

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th March 2017

Dear Constituent,
RE: COST OF CHILDREN'S FUNERALS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the costs of children's funerals.

I agree that this is an incredibly important issue, and as you say, the death of a child is always a tragedy for which families could not possibly plan.

I understand that a number of local authorities already choose to waive fees for children's funerals. I hope all local authorities would carefully consider their policy in this area and I have written to both Corby Borough Council and East Northamptonshire Council to ascertain the position in our area. As democratically elected organisations, however, they are independent of central government and are responsible for managing their budgets in line with local priorities.

There is a role that central government can play, which is why the Department for Work and Pensions operates the *Social Fund Funeral Payment* scheme that you mention. This continues to provide valuable help for people in receipt of a qualifying benefit. With an average award in 2015-16 of £1,410, the scheme is making a real contribution to the funeral costs of those who need it. Indeed, the average award has increased by 27 percent since 2006.

The scheme meets the full necessary costs of a cremation or burial. Other costs, such as the coffin, and church and funeral directors' fees, are limited to a maximum scheme payment of £700. There is, however, no restriction on the type of funeral expenses that can be claimed under this category.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

That said, I know Ministers are looking closely at what more can be done. I will keep a close eye on progress.

LISTENING TO YOU - CAMPAIGNING FOR YOU
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