

# Alex Strangways-Booth

BBC



**The Institute of Cemetery and  
Crematorium Management  
Tackling Funeral Poverty Seminar 2016**



# PUBLIC HEALTH FUNERALS AND THE BBC

**How Persistence Paid Off.**

Alex Strangwayes-Booth  
Religious Affairs Producer, BBC English Regions

# WHY DO AN FOI ABOUT PH FUNERALS?

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## Burial space in England 'could run out in 20 years'

By Alex Strangwayes-Booth  
Religious affairs reporter, BBC News

🕒 27 September 2013 | [UK](#) | [📧](#)

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# BACK TO PERSISTENCE

- We approached 436 councils. Of the 409 who were responsible for Public Health Funerals, we had full responses from 300 ( all the data requested, for all the years)
- The data is taken from those 300.
- Many councils publish the data online now. But not in the form I wanted it! I spent a lot of time with a calculator!
- It took a year to gather the data.
- And another few months to crunch it

# SO WHAT DID IT SHOW?

## 'Paupers' funerals' cost councils £1.7m

By Caroline Wyatt & Alex Strangwayes-Booth  
BBC News

🕒 30 November 2015 | UK

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# STATS, STATS, STATS & PERCENTAGES.

- North West has the most funerals – followed by London
- The South East saw the biggest increase in numbers of PH funerals – 32% more.
- Biggest rise in costs in the South West – 63%
- Birmingham did 245 PH funerals in 2014.

# WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

- Government Select Committee Inquiry
- BBC Data contributed to their findings
- Are we now looking at an overhaul of the funeral industry and the Social Fund, and could our data have helped push that forward – I like to think so!