

[News story: Civil news: medical report information and mental health claims](#)

Providers will need to start reporting the number of independent medical reports for controlled work from their June 2018 submission onwards.

Why is this necessary?

We are now collecting information on the number of independent medical reports billed on each mental health controlled work claim.

The idea is to improve the quality of the data we hold in this area.

The changes will apply to all completed cases from 1 June 2018. Providers submitting claims will be asked to enter the number of independent medical reports billed.

Mandatory change

It will become mandatory to enter this information for work billed from your June 2018 submission onwards.

We have updated our 'Guidance for reporting controlled work matters' to reflect these changes.

You should read the mental health section of this document for further details on the information you now need to report.

We will also be publishing a new bulkload spreadsheet, as well as information on the changes that have been made to CWA to help you report this information.

Further information

[CWA codes guidance](#) – to download 'Guidance for reporting controlled work matters'

[CWA updates to reporting changes](#) – for further guidance on the changes to CWA and bulkload spreadsheet

[Press release: Consultation seeks](#)

[views on Alkane Energy permit application](#)

Alkane Energy UK Ltd has applied to the Environment Agency for an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 for a site at Rufford Hills Farm, off Rufford Lane, Rufford, Nottinghamshire.

As part of this exploration the company plan to carry out the drilling of a borehole to extract gas from old mine shafts.

This is a well-established technique that the company use at several sites in the area, with the gas then converted into electricity.

The Environment Agency is seeking views from the local community and interested groups on the application. The application documents have been placed [online](#) for people to view and provide comments.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency, said:

We insist that where a permit is required our standards are met and that we have evidence that the process can take place safely. We will thoroughly assess the application to ensure that people and the environment are protected.

The consultation runs from 31 May 2018 until midnight on 28 June 2018.

People now have the chance to comment on the proposals by emailing pscpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk or you can post you response to:

PSC
The Land Team
Quadrant 2
99 Parkway Avenue
Sheffield
S9 4WF

[News story: Tougher regulation for funeral plan providers](#)

[New plans](#) to stop grieving families from being ripped off have been announced today (1 June 2018). The government [will consult](#) on tougher regulation for

the pre-paid funeral plan sector, and propose bringing the market into the supervision of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

People at their most vulnerable are being pressured, harassed and misled by some pre-paid funeral plan providers, according to research conducted by Citizens Advice Scotland and Fairer Finance. Approximately 95% of the funeral plan sector is voluntarily regulated by the Funeral Planning Authority (FPA), a self-regulatory body.

The FPA does not have the power to prevent pre-paid funeral plan providers from trading, and while it does have a code of practice for its members, this code is not legally binding.

John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury said:

I'm appalled by the lengths that some dishonest salesmen have gone to in order to sell a funeral plan. It breaks my heart to think that our oldest and most vulnerable are being pressured into funeral plans that leaves their grieving families out of pocket.

There are thousands of pre-paid funeral plans bought each year, and most providers are fair and legitimate. But tougher regulation will ensure robust standards are enforced for all plan providers, and protect individuals and their families if things go wrong.

Demand for funeral plans has grown significantly in recent years, with annual sales up roughly 245% between 2006 and 2017, but the regulations have remained unchanged since 2001.

James Daley, Managing Director of Fairer Finance, said:

Funeral plans are an important and valuable product, and we hope regulation of this sector will give responsible companies the chance to thrive, and give consumers the necessary reassurances they need to buy in confidence.

People who buy funeral plans are not around to measure delivery against their expectations, which is why it's so important there are clear rules around how companies must behave. And with most plans costing over £3,000 – it's important that customers can have total confidence that their money is safe.

In parallel to this [call for evidence](#), the Competition and Markets Authority [has launched a market study into the supply of funerals in the United Kingdom](#).

Further information

A funeral plan is a contract under which a customer makes one or more

payments to a provider, who subsequently arranges or pays for a funeral upon the death of the customer. Providers either invest these payments in a trust fund or take out a form of insurance against the life of the customer. This enables customers to pay for a funeral in advance and safeguard against inflation.

