

1 November 2019

Welcome to your latest round-up of news from the Good to Great programme.  
Head on over to [www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk](http://www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk) to see the news first.  
Why not join the conversation today?

# BEING AT OUR BEST

In his latest blog, Mike reflects on the exceptionally high service we give to clients, and how we should all have pride in what we do as we continue to go from Good to Great.

**Ever since we began our Good to Great journey, we've focussed enormously on the changes planned for our internal systems, more efficient ways of working and how we present ourselves.**

However, one thing will never, ever change – and nor would we want it to. That one thing is client service.

It's important not to lose sight of the fact that we always have to provide the highest level of service.

That is why clients choose us. And that is why we have consistently high reviews from families we have helped at their greatest time of need. With 66% of our business being driven by word of mouth and recommendation, it's clear to see that our service and reputation sets us apart.

Up and down the country, from Edinburgh to Eccles and from Teesside to Truro, we provide counsel to our clients, we make

their loved ones' funerals personal to them and we hold hands and provide a listening ear when needed. Tens of thousands of funerals every day, each one with a different personal touch, each one where a colleague has gone beyond what is expected of them.

In collating *The Little Book of Dignity*, which you'll get next week, we gathered hundreds of incredible stories of colleagues adding those small, meaningful touches that mean the world to the families we care for.

In the fifteen stories we eventually chose, you will read some great examples of service at its highest. This is where we are at our best. And we should be enormously proud of what we do.

With taking the greatest care at the forefront of our minds, many of you will welcome the introduction of Funeral Safe.



This new, third party finance product will help clients spread the cost of funerals, which I'm sure you will agree is a great and very welcome enhancement to the service we provide.

We deliver much of that care and attention to those in resting in our care centres and service delivery areas, which clients never see. Tens of millions of pounds are being invested into property developments that are behind the scenes, but which are vital for us to give the highest level of service.

So, as you can see, the theme of exceptional client care runs through our service in all its forms.

With the industry under more scrutiny than ever, it is vital we continue to lead the way, taking the greatest care.

Warm regards,  
**Mike McCollum**  
CEO

# WITH GREAT CARE COMES GREAT FLEXIBILITY

Hot on the heels of our new client payment portal, we're offering our clients even more ways to pay for their loved one's funeral.

**It's no secret that some families struggle to cope with the financial burden of paying for their loved one's funeral in one lump sum. As a responsible business, we've now joined forces with Funeral Safe to give our clients a new, more flexible, payment option.**

Funeral Safe is an independent third party who offer loans specifically for a funeral, should a client wish to explore the option. We won't receive a penny in commission if clients choose to pay this way, and there is no pressure or sales techniques involved from either party.

Should the client decide to apply for a loan, please don't offer any advice about it - all you need to do is hand them over to Funeral Safe. They'll undertake a few checks on the client's financial health to make sure they can afford the repayments. Then if the loan is issued, we will receive payment in full directly from Funeral Safe.

The client will then make monthly payments to Funeral Safe with no involvement from Dignity.



Offering our clients greater flexibility is a key part of our Good to Great journey. Teaming up with Funeral Safe means we are now able to offer alternative ways to pay - online via our client payment portal, or through finance.

The new payment option will be added to all client invoices via Compass, from 4th November 2019.



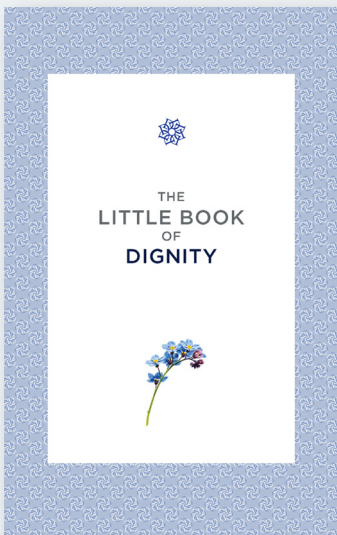
We'll provide more details about the service to branch managers and colleagues before

it launches and will be sending customer leaflets to all our branches very soon. Clients will also soon find a finance calculator on our branch web pages to give them even greater transparency in the initial stages of planning a funeral. As this is a regulated financial product, you should not offer any advice to the client - simply refer them to Funeral Safe.

