



Pure 
Cremation
The freedom to choose

**The Big Future of
Funerals Survey
2022**

Introduction

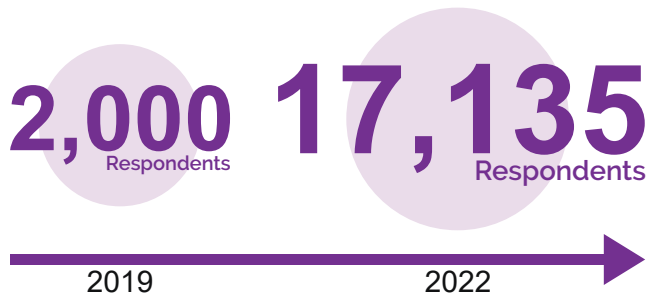
Saying goodbye to someone who has died is an extremely important life moment, but how families choose to do this is changing very rapidly. This cultural shift is something that industry professionals, policy makers and other stakeholders have struggled to understand and respond to.

The Big Future of Funerals Survey 2022 collected responses from people who have pre-purchased a new kind of funeral plan, a direct cremation plan. It is the largest piece of research ever conducted in the UK into consumer attitudes to funerals and is the second of its kind.

A landmark report for the funeral industry

With **17,135** responses from Pure Cremation Funeral Planning customers the 2022 report offers important insights into how consumer attitudes have already changed, and how UK funerals will evolve.

Since 2019 there has been a dramatic and rapid increase in the number of direct cremation plan holders, with sales of this style of plan growing faster than any other. This indicates that the appeal of direct cremation has broadened very quickly, and the pace of this change will be of real concern, presenting an unprecedented challenge to all those providers who rely on customers choosing a more traditional send-off.



Three Key Results

The Big Future of Funerals Survey asked 11 questions about why people had chosen the simplest cremation option available, how the end of their life should be marked, where this should happen and who should be in charge.

A caring decision

54%

Want less stress for the family and friends they leave behind when arranging their send-off (Only 5% sought the cheapest option).

A new focus

52%

Want to express their life through the ashes' final resting place - changing where and how we say goodbye in the future.

Confident consumers

77%

Said they didn't need any professional help to arrange the farewell event - indicating a reduced role for funeral professionals.

Pure Cremation is one of the UK's leading providers of direct cremation





Methodology

Pure Cremation conducts the Big Future of Funerals Survey to better understand the motives behind the growth in the popularity of direct cremation services and what this might mean for the future of funeral provision in the UK.

This survey is believed to be the biggest in the sector, increasing dramatically in size from nearly **2,000** responses in 2019 (**20%** response), to achieving more than **17,000** responses in 2022, from just over 65,000 (**26%** response) direct cremation plan holders.

The questions in the latest survey have been adapted slightly to allow data to be collected and collated electronically however the questions were largely unchanged as comparing survey results is an important tool for observing trends.

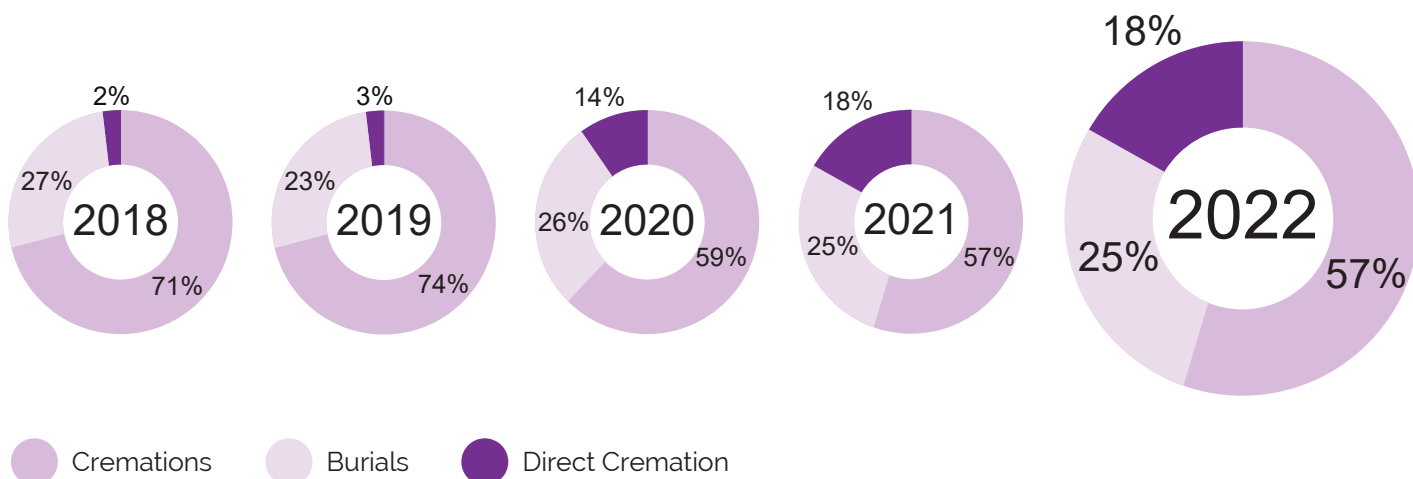
All those surveyed have planned and paid for their own simple, direct cremation, which means that the 2022 results offer more than a fascinating snapshot of today's attitudes – it reveals significant trends for the future.

