



New funerary methods

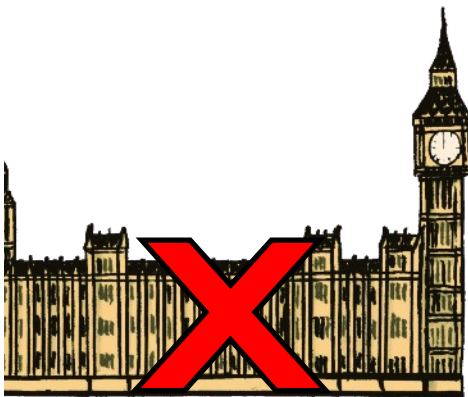


Easy Read version

Who we are



We are the Law Commission of England and Wales.



We are independent. This means we are not part of the Government.



We look at the law and suggest changes to make it better.

What we are doing



We are looking at the law about **new funerary methods** in England and Wales.



New funerary methods are different ways of dealing with a body of a person who has died, other than **burial, cremation or burial at sea**.



Burial means burying the body of a person who has died.



Cremation means the body of a person who has died is burned and turned into ashes.



Burial at sea means the body of a person who has died is placed in the sea.

Our project



We held a public **consultation** from June to September 2025.

A **consultation** means we ask people questions and listen to their ideas.

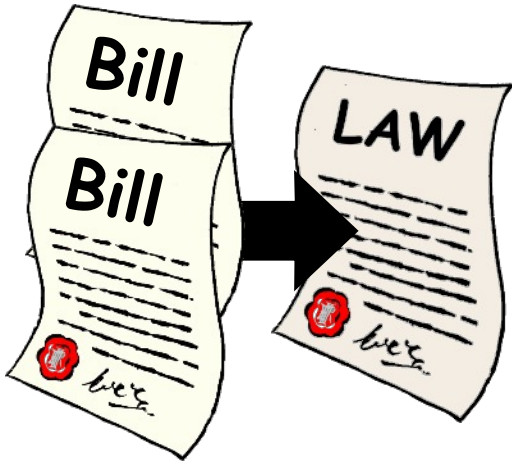


We read everyone's answers to the **consultation** and this helped us decide how we think the law should change.



We have now published a Report which makes **recommendations** to the Government.

Recommendation is another word for a suggestion.



We have also given them a first version of 2 draft **Bills**, 1 for England and 1 for Wales.

A **Bill** is a suggestion for a new law for Parliament to look at and talk about. When they agree what it should say, they ask the King to make it law.



The Government will now look at our Report and decide whether to follow our **recommendations** and change the law.



This booklet is an easy read summary of our Report. Our full Report and our draft Bills can be found at

lawcom.gov.uk/project/new-funerary-methods/



In this booklet we tell you our **recommendations** for changing the law. We have not covered everything in this booklet. But we have tried to focus on the things we think will matter most to you.

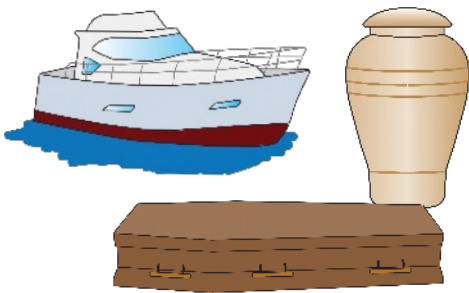


You may want help to read it.

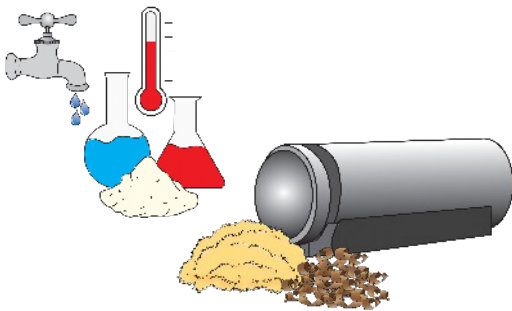


There are some difficult words in this booklet. These are in **bold**. There is a list of what they mean at the end of this booklet.

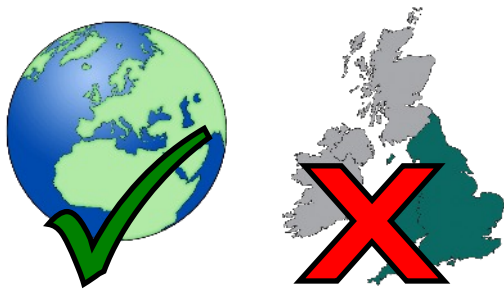
Why the law needs to change



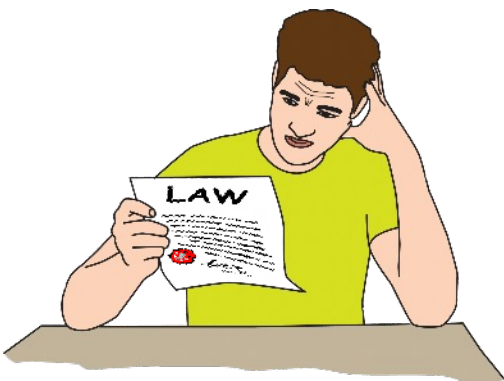
People that die in England and Wales are either **buried, cremated or buried at sea.**



