



Friday 18 December 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!)

THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL



In our latest video, we look at how we've worked together in a year we will never forget.

As we come to the end of a tumultuous year, we wanted to say a huge thank you.

Whether you've been working flat out in **IT** to get people set up to work from home, in **HR** making sure we and our families are looked after, in the **Crematorium and Memorial Group** making sure mourners could still say a respectful goodbye, in **Health & Safety** navigating and explaining the ever-changing guidelines, in **Funeral Operations** delivering care to our families in their darkest hours, in **Marketing** making sure clients understand we're here to help, in **Pre-Need** helping clients choose the right plan for them, taking calls and having a listening ear in the **CSC**, in the **Incident Management Team** making sure we work together to

manage our response to the virus, or in any other of our many teams – you've all been taking the greatest care of each other, our clients and our communities in a remarkable way.

Take a look back at just some of what we've achieved in our end of year video – and give yourselves a big pat on the back. You deserve it.

And finally...

Normally at this time of year we would come together, enjoying food, a few drinks and maybe letting our hair down on the dancefloor.

Sadly this year that can't happen, but we didn't want you to miss out on a festive treat on us. So, look out for a special delivery from your friendly post-person over the next few days.



Merry Christmas – and best wishes for a very happy 2021.

STARS SHINE BRIGHT

Families can ask for memorial tags to be placed on decorative trees at our crematoria this Christmas.



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at our crematoria with colleagues putting the finishing touches to their remembrance trees.

The Crematorium and Memorial Group (CMG) is running a campaign across all 46 of its locations to remember those lost in 2020.

Families have been invited to dedicate a star-shaped tree tag to a loved one, while CMG has produced a specially commissioned memorial plaque to put on display.

The response so far has been fantastic and we'll keep adding new tags throughout the festive period.

Each crematorium has also nominated a local charity to receive a £500 donation plus any additional contributions families wish to make.



To see more remembrance trees, check out our [gallery](#).

BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER

Thanks to digital technology – and great teamwork – we’ve continued to host memorial services for clients this Christmas.

Many of our branches have a longstanding tradition of organising memorial services in the run up to Christmas.

They provide recently bereaved families with an opportunity to remember and commemorate their loved ones.

Sadly this year, with COVID-19 restrictions still in place, such face-to-face gatherings are not possible.

Yet that hasn’t stopped you showing clients how much we care.

Going digital

Knowing how effective webcasting has been for mourners unable to attend funeral services during the pandemic, branches started enquiring about using the same technology for our Christmas events.

Fortunately a number of venues, including those operated by our colleagues in The Crematorium and Memorial Group, came forward in support and enabled

us to film and broadcast services in most of our operating regions.

Where possible, we’ve also been using local branch webpages to store recordings for clients who want to watch at a later date.

The personal touch

In addition to Christmas carols, readings and lighting candles of remembrance, several teams found ways of making their virtual services extra special.

In the North West region, more than 9,000 clients received an order of service in the post with their invitation to log on and remember a loved one.

Also enclosed were a sachet of mulled wine spices to replicate the usual after-service refreshments, a heart shaped pin badge bearing a rainbow design and a Christmas tree memorial tag.

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(l-r) Valerie Orpen, FSA at J H Kenyon, Bayswater, the Reverend Owen Dobson and the Reverend Paul Thomas, curate and Vicar of St James’s Paddington, Business Manager Philip Smyth and Dr Brian Parsons.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE



JH KENYON

R. BRAIN & G. GAMBLE & SON

RONALD P. SHERRY & SON

W. S. BOND

Thursday 10th December 2020 at 7 o'clock

PLEASE JOIN US VIA

LIVE STREAM

www.stjamespaddington.org.uk

and

www.facebook.com/stjamesusssexgardens



Area Manager Ann-Marie Studd said: “We have been overwhelmed by the strength and understanding of the families we have arranged funerals for this year.

“While we can’t come together in person as we normally do, we hope people can still feel part of the experience when they join us online and that it brings them some comfort.”

Branches of J H Kenyon, R. Brain & G. Gamble & Son, Ronald P. Sherry & Son and W. S. Bond arranged to have their service live streamed via the **Facebook page** of St James’s Church Sussex Gardens in Paddington.

They also swapped the usual cash collection for an internet fundraising page and donations via text message, with all proceeds going to London’s Air Ambulance Charity.



