
Funeral Partners

Sustainability Report 2024



Introduction

At Funeral Partners, our focus is clear: to strive to be the best local Funeral Director in every community we serve. That means providing the very best standard of care to bereaved families today.

Our funeral homes are rooted in the local communities we serve, and some have been around for more than 300 years. It's why so many of our clients put their trust in us when they choose our services to arrange their loved one's funeral, a position of privilege we don't take for granted.

Providing an excellent level of service also means planning for the future. That means being accountable to our communities and the environment, and making a commitment to be there for future generations.

We recognise this ambition is no mean feat. It's why we commit to continually improving our sustainability activities, and to reporting on our progress.



About this Report

This Report sets out our Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments in 2024, and it explains some of our achievements in 2023¹. Our Sustainability Report is updated every year and is guided by the following key principles:

Trust

We want to build trust and understanding with all relevant stakeholder groups, by sharing our sustainability priorities. For example, these groups include:

- **Our customers**
- **Our colleagues**
- **Our regulators**
- **Our suppliers**
- **Our investors**

Transition

We want to recognise where we are now, and commit to activity which supports a more sustainable future for everyone.

Track

We want to track our progress and be able to evidence our improvements year-on-yea.

Our commitments

Whilst we strive to continually improve everything we do, we feel the most material aspects of our business from an ESG perspective are as follows:

- **Our care**
We feel privileged to provide services to the bereaved and to be able to look after each deceased person in our care. We aim to provide lasting memories for family and friends with a positive, caring and understanding approach.

- **Our people**
It is only by working together and valuing the skills and knowledge which everyone in our business brings that we are able to achieve the highest standards for our customers.

- **Our communities**
We want to be rooted in the communities we serve, to break down the barriers of contacting a Funeral Director and talking about death and bereavement.

- **Our funeral plans**
We offer funeral plan services for those who may wish to plan their funeral arrangements in advance. Our funeral planning business Choice is part of Funeral Partners. It is typically the case that our funeral plans are bought and redeemed in the same location. This can offer families peace of mind when it comes to knowing the Funeral Director to provide the services in the funeral plan.

- **Our environment**
We aim to minimise the risks to the environment of our activities, so that we can preserve and protect our planet.

- **Our governance**
Our activities are complex and highly regulated, and we want our business to be built on strong foundations, so that we can provide our services for future generations to come, just as our funeral homes have served so many generations in the past.

¹ Specific data points provided in this report (such as investments amounts and carbon emissions) relate to our 2024 financial year (which is dated from 1st October 2023 through to 30th September 2024).
Note: Scope 3 emissions data contained in this report are for our emissions from the financial year 1st October 2022 through to 30th September 2023. This is because our 22/23 Scope 3 emissions are more comprehensive (in terms of scope categories) than our current calculations for the financial year 23/24.

Our care

Providing an exceptional level of care, support and guidance to our clients and families at one of the most difficult times is at the heart of what we do. Our reputation is built on trust and integrity with the provision of exemplary care for any deceased person resting with us.

Our objectives

Offer personalised funerals to every client.

Provide comfortable and supportive surroundings for the bereaved, and the highest standards to deceased persons in our care.

Tailor support to customers who may be vulnerable.

Ensure transparent pricing across all products and services.

Our 2023/24 achievements

This year, we continued to encourage our teams to create unique funerals for every family. Examples include an ice cream van leading the cortège and a cortège with 21 limousines. The effort by our teams has been recognised in the media

We invested over £3.2m in our funeral home property estate in order to create high standards both back-of-house and front-of-house. There is a focus on deceased storage and mortuary standards and we plan to continue to invest at a similar level in future years.

In addition to a series of regular management checks, we formally audited each of our funeral homes against rigorous internal standards as well as standards which apply to us from external organisations. For example, the standards of care we provide to deceased persons, along with health and safety.

This year, we created new training modules for our colleagues to help identify and support those clients who may be vulnerable.

We have expanded our online “quote builder” to include many more products and services, so that our customers can obtain as accurate a quote as possible for their desired funeral service in their own way and in their own time.

In line with our regulatory obligations, we provide standardised pricing information in our branches and on our websites to assist clients in price comparison.

“I worked with colleagues to produce a support video bringing together all the ways we are able to support our clients. Our clients sadly may not just be bereaved, but may face other issues too. For example, financial challenges, physical or mental health conditions and other difficult circumstances. The video formed part of our training requirements, so that we could all learn together and develop our skills and knowledge in this critical area.”

