, and have a consistent view of the things that make a service good and the things that they see as poor and unsatisfactory.

However, what do their external clients, namely the relatives and friends of the deceased, expect?

If Funeral arrangers / directors are aware of, and understand, what their clients expect, then they can use these as their own standards and aim to provide a level of performance and service at least to those standards at all times. Funeral arrangers / directors are part of a unique service, unique because of the feelings and emotions of their clients, thus making the care they receive even more critical.

Clients expect to receive:

Material Service Standards:

- ❖ Bright and attractive funeral home
- ❖ Quality of product, coffin/casket, flowers etc and choice of same
- ❖ Clean vehicles, inside and out
- ❖ Correct number of vehicles – arriving on the right date at the right time
- ❖ Offer of ancillary services, memorialisation, catering etc



Personal Service Standards:

- Empathy, patience, flexibility, professionalism
- Friendly but not over-familiar service
- Not to be kept waiting
- Regular communication
- Polite and dignified treatment
- Comprehensive knowledge of all types of funeral arrangements and/or the ability to acquire knowledge of the more unusual requests
- Smart, clean appearance – appropriately dressed

These are some of the key standards that must be achieved at all times.

Funeral arrangers / directors will often have to deal with extremely emotional situations. Clients may be experiencing feelings such as anger, despair, guilt and frustration and the response to these emotions is critical. Funeral directors need to communicate that they are offering a friendly, caring, helpful and yet professional service. At the same time they must stay in control, and in some respects be professionally distant yet caring and understanding. These skills, the ability to recognise and understand the emotions of others along with the ability to manage one's own emotions is known as **Emotional Intelligence**.

Learning Outcome 4

Understand the principles of Emotional Intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence



Intelligence comes from the Latin verb “intellegere” which means “to understand”. In its most basic sense it is “the capacity to solve problems, meet challenges or create value products”. Intelligence in this sense is referred to as cognitive intelligence or IQ. Cognition includes attention, perception, memory, reasoning and judgement.

In 1996, Daniel Goleman created a stir by claiming that existing views on cognitive intelligence or IQ were too narrow and that our emotions played a far greater part in individual success or ability. He stated that self-awareness, empathy and social-deftness were the attributes that made people excel. He referred to these abilities as “Emotional intelligence”.

Emotional intelligence was not a new concept in 1996. The model of Emotional intelligence had been proposed in 1990 by Yale Psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer. Salovey and Mayer mapped out in detail how we can bring intelligence to our emotions and went on with fellow academic David Caruso to form the MSCEIT[®], - a form of Emotional Intelligence testing.

This focuses on how emotions can be used intelligently and looks at four core abilities that will be explained next.

- 1. Recognising Emotions**
- 2. Using Emotion**
- 3. Understanding Emotions**
- 4. Managing Emotions**



Recognising Emotions

This is the ability to recognise how you and those around you are feeling. The first branch of the emotional intelligence model involves the capacity to perceive feelings accurately. Emotional perception involves paying attention to, and accurately decoding, emotional signals in facial expressions, tone of voice and body language. If the Funeral arranger /director is uncomfortable with a person's expression of emotion, for instance, and they turn away when they sense another's discomfort, they may not accurately perceive that other person's emotional state. Accurate emotional recognition is the basis for effective interactions. It helps you position yourself, your decisions and your communications more effectively.

Using Emotions

This is the ability to know which emotions can assist a situation or task and being able to generate these helpful moods. Key leadership tasks are building rapport and trust, creating a vision, thinking flexibly and strategically and making effective decisions. These tasks require an integration of emotions and thinking. As a Funeral arranger / director and for some perhaps a leader of a team your skills at using emotions may be called upon daily. For example if you sense that the mood of your team or your colleagues is negative, you will understand that this is directing the focus on to what won't work rather than what will work. If you are able to shift your emotions to what the team or your colleagues are feeling and empathise, you can help individuals feel connected and become more focussed on achieving the common goal.