Background

Direct cremation has become a mainstream choice

The first Big Future of Funerals Survey in 2019 generated nearly 2,000 responses from 11,000 questionnaires. At that time the idea of direct cremation still felt very new, only embraced by non-conformist families and individuals who actively rejected traditional funerals.

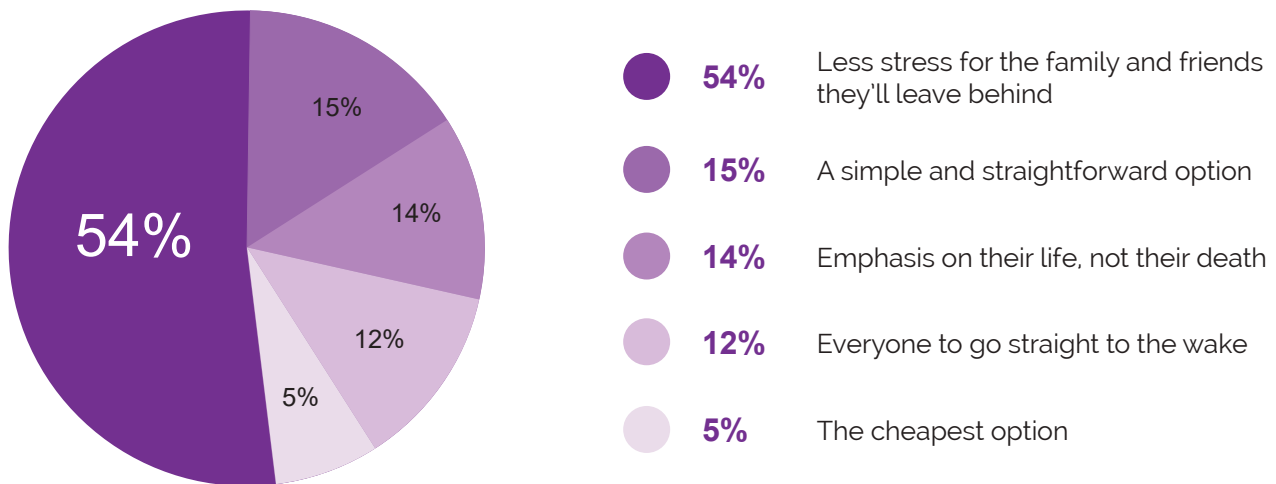
In the last 4 years the demand for direct cremation has more than quadrupled, accelerated by the pandemic restrictions, and is expected to match that for burials within the next 2 years.