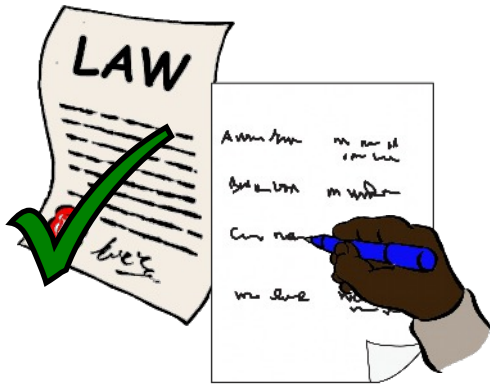
There are now other ways of dealing with people's bodies after they have died and there may be more in the future. These are called **new funerary methods.**



Some **new funerary methods** are available in different parts of the world but are not available in England and Wales.



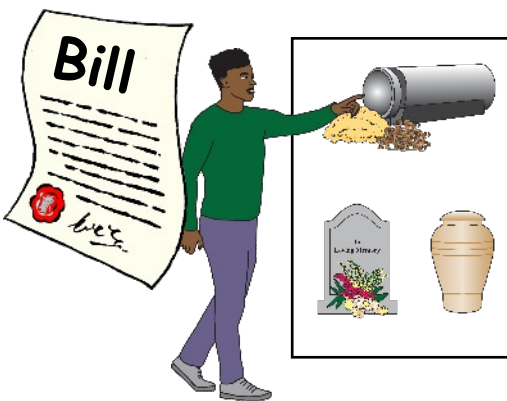
The law about **new funerary methods** is not very clear.



There are some laws which might apply, like the laws about how to **register** deaths. These laws may mean that **new funerary methods** cannot be used.



People have told us that it is important for the law to be clear. They want to be able to use **new funerary methods** in a way that is safe.

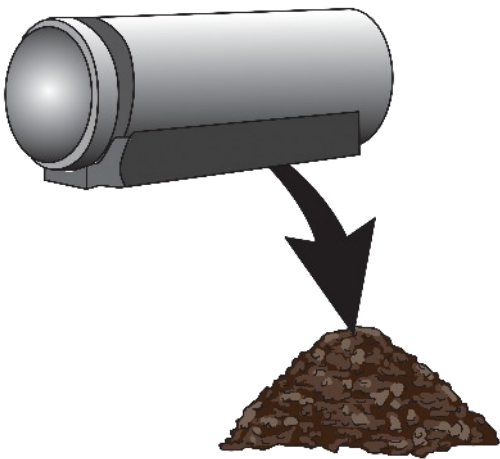


Our **recommendations** and draft **Bills** could be used to make **new funerary methods** available here. This could give people more choice about what happens to their bodies when they die.

What is a new funerary method?



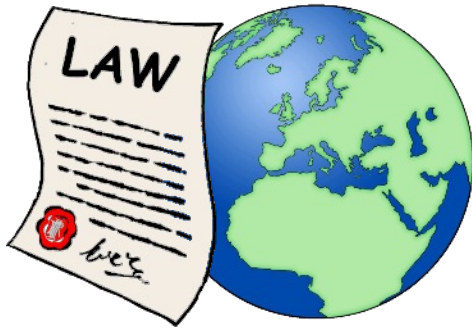
A **new funerary method** is a process that breaks down the body of a person who has died. A **new funerary method** must be different from **burial, cremation or burial at sea**.



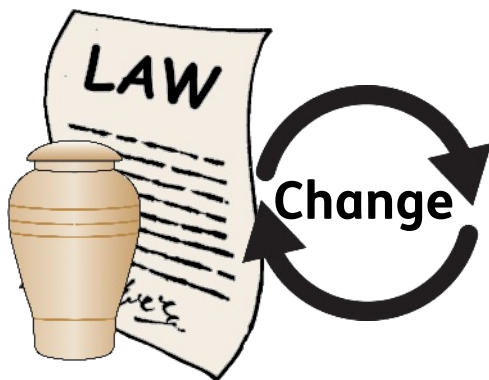
The purpose of a **new funerary method** is to dispose of the body.

This means that methods which preserve the body, instead of breaking it down, are not **new funerary methods**.

New laws



Different places around the world have made laws about **new funerary methods** in different ways.

