



Code of Conduct

for members of

The Association of Natural Burial Grounds

In addition to complying with all relevant legislation, and specifically that concerned with planning, record keeping, and the financial probity of directors and trustees, association members undertake to adhere to the following code of conduct

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Foreword – We, the trustees of the Natural Death Centre, are delighted to introduce this new code of conduct for the operators of natural burial grounds. We believe that this code brings a strong foundation to the association, provides protection for the public and safeguards confidence in the natural burial movement.

Operators should be guided as much by the spirit of this code as by the express terms.

1. **Integrity** - Association members shall at all times act with integrity and avoid conflicts of interest and any actions or situations that are inconsistent with professional operations.
2. **Competence** - Association members shall carry out its work with due skill, care and diligence and with proper regard to the standards expected of them.
3. **Service** - Association members shall carry out its work with expedition and with proper regard to the standards of service and customer care expected of them.
4. **Training** - Association members shall ensure that they have in place the necessary procedures to ensure that all its staff are properly trained and competent to do their work.
5. **Advertising** - Association members shall promote their

amenities and services only in a truthful and responsible manner.

6. **Solvency** - Association members shall ensure that their finances are managed appropriately.
7. **Arrangements to cover the incapacity or death of a sole operator** - Association members shall have in place appropriate arrangements in the event of the operator's death or incapacity or other extended absences.
8. **Information to ANBG** - Association members shall submit such information about its activities and in such form as the NDC Board of Trustees shall reasonably require.
9. **Complaints handling** - Association members shall advise clients of their right to complain, and the process for doing so. They shall also operate a complaints handling procedure, which is acceptable to the Association.

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10. **Procedures** - Association members will follow the guidance and recommended procedures contained in the Ministry of Justice publication: *Natural Burial Grounds - guidance for operators 2009*.

In particular, each burial ground should have clear published information and policies on the following subjects, in order for the public to make a proper and informed decision before proceeding:

- a) **Description of the site** (topography)
 - b) **Location** (including directions or a map on how to locate the cemetery and details of any public transport links)
 - c) **Site Owner** (including information on whether the site is freehold or leasehold. If the latter also state how long the lease runs for)
 - d) **Site Operator** (including contact details)
 - e) **Type of plots available** (including plot options, cremation options, whether or not plots can be purchased in advance)
 - f) **Burial rights** (including time limits)
 - g) **Gravedigging** (including methods used and options for families)
 - h) **Embalming** (including whether embalmed bodies are acceptable in exceptional circumstances; see 15 below)
 - i) **Memorials** (including types available, suppliers, term of years, approved designs, tree planting schemes, memorial books, websites, benches)
 - j) **On site facilities** (including car parking, shelter, rooms, chapels, toilets, mortuary facilities, what is and is not provided)
 - k) **Funeral directing services provided** (including options available)
 - l) **Coffins and shrouds permitted** (including types of materials allowed in their construction)
 - m) **Details of the future of the site**, its objectives, maintenance and management plans
11. **Co-operation** - Association members shall co-operate with the Association, which reserves the right to check on member's compliance to the code at anytime.

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12. **Sustainability** - Association members will take all reasonable steps to conserve existing local wildlife, promote biodiversity and manage their projects according to sound sustainable and ecological principles.
13. **Archaeology** - Association members will take all reasonable steps to identify and preserve archaeological remains.
14. **Choice** - Association members will not require that a funeral director be used. Guidance to the public is available from the Natural Death Centre.
15. **Toxic chemicals** - Association members will only accept embalmed bodies for burial in exceptional circumstances such as repatriation.
16. **Coffins and shrouds** - Association members accept for burial bodies whether wrapped in a shroud or an alternative biodegradable container or wrapping. Members will encourage the use of environmentally friendly coffins and natural materials.
17. **Prices** - Association members will provide fully itemised price lists for potential clients on request, and will also reveal these prices on the telephone on request.
18. **Feedback** - Association members will provide each client with a feedback form and inform them both in their printed literature and their websites that further comments can be made directly to the Association of Natural Burial Grounds either online, phone or post.
19. **Provisional applicant members** may join prior to having a site, but must fully comply with the application requirements to convert to full membership requirements within three months of their site opening.
20. Association members will make a copy of this Code of Practice available to the public, and will have copies available on request for others.

This code is effective from 01 January 2010. It is not an exhaustive statement of the conduct expected of operators, but sets the minimum standards that they must observe. Failure to meet these standards should be brought to the attention of the Association. Not every shortcoming, nor failure to comply with this Code, will necessarily give rise to disciplinary proceedings. However, a failure to follow any guidance associated with the Code is a factor that will be considered should it be necessary to examine the behaviour of a member.