Source: Sunlife Cost of Dying Report 2023

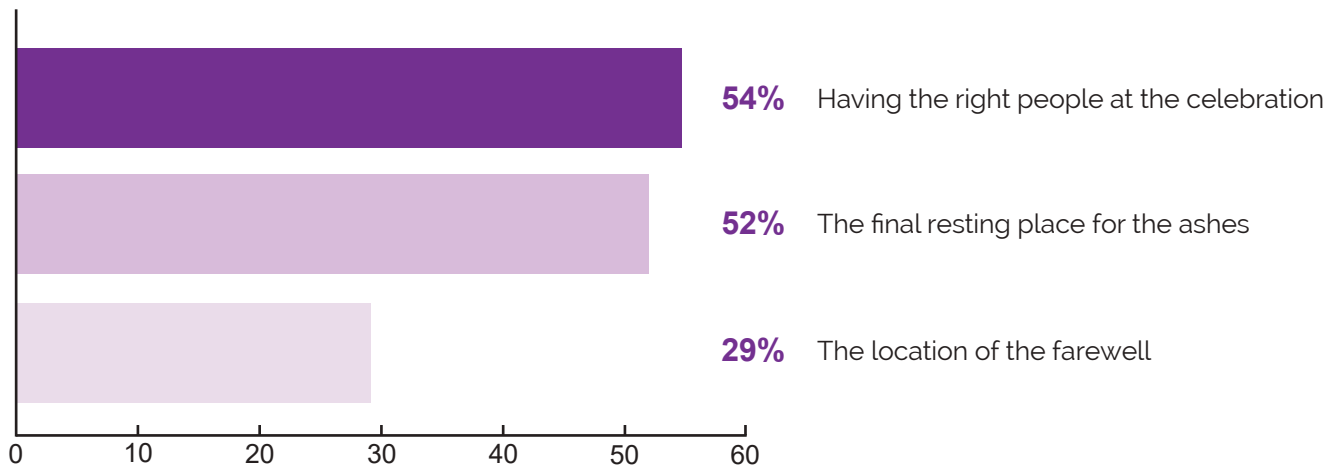
Behind the headlines

People are choosing direct cremation because they want:



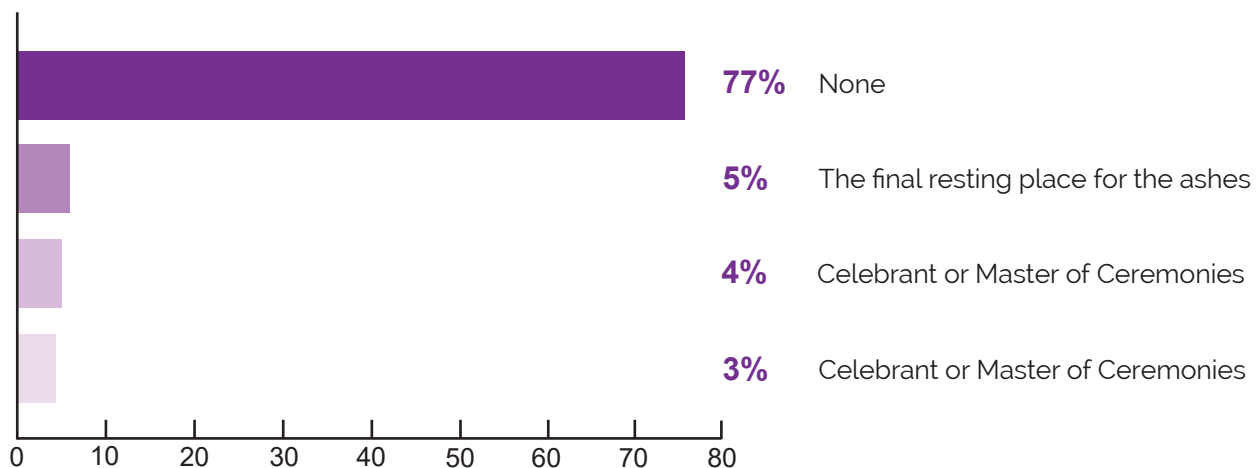
The most important ways to express a life are:

(multiple answers allowed)



More confident consumers are in charge

When asked which professionals they would engage to help to organise the farewell a staggering 77% chose 'None' and only 4% would engage a Celebrant or Master of Ceremonies.



These results make complete sense when our respondents are opting to change the focus away from the coffin at the crematorium and towards the disposition of the ashes, via more informal and celebratory events.

What these results mean



A big change to the funeral service landscape is on the horizon

Does this signal the death of the funeral?

NO!

Our results show that a good send-off still matters, but how this looks and where it happens are already changing thanks to two key developments:

- A well-established trend towards celebrating the life that has been lived rather than mourning the death
- A new opportunity to 'uncouple' the cremation from the ceremonial elements

Acknowledging the death of someone special is a key rite of passage and this is evolving in a very similar way to weddings. Whatever the budget, people expect a wedding to be a highly personalised 'experience' that reflects the couple's own style. It's no surprise that funerals are heading in this direction too.

Timeline

1960

Most funerals take place in church, with a short committal at the crematorium

1980

More funerals take place entirely at the crematorium, but still led by clergy

2000

Most funerals take place entirely at the crematorium and are led by civil celebrants

2015

Pure Cremation launches its service for the people who reject the traditional funeral format, followed quickly by the launch of a direct cremation pre-paid funeral plan

2020+

Awareness of direct cremation is growing thanks to active promotion on TV and the web by a growing number of providers, plus the need to make pragmatic choices during the Coronavirus pandemic had an effect. Post-pandemic there is a more general shift in mood, with consumers looking for better value, more personal send-offs on their terms.