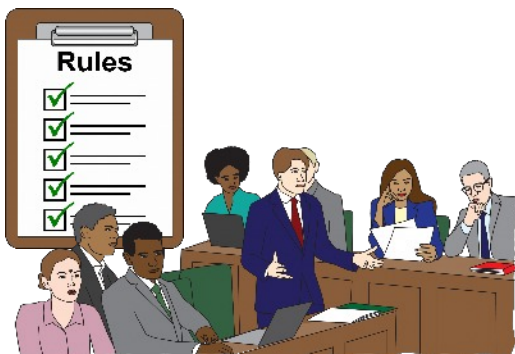


Some places have changed existing laws about **cremation** so they also apply to **new funerary methods**.

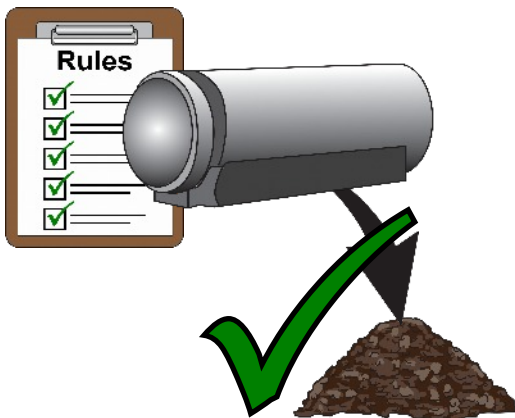


We think it would be best to have a new set of laws about **new funerary methods** in England and Wales.

Rules about new funerary methods



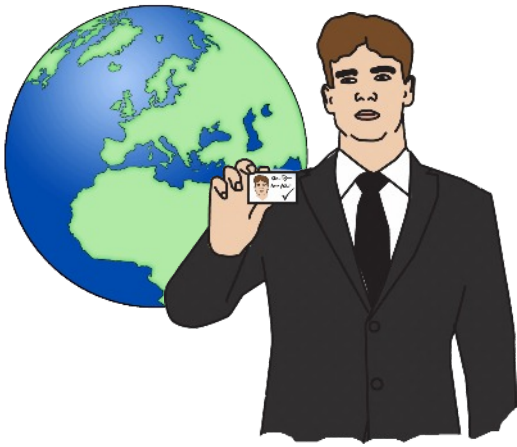
If our draft **Bills** become law, they will let the Government make rules about **new funerary methods** called **regulations**. This would be similar to the law in Scotland.



The **regulations** will be able to say how a **new funerary method** should be done.



Our Report does not suggest which **new funerary methods** the Government should make laws about. The Government should make that decision.

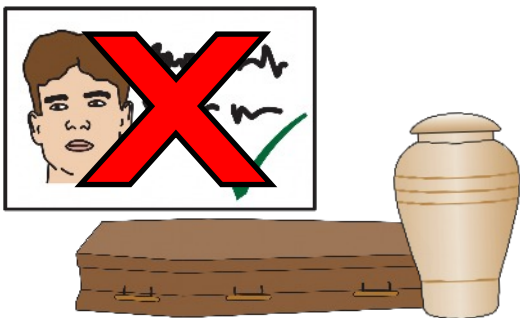


In some places around the world, people or companies who want to offer **new funerary methods** need a **licence**.

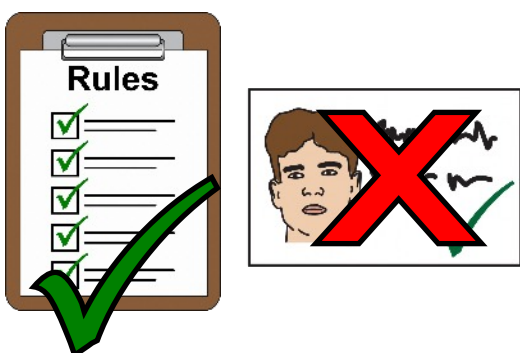
A **licence** means you are allowed to do something.



In our **consultation**, we asked if there should be licences for **new funerary methods** in England and Wales.



You do not need a **licence** to **bury** or **cremate** a body.



For **new funerary methods**, we think **regulations** made by the Government would be enough, without **licences**.

Principles



Principles are important points to think about.

There are 3 main **principles** which guide the law about **burial** and **cremation**. These are:



1. Looking after the environment - like the air, water and land,



2. People's health and safety,

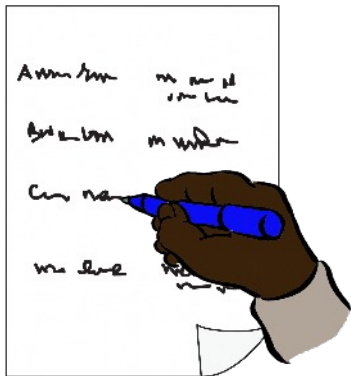


3. Treating the bodies of people who have died in a dignified way - with care and respect.



The Government should have to think about these **principles** when they make **regulations** about **new funerary methods**.

