

Our First Offices

EXPLAINED

A brief explanation of what First Offices are, when we
do them, where and why



THE SEARSON FAMILY
FUNERAL SERVICE

*"We don't just arrange funerals, we create
meaningful days"*

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Our First Offices

A Brief Overview

WHAT ARE FIRST OFFICES?

First Offices constitute the first duty of care provided by the Funeral Director upon the arrival of a Guest in their care. Historically, this role was often carried out by a Nurse or another Community Carer when someone passed away, and it was known as 'Last Offices'. However, over time, this responsibility is now frequently undertaken by the Funeral Director.

First Offices involve the general laying out of a deceased upon arrival at the Funeral Home. This includes ensuring they are positioned comfortably so that, when Rigor Mortis sets in, their posture remains straight and relaxed. Specially designed devices are available to help achieve the proper posture: Head Rests, Arm Positioners, and Body Adjusters that support and maintain the preferred position before the deceased is placed in their coffin.

First Offices are a set of standard procedures governed by our 'Mortuary Care Policy'. This Policy outlines the minimum required actions for each Guest during the initial stage of their journey with us.

WHERE IS THE DECEASED KEPT?

Every Guest that enters our care will initially come to our 'Mortuary Care Facility' at our Havant Funeral Home. Once they are prepared for visitors, they will be taken to your chosen Chapel of Rest. They will lie in a temperature-controlled 'Guest Room', which is designed to care for those with dignity and to meet all necessary manual handling requirements. Being temperature-controlled means we can also manage Mother Nature more effectively.

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WHAT ELSE IS INVOLVED?

First Offices involve more than just general laying out. Our 'Mortuary Care Standards' specify specific steps to maintain a Guest's comfort, dignity, and care at all times: We ensure each Guest is clean and free from soiling before they are transferred to a Resting Tray. When soiling is evident, clothing may be removed and replaced with disposable garments until suitable clothing is provided. No Guest is ever left without some form of clothing while in our care. When soiling occurs, we are required to clean, wash, and disinfect before using alternative garments. For health and safety reasons, soiled clothing will be disposed of through our clinical waste process.

Upon arrival at the Funeral Home, we also take measurements such as their height and width, which are necessary to select the appropriate coffin size. We also weigh each Guest on specially designed scales to meet the Crematorium's requirements and to determine how many staff may be needed for the funeral. The check-in process is thorough and detailed, and all staff are trained to ensure every requirement is met to the highest standard.

WHEN ARE FIRST OFFICES CARRIED OUT?

First offices are conducted upon arrival at our Mortuary Care Facility. This could be during working hours or during the night. Our facility is operated around the clock, and regardless of the time of day or night, every Guest is received into our care using the same steps. We have staff on call, our 'First Call Team', and, should they encounter any problems, there is also a Funeral Director on call to guide and assist where necessary.

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HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO IS WHO?

When a Guest is brought into our care, they undergo a thorough identification process. We operate a digital booking system that tracks each Guest from their arrival at our Funeral Home until they depart for the funeral. This system manages their journey, details processes, movements, property, and care.

IDENTIFICATION is vital, so we have adopted technology that digitally prints Patient Wristbands with details such as: Full Name, Address, Date of Birth, and Date of Death. When there are two or more guests with similar names, additional wristbands are used to distinguish them. These Wristbands and the system we use are identical to those employed by the NHS in hospitals; they are water- and tear-resistant and provide maximum data security. We also have a 'Mortuary Board' that visually indicates the location of guests at any given time.

Each Mortuary Tray is also marked with a Name Card, and once a Guest is placed in their coffin, an Identification Card is attached at the end for further identification measures.

DO YOU PROVIDE FIRST OFFICES TO EVERYONE?

YES ... As a Funeral Director, our fundamental role is to ensure the care, safety, and dignity of those entrusted to us. First Offices are not a method of preparation; you have a range of options available depending on your needs and preferences. First Offices guarantee that CARE is provided, and the process also complies with the regulatory requirements of the UK FUNERAL DIRECTOR CODE as specified by the National Association of Funeral Directors.