CMA Vet Report Fails Grieving Pet Owners by Ignoring What Pet Cremation Actually Means

Wednesday 25 March, 2026

The Association of Private Pet Cemeteries and Crematoria (APPCC) has welcomed the positive aspects of the Competition and Markets Authority's final report on veterinary services for household pets, while warning that the remedies remain incomplete unless they are accompanied by clearer service-definition standards for pet cremation.

The APPCC supports the report's emphasis on clearer consumer choice, greater transparency in ownership, and the requirement that veterinary practices inform pet owners that they may arrange directly with a crematorium. It also welcomes the requirement that cremation pricing be published and that owners receive clearer written information before making decisions.

However, the Association says that price transparency on its own is not enough if the market continues to treat very different services as interchangeable. In practice, what is sold as an individual or communal cremation can vary significantly between providers in terms of handling, storage, transportation, the cremation process itself, and the final destination of the ashes.

APPCC members work to a published consumer code that treats cremation as a complete bereavement service, not merely a disposal process. The Association says that, without stronger minimum definitions and disclosures across the sector, grieving owners may still believe they are comparing like with like when they are not.

Kevin Spurgeon, Director of the APPCC, said:

"Price transparency alone does not protect grieving pet owners, because price says nothing about the stan he service be described in similar terms may differ greatly in collection times, handling, transport, cremation process and lace of ashes. enormously to families, and they should be explained clearly before any decision is made."

The Association is urging the CMA and policymakers to build on the final report by requiring clearer plain-English disclosures about how pets are handled, stored and transported; what individual cremation and communal cremation mean operationally; where communal ashes go; and whether a service is being sold as bereavement aftercare or, in substance, as a disposal service.

The APPCC says this would strengthen the CMA's consumer-protection aims, improve fair competition, and allow pet owners to make informed decisions at one of the most sensitive moments they face.

What APPCC is calling for

- Clear operational definitions of individual cremation and communal cremation.
- Written disclosure of handling, storage and transportation practices.
- Transparency about the final destination of communal ashes.
- Clear disclosure where a service is offered as bereavement aftercare and where it is, in substance, a disposal service.
- Recognition of robust sector standards, including codes that cover dignity, care and consumer protection throughout the whole process.

Notes to editors

- The CMA final report on veterinary services for household pets was published on 24 March 2026.
- APPCC members operate to a published consumer code that covers respectful handling, transport, storage, cremation or burial, and onward care of ashes.
- APPCC believes stronger service-definition disclosures would support informed choice and fairer competition in the pet aftercare sector.

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