Understanding Emotions

The third part of the model is, "understanding emotions". Emotions are a central part of our relationships with our self and others as they are present in almost every interaction. Understanding emotions involves knowing what a person is feeling, the causes of these feelings, and the ability to predict how feelings will progress and change. It also involves putting this knowledge into words.



Your ability to understand emotions will help you figure out what drives and inspires your team and what frustrates and alienates them and how one event compared with another will make them feel.

Managing Emotions

To be effective we need to be able to manage our own and others emotions. This involves being open to what we and others are feeling. This skill is hugely beneficial to the Funeral arranger / director who will spend a lot of his or her time with families who have suffered traumatic loss and who are looking to their Funeral arranger / director for support and guidance. Motivating yourself, dealing with stress and making decisions or taking actions that are helpful to you, require the ability to manage your own emotions. Having the relationship you desire with your clients and colleagues also requires you to have the ability to manage others emotions. Situations where you need to inspire, give feedback, deal with conflict and criticism, handle and achieve change and gain support, all hinge on skilled emotion management.

Caring for others starts by caring for oneself

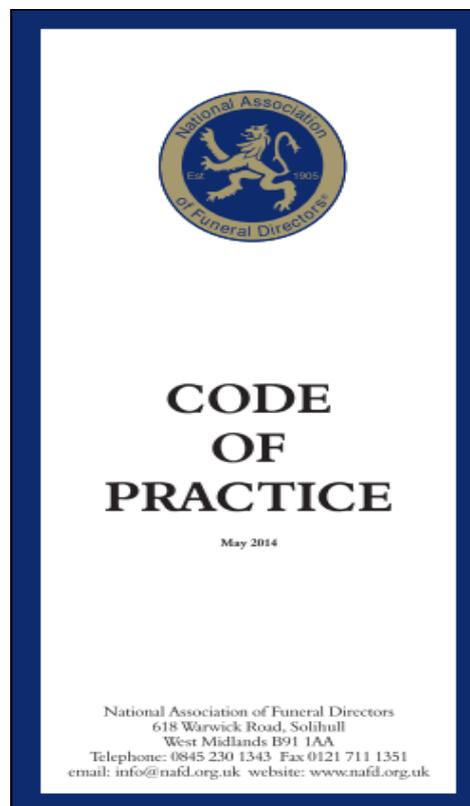
It will be evident that the responsibility for a high standard of client care rests with all those involved in funeral service; however, the bereaved cannot be served effectively unless steps are taken to prepare funeral directors for this task. As individuals, funeral arrangers /directors need to recognise that caring for others involves directing attention to their own skills and knowledge. Although daily contact with clients increases experience in the handling of situations, on a more professional level it is essential that the need for on-going personal development is recognised.



Learning Outcome.5

Understand the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) Code of Practice.

The NAFD Code of Practice



Visit Moodle to access the current copy

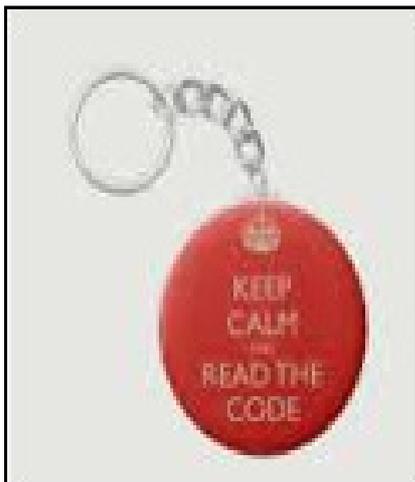
Funeral Directors provide a service of considerable importance to the relatives of the deceased. They make arrangements and provide services for clients at a time when they may be in a vulnerable and emotional state. They must adopt the highest standards, both in assisting the client to choose a funeral and in providing a reliable and dignified service according to the wishes of the client.



In 1979, to foster good practice in the funeral service industry, the National Association of Funeral Directors drew up a Code of Practice. The Code was revised in May 2014.

In these days of high profile exposure from all sectors of the media, not only has the level of client satisfaction got to be maintained, it has to be seen to be being maintained, thus giving confidence to the general public who rightly expect and indeed demand the highest standard of care, compassion and service.

