

Report to: **Mansfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee**

Date: Monday 22 September 2025 (15:00 hours)

Director Lead: Mansfield District Council, Adrian Selby, Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services, 01623 463036

Lead Officer: Mansfield District Council, Nada Colclough, Crematorium and Cemeteries Manager and Registrar, 01623 463882

Report Summary	
Type of report	Open Report
Report Title	Children's Funeral Fund
Purpose of Report	This report seeks to provide an annual update on the Children's Funeral Fund spend.
Recommendations	That the committee note the report

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Funeral services for children under the age of 18 are free at the point of sale, for bereaved parents. Crematorium and burial authority operators can claim back any costs associated with a child funeral service from the Government Child Funeral Fund. Reclaimed funds are in line with current fees and charges.
- 1.2 To improve bereavement service provision for the parents of deceased children and children who experience bereavement, in September 2023 the committee approved that any funds that are claimed back can be repurposed to improve the children's bereavement services at the crematorium and within the wider community, on an ongoing basis, rather than these funds being utilised as income. This report sets out the previous 12 months activity and the anticipated spend for 25/26 and 26/27

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered and Reasons for Recommendations

Funds Claimed Back

- 2.1 Funds were first claimed in June 2022 and in that time the following funds have been received:

Year	Number of funerals	Total Claim Value
2022	15	£3,427.50
2023	21	£4,888.50
2024	24	£5,743.50
2025	5	£1,255.00
Total	65	£15,314.50
Spent		£4,293.33
Remaining		£11,021.17

- 2.2 The value per child cremation is made up of the cremation fee and the medical referee fee. The medical referee authorises the cremation to take place, following inspection of medical records.

Replacement Memorial Stone

- 2.3 Within the crematorium grounds there is a location dedicated to the scattering of children and baby cremated remains. Within the location is a memorial stone with an appropriate inscription in memory of lost children with families often leave flowers and mementos in the area. It, not surprisingly, attracts a lot of flowers being left and often there was insufficient room for families to leave flowers, without spoiling the aesthetic of the area.
- 2.4 While the stone had been in place for several years this has become worn and in its current location it does not leave sufficient space for enough families to be able to leave tributes. A replacement stone has therefore been replaced with the addition of several flower vases, allowing families to leave tributes in a more fitting way.
- 2.5 Although the stone was relocated to allow for the additional flower vases, it remained in the same vicinity of the scattering area.
- 2.6 The total price for the new stone with additional vases was £1,293.33.
- 2.7 The original stone was also refurbished and placed within the different location, within the children's scattering area.

Children's Bereavement Centre Donation

- 2.8 The Children's Bereavement Centre are a charity that provide support to bereaved children across Mansfield, Ashfield and Newark and Sherwood.
- 2.9 All children who engage with the support services of the Children's Bereavement Centre, do so because of experiencing trauma due to a death or terminal illness of someone close to them. As a result of this trauma, children are more likely to experience behavioural problems, change schools or be excluded, have lack of concentration, avoid participating in clubs, have difficulty making friends, struggle with anxiety, anger, drinking and/or use of substances.

- 2.10 Bereaved children are extremely vulnerable to mental health disorders as they may be confused and upset by what they are feeling but unable to identify or understand why.
- 2.11 To support bereaved children, the charity offers group and 1:1 support, play therapy and filial therapy, which combines play therapy with family therapy.
- 2.12 As a charity the Children's Bereavement Centre only receive 4% annually in government funding and therefore need to raise over £330,000 each year.
- 2.13 1:1 counselling for children accessing support from the charity has a huge impact and the Joint Crematorium Committee funded 15 children's counselling sessions, to support 5 children from each of the authority areas. This is at a cost of around £200 per session with the total donation made of £3000.
- 2.14 The 15 places have already been utilised and have made a significant impact to an already extensive waiting list of children awaiting support. Some of the money was even used to purchase a chess set, for one child to play with their counsellor, while sharing his emotions.
- 2.15 It is proposed that given the impact of these services within each of the authority areas, that the joint Crematorium Committee continue to make an annual donation to be financed from the Children's Funeral Fund. The number of funded 1:1 counselling place could be determined by the amount of funding claimed back. Any decision making around future donations will be brought to the committee for approval.

Proposed Spend

- 2.16 While the proposed annual donation would benefit children's bereavement services well, a longer lasting interactive memorial is proposed, following the refurbishment Mansfield Crematorium.
- 2.17 An example of an interactive memorial garden can be found in Cardiff's Bereavement Services where they have installed a 'Dear Mum' memorial.
- 2.18 The memorial garden is based on a book called Dear Mum and is aimed at supporting children who have been bereaved. The memorial project tells the whole story of Dear Mum through an interactive walk through the garden
- 2.19 The concept surrounds a "Forget-you-Not Post-box" and granite characters that encourages children to write a letter to their loved ones. The storybook is to help parents/guardians guide their children through this difficult time with a compassionate and engaging short story centred around writing a letter to a lost loved one as a way of dealing with grief.
- 2.20 The Post-box and surrounding characters are specifically designed to make an accessible area for children in a place (crematoriums/cemeteries etc) that may frighten them or make them feel uncomfortable. The standard Dear Mum collection includes granite sculptures of Miss Fair Isle Tree (Owl), Dora Bench (Mouse), Walter Cotton (Badger).

- 2.21 Something of this nature would require engagement with specialist bereavement services and would require consultation with stakeholders however project on this scale would really add benefit to how we support bereaved children at the Crematorium.
- 2.22 While the story book Dear Mum is a good example of how a project like this could be implemented other short stories could be utilised, depending on the availability of appropriate literature for children at the time of the project start.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendation's officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have referred to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.