Linsie Kemp
Funeral Arranger



Our 2024/25 commitments

- Continue to improve our ability to identify customers who may require tailored support due to their unique personal circumstances (for example, a vulnerability) including improving the support we can provide to customers who interact with us online.
- In March 2025, the Scottish government is introducing a new “Code of Practice”, which is a mandatory set of standards which will apply across the funeral profession in Scotland.² We will support the introduction of the new “Code of Practice” and we aim to adopt any relevant best practice across the other areas of the United Kingdom in order to deliver our commitment to providing the highest possible standards of service in all areas of the United Kingdom where we operate.
- We will be carrying out an ongoing incremental improvement programme associated with health and safety risk management, with a focus on topics such as driver training and awareness.
- As proud members of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD), we aim to work with the NAFD to shape the future of regulation of the funeral industry in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, building on the work being undertaken in Scotland, in order to continue to recommend minimum standards for all Funeral Directors across the United Kingdom.

² www.gov.scot/publications/funeral-director-code-practice-2/documents/



Our people

People are our biggest asset, our management, support office and operations teams are the heartbeat of our organisation. Only with the best people sharing the same behaviours and values, can we provide the best service to our clients and families.

Our objectives

For our colleagues to feel empowered, happy and satisfied in their work.
Minimise health and safety risks associated with our business activity.
Encourage awareness and dialogue around mental health and wellbeing.
Create a more diverse workforce where everyone feels included.
Commit to the ongoing professional development of our team members.

Our 2023/24 achievements

90% of or colleagues responded to our engagement survey, which was a 20% increase versus the last survey.
We provided more “manual handling” training to our colleagues through additional practical sessions in order to reduce the risk of injury.
We continued to provide support to all our colleagues by issuing a monthly wellbeing newsletter to all colleagues, and by promoting our network of Mental Health First Aiders.
We supported National Inclusion Week and we provide diversity and inclusion training to our team members.
We used Apprenticeship Levy funds to invest in the development of our frontline team members and management population, and provided in-house tutoring to colleagues who wanted to gain National Association of Funeral Directors qualifications.

Listen to our team members and make continued improvements as a result.

We now have three established “Colleague Forums” across our business, which discuss recommendations around how we can continue to improve our processes for the benefit of our colleagues and our clients, and which discuss topics such as health and safety. These forums help shape the direction of our business with views and recommendations being provided to senior management.

Our 2024/25 commitments

- Invest in a new training, development and tracking software, in order to improve the overall training and development of all our colleagues.
- Create a more formalised Continued Professional Development structure in order to enable colleagues to capture their personal development and learning journey.
- Continue to mitigate our health and safety risks in the interests of all those who interact with Funeral Partners.
- Continue to review our salaries, reward and benefits programme to keep pace with the market and minimum wage to ensure fair remuneration for our people and to attract new quality talent.
- Review and report annually on gender pay gap.

Our communities

Our funeral homes and teams are an integral part of their local communities by being actively involved in local activity and by supporting important initiatives, charity work and good causes. This helps to break down barriers about death and bereavement and builds a relationship, trust and recognition in our local brands, so that families have confidence in using our services in their time of need. This year we will continue to build those community ties and much needed support and funding for local good causes.

Our objectives	Our achievements
Encourage our communities to open up about bereavement and funerals.	Launched and ran 5 community funds/assistant programmes - we gave £53k to not-for-profit groups to fund funding for Health, Education, Employment opportunities, Poverty / Social Deprivation initiatives. (Belfast and Ulster in Northern Ireland, Berkshire, Mossley)
Carry out community activities to get more people acquainted with their local Funeral Directors.	Goals 4 GOSH held its fourth annual charity football match for Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity (GOSH Charity), which took place on Sunday 26 May at Crystal Palace's Selhurst Park stadium, raising an astonishing £47,850. Funeral Partners were principal sponsors of this event which is organised by one of our management team.
Support the causes that matter to our local communities.	<div>In total our teams have worked with their local communities and have sponsored, donated, raised and gifted over £200k in community activity in 2023/34.</div> <div>We enabled clients, families and friends to give £2.6m in memory of the deceased to their preferred charities (via our online charity donation service, provided by MuchLoved).</div>

Our commitments

- Review and update our bereavement training resources (which our teams provide to local groups who may be impacted by bereavement e.g. care homes).
- Provide more toolkits for our teams to engage with the local community, taking into account new regulatory requirements.
- Introduce a Community Engagement Lead as an additional responsibility across each region to work closely with our Marketing team to support our growing commitments to events, sponsorship, fundraising and other community activity across our funeral homes.
- Introduce further Community Funds and Community Assistant programmes across the UK to support our giving back to the local communities strategy



Funeral Plans



We recognise many people wish to plan and pay for their funeral services in advance – and that pre-planning for a funeral can ease the emotional and financial burden placed on families when someone dies. Choice funeral plans can be bought in a Funeral Partners Funeral Directors, online or via the phone. Funeral Partners provide funeral plans under the brand name “Choice”, and our funeral planning business is part of Funeral Partners.¹

Our objectives

- Enable every funeral plan customer to capture personalised choices about their funeral service, in advance.
- Meet the ongoing regulatory requirements placed on our funeral planning business, which is now authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, along with all other funeral plan providers³.