The Future of Funerals

These developments have profound implications for the future role of funeral directors and other professionals in this sector, and lead us to make these 4 predictions:

1

Friends not strangers

The most emotionally significant part of any funeral is the tribute to the person who has died and there is a movement away from engaging professional strangers to achieve this.

Those choosing direct cremation for themselves want to be sure the right people are present and nearly half (48%) want the farewell timed to ensure family and friends can be there.

50% say it is very or extremely important to have family and friends in charge or arranging the farewell.

PREDICTION: Farewells will become 'invitation' events held separately from the cremation and we will see a longer interval between the death and goodbye to allow enough time to plan the event and gather everyone together.



2

A happier place

There is a desire to say goodbye in a place associated with happy memories for the bereaved and deceased.

More than a quarter feel the venue is an important way to personalise the farewell event, and nearly one in three find the crematorium is too depressing. Families are used to choosing the perfect place for weddings, so it is no surprise to see this trend emerge in funerals too.

Home and nature are the settings most popular with respondents.

Home or Garden
35%

Beauty Spot
25%

Beach
18%



PREDICTION: Fewer ceremonies will be held at the crematorium, the specialist 'death venue', but hospitality and heritage venues could begin to offer farewell packages especially with the focus shifting away from the coffin.

3

Focus moves from coffin to ashes

The survey has revealed that one of the most powerful ways to express the life that has been lived is the final resting place for the ashes (**52%**), only slightly behind having the right people present (**54%**).

For many years the number of families choosing formal disposition of the ashes in a cemetery has declined. It feels natural to 'upgrade' the laying to rest of the ashes to the main farewell event, especially when moving away from the coffin as the focal point opens an almost unlimited range of venues, allowing families to tangibly reflect their loved one's life story.

PREDICTION: Today's families are seeking more personal farewells, with the right people, in the right place, and with an emphasis on life not death. Separating the two parts of a funeral (the cremation and the tribute) offers greater scope to achieve these goals and this practice will become more popular.



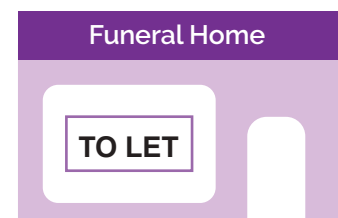
4

A reduced role for traditional providers

With families taking greater control over the farewell event the role of crematoria, funeral directors and celebrants will change significantly:

- Funeral directors face relegation to the performance of the essential practical tasks of caring for the deceased and logistics of unattended cremations; they will need to adjust their business model as the revenue per funeral falls
- Crematoria will find their chapel spaces increasingly used simply as the arrival hall for direct cremations, potentially driving up the cost of traditional services to maintain income levels
- Civil celebrants will not survive unless they can promote their services to families directly rather than relying on funeral directors for referrals

PREDICTION: There will be fewer funeral directors and celebrants in the future, and traditional funeral services could become more expensive, further increasing the appeal of direct cremation.



In summary

Funerals are already changing from occasions for mourning that are held in specialist venues and overseen by dedicated professionals to celebratory, family-run events in familiar and more relaxed surroundings, with a separate unattended cremation.

As more people get to experience these new-style goodbyes an ever-greater number will question the limited format and high costs of the traditional British funeral.

About Pure Cremation and Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Ltd

Pure Cremation Group Ltd is the parent company of Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Ltd and Pure Cremation Ltd. It is wholly independent, owned by four shareholders – Bryan Powell, Catherine Powell, Richard Thomerson and Rob Murphy.

Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Ltd offers a pre-paid plan for the very simplest cremation style available, and in the last 2 years alone has attracted more than 110,000 new plan holders. Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Ltd became the UK's number 1 pre-paid plan provider by annual sales volume¹ in 2021.

A pre-paid funeral plan makes things easier for those you leave behind because you can express your wishes and make provision for the costs of fulfilling them. In addition, almost every person buying a direct cremation funeral plan will discuss their decision with family and friends, increasing awareness and acceptance of this new way of saying goodbye.

In 2022 funeral plans became regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Ltd are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Pure Cremation Ltd was founded by experienced funeral professionals who saw an unmet need for an alternative to the traditional funeral. They pioneered a new way to deliver simple cremations and make them available to families across the UK at the same transparent price.

