

## Guidance notes for families who wish to carry coffins

The following notes are our recommendations as part of our company policy for family members wishing to assist in carrying a coffin. We can offer full training and preparation for carrying the coffins. Although in most instances it is not necessary, we can invite those who wish to carry into the relevant office and have members of our staff at hand to assist and advise with the removal a coffin from the hearse, the raising of the coffin to shoulder height and the lowering of the coffin onto trestles. We feel this would give confidence to people who have never been involved before. We would strongly suggest that our staff should lower the coffin into a grave if an interment is required.

### Instructions

Those persons who do not wish to receive full instructions as above should make themselves known to the Conductor of the funeral at the earliest opportunity and certainly at the place the service is to be held. The Conductor will establish who is to be in what position at the coffin i.e. heights of opposing bearers should be as closely matched as possible. They will be told to face their opposing bearer as they assist the coffin from being withdrawn from the hearse.

Once the coffin is clear of the tailgate of the hearse and upon instructions from the Conductor, the bearers will raise the coffin together to shoulder height and move themselves to put their shoulder under the coffin facing the way they will walk. The Conductor will assist the raising of the coffin to shoulder height. They will be advised to take short steps starting with the left foot after the Conductor has bowed at the coffin.

Once at the trestles or catafalque they will be told to halt. At the command of the Conductor they should reposition themselves to take the coffin off their shoulders and support all the weight in their hands lowering onto the trestles or catafalque, but not releasing the coffin until the conductor gives the command. The Conductor will support the head end of the coffin during this time. All bearers will remain facing each other and bow towards the coffin taking the lead from the Conductor. All the bearers will walk away from the coffin in an orderly fashion and take their seat in the pews.