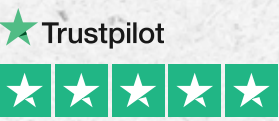
Our 2023/24 achievements

- Relaunched a fully mobile optimised website with instalment payment options available for online purchases. New purchase journey build with customer understanding, vulnerable customers and consumer duty at the heart of the design and process.
- We launched a new “Unattended Direct Cremation” plan, to meet the evolving needs of our customers. Our direct cremation plan allows the deceased person to be viewed in a funeral home prior to the cremation and the plan was recognised by Funeral Solution Expert as being the biggest proposition innovation in the last 12 months.
- Provide a variety of funeral planning product options and purchase methods in order to meet the evolving needs of our customers.
- We are active members of the National Association of Funeral Plan Providers, and we are represented at both the monthly Members Meeting and the monthly Compliance Forum.
- We provided training to our colleagues on the Financial Conduct Authority’s new “consumer duty”, as part of the business’s wider implementation plan which places improving customer outcomes at the heart of everything we do.
- Launched TrustPilot independent review service for customers to leave reviews and feedback. Achieving a 5 star rating.
- Our initiative to train all our funeral homes ahead of FCA regulation coming into force was shortlisted for an award by the International Compliance Association in 2023

Our 2024/25 commitments

- Continue to innovate our product range for customers with differing funeral plan needs.
- Continue developing our website and telephone sales channels to give customers more choice in how they research and purchase a funeral plan. This will help us meet customer needs and gather valuable feedback.

³ Choice Funeral Plans are provided by Alternative Planning Company Limited (APCL) which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. APCL is part of the Funeral Partners Group.



choiceplan.co.uk



Our environment

We all have a responsibility to make sustainable choices. Especially businesses. So we're committed to understanding the impact we have on the environment, and to minimising this impact, as part of a long-term strategy.

Our objectives

Understand the full extent of our carbon emissions, using international carbon accounting standards (the Greenhouse Gas Protocol).
Minimise the environmental and human impact of our business operations, including in our supply chains.
Enable our clients to make funeral choices based on their values and environmental concerns.

Our methodology

Funeral Partners employs the operational consolidation approach for our carbon inventory. This means we encompass all GHG emissions from operations that are under our operational control.

To evaluate our Scope 1 & 2 emissions, we have relied on activity data, including measures like the kWh of electricity consumed and litres of fuel used. When it comes to our value chain emissions, we follow a 'hybrid approach', meaning that both transaction and activity data are used in order to assess Scope-3 emissions.

We have continued to work with Normative (an enterprise carbon platform). Normative provide us with a foundation of reliable emissions data for us to plan, implement, and verify the impact of our sustainability initiatives.

Our 2024/25 commitments

- Continue working on a decarbonisation plan, with an aim over time to reduce overall carbon emissions per funeral, as part of a long-term path to net zero emissions by 2050 which will likely include:
 - Further investments in our transition to a fleet of electric vehicles
 - Completion of the roll out of automated meter readings across our property portfolio
 - Engaging with our supply chain to minimise environmental and human impact
- Further improve the data quality and extent of our assessments concerning Scope 3 emissions, including reporting on emissions from employee commuting.
- We understand that our customers will be interested in understanding the environmental impact of funeral services, including from a carbon emissions perspective. We aim to better understand and disclose the environmental impact of funeral choices to our clients to enable them to make more informed decisions about our products and services.



Cycle2Work scheme

We offer a Cycle2Work scheme which team members can take advantage of in order to save money and support minimising the environmental impact of commuting.

