



Empowering ICCM Members: A 10-Point Sustainability Action Plan for Bereavement Professionals

Practical Strategies for Greener Cemetery and Crematorium Services

Introduction

As members of the bereavement profession, we occupy a unique and trusted position within our communities, serving alongside our colleagues in crematoria and related services. Many of us share a keen interest in environmental sustainability but may feel limited in our ability to effect change, either through lack of formal authority or uncertainty about where to begin. This 10-point plan has been developed to support our membership in taking meaningful, practical steps toward sustainability—regardless of role or seniority.

1. Stay Informed

Make it a priority to keep up to date with the latest developments in sustainable practices within the bereavement sector. By understanding the challenges and opportunities in areas such as emissions, energy use, and eco-friendly innovations, members will be better equipped to recognise where changes can be made.

2. Lead by Example

Demonstrate environmental responsibility in your daily routines—whether by minimising paper usage, switching off equipment when not in use, or being conscious of resource consumption. These small yet visible actions can inspire others and foster a culture of environmental awareness among fellow members.

3. Start Conversations

Encourage discussion among peers about sustainability; sharing relevant articles, sector news, or examples of green initiatives can gently spark interest. Remember, meaningful change often begins with an open and supportive conversation.

4. Seek Out Quick Wins

Identify opportunities for immediate, low-barrier improvements, such as organising a recycling point in staff areas or suggesting car-sharing schemes to reduce transport emissions. These initiatives can often be started without the need for formal approvals and demonstrate early commitment.

5. Gather and Present Evidence

Observe and note resource usage, waste, or existing practices within your area of work. Use this information to build a case for small improvements or to gently highlight opportunities for positive change within member forums or team meetings.

6. Engage Beyond Your Organisation

Participate in workshops, webinars, or discussions hosted by the wider bereavement or sustainability community. By bringing back knowledge and success stories from other organisations, you can help inspire new ideas among fellow members.

7. Collaborate and Network

Reach out to like-minded colleagues within our membership or partner organisations to explore collaborative initiatives, such as organising themed events or awareness sessions that focus on sustainability in bereavement care.

8. Invite Input

Encourage your peers to contribute suggestions for more sustainable practices, perhaps via an anonymous feedback mechanism or during regular meetings. Gathering a range of perspectives can help uncover new opportunities for improvement.

9. Celebrate Achievements

Share and acknowledge even modest sustainability successes within member communications, newsletters, or forums. Recognition boosts morale and reinforces the message that every step, no matter how small, is valuable.

10. Advocate Respectfully

Advocacy does not require formal authority. Continue to share positive messages about sustainability and encourage the belief that everyone within the membership has a role to play. Consistent, respectful advocacy helps shift culture and paves the way for broader action in the future.

Conclusion

While we may not each hold decision-making power, as a collective membership we can take persistent, incremental steps toward greener, more sustainable bereavement services. By embracing these practical actions, we honour not only those we serve but also our shared responsibility to the environment and future generations.

Further Overarching Resources to Consider

For a wider understanding of sustainability in both our everyday lives and the workplace, below you will find some useful and bite-sized links to broaden current understanding of what 'sustainability' might look like in practice. Please feel free to refer to these links or share with your teams:

https://youtu.be/t69P9_v7jrU Sustainability in 4 minutes. (4.01min)

<https://youtu.be/CfM0MxBfi2g> 8 Sustainable practises in the workplace. (2.15 min)

<https://youtu.be/SN5-DnOHQmE> What is the greenhouse gas effect. (2.30 min)

<https://youtu.be/BCQq0pafCL0> Report says UK is suffering from the effects of climate change. (2.21 min)

<https://youtu.be/AaFtQ21h1-E> Reducing the UK Greenhouse gas emissions and the clean growth strategy. (2.35 min)