

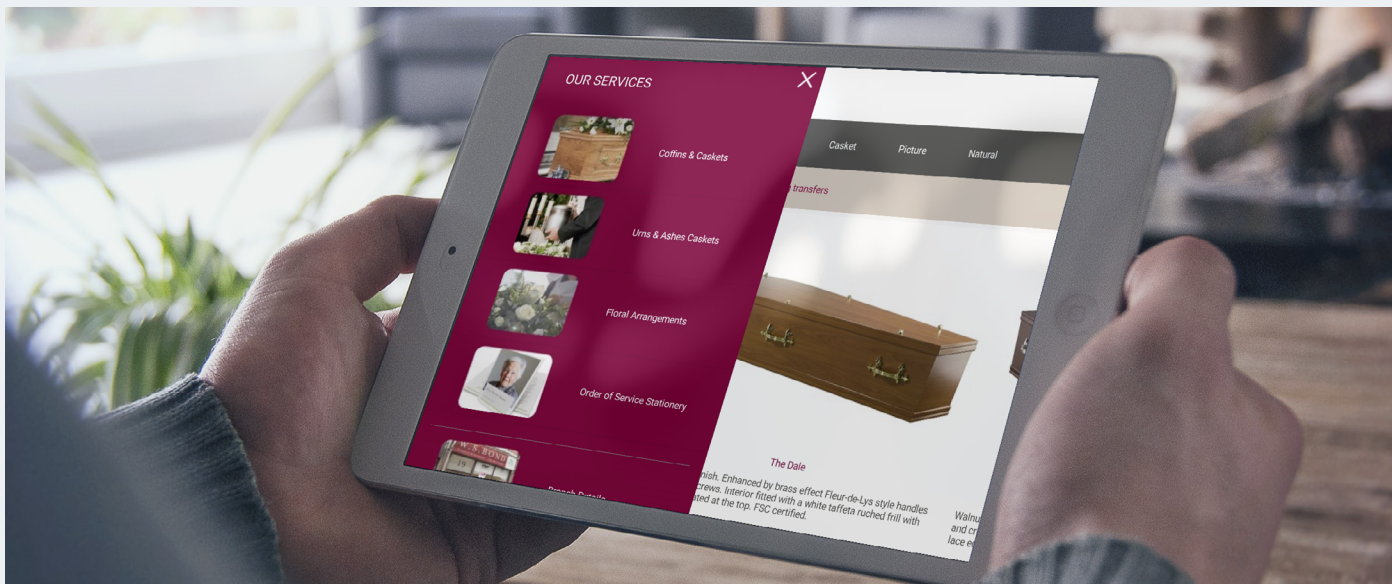
14 February 2020

Welcome to our round-up of news from the Good to Great programme. Can't wait for the next issue? Then go to www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk to see the news, comment and get involved.

(P.S. Don't forget to print out a copy for any colleagues who don't have email!)

ARRANGER TABLET HERE TO STAY

We've been giving you regular updates on the how a small number of funeral arrangers were finding using a handheld tablet during their arrangement meetings. And the final results are in... they love it!



Richard Jackson, Funeral Manager at J Rymer in York took part in the arranger tablet trial and agreed: "Families now expect technology and I didn't receive any negative reactions or feedback. The trial went really well."

Now that the 'proof of concept' trial has proven to be successful and we know our arrangers and clients feel comfortable with the technology, it's time to move on to the next phase of the journey.

The project team are now busy gathering requirements for a

tablet that will allow arrangers to key in (or 'type') information there and then during the arrangement meeting, moving on from using the tablet as an online catalogue of coffins, caskets, flowers, orders of service and photographs of the local branch.

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“
We have proven
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”

Jerry Young, Funeral Director at W S Harrison and Son in North Tyneside, who also took part in the initial trial (pictured), added: “We’re looking forward to seeing how the next version of the tablet will make arranging funerals even easier, as well as improving the overall experience for our families.

“During arrangements using the tablet families have often commented that they expect us to be using this technology rather than objecting to it; being seen as professional and up to date can

only help our families to build trust in us and therefore in Dignity as a whole.”

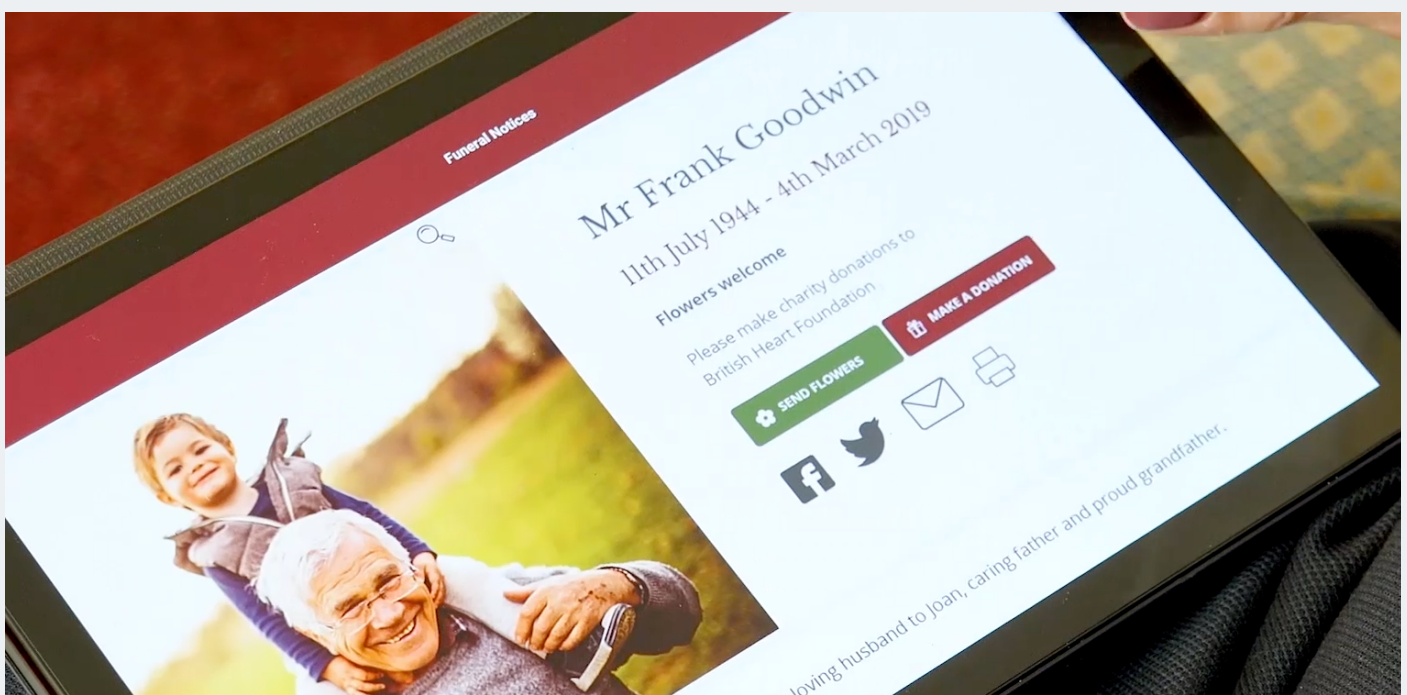
Stephen Rymer, Regional Manager in the North East and business lead for the project agreed, commenting: “This is a really exciting time for Dignity.

“With the help of our arrangers who have been trialling the technology with clients, we have proven that pursuing the tablet is the right way to go. I’d really like to thank them for getting involved

and helping us on our Good to Great journey.”

Huge thanks go to our colleagues who trialled the initial version of the tablet – Richard Jackson, Janice Lloyd, Jerry Young, Karon Wood, Hayley Johnson and Emma Sheehan.

You can view a video of some of our arrangers giving their verdict on the [tablet here](#). Watch this space for more updates as we begin the next phase of tablet development.



MOVING, MOVES AND MODERNISATION

Our support services may not be the main focus of transformation, but they're essential to its success. Here, Richard Portman describes the changes and moves in Sutton Coldfield as the team continue to support the business' goals.



In my last article back in August last year, I talked about the additional space we had just taken in the Library building. The Transformation Team moved there and, apart from a couple of floods caused by heavy rain and blocked guttering, it has been a very successful move giving them plenty of space to work in. As I noted in August, they were joined by the Web Development Team from IT as the growth in that team could not be accommodated in King Edwards Court. We also have

plenty of meeting rooms in that building, so please remember that if you need somewhere to meet. Our staff on reception will be very grateful as it takes some of the pressure off meeting room requirements at King Edwards Court.

We have not yet completed all the various departmental moves that have been planned, but I hope those will happen in the next couple of months. Some teams will move to the Library, and others to the Duke Street offices where we

have some space vacated by the Transformation Team. Fortunately (or unfortunately) I have three, shortly to be four, departments reporting to me which are based at Duke Street. I now have all my regular meetings with them there, so I have probably become a familiar figure hurrying through the centre of Sutton Coldfield between our offices. As part of these moves, we are looking to create a Multi Faith Room at King Edwards Court which I hope will be well received by our colleagues there.

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In other news, there have been a couple of changes of Heads of Department within Corporate Services. Ciaran Nolan moved on to pastures new at Christmas and I'm pleased to advise that Keith Watkeys has been appointed as Head of Property in his place. I am sure many of you already know Keith and his extensive (if not encyclopaedic!) knowledge of our property estate. He will be a real asset as we roll out our transformation plans.

At Dignity Manufacturing, our Head of Manufacturing, John Burn, is retiring at the end of April to be replaced by the factory manager, Tim Snowden. John has been with Dignity for ten years and in that time has been instrumental in modernising our production

facilities, increasing the range of coffins we manufacture, securing FSC accreditation and getting ISO accreditations for Occupational Health and Safety Management and Environmental Management. I wish John the very best in his well-deserved retirement - but on the basis of what he has told me about his plans he will be very busy! Overall, I am very pleased that we have been able to promote two excellent managers into bigger roles.

Finally, I should mention that our HR team has been released 'back into the wild.' During 2019 Tracey Rose, our Head of HR, worked very closely with senior members of the Transformation Team to build a strong and multi-skilled HR function capable of supporting

the business going forward. That work is now largely complete. The HR function will continue to have close links with the Transformation Team, including the ongoing secondment of Maria Connelly into the Transformation Team for what will probably be most of 2020.

What will 2020 be like? I suspect very busy again, but I would like to thank everyone across the business for the hard work they do every day directly or indirectly in support of our clients and their families.

Kind regards,

Richard Portman
Corporate Services Director

NEW FAQs PUBLISHED

We've updated our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the Good to Great website - check them out.

From watercoolers and washrooms to branding and stationery, we've made sure the Good to Great FAQs are bang up to date.

Can't find what you're looking for? Just head on over to the **contact us** page and we'll get right on it.



SIMPLICITY TO SPEED UP ASHES DELIVERY

This month will see Simplicity introduce a new speedy delivery service to return ashes and personal effects back to family members.

This month will see Simplicity introduce a much quicker delivery service to return ashes back to family members.

It currently takes six weeks (or in some cases longer) for ashes to be delivered back to the family – not ideal by anyone’s standards. Which is why, after an in-depth review of current processes involving both head office and operational colleagues, Simplicity will be returning ashes back to families within four weeks of the cremation. That’s great news for our clients, and great collaborative working from our colleagues.

When arranging a Simplicity cremation of a loved one, the client has a couple of options on what they would like to do with the ashes:

- They can be scattered in the Garden of Remembrance at the crematorium
- The ashes can be returned to the family.

When it comes to the latter, funeral operations colleagues will collect the ashes of the deceased directly from the crematorium within five days of the cremation. They will then deliver them to

the nearest Ashes Co-ordination Centre (just so you know, Ashes Co-ordination Centres are simply a selection of the existing Simplicity Service Centres) to present the ashes as per the client’s request, and co-ordinate the delivery with local funeral operations colleagues.

If the ashes need to be delivered to a family that aren’t local to that particular Ashes Co-ordination Centre, for example, a family from Glasgow organising a cremation of a family member that lived in London, the ashes will then be picked up by our new dedicated driver, who would deliver them to the closest Co-ordination Centre to the family (in our example, the nearest one to the family would be Hemel Hempstead), for onward delivery to a local branch. Funeral operations colleagues will then arrange delivery to the family. This will all take place within four weeks.

Our delivery driver has a set route, covering all of our regions in four days and will be making weekly deliveries rather than monthly ones as they currently do.



“Traditionally receiving the ashes can be a longer process than necessary but with our new process in place we’ll be reducing that time by a third.

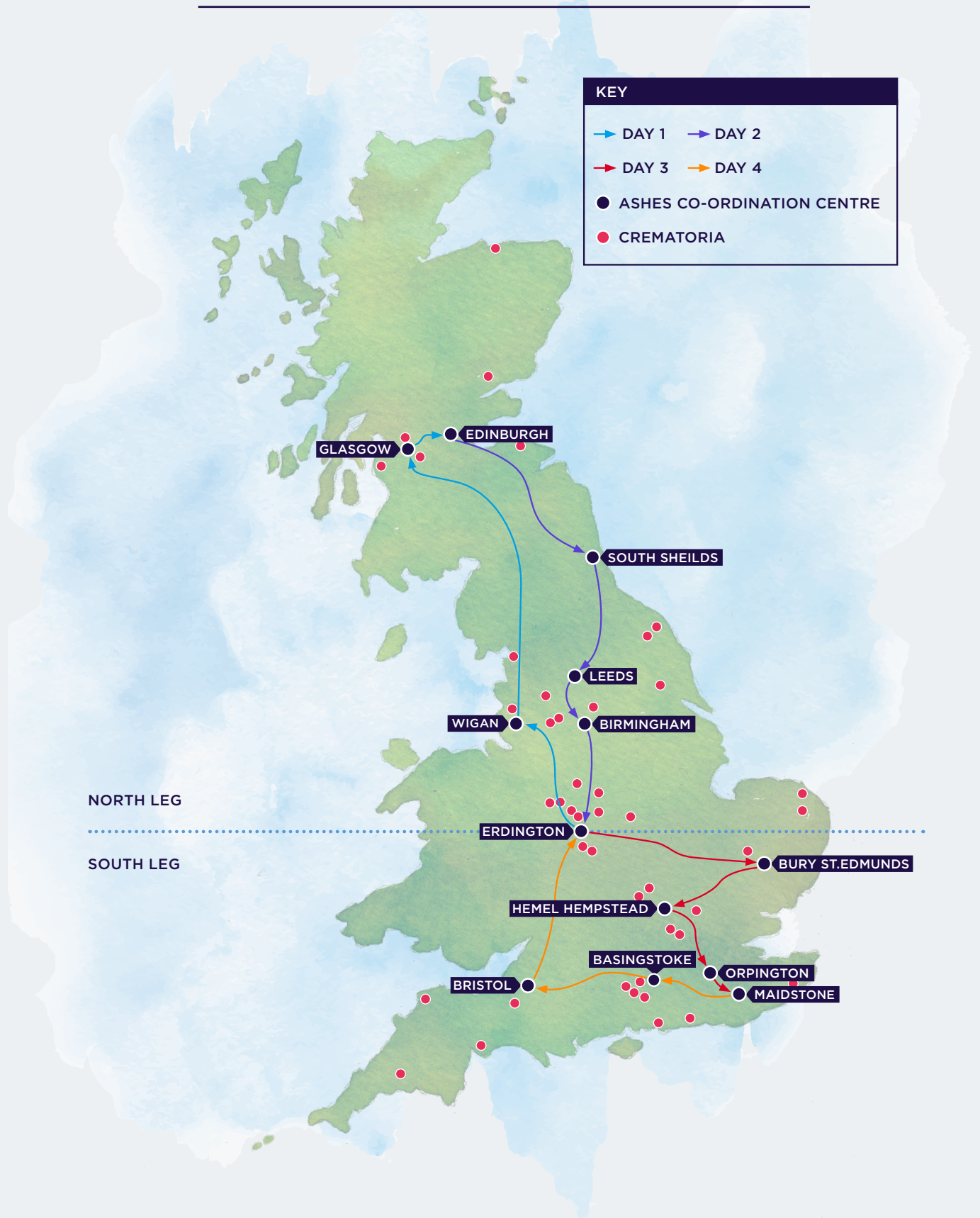
Head of Group Marketing, Mark Hull, said: “Traditionally receiving the ashes can take longer than necessary, but with our new process in place we’ll be reducing that time by a third. This will bring us a little closer to meeting the expectations of our clients, and position Simplicity in a more competitive light.

“The next steps for the process will be to exceed the expectations of our clients and reduce the timeline for ashes delivery to three weeks. At the same time we will also add a new additional service allowing us to return jewellery and personal effects, using the same courier. That will be an incredible improvement.”

If you work in funeral operations and are involved with Simplicity, look out for more detailed information coming your way very soon.

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ASHES DELIVERY ROUTE



CHANGE IS A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

Feeling OK about Good to Great one minute and panicking the next? You're not alone. Find out more about the range of emotions we can go through in our latest change feature.

Shock.
Confusion.
Adaptation.
Acceptance.

These are just some of the emotions we lead our clients through every day.

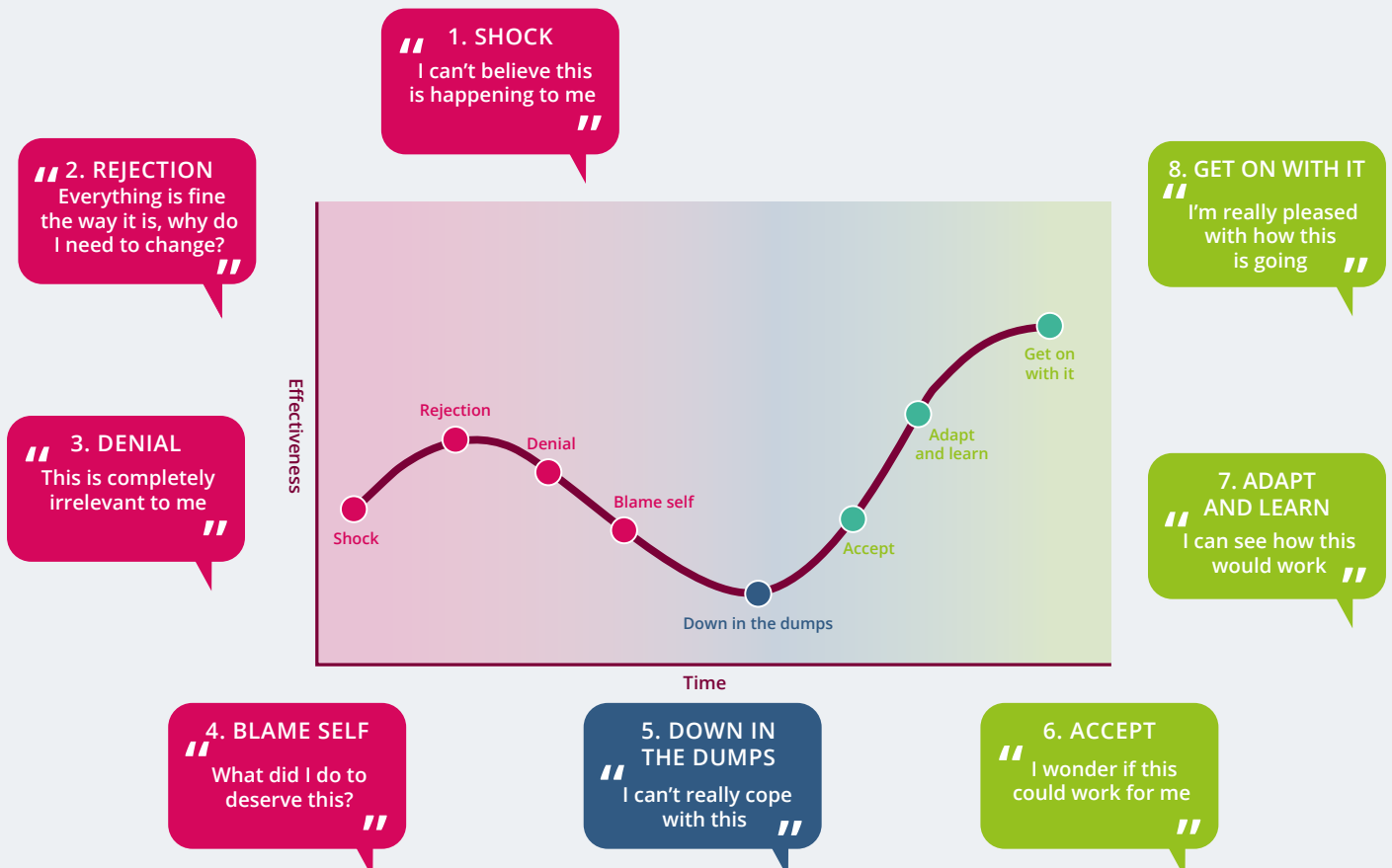
But did you know that they also form the basis of the neuroscience behind how we react to change? If you've ever heard of the Change Curve (pictured), then you may

be surprised to know that it has its very origins in bereavement research.

Developed by **Elisabeth Kubler-Ross**, the change curve is now routinely applied to people and organisations experiencing change, showing the whole rollercoaster range of emotions we go through - whether it's a recipe change for our favourite chocolate bar, changes at work, or indeed the loss of a loved one.

DID YOU KNOW?

The change curve even applies to positive changes. In some ways it is harder to deal with as you didn't expect to feel negative emotions about something you were looking forward to.



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TOP TIP

Everyone will go through change at a different speed, so recognise that your colleagues may be at a different point to you and need different levels of support. Some people, for example in the emotional fog period, want to be left on their own; others need to be able to talk to their friends and colleagues.

Although there are always exceptions, most people come out of the other end of change successfully. They'll be stronger, recognising that they will have learned from it, despite some potentially painful times on the journey, which gives us more

strength to deal with future changes.

Beginning with an emotional response – shock – we may then go into a denial phase - “They’ll bring back the old recipe, this will never work.”

Once we realise the new thing is here to stay, we may get angry, then confused, before finally accepting it and moving on.

Clearly it’s far more complex than that, but the important thing to note is that it’s perfectly normal to swing back and forth through all these emotions, even if for a fleeting moment.

What we do want to avoid though is getting stuck at any one place on the curve, as that is not healthy

and can lead to confusion and anxiety - hence the support we’re offering every colleague in our networks.

We know that change is exhausting and can be emotionally draining, so over the next few months, we’ll continue to support you, including giving you some practical tools and training, before the changes come to you.

If you’ve already had your training, why not share your experiences on the [website](#).



#YourStory monthly prize draw winner

We’re pleased to announce the first #YourStory prize draw winner of the year!

Every time you share a story of going above and beyond for colleagues or clients with us, you get a free entry into our monthly prize draw to win a £100 Amazon gift card.

One man who is glad he did is our January prize draw winner, Funeral Director Simon Collar from Clarabut & Plumbe Funeral Directors in Bedfordshire. Here’s a snapshot of his story...

A young man described as a ‘tearaway’ as a child by his family found stability and control by joining the RAF. Upon hearing this at the young man’s funeral arrangement, Simon contacted the RAF to see if they could get involved somehow.

You’ll have to wait until the next *Little Book of Dignity* is published to find out what happened at the funeral, and how this impacted the family he left behind.

Thank you for sharing your stories of going above and beyond for clients and colleagues with us – please keep them coming. Just use the **form** on the Good to Great website.



SUPPLIER INFO NOW ONLINE

A new online procurement page has been introduced to help you find the right suppliers for your needs – all at the click of a button.

Guess what we have around 3,500 of?

Not limousines.

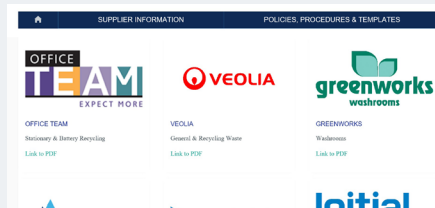
Not properties.

Not Dignity mugs in our kitchens.

Nope, the answer is that we have around 3,500 suppliers on our books.

That's quite a lot. And with an annual spend of around £200m, it's really important to make sure we're getting value for money when shopping around.

To help you keep on top of your supplier relationships, we've

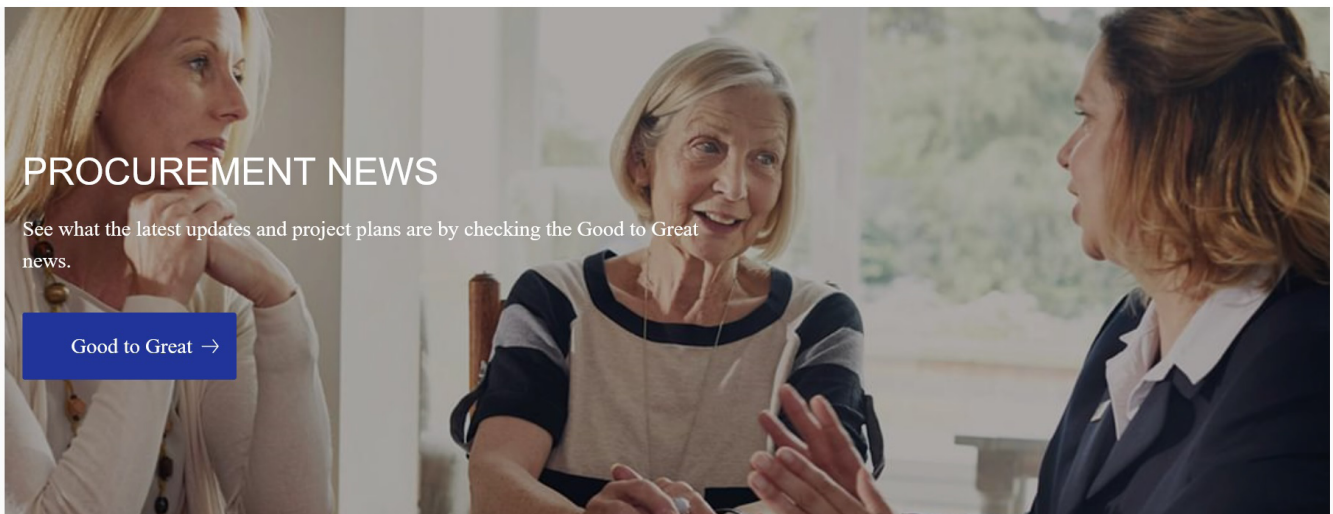


launched a brand-new intranet page dedicated to procurement which can be found by clicking on 'Procurement' from the Dignity Intranet, or using the following link: <https://intranet.dignityuk.co.uk/pages/procurement.html> Here you can find information about key suppliers, their standard pricing, what they do and their contact details, all at the click of a button.

Designed to make your lives easier, you can also use the new page to

find the right suppliers and goods for your needs, in line with our recently introduced **procurement policy**. And with the information you need instantly available at your fingertips, you no longer need to call procurement and wait for a response (unless you really want to!).

The **procurement pages** will be constantly updated, so why not take a look? If you have any feedback or suggestions for content that would help you, please get in touch at purchasing.team@dignityuk.co.uk.





seconds with...
Gemma Barron
FUNERAL SERVICE OPERATIVE



This week we head to Scotland to have a chat with Gemma Barron, a Funeral Service Operative. Here's what she had to say...

Where are you based?

I work at Gordon & Watson in Aberdeen.

What was your first ever job?

It was as a Carer.

Where did you go on your last holiday?

Las Vegas.

What does a typical day look like for you?

When I come in, I report to my line manager to be briefed about my jobs for the day which are already prioritised for me, then along with my other colleagues, we take care of the tasks in hand. I have to say I don't really have a typical day, it's very untypical if I'm honest! When I'm working in the mortuary

it's a unique combination of attending to first offices, washing the deceased, doing their hair and make-up and getting them dressed for chapel visits. I think it's a huge responsibility caring for the deceased and preparing them for family viewing, as this is the last time their loved ones will see them and that is a privilege.

How and why did you get into the funeral industry?

I wanted to help make lasting memories of loved ones for the families.

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

I look after people who are going to stay up in the sky.

Tea or coffee?

Tea.

Star Wars, Star Trek, or none of the above?

None of the above.

Favourite film or artist?

Mary Poppins.

What's the highlight of your day?

Working in the mortuary and undertaking the role of deceased preparation.

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

Invest in your premises.

Are you excited about the future of Dignity?

Yes.



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