Funeral Safe are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and governed by an independent supervisory board. You can find out more about them by visiting their [website](#).

# COMING SOON: THE LITTLE BOOK OF DIGNITY

Ssshhhh... we're going to let you in on a little secret.  
A secret that will most likely end in tears...



**We're publishing a book called 'The Little Book of Dignity' and it's on its way to you.**

Inside you'll find a small selection of real-life stories from our Arrangers and Funeral Directors who have been doing what they do best - providing comfort and support to our clients in their darkest of times. We should warn you though, you'll

probably need a few tissues to hand when you read it... Look out for a copy coming very soon - and don't forget to keep an eye on the [Good to Great website](#).



## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Debbie recently made an arrangement where the client was an elderly lady with a disability. The lady had genuine concerns about getting into a limousine with dignity and in a reasonable time. So, she took a limousine to the lady's house a few days before the funeral and spent some time figuring out which was the best way to approach and park, which was the best seat for her and how far back/upright to set it. *On the day, no-one saw a thing and the elderly lady was reassured and comfortable.*



STORY NO. 2

DEBBIE KING,  
LEVERTON FUNERAL SERVICE,  
KENT

## HOME GROWN FLOWERS

Stephen was at the home of an elderly gentleman, whose wife had passed away, arranging the funeral. Stephen commented on what a wonderful garden they had and how the flowers were beautiful. During the arrangement they were discussing which flowers the gentleman wanted from the floral brochure. Stephen then suggested that he could arrange for their florist to visit the elderly gentleman at his home and pick flowers from his garden to make the main floral tribute from those that his wife had grown and enjoyed. *The elderly gentleman was so comforted that the flowers his wife had grown would be on her coffin.*



STORY NO. 6

STEPHEN RYMER,  
J RYMER FUNERAL DIRECTORS,  
YORK

# CREATING A WINNING WASTE PLAN

Colleagues from around the business have joined forces to talk about how we can improve our waste management as we go from Good to Great.

**Continuing our strategy of using colleagues' expertise to drive the Good to Great programme, last week saw the very first waste management steering group take place.**

Building on the fantastic feedback so many of our colleagues provided in the recent survey, colleagues from across the business came together to discuss what mattered to them in terms of our waste management.

Topics from current supplier issues and ideas on how to tackle them, to online solutions and more were covered in the workshop. Colleagues came up with some fantastic suggestions, including more centralised support, more online management and sustainable solutions.

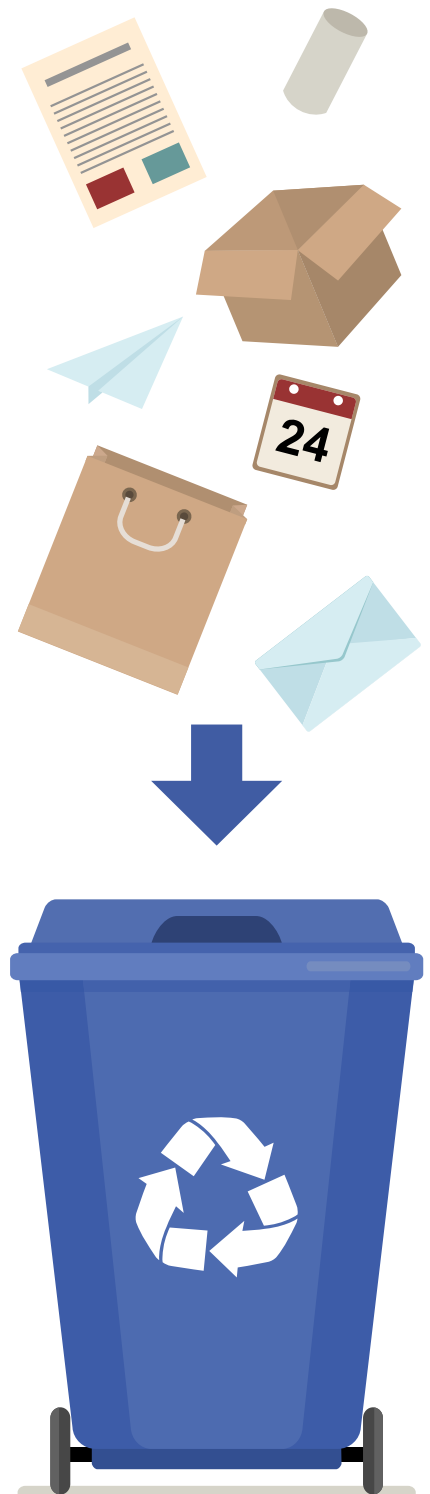
By making the most of our size, we can not only get a better deal and save the business money, but