The Code of Practice applies to all services provided by members, including the provision of flowers and the arranging of advertisements, however it does not include the provision of gravestones.



Please ensure that you become familiar with the requirements of funeral arrangers and funeral directors within the revised NAFD Code of Practice (MAY 2014)

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The NAFD has introduced a Code of Professional Standards for the benefit of raising standards. As part of your studies, please discuss the purpose with your tutor.

A copy of the Professional Standards can be found on Moodle along with a series of NAFD Guidelines.



Learning Outcome .6

Know how to deal with conflict situations.

There will be times when the funeral arranger/ director or any of his or her colleagues will find themselves having to deal with conflict whilst making funeral arrangements. Whilst the Funeral director may only be involved in that conflict indirectly, for example when there is heated disagreement between family members when the funeral arrangements are being made, it can still be very disconcerting to be part of it.

Family conflict has three characteristics that distinguish it from other types of conflict; the intensity, complexity and duration of the relationships. Relationships between family members are typically the closest and most emotionally intense; and the bonds between adult partners, between parents of children or between siblings can involve the highest level of attachment, affection and commitment. In times of bereavement these feelings can intensify further, old arguments can be re-raised, blame for the death can be unfairly



apportioned and the Funeral director can find himself or herself part of an emotional battlefield.

There are a few points that it is worth remembering to help you mediate a difficult situation and help control the quality of the communication in it before things escalate out of hand.

Speak calmly, slowly and stay in control

It is important to keep your own communication controlled when in a difficult conflict situation. Your speech, reactions and body language have an enormous impact on others so you must be very careful with them to ensure that you do not inflame an already difficult situation. Even if you need to step into an argument of name calling and yelling, you can only be effective if you remain calm yourself. Speak slowly if others are worked up and quick with their words, speak softly if others are yelling. We unconsciously match our communication style to mirror those we are with – so resist the urge to yell back! – speak softly and slowly to encourage others to naturally gravitate to match your behaviour.

Empathise without claiming to know how they feel

Emotional intelligence skills will mean that you are able to recognise the emotional state of others. However, feelings are personal to everyone - particularly when bereavement is involved – so do not claim to know exactly how someone feels or say you have felt like that yourself at one time. It may come across as arrogance if you try to claim to understand exactly how they feel. Chances are the people involved will be feeling very vulnerable and may feel awkward that you are witnessing such intense family emotions. You can empathise and relate to their situation by choosing your wording carefully, such as, “I am sure that this is a very difficult situation for all of you, I am here to help and offer support in whatever way I can”.



Stay objective

Staying in control means staying objective, that is, you should not take sides or decide how to resolve any conflict yourself. You might have some ideas or suggestions but always let the people involved decide how to address things and attend to the situation. If you force the situation you can quickly appear to be taking sides, if you are truly empathising with everyone you must leave the decisions and the communication up to them and only be available to listen, help and guide people towards a solution without yourself becoming part of the problem!

When to walk away

If family arguments escalate out of hand and all your attempts to diffuse the situation fail you should judge whether it is appropriate to halt the making of the funeral arrangements until the situation has calmed somewhat. Your approach to this needs to be calm and controlled and done in a way that does not attribute blame or reproach to those involved in the argument. Remember to speak softly and calmly. You should direct your statement to your client, you may want to phrase it as something along the lines of “If there are some issues you would like to discuss privately as a family, I can make arrangements to call back and see you later in the day”. Sometimes statements such as these can diffuse the situation and make people refocus on the arrangements in hand.

Very often family situations such as these involve harsh words, spoken in haste and in grief. However, if you feel that there is a threat of violence or that you are in danger of becoming involved in a physical dispute between family members you should extract yourself from that environment at the earliest opportunity.



Learning Outcome 7

Understand the Funeral Arbitration Scheme (FAS).

Funeral Arbitration Scheme



Members of the National Association of Funeral Directors and Funeral Arbitration Scheme.

The Funeral Arbitration Scheme provides a simple procedure to resolve complaints. If a complaint cannot be resolved with the funeral firm direct, conciliation and arbitration is available through the Funeral Arbitration Scheme.