Above: G. Gibbs host a memorial service at Saint Francis of Assisi Church, Wednesbury. Top: one of two virtual services organised for clients of Gordon and Watson and Macintosh and Steven in Aberdeen.



FINAL DATES FOR ORDERING

Need it before Christmas? Check the cut-off dates for getting hold of stock from our suppliers before the holidays begin.

We’ve all been there – racing around the shops on Christmas Eve for a last minute gift, or the final few ingredients for Christmas dinner.

However, when it comes to essentials for the workplace, it’s better to be organised and not leave anything to chance.

Fortunately those helpful people in our Procurement team have

a little something to make everyone’s life easier.

They’ve captured all the festive opening hours for our major suppliers and listed cut-off dates if you need items delivered before the Christmas break.

So now’s a good opportunity to check stock levels, think ahead

to what you might need and get orders placed in plenty of time.

Click here for all the details and don’t forget to use the information on Procurement’s **intranet page** if you ever need contact details for our preferred suppliers.

If only Christmas shopping was this hassle-free!

YOU'RE AMAZING!

10,000 stellar reviews and counting just two years in.

Whether it's Amazon, Etsy or TripAdvisor, many of us will seek out the best reviews for the confidence we're getting the quality and service we want.

With this in mind, we began to actively ask clients to review us online two years ago when we launched our new local branch websites.

In November 2019 we also started to ask some customers to leave their reviews directly on Google My Business. Having good reviews in both places helps us stand out when people are searching online and builds trust in what we do.

We started out with no reviews at all on our websites and just 49% of branches with a review on Google - often a negative one.

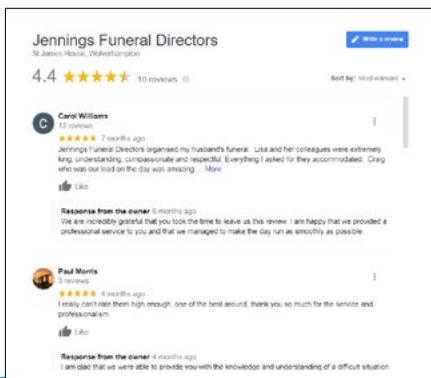
But thanks to the dedicated effort of our reviews team, every single branch now has at least a couple of reviews online - and 77% have a review directly on Google as well.

In fact this week, we've now reached the incredible milestone of over 10,000 online reviews - a huge improvement.

And thanks to your incredible work in taking the greatest care of our clients, we can proudly boast that we have an outstanding average of 4.88 out of 5 across those 10,000 reviews.

In the last week alone we received a whopping 79 five-star reviews on Google - becoming part of the 94.6% of all our reviews that have reached the highest standard.

Head of Branch Development Justin Lewis said: "Reaching this landmark number and continuing to deliver a five-star service is a great success story and shows how positively our clients regard the service we deliver and the people who deliver it. Thank you and well done!"



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JUSTIN LEWIS Head of Branch Development

FINANCING THROUGH FUNERAL SAFE

Our clients can choose this specialist payment option, with the first three months now interest-free.

FUNERAL SAFE

For some families, paying for a funeral represents a significant financial outlay, especially if no provisions have been made.

One way of managing the cost is funeral finance, which means a bill can be repaid gradually over a number of years rather than in a single lump sum.

It's an alternative to using a credit card or dipping into savings and we can introduce our clients to an expert in this area, Funeral Safe.

We've been referencing Funeral Safe on our invoices for just over a year, but now we're planning to make them more visible as a payment option. We'll start by putting information on our websites and then later offering leaflets in branches.

Who are Funeral Safe?

A consumer credit provider for those wishing to spread the cost of all or part of their loved one's funeral.

They are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and offer finance from £500 up to a maximum of £7,500.

Funeral Safe are completely independent and we don't receive any commission if a client decides to pay this way.

Borrowing periods range from one to five years and there are no early repayment fees. Better still, all Dignity clients qualify for the new considerate payment option.

This gives anyone using funeral finance an initial three month interest-free period on their loan.

How would a client apply?

Directly through Funeral Safe as that's who their credit agreement will be with.

Funeral Safe will carry out checks to ensure the applicant can afford to repay their loan without putting themselves in any financial difficulty.