Registration



A **register** is written information that shows what has happened to a person's body after they have died.



When a **burial** or **cremation** happens, this must be **registered**. This means it must be written down and kept.



Keeping a **register** is important because it might help people. It might help:

- The police if they need to check who someone was.



- People who are looking into their family history.

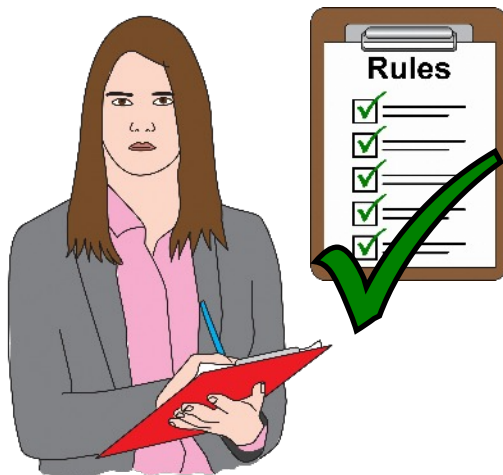


When the Government makes **regulations** about a **new funerary method**, we think that they must also make **regulations** about how, when and where someone must **register** each time the new method is used.

Making sure new funerary methods are done properly

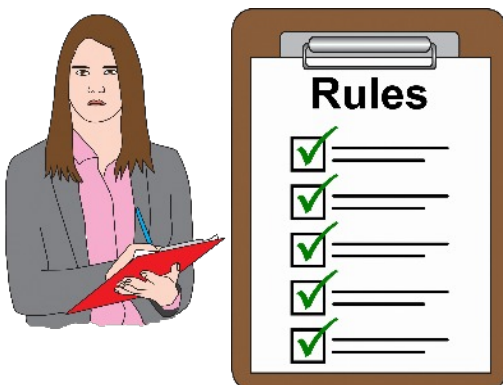


When someone is doing a **new funerary method**, they must follow the **regulations** made by the Government. It is important that this can be checked.



This should be done by **inspections**.

An **inspection** is when someone checks on people to make sure they are following the rules.



When the Government makes **regulations** about a **new funerary method**, they should also have to make **regulations** about **inspections**.



The Government should also be able to make rules saying that, if someone has done a **new funerary method** in a way that does not follow the **regulations**, that should be a crime.



If someone does this crime, they could get a fine.

Methods that have not been regulated



If someone does a **new funerary method** that the Government has not made **regulations** about, that could be dangerous.



It could also mean that people's bodies are not treated properly and it might be upsetting for people.



The law should say that, if the Government has not made **regulations** about a **new funerary method**, using that method is a crime.

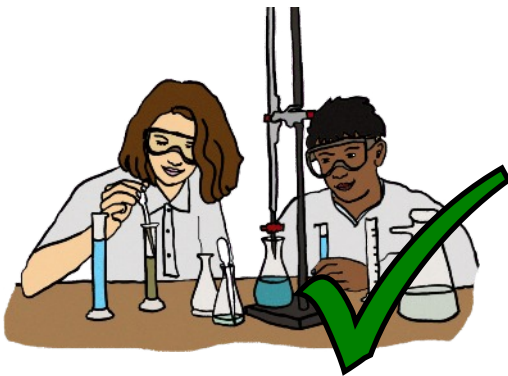


If someone does this crime, they could get a fine or go to prison.

Trials



Other kinds of **new funerary methods** might be developed in the future.



To make sure they are safe, they may need to be **trialled**.

A **trial** is where something is tested.



The Government should be able to make **regulations** about **trials** of **new funerary methods**.



Someone's body should only be used in a **trial** if they agreed to that before they die.

What happens next



We have given our **recommendations** in our Report and our draft **Bills** to the UK Government and the Welsh Government.



The UK Government can decide if they want to change the law for England, and the Welsh Government can decide if they want to change the law for Wales. Parliament will then decide whether to pass the new laws.



If our draft **Bills** become law, the UK Government and the Welsh Government can then decide which **new funerary methods** they want to make **regulations** about, and what should be in these **regulations**.

What the words mean

Bill: a suggestion for a new law for Parliament to look at and talk about. When they agree on what it should say, they ask the King to make it law.

Burial: burying the body of a person who has died.

Burial at sea: placing the body of a person who has died into the sea.

Consultation: a chance for you to tell us what you think by answering some questions.

Cremation: the body of a person who has died is burned and turned into ashes.

Inspection: a check to make sure people are following the rules.

Licence: permission to do something.

New funerary method: different ways of dealing with a body of a person who has died, other than **burial**, **cremation** or **burial at sea**.

Principles: important points to think about.

Recommendation: another word for suggestion.

Register: written information that shows what has happened.

Regulations: a type of law made by Government.

Trial: where something is tested.



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