Pure Cremation Ltd offers direct cremation services to families with an immediate need and is the funeral service provider chosen to fulfil the plans sold by its sister company, Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Ltd.

Pure Cremation Ltd operates Charlton Park Crematorium in Hampshire and carried out nearly 3% of all funerals in England and Wales in 2022.

1 Claim based on data from Pure Cremation, Dignity plc annual report, Co-operative Society annual Report and the Funeral Planning Association statistics published in 2021. For substantiation data visit www.purecremation.tv.

Pure Cremation provides caring teams available 24/7, quality care, good value for money and strong environmental credentials.



Read what our customers say...

About our Direct Cremation service provided by Pure Cremation Ltd



Our customers rate us
4.8 out of 5!
2,400+ online reviews

"I am glad to be able to easily write a review, because the experience - from start to finish - was exceptional. They really took care of the little things; I was particularly impressed by the way in which they hand-delivered my dad's ashes to my Mum. She was most impressed. Thank you."

Adrian John Heywood

"My husband wanted no traditional funeral but a party to celebrate his life, so when he passed at Christmas, I contacted Pure Cremation they did everything with dignity and respect. He will be having a wonderful Viking theme party, I will be setting a plan for myself, it takes all the stress away of organising a funeral."

Donna Appleyard

About our funeral plans provided by Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Ltd



Our customers rate us
4.9 out of 5!
14,000+ online reviews

"My wife did this all online for me it was straight forward and given me peace at mind knowing everything is sorted for when the inevitable happens leaving my family to enjoy celebrating my life in the style they choose to do without any worries I would recommend people to sort their plans as earlier as possible it is so simple, I'm pleased now that I can get on with the rest of my life."

Rachel

"Very polite and friendly on the phone. Answered any questions. Advised you are able to make any changes... just give them a ring. It's given me peace of mind and one thing less to worry about. I don't like funerals and don't want one for myself. I'll have my flowers before I die."

Barbara North

"At first I was quite daunted arranging my own funeral. It seemed so surreal. But the application process and a member of staff gave me the confidence to take the plunge and filling in the online form was simple and it is something I wanted to do for a long time, and one less thing for my family to worry about."

Arthur Brooks

"It was stress free, so easy to fill in the information required. I received my pack in less than a week. Could not believe how quickly it had been dealt with. What could have been a difficult matter emotionally, in fact, was not. Nice, experienced firm to deal with, so glad I chose them."

Patricia Johnson

Results comparison by question



Q1. Why have you chosen not to have a funeral service at your local crematorium?

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
It's too depressing	49.67%	30.20%
The service itself is too short and rushed	9.80%	1.93%
It feels like a production line	43.52%	17.72%
I find it all rather impersonal	25.87%	10.80%
Getting to a weekday service is stressful and inconvenient	13.83%	3.06%
I'd rather go to the wake	19.83%	12.04%
Seeing the coffin is too traumatic	35.08%	9.87%
No response	5.56%	14.37%

Q2. There are many reasons for choosing a direct cremation. Please select the statement that best reflects your decision.

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
My farewell event should emphasise my life not my death	34.15%	13.78%
I wanted the cheapest option	40.80%	5.07%
I want to take the stress away from my family/friends	N/A	53.91%
I want something simple and straightforward	N/A	15.31%
There won't be many people to attend a funeral	13.89%	4.66%
I want my family to be in charge of the style and location of the farewell	16.12%	3.77%
I find traditional funerals too upsetting	20.15%	3.13%
No response	1.36%	0.36%

Q3. How important is it that your family or friends are in charge of your farewell event/celebration of life?

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Extremely important - 5	32.08%	20.76%
Very important - 4	8.01%	19.35%
Somewhat important - 3	9.86%	17.44%
Not so important - 2	5.94%	21.72%
Not at all important - 1	7.90%	17.88%
0	33.77%	N/A
No response	2.12%	2.85%

Q4. How important is it to personalise your farewell event/celebration of life?

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Extremely important - 5	23.47%	20.76%
Very important - 4	7.90%	19.35%
Somewhat important - 3	10.51%	17.44%
Not so important - 2	6.15%	21.72%
Not at all important - 1	9.42%	17.88%
0	40.03%	N/A
No response	2.29%	2.85%

Q5. How should this farewell event express your life and personality? (Tick all that apply).