Emissions type	Emissions (Tonnes of CO2e)	Comment	Our 2023/24 achievements
Scope 1	Emissions from our owned or controlled activities: 1,537	Overall Scope 1 emissions reduced year-on-year, despite our business growing in size. The main driver for this reduction was a change in the emissions factors being used. We are now working on a decarbonisation plan to further reduce our Scope 1 emissions.	Smart metering We have commenced a roll out programme for our gas meters, to help us measure more accurately (and therefore better manage) our gas emissions per site. We have rolled out automated electricity meter reading devices to 40% of our properties, which enables us to profile energy usage and target reduction initiatives in higher energy usages sites. The roll out programme for our smart meters will be completed by the end of 2024.
Scope 2	Emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity, but occurring at sources not owned or controlled by us (indirect): 648	Overall Scope 2 emissions reduced year-on-year, despite our business growing in size. 100% of the electricity we use in our premises is generated from renewable sources.	Electric fleet We are continuing to invest in a replacement programme from petrol/diesel vehicles to electric. In the financial year 2023/24, we spent a further £724k in our transition towards a hybrid or fully-electric fleet. We now have 13 fully electric vehicles/hybrid vehicles in our fleet, an increase of 26% versus our financial year 22/23.
Scope 3*	Emissions from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchased goods and services• Capital goods• Fuel- and Energy-Related Activities• Upstream transportation and distribution• Waste generated in operations• Business travel 7,542	This is the first time we have carried out a comprehensive Scope 3 assessment. We follow a 'hybrid approach', meaning that both transaction and activity data are used in order to assess Scope-3 emissions. In collaboration with our carbon consultancy, we calculated emissions for the Scope 3 categories that are relevant and material to our value chain.	We have had a workshop with Normative to define next steps in order to improve the measurement of supplier emissions and determine the levers we have to reduce value chain emissions.

*Our Scope 3 emissions data are for our emissions from the financial year 1st October 2022 through to 30th September 2023. This is because our 22/23 Scope 3 emissions are more comprehensive (in terms of scope categories) than our current calculations for the financial year 23/24.

Our commitment to good governance

Across our business, we've made a commitment to sustainability, and we recognise this requires:

- strong governance frameworks and
- robust supplier management

We have a number of forums in place in our business to manage sustainability risk, as well as other risks – such as information security, data protection and wider operational risk.

Our Chief Executive Officer, who is a Member of the Executive of the National Association of Funeral Directors leads the way, championing sustainability within our business.

Monitoring progress

- Progress toward our sustainability goals is closely monitored in our Sustainability Working Group, which is attended by the Chief Finance Officer who is also a member of the Board and our Risk & Compliance Director.
- In addition, our overall Risk Governance Committee meets monthly and reviews operational and enterprise-wide risks. It is attended by three members of the Funeral Partners Group Board, including the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Finance Officer and it is chaired by a Non-Executive Director.



Supplier Management

Our objectives

- Monitor responsible business practices across our supply chain and look to work with suppliers whose values of ethical conduct and good customer outcomes align with our own.
- Obtain ongoing ESG-related datasets from our suppliers in order to continually improve supplier selection and ongoing oversight.
- Collaborate with suppliers to achieve a shared ESG vision, aligned to our supplier Code of Conduct.

Our 2023/24 achievements

- We have profiled our suppliers based on risk, and created a new supplier Code of Conduct, to be adhered to across our most important and strategic suppliers.
- We have assessed some of our key suppliers against ESG credentials:
- We look to work with suppliers with robust governance practices in place. Wherever possible, we look to select suppliers who have obtained certifications so that they can evidence their responsible business practices to us. For example:
 - Our two main coffin manufacturers are:
 - members of Sedex Global (a not-for-profit membership organisation dedicated to driving improvements in ethical and responsible business practices in global supply chains) and
 - Platinum award holders as part of the Greener Globe Funeral Standard
 - Suppliers of a range of Forest Stewardship Council-certified coffins
- Our principal uniform provider is ISO14001 certified (the internationally recognised standard which helps businesses continually improve their environmental performance) as well as a member of Sedex Global
- 65% of our masonry sales last year were from suppliers involved in Sedex Global, which represents a 3% increase versus last year.
- Our main supplier of floral tributes is a member of the Floriculture Sustainability Initiative
- The underlying funds in which we place our funeral plan monies are positively screened for ESG-related risk and monies are placed in to companies which make a positive contribution toward a cleaner, healthier, safer and more inclusive society. Effective October 2024, the underlying funds scored 5 Globes out of 5 on ESG grounds by the Morningstar Sustainability Report.⁴

⁴ For funeral plan purchases from January 2022 onwards. The Morningstar Sustainability Rating is designed to support investors in evaluating the relative environmental, social, and governance risks within portfolios.

Our 2024/25 commitments

- Review the supplier assurance framework in our Code of Conduct, including supplier audits.
- Work with key suppliers (who form part of our Scope 3 carbon emissions) to align carbon reduction plans.



Governance

Our Industry Credentials



All our Funeral Directors are members of the National Association of Funeral Directors.



All of our Funeral Directors in Northern Ireland are members of the Irish Association of Funeral Directors (IAFD).



Our funeral plan business is part of the National Association of Funeral Plan Providers

Along with all other funeral plan providers:



Our funeral plan monies are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).



Our funeral plan customers may be eligible for redress through the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS).



Funeral Partners is Cyber Essentials certified and continues to invest in minimising information security and data protection risk.



Our Director of Central Operations is a member of the British Institute of Embalming and is their Immediate Past National President.



Training Initiative of the Year Finalists at the ICA Compliance Awards 2023



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