

Press release

Soaring Cost of Funerals Leads to Rise in Crowdfunded Funerals

14 September 2016 - JustGiving has revealed the number of people turning to crowdfunding to help pay the costs of funerals has increased by 313% since 2015. More than 2,000 people across the UK have crowdfunded on JustGiving to help say farewell to loved ones in 2016 so far, with a page raising on average £1,300.

The data released coincides with the publication of SunLife's 10th annual Cost of Dying Report, which found that the average funeral cost has risen by 5.5% to £3,897 in 2016. SunLife's research found that 40% of people organising a funeral said it cost more than they expected and more than a third (38%) of those said it cost a lot more. As a result, one in twelve people organising a funeral said they had to cut back or change some of the 'send-off' costs they had planned for their loved one:

- 30% had to cut back on limousines for immediate family
- 27% on the memorial (headstone, urn, bench etc.)
- 26% had to make cutbacks to the catering.
- 17% cut back on flowers
- 15% had to find a cheaper venue

Charles Wells, Chief Operations Officer for JustGiving, said: "Thinking about the costs of a funeral is the last thing a grieving family wants to do but with the cost of funerals rising JustGiving has seen increasing numbers of people turning to crowdfunding to help say farewell to their loved ones. It can also be a practical way for friends, family and the community to come together and help take the strain off families when they're mourning their loss."

In November 2015, a Freedom of Information request by the BBC revealed that the number of "paupers' funerals" carried out by local authorities for people who die alone or without relatives able to pay had risen by 11% between 2011 and 2015*.

Pages launched on JustGiving in 2016 to pay for funeral costs include:

- A cyclist whose body was kept in a mortuary for three months. Charles Birmingham was fatally injured in a crash involving a skip wagon in Oldham on April 8. Commenting on the crowdfunding page she launched, Birmingham's friend and landlady, Linzi Millward, said:

'It has now been 14 weeks since he passed away and he remains with the coroner following the inquest. Whilst his family have applied for the death grant to support some of the funeral costs. They need to raise deposit for his funeral. Any donation, no matter how small would be fully appreciated.'



The crowdfunding page for Charles Birmingham raised £2,433 and the funeral was able to take place on 5 August: <https://crowdfunding.justgiving.com/Charlie-Birmingham> <http://road.cc/content/news/198095-no-funeral-yet-oldham-cyclist-killed-three-months-ago-%E2%80%93-crowdfunding-appeal>

- A lady whose battle with terminal cancer provided inspiration and encouragement to others fighting the disease. Claire Blair was initially given only a few weeks when she was diagnosed with breast cancer but survived for seven years and set up her own charity during that time. Yet the costs of the funeral were so high that her family were unable to afford a headstone and so she was laid to rest in an unmarked grave. Over two years later her friend launched a crowdfunding page has raised over £1,000, enabling her family to buy her a headstone and pay the parish charges: <https://crowdfunding.justgiving.com/amanda-bell>
- A local charity in Felixstowe who crowdfunded for a local man who passed away. When Ralph Ryder passed away he was unable to even afford heating in his home. The Basic Life Charity raised just over £2,000 for Ryder's funeral after launching a crowdfunding page on JustGiving: <https://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/basiclife/ralphryder>

*<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34943805>

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Further information:

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Data:

- 2,007 crowdfunding pages to pay for funeral costs were launched on JustGiving between Jan 2016 and September 2016; 486 pages were launched during the same period in 2015.
- A crowdfunding page to pay for funeral cost raises an average of £1,300 on JustGiving
- 52,630 people have donated to crowdfunding pages to pay for funeral costs on JustGiving between Jan 2016 and September 2016

The Sunlife's 10th annual Cost of Dying Report: <https://www.sunlife.co.uk/press-office/>

About JustGiving

Voted Best Giving Platform by the charity members of the Institute of Fundraising in 2014 and 2015, JustGiving is the world's social platform for giving, enabling over 26 million people across 164 countries to raise \$4 billion since 2001. As a tech-for-good company, JustGiving charges a small fee on donations, all of which is re-invested into the development of world-



class technology and innovative tools to fulfil its mission to connect people with the causes they care about.