A complaint under the Funeral Arbitration Scheme must be made within twelve months of the date of the funeral. The funeral firm is bound, as a condition of Membership of the NAFD, to comply with a client's wishes to proceed to conciliation or arbitration under the Scheme.

The Funeral Arbitration Scheme provides a simple procedure in three, easy to follow stages, through the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR), which is an independent organisation offering conciliation and arbitration for the purpose of resolving disputes.



STAGE ONE Resolution with the funeral firm

In the event of any complaint, the client should first raise it with the funeral firm.

If the client and the funeral firm are unable to resolve matters, the client should apply, in writing, to the Funeral Arbitration Scheme.

On receipt of a complaint, the Funeral Arbitration Scheme will contact the funeral firm concerned and will encourage the two parties to seek a resolution of the complaint.

STAGE TWO Conciliation

If, after 28 days from the date the Funeral Arbitration Scheme has notified the funeral firm of the complaint no resolution has been achieved by the two parties, you can request the Funeral Arbitration Scheme to refer the complaint to the CEDR for conciliation. If you wish, you can go straight to arbitration at this point. The Funeral Arbitration Scheme will issue an application form; together with the Rules for arbitration (see Stage Three).

A conciliator will be appointed to deal with the specific case with a remit to make every effort to achieve conciliation between you and the funeral firm. The appointment will be made by the CEDR. The conciliator will have no association or connections with the funeral firm against which the complaint has been made.

Each party will be requested to submit case statements together with all relevant supporting evidence. These will be reviewed by the conciliator who will speak to the parties by telephone and may request further information or explore possible solutions.



If the parties do not reach a solution between themselves after discussion with the conciliator then he/she may suggest some opportunities for settlement. If a solution is found or is accepted by the parties as proposed by the conciliator, the conciliator will record that solution in writing and send it to the parties through the administrator (the CEDR) in the form of a simple “Confirmation of Outcome” Statement, for signature. If the parties do not settle, the dispute may be referred to arbitration.

STAGE THREE Arbitration

If conciliation does not lead to a settlement of the complaint, you may refer the complaint to independent arbitration through the Funeral Arbitration Scheme or seek redress through the Courts (a leaflet providing further information is available either from a County Court in England and Wales, or a Sheriff’s Court in Scotland). Assuming the individual parties in dispute opt to use the Funeral Arbitration Scheme they will be asked to sign an application for arbitration, which will be sent to the CEDR, together with a fee of £50.00 plus vat (payable by yourself), which may be recoverable in the arbitration award.

Arbitration is conducted by an arbitrator who is appointed on the basis of reputation, expertise, training and experience.

The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding on both the client and the funeral firm.

Additional guidance notes on the Arbitration Scheme are available from the Funeral Arbitration Scheme, which can be contacted at 618 Warwick Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1AA.



For more information and further details on **the NAFD Code of Practice; Code of Professional Standards and the Funeral Arbitration Scheme**, please see the relevant PDF leaflets downloadable from Moodle.



Proof of Learning – Assessment Criteria

Module 1 Unit 2	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
	The learner can:
1.2.1a	Describe the primary functions of a funeral directing business.
1.2.1b	Describe the relationship between a funeral directing business and the local community.
1.2.1c	Explain the importance of a funeral directing business promoting a positive, professional image.
1.2.2a	Outline the principles of good client care.
1.2.2b	Differentiate between internal and external client care.
1.2.2c	Describe how to gain an understanding of a client's expectations regarding the role of the funeral arranger.
1.2.3	Describe the skills involved in providing good client care.
1.2.4	Compare and contrast the four key areas of Emotional Intelligence.
1.2.5a	Explain the purpose of the NAFD Code of Practice.
1.2.5b	Explain the benefits of the NAFD Code of Practice.
1.2.6a	Describe how to deal with the following situations: a) conflict of family relationships;
1.2.6b	b) the appointment of more than one funeral director.
1.2.7a	Explain the purpose of the FAS.
1.2.7b	Explain the benefits of the FAS.