

Overview of the Funeral Directors General Composition and National Commission on Infant Cremation Code of Practice Survey

The Funeral Directors General Composition and National Commission on Infant Cremation Code of Practice (the Code) Survey was issued by Inspector of Funeral Directors Natalie McKail and The Scottish Government's Burial, Cremation, Anatomy and Death Certification Team on 1 June, 2018. The survey closed on 15 July, 2018, having run for 6 weeks.

The aims of the survey were two-fold – for the Inspector of Funeral Directors to better understand the composition of funeral director businesses in Scotland (in terms of staffing numbers, role types, and other high-level business details), and to gauge the profession's awareness of (and response to) the Code and to inform the Inspector's approach to future funeral director business inspections. This was also The Scottish Government's first ever attempt to directly engage the funeral director profession as a whole.

The survey was issued to each known individual branch of funeral director businesses in Scotland, of which there are 696. Funeral director corporations were asked to distribute the survey to their individual branches for response. All responses to the survey were provided on a voluntary basis.

The vast majority of responses received were from funeral director corporations: 208 responses. 38 responses were received from privately owned individual businesses/branches.

Understanding the composition of funeral director businesses

The information provided has informed a better understanding of the general composition of funeral director corporation branches. Unfortunately, we did not receive enough responses from privately owned businesses to make any statistically valid conclusions on the composition of independently owned funeral director businesses.

Awareness of the Infant Cremation Code of Practice

Of those who responded to the survey, the vast majority (all but 2) branches were aware of the Code, with many branches indicating they have integrated the Code into their branch policies and procedures through actions such as changes to policies and staff training.

Corporation members benefit from industry news and updates (such as the publishing of the Code) being shared through corporate management lines – the vast majority of corporate responses noted that branches and staff were made aware of the Code by their managers. Privately owned individual businesses mainly rely on the media, their trade organisation/s, or the Scottish Government for industry news and updates.

We estimate that approximately 500 branches did not respond to the survey. While the reasons for this are not known, of those who did respond the vast majority requested to be kept informed of future government developments.

The results of this survey will be used to inform the Inspector of Funeral Director's future work, as well as future strategies for engaging funeral director businesses.