Pre-paid funeral plans exhibit many of the characteristics of other financial services products, such as insurance products, which is why responsibility for this call for evidence is within the remit of HM Treasury.

[Press release: CMA investigates funerals sector](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) market study will examine whether the information provided by funeral directors on prices and services is clear enough for people to be able to choose the best option for them.

It will also look at how prices have changed over time and the factors that affect them.

The average cost of a funeral was nearly £3,800 in 2017 – not counting extras that can add another £2000 to the total bill. Affordability and debt can therefore be a real concern to many people, with those on the lowest incomes potentially spending up to one third of their annual income on a funeral.

The rising level of cremation fees will be considered as part of the review, with cremations now estimated to account for around 75% of all funerals.

In parallel to the CMA's market study, HM Treasury is launching a separate [Call for Evidence](#) on regulation in the pre-paid funerals sector. The CMA therefore does not intend to examine the pre-paid sector within its market study.

Daniel Gordon, Senior Director of Markets at the CMA, said:

People can understandably be very emotionally vulnerable when planning a funeral. We therefore think it is important that – at what can be a particularly challenging time – the process is made as easy as possible.

As part of this study, we want to ensure that people can at least receive clear information on prices and the services making up a funeral, and that people get a fair deal on the cremation fees charged.

Views are welcome on any of the issues raised in the [statement of scope](#) by

the 28 June.

An interim report, presenting initial findings and views on potential remedies, will be published in 6 months, ahead of the final report in a year's time.

If it finds issues of particular concern, the CMA could take further action, such as opening consumer or competition enforcement cases or launching a full market investigation.

Notes to Editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. Market studies may lead to a range of outcomes, including:
 - clean bill of health
 - actions which improve the quality and accessibility of information to consumers
 - taking consumer or competition law enforcement action
 - making recommendations to the government to change regulations or public policy
 - encouraging businesses in the market to self-regulate
 - making a reference for a more in-depth (phase 2) market investigation, or
 - accepting formal undertakings in lieu of a reference
3. The UK funerals market is estimated to be worth over £2 billion a year. The CMA estimates that there are around 5,000 funeral director branches and 294 crematoria currently in operation in the UK. 106 crematoria are privately operated and the remainder are owned and operated by local authorities.
4. [The Royal London National Funeral Cost Index 2017](#) reports that the average cost of a funeral in 2017 was £3,784.

[News story: New Government Chemist appointed](#)

Dr Julian Braybrook will take up his position today (Friday 1 June), taking over from Dr Derek Craston, who became the Government Chemist in 2008.

Dr Braybrook is currently Director of Measurement Science for the [National Measurement Laboratory](#) at [LGC](#), a life sciences research and testing company.

He is responsible for the science strategy and partnership development of metrology and regulatory analysis programmes, in support of the UK National Measurement System.

Commenting on his appointment Dr Braybrook said:

I am truly honoured to take up the position of Government Chemist. I am excited to build on the successes of Dr Craston and uphold the standing of this important role.

Since joining LGC in 1988, Julian has carried out a variety of roles delivering and managing national and European analytical research innovation and contract service solutions, for a wide range of chemical and biotechnology applications. He holds several national, European and international positions informing standards generation and application, as well as government and commercial policy and practice.

Julian has a degree in Chemistry from the University of London and a PhD from the University of Cambridge for research into novel contrast agents for magnetic resonance spectroscopy and imaging. He has an honorary DSc from Kingston University London for his contributions to chemistry. He is a Chartered Chemist and Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (CChem FRSC).

The Government Chemist role was created in 1909, to ensure the Laboratory of the Government Chemist could work independently of the Inland Revenue department (which provided staff to the Laboratory) and the Board of Customs and Excise (which controlled it). Nowadays the Government Chemist oversees the statutory function of referee analyst, resolving disputes over analytical measurements, particularly in relation to food regulatory enforcement.

It is fundamental to providing an independent voice for sound analytical measurement science and preventing miscarriages of justice. The Government Chemist also promotes analytical science and technology, and provides advice to government on policy, standards and regulation based on research carried out by him and his team.