

28 July 2022

To: All Councils in Northern Ireland

Dear Chief Executive

Resolution of Council – Burials Charging Policy

I would advise that the Council had agreed to a Resolution effecting an amendment to its Cemeteries Burial Charging Policy as a result of a review following a case which is set out in this letter. It was agreed that I should write to the other ten Councils and ask them to consider implementing the same policy.

In December 2021 a young man, Daniel Ferguson, passed away suddenly while living in Australia, a few days before he was due to return to Northern Ireland to live again in his home town of Donaghadee.

The Council was contacted by the Undertaker on behalf of the family to make arrangements for Daniel to be buried at the local Cemetery in Donaghadee. They explained that he had passed away in Australia so a non resident charging rate was applied and the interment took place.

Daniel's mother subsequently contacted the Council asking if it would consider changing the related pricing policy in order to accommodate the circumstances experienced by her family. She explained that her son was packed and ready to return home when he died suddenly and he had already established evidence of residency in Northern Ireland by transferring his address on his official documents.

His mother also made it clear that she was not seeking redress on her particular case, but a change that would allow similar cases to be avoided in the future. If such a change was possible, she asked if such changes might be encouraged across the other ten Councils in Northern Ireland.

The Council considered this request at its meeting in June 2022, and agreed to amend its pricing policy to include the application of a resident's burial discount if there was evidence of "imminent residency" as set out below.

The following criteria have now been introduced in order to evidence this as follows:

- Evidence provided that other statutory authorities had provided a new form of identification such as a driving licence to the deceased within three months prior to the date of death that included an address within the Borough.
- Evidence of an imminent return to the Borough, such as flight tickets or other evidence of travel arrangements.
- Evidence that this return was intended to be permanent at the time, evidence would include a tenancy or mortgage agreement.

All criteria must be met.

I would ask that you bring this Resolution to your Council and consider introducing a similar amendment to your Burials Charging Policy.

Yours faithfully



STEPHEN REID
Chief Executive