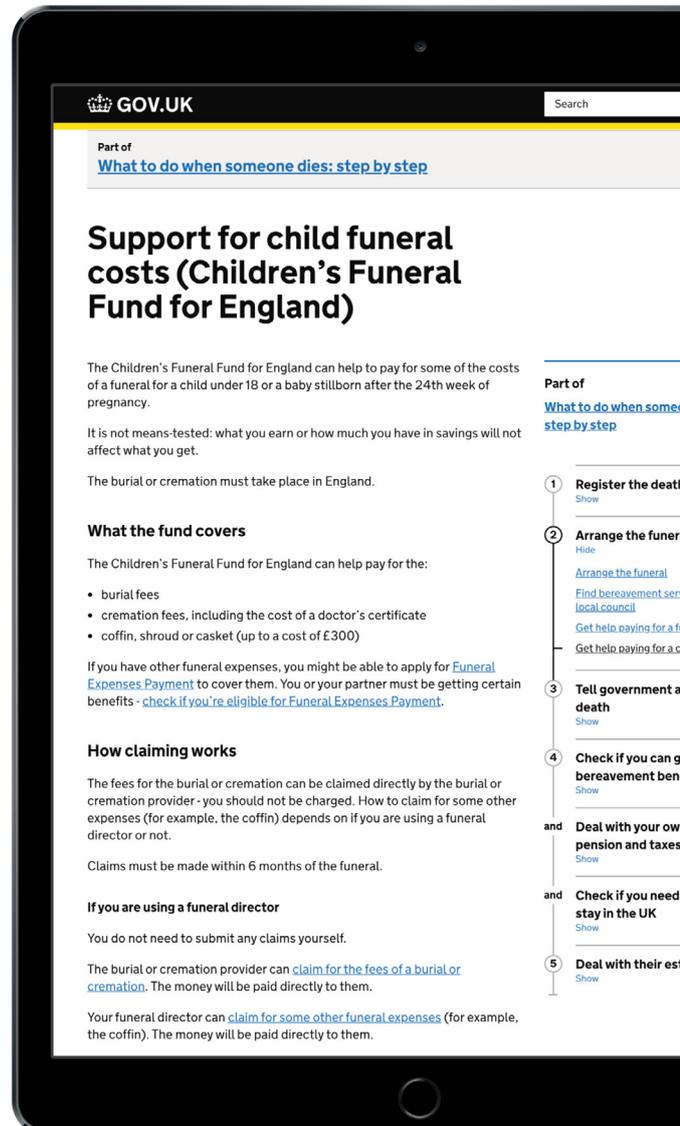


CASE STUDY

Rapid Digital Service Delivery at Ministry of Justice

We delivered the Children's Funeral Fund, a No10 priority, for the Ministry of Justice from idea to public beta in just six weeks



Introduction

By May 2019, the need for a Children’s Funeral Fund to help grieving families pay for a child’s funeral costs had become an urgent priority for Prime Minister Theresa May. She directed the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to create a new digital service, which we were asked to deliver in just 6 weeks.

We established mixed Made Tech/Civil Service teams and focused on delivering the service at speed. We used the MoJ’s Form Builder tool to build the claims form and developed two work streams to operate in parallel, one for fixing the Form Builder and one for getting the claims form live.

Using Kubernetes, Ruby, AWS and Electron JS, we reduced the development time of the service so the idea could be built into a public beta in just 6 weeks. Furthermore, our work on Form Builder has resulted in it being used by other public sector organisations to digitise paper-based processes.

@richardjpoppe: “How would we know if [UK government] digital services are getting faster? There are indications of ‘faster’ from things like MOJ getting the funeral costs service live in 6 weeks.”



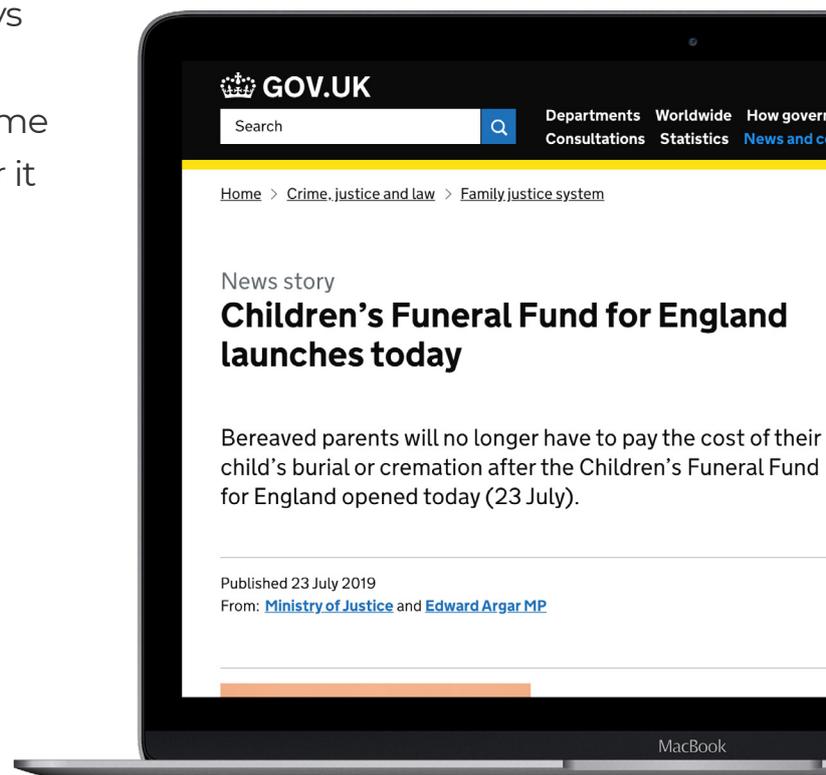
Richard Pope, part of the Government Digital Service

Easing the financial burden for grieving families

In November 2016, MP Carolyn Harris, who had lost her son Martin, hosted the first parliamentary debate on the costs of children's funerals.

According to the Independent, every year in England an estimated 3,800 children die under the age of 18 and there are a further 2,700 stillbirths. As bereaved families can face funeral-related costs that total many thousands of pounds, the Children's Funeral Fund was conceived to help them when they were most in need.

In March 2018, then Prime Minister Theresa May announced that the government would set up a Children's Funeral Fund in England, so that burial and cremation fees would be waived by local authorities and met by the government instead. Delays meant that the fund had not been set up by May 2019, at which point the Prime Minister reiterated the urgent need for it to be delivered.



The project to deliver a digital service in just six weeks

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) needed to build the Children's Funeral Fund in a short time frame. The service needed to allow parents to claim expenses online for a range of funeral costs, including a coffin, shroud, casket or covering, as well as some cremation and burial costs.

The MoJ team undertook research that included contacting bereavement charities and speaking to the Department for Work and Pensions to understand how to communicate with bereaved families. They also completed some journey mapping and lo-fi design work using Google Docs to test early iterations of the form.

As this was an urgent No10 priority though and it needed to be delivered in just 6 weeks, so they asked us to deliver a digital service within this tight timeline.

“In the darkest moment of any parent's life there is little light - but there can be support. That is why I have asked for the Children's Funeral Fund to be set up in England.”

Prime Minister Theresa May

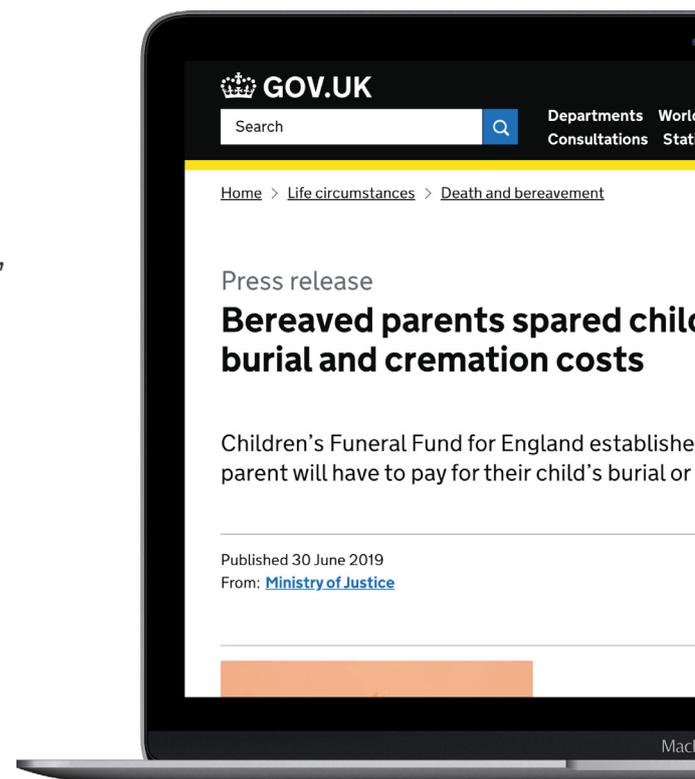
Our approach to delivering the Children's Funeral Fund

We began by establishing mixed Made Tech/Civil Service teams, as some of the MoJ Central Digital team had left, and then focused on delivering the service at speed.

We decided that using the Form Builder to build the claims form was the best approach. Form builder is an editor that makes building transactional forms easy using components from the GOV.UK Design system. To do this though, we had to ensure the Form Builder was fit for purpose and production ready.

Therefore, we developed two work streams to operate in parallel, one for fixing the Form Builder and one for getting the claims form live. Our work involved using Kubernetes, Ruby, AWS and Electron JS, and reduced the development time of the service so the idea could be built into a public beta in just 6 weeks.

In addition, a number of accessibility and content issues were fixed within Form Builder, so other teams in the MoJ and HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) would find it easier to use in future.



The technology and tools used

- **Ruby**
- **Electron JS**
- **Amazon AWS**
- **Kubernetes**

“The Children’s Funeral Fund will provide bereaved parents with much-needed support and I am proud to have worked alongside such dedicated campaigners to make this important scheme a reality.”

Justice Minister Edward Argar

The results – an urgent No10 priority delivered

We delivered the Children’s Funeral Fund from idea into a public beta in just 6 weeks, meeting No10’s urgent need so it was launched in July 2019. The service is available regardless of a family’s income and covers costs for burial and cremation fees.

Not only that, our work on Form Builder has resulted in it being used by other MoJ agencies to digitise paper-based processes, including for HMCTS complaints and victims of violent crime compensation. The tool is open sourced and available for all government departments to use.

About Made Tech

Made Tech are public sector technology delivery experts. We provide Digital, Data and Technology services across the UK market.

We help public sector leaders to modernise legacy applications and working practices, accelerate digital service delivery, drive smarter decisions with data and enable improved technology skills within teams.

If you'd like to find out more, you may want to read about some related projects:

- [Delivering GovWifi for the Government Digital Service \(GDS\)](#)
- [Building an API platform for Hackney Council](#)
- [Technology Capability Building at Ministry of Justice](#)
- [Check out what we do at madetech.com](#)

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