we can also make life easier for our colleagues and have more control over our environmental responsibilities.

With a shortlist of suppliers now bidding to win our business, our colleagues' input means we can make sure that the preferred bidder is the one that can meet our business needs, based on our own colleagues' experiences and feedback.

The group will next meet in early November, so watch this space to see who gets to win our waste!

“  
Colleagues came up with some fantastic suggestions, including more centralised support, more online management and sustainable solutions.  
”



# COMING SOON - A NEW STATIONERY SHOP

A new and improved online shop that lets you order stationery at the click of a button is on its way.

**Stationery is one of our 'staple' buys, covering everything from pens and pencils, to cleaning products, to medical consumables such as gloves.**

We're aiming to buy smarter as we go from Good to Great, and as you'll know from previous updates, we've been working with colleagues from around the business to help us shortlist suppliers for a new national stationery contract.

As well as better deals and service, there'll also be a new

“

There'll also be a new online portal where you can search, choose and order your stationery at the click of a button.

”



online portal where you can search, choose and order your stationery at the click of a button.

The good news is that we've got some great suppliers on our shortlist and we're now working on understanding exactly what will make your lives easier when it comes to ordering. The winning supplier will not only need to prove they can give us great service now, but also in the future as we continue to grow and evolve.

We hope to make a decision in the next couple of weeks, so watch this space to find out who will win our business.



## UNIFORM - HAVE YOUR SAY

Uniforms and workwear is a hot topic – and we want to know what you think to help us improve our future range.

**Lots of you have been asking about your uniform over the past few months, and the time has now come for us to start looking at improving our workwear as we go from Good to Great.**

Your insight will be the key to a successful project, so we would welcome your feedback about the look, feel, comfort and range of products available - and everything in between.

If you have any feedback at all, please either comment on this article on the **Good to Great website**, or email **[purchasing@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:purchasing@dignityuk.co.uk)**.

We look forward to hearing from you.

# WHO WILL BAG THE SOURCE TO PAY DEAL?

Think the Crystal Maze, MasterMind or University Challenge are difficult? They have nothing on the Source to Pay supplier bid.

**As a business, we buy loads of stuff, from flowers to services from doctors and ministers, to one-off purchases we need in a hurry.**

But in a company of our size and scale, it's unusual to have manual processes for invoices, finding suppliers and then ordering the goods and services we need.

So, with our expert procurement team now on board, we've been putting proposed suppliers for a new Source to Pay system through their paces, asking them to show how they'd deal with situations common to us in a more efficient and modern way.

Think the Crystal Maze, MasterMind or University Challenge - but with a Dignity twist.

## **You're the judge**

In two full-day sessions, shortlisted suppliers were asked to showcase their systems to show how they would work, from ordering flowers from a local florist to processing disbursement payments, to making payments for those one-off purchases.

With colleagues from Funeral Operations, the Crematoria division and Head Office all represented on a steering group, we've been able to make sure that the system we choose has been scored by the very people who'll be using it.

## **So what's next?**

Our judges will complete their assessments and make a recommendation to the Executive Team, with a view to a successful bidder being appointed in January. Watch this space!



“

With our expert procurement team now on board, we've been putting proposed suppliers for a new Source to Pay system through their paces, asking them to show how they'd deal with situations common to us in a more efficient and modern way.

”



# GETTING OUR HOUSES IN ORDER

We're embarking on our biggest ever property project, with refurbishments and new sites galore. Check out our progress here.