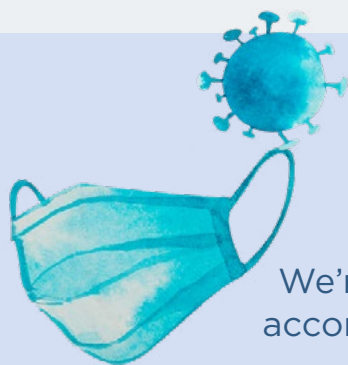
If everything is successful, Funeral Safe will settle the funeral account with us and set up a monthly repayment plan for the client over their chosen term.

Please remember not to give advice

For those of us dealing directly with clients, it's really important to remember our role.

We must not enter into any finance based conversations. We can offer a client information about funeral finance and put them in touch with Funeral Safe, but we are not authorised to give advice or make product recommendations.

Here are the details you'll need: visit www.funeralsafe.co.uk (applications can also be made securely via the website) or telephone 0330 002 0872.



EASY DOES IT



We're up and running with our new PPE partner and, according to your feedback, everything's working well.

Last month we told you about our partnership with RS Components who are helping us source key items of PPE so we can keep ourselves and our clients safe.

Since then we've pressed ahead with user training, finalised the product range and started processing our first orders.

Just to recap, RS Components joins us to help relieve the pressure on colleagues in our Regional Centres and within Funeral Operations.

Centres no longer need to receive, store and distribute PPE for our branches. Instead, supplies can be ordered through the RS Components portal and deliveries will go directly to where they are needed in just 48 hours.

Items available include coveralls, goggles, face visors, masks, overshoes, blue roll, hand sanitiser, disposable gloves, aprons and yellow bags for safe disposal of any used tissues.

Happy so far!

Funeral Manager Mags McConnachie is among those already using the system.

She said: "I'm very happy with the experience so far. I placed my first order and received it the following morning, so if the service remains like this then we can't ask for more."



Business Managers Neil Asquith and Spencer Barlow both found the portal user-friendly, with Neil saying the process was "smooth and easy to follow".

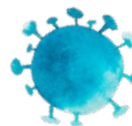
Spencer also liked the status updates provided. "I had email confirmations every step of the way, including after placing the order, when it was dispatched and when it was out for delivery," he added.

You can read about RS Components and their partnership with Dignity on the **Intranet**. Head to the 'Procurement' section and then

select 'Supplier Information' on the top menu tab.

RS Components has prepared a welcome pack with full details of who to contact if you have any queries about their products and services or need help tracking a delivery.

And if you're unsure about how to get hold of PPE, or who is responsible for placing orders in your region, please speak to your Area Manager.



SELF-ISOLATION PERIOD SHORTENED

Official coronavirus guidance now requires people to isolate for 10 days instead of 14.

This week has seen a change in government guidance for controlling the spread of coronavirus.

The self-isolation period for contacts of people who have the virus has been shortened from 14 to 10 days. This matches the period those with symptoms or a positive test are required to isolate for, which is also 10 days.

And it's the same for anyone instructed to quarantine after returning from a country that isn't on the government's travel corridor list – 14 days is now reduced to 10.

The changes apply across the UK.

What does this mean for us?

We are continuing to pay colleagues who need to self-isolate, the only difference being we will now cover salaries in full for the first 10 days of isolation rather than 14.

If a colleague remains unwell and unable to return to work after 10 days, they will receive Company Sick Pay or Statutory Sick Pay in line with their normal contractual entitlement. Casual workers will continue to receive an average of their previous 12 weeks earnings.

It's important to remember that while the self-isolation period may have reduced, this shouldn't

be an excuse for complacency.

COVID-19 is still highly contagious and we all have a responsibility to **stay home** and remain isolated from others if we are showing symptoms or have had any exposure to the virus.

When should someone self-isolate?

You should self-isolate if:

- You have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive
- Someone you live with (or have

formed a support bubble with) has symptoms or tests positive

- You are notified by NHS Test and Trace as a result of being in close contact with someone who has the virus*
- You arrive in the UK from a country not exempt from quarantine rules.

* At Dignity, we have our own contact assessment process running as well, which means we might be in touch before Test and Trace to tell you to self-isolate.



For more information, you can read the government's latest stay at home guidance [here](#) or check out [this summary](#) from the NHS. If you have specific questions about work and coronavirus, please speak to your Line Manager.

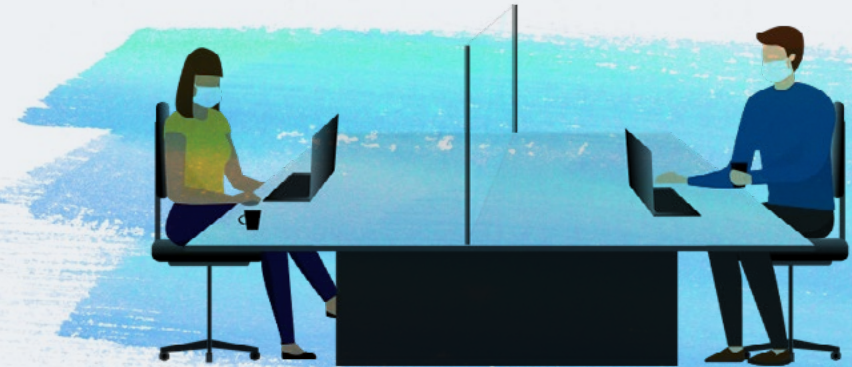
CHECKING COVID-19 COMPLIANCE

Oh, they're making a list and checking it twice; they're gonna find out who's naughty or nice – your RHSO is coming to town...

How did you get on with your New Year's resolutions this year?

Hmmm. Same here. It's easy to let our good intentions fall by the wayside, but when it comes to COVID-19, we need to make sure we don't get complacent and remember to stick to all the guidance.

We know there's a lot to remember, with restrictions and government guidance changing often, but whether we work in Crematoria & Memorials, in a funeral home or head office, we all have a responsibility to keep each other safe. Through January, our Health & Safety team will be making unannounced visits to all



our premises to make sure they're COVID-19 compliant.

Whether it's wearing masks, using Perspex screens, donning PPE or maintaining sanitiser levels, they'll be checking how you're doing against 17 questions. There's an 85% pass rate, with results published on the She Assure system.

We want everyone to pass, so to help you get ahead and make sure you're top of the leaderboard, you can [**download the questions in advance here.**](#)

If you have any questions about what this means for you, contact [**health&safety-regionalofficers@dignityuk.co.uk.**](mailto:health&safety-regionalofficers@dignityuk.co.uk)

CHANGES TO FUNERAL OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

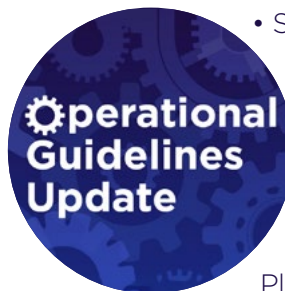
Our guidance has been updated – please familiarise yourself with the changes.

We've received updated advice for funeral home visits, close contacts and respiratory illness.

Therefore, we've reflected this in our [**operational guidance document.**](#)

What's new?

- Section 3, page 4 – updated instructions for appointments and clients visiting the funeral home.



- Section 3, page 5 – further definition for close family members on final bulletpoint.
- Section 5, page 8 – updated guidance on deaths that have links to a respiratory illness.

Please note this guidance is mandatory and we need you to follow it for the safety of you, our colleagues, clients and communities.

ACCIDENT BOOK MOVES ONLINE



New Process for the New Year – make sure you know what to do.

Gone are the days of having to fill in an old-fashioned accident book, thanks to the introduction of a brand new accident reporting tool.

The Health & Safety team have worked with IT to move the system online, meaning that each case can be logged, traced and updated at the click of a button.

Hosted on the She Assure system, any colleague with intranet access can access the new tool from 1st January.

We know it may take a bit of

getting used to, so if you're currently responsible for recording accidents at your location, or would like to see how to do it, then we've produced a **handy training guide** that shows the process step-by-step.

You can also watch this **short video guide** to the new system.

You should continue to use the current accident reporting process up to and including 31st December.

Please make sure you continue to report every accident or

incident, no matter how small. After all, Safety Starts With You.

Not got intranet access?

We know that some colleagues such as FSOs don't have access to the intranet. If this applies to you and you need to record an accident, please work with your local manager or administrator to log a report.

If you have any queries, please contact your Regional Health & Safety Officer, or drop a line to **health&safety-regionalofficers@dignityuk.co.uk**.



YOU'VE BEEN UPGRADED!



We've been busy updating your IT, including RDS and emails.

Whether it's being bumped up to first class, getting a new phone or getting a great substitute in our grocery delivery, we all love an upgrade.

So, we think you'll be pretty pleased with the work IT have been doing to improve our systems to newer versions of the software.

If you use Remote Desktop Services (RDS) you may spot small name changes to your Microsoft Office apps. Other than being newer, better versions, there's no change to how these work for you.

We're also contacting all email users to migrate mailboxes to Exchange online. By moving our emails to the cloud, your personal mailboxes will be 200 x bigger (woohoo!) with shared mailboxes 100 x bigger.

What's more, if you use Microsoft Teams, your

Outlook calendar will be synchronised and visible within the Teams application, making it even easier to manage your diary. With thousands of mailboxes to move over (and a break for Christmas!) we won't finish doing this until the end of January, with all migrations happening overnight to minimise disruption.

We're contacting everyone alphabetically, so if your name begins with Z, please be patient!

Next steps

Look out for an email from IT with instructions for migrating your mailbox. Make sure you read them carefully so you understand what this means for you, and how to set up your emails on your company phone.

Got a query?

If you've got a question about this upgrade, please get in touch with project manager Dipesh Patel:

Dipesh.patel@dignityuk.co.uk



WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?

As we come to the end of this extraordinary year, we'd love to know what you think of our communications in our quick survey.

It's been a few months since we last asked for your opinion on how we communicate with you.

Your insight is always really valuable and helps us to make tweaks and improvements to the Good to Great website, the Dignity Digest newsletter and more.

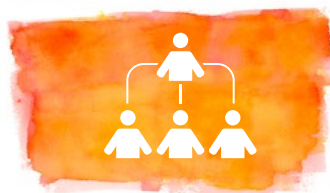
We've all had to adjust to new ways of working and living this year, but we're still committed to making sure you know what's happening, how to do your job effectively and making you feel part of the wider team.



So, we'd like to know your thoughts about the way we share information with you, our communications around COVID-19 and about how we're seen in the media.

Please take just a couple of minutes to complete **our anonymous survey** and help us understand how you are and what we can do to improve.

We're also looking for a few volunteers to have a phone call chat with us about communications. If you'd like to take part, or if you have any queries, please drop a line to **internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk**.



PLEASE UPDATE YOUR **NEXT OF KIN DETAILS**

It's really important that we hold your next of kin contact details in case of emergencies.

We want to make sure that we hold the most up to date contact details for you.

Your address, phone number, email address and next of kin details are all held in Oracle and we'd appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to ensure they are all up to date.

All you need to do is head on over to Oracle – you will need

your Dignity email address (this is your username) and your password. If your password has expired, call the HR Shared Service Centre on 0121 726 4615 and we'll issue you a new one.

You can check out our mini guide to updating your details on Oracle by **clicking here**.

If you haven't used Oracle before, you can always email your details

directly to **HR Shared Services** or give them a call and they will update your records for you.

If you've never logged into Oracle before – or you do not have a Dignity email address – you can use a personal email address to access Oracle. But first you will need to call HR Shared Services (0121 726 4615) who will provide you with a password.

WIN BIG IN OUR CHRISTMAS QUIZ

We have some cracking prizes up for grabs in our fantastic festive competition.

It's time to deck the halls, break open the mulled wine and stuff ourselves silly on mince pies.

Which can only mean one thing – it's Christmaaaaaasss!

(Admit it, you channelled your inner Noddy Holder then, didn't you?)

And with so many of us looking forward to this festive season more than ever after such a challenging year, we've got a sleigh full of tree-mendous prizes for you in our Christmas quiz.

All you need to do is answer all our questions correctly and send your answers with your name and address to **internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk** by 31 December.

The first correct answers drawn out of our Santa hat win:

1st prize: £150 Asda voucher

2nd prize: Lenovo M7 tablet (RRP £100)

3rd prize: Fitbit Inspire 2 (RRP £89.99)

4th prize: Echo Dot with clock (RRP £59.99)

5th prize: £25 Greggs voucher

TO WIN, ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS CORRECTLY...

- How many of Santa's reindeer begin with the letter D?
- In which fictional world, created by CS Lewis, is it always winter but never Christmas?
- Complete the lyrics: 'On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me...'
- Which author wrote 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' in 1957?
- What is Scrooge's first name in the Charles Dickens novel 'A Christmas Carol'?
- In which decade did Slade have a Christmas number 1 with 'Merry Xmas Everybody'?
- What is the name of the actor who plays 'Elf' in the popular Christmas film?
- What is the name of the singing snowman in 'Frozen'?
- What time is the Queen's speech traditionally broadcast on Christmas Day?
- By what name is St Stephen's Day better known in the UK?