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Location	28.70%	29.16%
Food	15.74%	12.38%
Ashes resting place	35.19%	52.34%
Legacy for a good cause	7.41%	N/A
Music	19.17%	24.80%
Having the right people at the celebration	N/A	53.90%
How people dress	3.87%	5.11%
Decoration	2.94%	1.47%
Other	11.27%	N/A
No response	36.17%	N/A

Q6. What would be your ideal farewell location?

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Home	15.25%	21.21%
Hotel	3.76%	4.07%
Church	4.19%	2.88%
Beach	13.67%	17.76%
Garden	13.62%	13.84%
Beauty spot	N/A	24.88%
Other	19.12%	N/A
No response	35.40%	15.36%

Q7. When would you ideally choose to hold your farewell?

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Monday to Friday	22.98%	7.50%
Monday to Friday morning	7.19%	2.68%
Monday to Friday afternoon	9.64%	3.90%
Monday to Friday evening	1.96%	1.65%
Saturday and Sunday	30.34%	20.28%
Saturday/Sunday morning	4.47%	3.61%
Saturday/Sunday afternoon	17.21%	8.71%
Saturday/Sunday evening	4.03%	3.36%
No response/non-committal	46.68%	48.29%

Q8. What timescale would you suggest for your farewell event?

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Before I go	6.10%	4.76%
Within 2 months of my death	31.54%	19.31%
2-6 months after my death	9.26%	3.69%
Whenever my family can all get together	N/A	48.33%
Around the anniversary of my death	9.42%	4.24%
No response/non-committal	43.68%	19.67%

Q9. Which professionals would you consider engaging for your farewell event? (Tick all that apply).

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Doula	1.25%	N/A
Celebrant/Master of Ceremonies	6.97%	3.67%
Singer/Other Musicians	7.90%	2.79%
Photographer	0.98%	0.47%
Caterer	6.86%	4.49%
Event Planner	2.45%	0.41%
None – would prefer family member	N/A	77.25%
Other	31.75%	N/A
No response/non-committal	49.35%	16.25%

Q10. Pick one phrase that you feel best describes you and your farewell choices.

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Traditional funerals feel 'fake' and impersonal	3.38%	3.15%
There are other ways to show someone that you care than a traditional funeral	N/A	10.53%
There are better ways to show someone that you care	12.31%	N/A
I'm a modest person who dislikes being the centre of attention	14.49%	13.70%
It's a waste of money – you should spend money on the living	24.84%	18.65%
Death is just a natural part of life and doesn't need a special ritual	24.13%	13.01%
I don't like being bound by tradition and like to make my own choices	N/A	7.00%
I'm a rebel who likes to do things differently	3.21%	N/A
I want people to celebrate my life and remember the good times	33.28%	32.22%
No response/non-committal	1.63%	1.73%

Q11. While the cremation might be unattended, there are many ways for family and friends to be involved before, during and after your death. Please indicate which of the following would mean something to you. (Tick all that apply).

Answer choices	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
Visits and calls during my final weeks	38.07%	35.85%
Being there right until the last breath	18.52%	18.44%
Washing my face and hands and making me look good	8.06%	7.24%
Dressing me in a favourite final outfit	6.48%	7.37%
The option to spend time with my body	6.37%	7.51%
Sending photos, letters or cards to go with me	7.79%	9.19%
Allowing me to tell my life's story/memories	N/A	6.69%
Choose a favourite keepsake or toy to accompany me	7.35%	8.88%
Placing the ashes of a favourite pet with mine	8.06%	9.70%
Picking flowers from their garden	6.10%	6.48%
Providing favourite food/signature dishes at farewell	5.72%	3.74%
Writing a eulogy	4.90%	4.47%
Creating a playlist of my favourite music	15.80%	19.57%
Decorating the farewell venue	2.23%	1.35%
Creating a video or photo tribute of my life	3.10%	4.11%
Recording a video of the farewell	1.03%	1.41%
Taking photos at the farewell	3.27%	2.72%
Selecting an appropriate scattering location for my ashes	46.90%	42.40%
Contributing to a memory book/box or display	2.61%	3.66%
Arranging a toast with my favourite tippie	22.44%	18.86%
Arranging a charity fundraiser (e.g. walk, climb, cycle, golf competition)	3.49%	2.36%
Arranging a collection for a special cause/charity in my memory	N/A	17.24%
Other	10.35%	N/A
No response	9.69%	16.52%



**Pure
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The freedom to choose

0808 500 8003

www.purecremation.co.uk

Pure Cremation Funeral Planning Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Registered address: Charlton Park Crematorium, Charlton Down, Andover, SP110TA.

Tel: 01264 319 319.

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