**Going from Good to Great isn't just about modernising our systems and ways of working - it's also about making sure that our huge estate of properties is fit for purpose.**

As well as sprucing up the condition of many of our larger sites, we've also been working hard to make sure we're set up to manage future growth and the demands of new working practices in funeral operations.

But as we all know from our own DIY experiences, such work takes time. Magnify that by the hundreds of properties we occupy and you can see that this is a monumental job.

We've had to start somewhere though, and with the basis of our Good to Great strategy routed in care centres, the core of our operating networks, this is where most of the property team's energy has been focussed. Designing the detailed specifications with colleagues from funeral operations, service delivery, IT and Health & Safety, collaboration across the business has been absolutely key to our success.

And thanks to this teamwork, we've been making great progress. In fact, the three pilot network care centres - Dinnington, Sutton-in-Ashfield and Lincoln - have been finished, and others which needed little work doing, including

Leicester, Hemel Hempstead, Baldock and Little Kimble, have also been completed.

### **So, what's next?**

We'll be starting work on redeveloping another seven sites in the next few weeks, with a further ten at design stage. Plus, we've also been busy securing new sites, with Bury St Edmunds, Aylesford, Carlisle, Kilmarnock, Wisbech, Oxford and Aldershot all at varying stages of design, with work anticipated to begin next year.

In summary, the property taskforce is a mammoth beast, but momentum and progress remains positive. Look out for more updates over the coming months.

## IN NUMBERS

42  
new care centres



Redevelopment  
of 30 existing  
sites into  
care centres



7  
care centres  
completed



10  
more care centres  
at design stage



7+  
new sites  
secured



7  
redevelopments  
starting soon





## seconds with... Melissa Whitefoot

SENIOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE  
TEAM MANAGER



While we were visiting CSC this week, we had a chat with Melissa Whitefoot to pose a few quickfire questions...

### Where are you based?

CSC, King Edwards Court, Sutton Coldfield.

can to motivate and get the best out of our agents.

### What was your first ever job?

I had a part-time job at a drycleaner when I was 16.

### What does a typical day look like for you?

My day is always very varied and can change very quickly, depending on the workload and current priorities in the CSC. Along with the other managers I look at how we are expected to perform on that day and make sure that the agents have the support they need to help our clients. I am responsible for the coaching and development programme in the CSC, so as part of that I am regularly reviewing this to ensure that as a management team we are doing all we

“  
I think it's a great time to be working for Dignity as the business goes through this transformation.  
”

### How and why did you get into the funeral industry?

I was looking for a new challenge due to being made redundant from my previous role after 13 years. When I applied for the position, I wasn't sure how I would feel due to the nature of the calls the CSC has to deal with. However, soon after I started I knew with absolute certainty that this was the right role for me, as not only was I working with a great group of people who were committed to helping our clients, I had the opportunity to grow and develop within my own career.

**continued on next page »**



### How would you explain your job to a three-year old?

I help people be the best that they can be.

### What's the highlight of your day?

This can be different each day but one of the things that stands out is watching the development of the newer agents who have joined the CSC as their confidence and passion for the role evolves.

### What would your top tip be to take Dignity from Good to Great?

Communication – this has to continue if Dignity wants to achieve its vision.

### Are you excited about the future of Dignity?

Absolutely, I think it's a great time to be working for Dignity as the business goes through this transformation. Change is inevitable; nothing in life stays the same and although it can be difficult at times to take on board, a positive mind-set will support you to manage the challenges that change can bring.

Who would you like to hear from in the next 60 seconds update? Would you like to take part yourself? Let us know at [goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk).



## JARGONBUSTER

Don't know your BAU from your ROI? Then we're here to help!

### In train

As Good to Great gains momentum, you may hear about taskforces being 'in train.'

While reflective of the journey we're on, there isn't a buffet car on this one.

This phrase simply means that arrangements are well organised or in progress.

### Fire-fighting

No need to call 999 for this one. All this means is that we're addressing a problem that must be solved immediately. For example, "we've been fire-fighting since last quarter's numbers were released."

**Got a phrase that has you bamboozled? Let us know at [goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk).**



Get in touch

If you have a question about transformation, heard something on the jungle drums, have some feedback or a suggestion for the next newsletter, then leave a comment on the website or drop us an email at [goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk).