

7 May 2020

Welcome to our latest news round-up from across the Dignity Group.
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!)



VE DAY 75

Tomorrow marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War Two in Europe. If your branch is doing anything to mark the special occasion, such as dressing windows, please send a photo to internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk or post it on our [Good Deed Feed](#).



A TIMELESS FUNERAL

We're all having to adapt the way we live and work, but we can still deliver meaningful funerals to the families we care for.

Funerals in the current climate are very different events to the services we delivered just a few, short weeks ago, but it doesn't mean the families we care for have to settle for a purely functional affair.

Director of Funeral Operations, Andrew Judd, **recently reminded us** that this crisis will pass in time, and how we can still offer dignified, meaningful farewells to those who want them - just maybe at a later date. We all know that while quiet and direct services are perfect for some, others prefer a send-off with a little more pomp and ceremony - and we don't want to take this away from the people this gives comfort to.

Because COVID-19 has placed restrictions on what we can offer today, we've made some changes to the Tailored and Full Service funerals to provide an alternative option for our clients - namely the Timeless Funeral.

These changes give a degree of flexibility at a time when we are all restricted in what we can do, and will allow families to have the tribute they want at a later date at an equal or greater value - whether it's a standalone service, alongside the scattering or interment of ashes, or placement of a physical memorial.

Some services have been made free of charge and provide an option for a memorial to take place once restrictions have been lifted.

Continued on next page >>



How will this work?

Available at all our branches (except those taking part in the price and service trials), these options will be offered to new and in progress funerals from now until further notice. The option to arrange a future memorial will also be made available for the funerals which may already have taken place since 23rd March, when the restrictions began.

As with funerals in more usual times, we can also arrange service stationery, floral tributes, and charitable donations for the planned memorial events.

Due to the variety of pricing structures across our business network, specific product guidance has been issued to branches already.

We hope you agree that by adapting the funeral we provide now, we can still take the greatest care to provide a thoughtful and dignified service for families to remember their loved ones later

NEW VIDEO SHOWCASES OUR TIMELESS FUNERAL OPTION

Our latest Dignity video showcases our Funeral Now, Service Later option (which we've called the Timeless Funeral) for families - so they can honour their loved one with an intimate funeral now, and a memorial at a later date when restrictions on funerals are lifted.

The video has been added onto client enquiry emails, so if people call in, please take any opportunity to ask for email addresses to send these out. You can also direct clients to the [video on our website](#), and we'll be featuring a shorter version on our social media channels from next week to help spread the message to those that need us.



COVID-19 TESTING: OUR POLICY

We promised to bring you greater clarity on the government's welcome decision to open COVID-19 testing to millions of key workers, including us in the funeral industry.

We've had time to look into some of the practical questions we had, and as a result, have produced a new **COVID-19 Testing Policy** for colleagues across the Dignity Group.

Who can get tested?

Testing is currently limited to colleagues who are self-isolating because they have coronavirus symptoms, or live with someone who does.

We've written to all 188 colleagues who have told us they are self-isolating, advising them to visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested to book a test for themselves and members of their household.

The tests do not apply to anyone who is shielding.

If you are self-isolating at the same time as working from home and wish to arrange a test, please arrange time off for it with your line manager.

What happens during testing?

The test itself is a quick and painless process. Either you or someone else takes a swab from the nose and back of the throat and just 48 hours later you'll receive a text message confirming your results.

What do I need to do with my results?

You'll need to let HR know your results straightaway with your name, payroll number and date of test, as outlined in the **policy**.

If you have a negative result, you should arrange to return or continue to work as normal. If your result is positive, then you should continue to self-isolate in line with government advice.

What if I'm not self-isolating?

We understand that if you're working with the deceased in these worrying times you may also keen to get tested. At the moment, due to the limited number of tests available, the government is prioritising people who are self-isolating.

We will continue to monitor how the science and scope of testing develops, should it be made more widely available.

INTRODUCING OUR GOOD DEED FEED

Heard about a good deed? Or perhaps done one yourself? We want to hear from you!

We're all doing our best to carry on and do our utmost for our clients, our colleagues, our families and our friends. But what we're calling the 'new normal' has taken a lot of adjusting to. And that's why we want to hear about the Good Deeds going on in your communities.

Whether you want to shine a light on your colleague, or tell us about a selfless deed you did – help us spread a little joy and a smile on the Good to Great website. From going the extra mile for a client, to getting your neighbour's shopping during the COVID-19 crisis or a great example of teamwork or even a personal

achievement – if it made you smile, well you get the idea – let us know. The [Good Deed Feed](#) is live on the Good to Great homepage now, and you can submit 'deeds' under the following categories:

- Client care
- Colleague care
- Teamwork
- Charity
- Community
- Family
- Achievement
- Other



You can even submit a picture, but that's optional. Head on over to the [Good Deed submission form](#) – we can't wait to read them.

YOU AND YOUR HOLIDAY

We may not be going anywhere, but it's still important to take some time off to banish burnout.

Many of us with holiday plans have seen them scuppered this year – but where does that leave our holiday allowance?

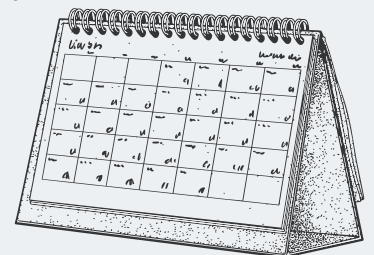
Understandably, we've had many questions about annual leave in recent weeks. Whether it's a caravan holiday in Wales, or a family trip to Florida, our time off means a lot to us and we look forward to that important break from work.

As with many of these things, we've been waiting for clarification on government announcements and as a result, we can confirm we'll be honouring their guidelines to roll unused annual leave from this year into 2021 and 2022 should anyone need to. Our guidance is that 50% of any carry over should be

taken in 2021 and 50% in 2022. It's important no one loses out – and equally, it's important no one burns out.

So, while you can carry your leave over, we'd really encourage you to take it. Just because our plans have had to change, doesn't mean we don't need the break. It's important for our physical and mental wellbeing to be able to switch off, and with more of us than ever working from home and switched on for longer, a break is needed more than ever.

Ultimately, your health is at the top of our priority list and we want us all to get safely through the crisis – and this includes taking the time out we need to recharge our batteries.



GOT A QUESTION?

If you have a question about your holiday allowance, bank holidays, weekend working or overtime, please ask your line manager in the first instance.

POSITIVE NEWS FOR PPE

PPE has been in short supply, but our stocks are looking healthier.

As you'll have seen on the news, global demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable gloves, masks and visors has meant supplies have been incredibly hard to come by in recent weeks.

But thanks to the perseverance and collaboration of teams from around the business, we're starting to see our orders come in.

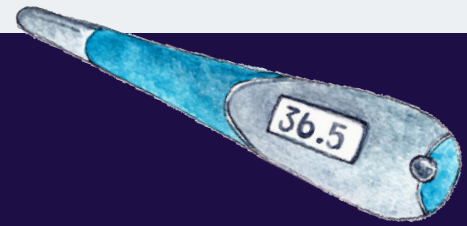
Colleagues from Operations, Health and Safety, Finance, Project Management and Procurement have worked tirelessly to source the PPE we need from verified, safe suppliers. With official guidelines constantly evolving (sometimes even on the same day!) this has not been an easy task, but together they have set up a new weekly process to make sure we understand what we need, what we have and what we expect to use in consideration of the latest guidance.

As a result, kit is regularly being delivered to our regional hubs for distribution by Regional and Area Managers to the areas that need it most. Including current orders, we have enough PPE for until the end of June – that's an amazing 1.6million pieces!

And as you can see in this picture of our ambulance crew in Southend, Ryan Harvey and Jonathan Holt, it really is appreciated.

The provision of PPE to keep you safe is a top priority and we will keep monitoring the ever-changing situation to make sure you're protected. Thank you for your patience, ideas and support while we've sourced these hard to come by supplies and please only use what you need.

If you have any questions about PPE or are running short, please ask your Regional or Area Manager in the first instance.



SAFEGUARDING YOU AND OUR COMMUNITIES

We've updated our guidelines to ensure that we continue to further protect ourselves and the communities we serve.

Recent news reports and studies have shown an increasing awareness of the risk of Covid-19 to people working and residing in in care homes, so with safety our most important priority, we have made our **Handling the Deceased** and **PPE guidance** even clearer.

It's now mandatory for colleagues to wear full PPE when collecting deceased from within the community and from nursing or care homes, regardless of the cause of death. This further safeguarding is for the benefit of everyone's protection when working in these locations. We can help reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections and avoid contributing to any potential cross-infection in the community during the course of our duties.

If you have any queries, please ask your line manager.



PRE-NEED FORMS & PROCESSES

With the changes enforced by COVID-19 on funeral plans, we've made it easier for you to find the information and forms you need with a new handy guide.

We recently asked you to help your CSC colleagues through these extraordinary times, and we're very grateful that as a result, we've significantly improved our clients' experience when they contact us.

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant we've had to make lots of changes to how we administer funeral plans, from plan authorisations, to ex-gratia payments for services we can no longer provide, as well as the occasional need for indemnity forms.



A guide to help you

We know these changes have meant you've had to take on a lot of new information and processes in a short space of time. It can be hard to keep track of what to do when for the different pre-need plans, so we've listened to your feedback and put all the information and processes you need into a simple **handy reference guide**.

Within this, you can find links to the forms you need, which can also be found in our online **resource library**. Please refer to **this guide** before calling CSC, to help them answer calls from clients in time and to relieve pressure in these unprecedented times.

Why not save or print it so you have it at your fingertips whenever you need?



GOT A QUESTION?

- For general plan queries please email or call your BDM.
- For Dignity plan authorisation queries, email cscdeathauth@dignityuk.co.uk or in an emergency, call 0800 731 0626.
- For non-Dignity plan authorisation queries, email csc.support@dignityuk.co.uk or in an emergency, call 0800 033 4709.

OUR COMMUNITIES CARE

“

Wolstenholme Funeral Directors in Accrington have been decorating their glass gazebo with a new funky kind of wallpaper – rainbows drawings.

”

“

The Dignity Team on the Isle of Wight received a digital rainbow image from a local company on the island, thanking all of the staff for the caring work they do every single day.

”

We've been hearing of some lovely stories of gestures and acts of kindness made to Dignity colleagues up and down the UK. Here are just a few to brighten your day.

Kim Crombie, one of our arrangers at W G Rathbone in Leamington Spa received some bloomin' gorgeous flowers from a local florist to thank her and the team for their outstanding work. Kim was nominated on the florist's Facebook page.

And speaking of Facebook... a bakery in Worksop, Nottinghamshire asked for nominations on a local group for keyworkers that are going into work as normal and serving the community during the pandemic. Our very own Clive Hopkinson Funeral Directors were nominated, and we heard they were particularly delighted with the selection of cupcakes they received to accompany their cuppa. Well done!

Our colleagues at Just Digital, a preferred supplier who print the majority of our brochures and funeral literature for branches, have been delivering special 'heart' pin badges with orders during the pandemic. The poignant message inside reads "To all our colleagues in the funeral industry... an army of kind hearts. Stay safe. Be strong."

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Wolstenholme Funeral Directors in Accrington have been decorating their glass gazebo with a new funky kind of wallpaper – rainbow drawings – not only from the children and grandchildren of our employees in Lancashire, but of the drawings being sent in by local children too. A Dignity shout-out to our Funeral Director Susan Taylor, who looks after seven branches, including Wolstenholme, and has been spreading the word.

The Dignity Team on the Isle of Wight received a digital rainbow image from a local company on the island, thanking all of the staff for the caring work they do every single day. It certainly made them smile, and us too!

Have you heard of something happening in your community to thank colleagues in the funeral industry? Or been a lucky recipient? Help us spread the smiles and let us know by posting on our **Good Deed Feed.**





GOVERNMENT FURLOUGH SCHEME: OUR STANCE

The Government furlough scheme officially went online, and understandably, many of you have asked what this means for you.

We know how worrying the last few weeks must have been as we've all waited for clarity on the government's advice. Our position has always been that we want to keep as many colleagues working as possible and this still remains the case. Furlough is a fantastic option for companies who may otherwise need to make people redundant, but that's not the position that we find ourselves in at Dignity, where demand for our services continues even more so than before the crisis.

This means that we do not plan on applying to the government scheme for any of our colleagues and are committed to keeping you employed.

We know many of you will still have some questions about your own circumstances, so we've answered the questions we have been asked the most often here:

If you are shielding

If the NHS has written to you advise you to shield or self-isolate, we will pay you company sick pay while you are off work. All we need from you is a copy of the NHS letter so we can process your absence correctly. Whatever your contractual terms or previous use of Company Sick Pay may be, don't worry, we will continue to pay you for the 12-week period.

If you are living with someone who is shielding

If you are living with someone who needs to shield and therefore need to self-isolate at home, we will

continue to pay you and will explore all alternative options to keep you engaged in the business. This could mean working from home or picking up other activities, all of which can be discussed with your line manager.

How are we doing?

We're hugely grateful to all colleagues who have supported our clients over the past few weeks, as we've got to grips with rapidly changing guidance and new ways of working.

The good news is that from absence rates of around 20%, we're now seeing many colleagues coming back to work after a period of self-isolation, which means we're able to keep caring for those who need us.

Naturally, we'll keep supporting you and our priority is your safety and that of our clients, so please don't come into work if you are poorly. **We have solutions in place** to help us continue to serve our clients at the frontline with temporary FSO colleagues.

Protecting you

We know there are lots of different personal circumstances we simply cannot cover in one communication. Our principle is to protect our colleagues, ensuring those who are most vulnerable can stay at home without financial concerns.

Our priority is to keep you safe, keep you engaged and have everyone fit and well and back to work once we are on the other side of this crisis. We continue to need your experience to help serve our clients and thank you for all your support at this unique time.



GETTING GREENER WITH OUR ENERGY

We've partnered with a new energy consultancy to make sure we work smarter and greener when it comes to gas and electricity usage across our branches, crematoria and offices.

Inspired Energy are an energy consultancy that will help us to buy energy at the best prices. With over 1,000 properties across our portfolio, the savings could be significant for our business.

Inspired Energy will also be working behind the scenes managing all of the data from the smart meters installed at our properties, and information contained within our energy bills. We'll be able to understand how our energy is used, and identify potential cost and carbon emissions savings with ease.

Steve James, Dignity's Sustainability Manager, explained: "By working with procurement we've brought on board a great energy consultancy that will really help us to not only save money, but help us ensure we're using energy responsibly and sustainably. We'll be focusing on the Crematoria division initially as we look to reduce, or certainly offset the carbon and gas emissions from the cremation process."

Our electricity supply across England, Wales and Scotland is already 100% renewable, which means we have zero carbon emissions from it. That's a saving of around 9,000 tonnes of carbon per year! Watch

this space as we look to reduce and offset our carbon footprint even more.

#FRIDAYFEELS

Sing when you're winning! Announcing Dignity's ultimate feel-good songs!

In our first #FridayFeels we asked for your go-to songs when you need a boost - and the suggestions put forward were definitely music to our ears.



Thanks to everyone who got involved. You've come up with an eclectic mix, everything from George Formby to the Foo Fighters, but every choice is designed to spread a little happiness during these difficult and sometimes emotionally draining times.

Click here to view the list in full and if you're a Spotify user you can listen along - the perfect accompaniment to your daily exercise, or just something to make those chores around the house a little less tedious!

Log on to the **website** to let us know your favourite sporting memories!





**Dying Matters
Awareness Week
11-17 May**

#DyingToBeHeard

**Dying
Matters**

*Let's talk
about it*

DYING TO BE HEARD

Mark the date in your diaries! It's nearly time for the annual Dying Matters Awareness Week, when funeral service and care providers come together to share important consumer messages related to death and bereavement.

Taking place from 11-17 May, the theme is 'Dying to be Heard' and the need for people to be good listeners when family and friends want to start conversations about death.

The coronavirus pandemic has unfortunately limited the opportunity to stage any face-to-face

events, but that's not stopping people raising awareness digitally by writing articles and blogs, creating videos, recording podcasts and hosting virtual discussion groups.

We're showing our support through sponsorship and consumer engagement via the media and our Facebook and Twitter feeds.

There'll be more information shared over the course of the week, so keep a close eye on both the **Good to Great** and the **official Dying Matters websites.**

MONEY ON THE MIND

We're looking at keeping in control of your finances and how to prevent problems escalating.

As a business, we're committed to supporting all of you financially through the current crisis, our decision not to take advantage of the furlough scheme and paying company sick pay to shielding colleagues being just two examples.

However, we know that concerns over money can have a detrimental impact on people's wellbeing, or exacerbate existing mental health problems. Fortunately there's plenty of advice available. Financial services providers have also put a number of support mechanisms in place directly in

response to coronavirus. It's a vast topic, so we're using this second article in our Stay Well series to touch on some of the basics and point you in the right direction if you need help. **Click here** to read the good, the bad and potentially ugly when it comes to money management.

Dignity's partnership with Neyber gives you access to info about good money management. Visit the **Financial Wellbeing Hub** via the Oracle system (which is where payslips are held)



DID YOU KNOW:

Mercer have created a useful Financial Wellbeing Toolkit with a downloadable **'guide to money in the time of coronavirus.'**

DEADLINE FOR DIGNITY RAINBOWS

Sophia Hines - Aged 3



Rebecca North



Molly Hull - Aged 9



Arthur Hull - Aged 7



Ayesha Van Den Hoek - Aged 6

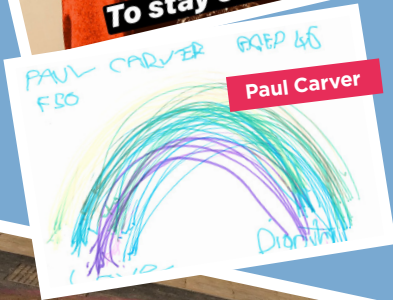


Mylo Crosby - Aged 5



"Your country needs
YOU
To stay safe"

Paul Carver



Lexi James-Hiscock - Aged 7



Mia Walker - Aged 9



Casey Godwin - Aged 7



Cody and Tyler Webb - Aged 14 & 11



The deadline to send in your Monday 11th May. With the bank holiday weekend upon us, why not pick up a pencil and get your families involved.

We've had lots of wonderful and colourful entries to help us create a Dignity rainbow – a huge thanks to everybody that has gotten involved so far. From children, to grandchildren, local communities and even employees – it's a pleasure to open those emails. We'll be posting them on the **on the Good to Great website** shortly for you to have a browse or even download and print off to display in branch or in your office window. Don't forget every entry we receive will receive a prize (think along the lines of a colouring book, but keep that to yourself for now) as a thank you for making us smile.

All you need to do is take a photo of the drawing and email it to **internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk** – along with the names of the people who drew it and an address we can send a prize to. Oh, and we may feature the drawings on our social media channels too. Let us know if that's OK when you get in touch.