

12th March 2021

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](http://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!)

## CELEBRATING OUR WOMEN

For International Women's Day we're celebrating the achievements of just some of the fantastic women in our business.



**This week was International Women's Day and in a year where women have arguably been affected more due to the pandemic, we wanted to recognise some of the amazing women that make us so successful and get their thoughts on working in our traditionally male-dominated industry.**

In fact, we have so many amazing women we wanted to celebrate, that this is just the first of two articles where we showcase female colleagues across the business.

### Sheril Udberg



Sheril was training to be a midwife when she decided she was meant to help those at the other end of life's

cycle. She's been a Funeral Director at Mitchell Funeral Service in Exeter since 2016.

"I do feel it is much harder for women to gain employment in the funeral industry," said Sheril. "The past 12 months have definitely been the most challenging time of my career, but it's very rewarding when a family tells me that I've helped them or provided comfort.

"There's always people who think it's a morbid job, but my friends admire me for doing it and my family are especially proud of me."

### Kate Legate

Kate has worked in the funeral profession for 16 years and currently manages 14 branches in Central Sussex, including J & R Matthews in Cuckfield; Wm Collins & Son in Burgess Hill and Chappell & Rice in East Grinstead; with responsibility for helping approximately 750-850 bereaved families every year.



"The funeral profession has changed a lot in the last 10 years," explains Kate. "It was unusual to see a lady funeral director back then, but some clients specifically ask for a female funeral director these days.

"I feel lucky to have always been encouraged by my manager, Matthew, and I try to pass on all that I've learned about standards and professionalism to other colleagues. A decade on, I now work with a number of other women funeral professionals and it no longer feels necessary to distinguish us by gender."

### Amy Groves

Amy has been the Manager of Grenoside Crematorium for the past two years. Her introduction to working in the funeral sector was a little unusual.



"I used to work for a Recruitment Agency where one of our clients was Grenoside Crematorium," explained Amy. "I became interested in how they operated, so when the Manager's position became vacant, I decided I should apply myself and was successful in getting the job!

"I previously had the preconception that the funeral profession was very male orientated. That's certainly not the case with CMG as there are successful women at all levels of the business. I don't think the job has presented any challenges because of my gender; the only the exception is that sometimes people will assume the Crematorium Manager will be a man."

## Rachael Barber



Regional Manager Rachael has worked at Gordon Barber, part of Dignity Funerals, for over 25 years. Rachael started working for the business in 1995 as a Funeral Service Arranger, a duty she carried out for over 13 years.

In 2020, Rachael was promoted to Regional Manager covering a wide area across Anglia and is the first female to have such a role in the history of Dignity Funerals.

Rachael said: "Being female hasn't held me back from achieving my goals. I recognise that both men and women have much to bring in caring for the bereaved and my colleagues are very dedicated and professional."



## Tracey Rose

As our Head of HR, Tracey is one of the most senior women in the business and passionate about making our business more attractive to women.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
In pre-Victorian times, the business of caring for the deceased was handled by women?

After striving to have more senior female role models at Dignity, she feels that the recent appointment of Natalie McKail is a step in the right direction as she will further strengthen our senior leadership team.

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*"To women thinking about joining the profession, I say 'do it!' It's a rapidly changing industry and I believe there will be great career opportunities."*

'do it!' It's a rapidly changing industry and I believe there will be great career opportunities for women in future. Whilst Dignity has been a traditional business, I am excited about the pace of change and growth and believe I have a real opportunity to help shape the future."

## Susan Taylor

Susan has worked at Scales Funeral Directors in Blackburn for the past seven years, after previously being landlady of a local pub and an office manager.



"As soon as I joined the funeral profession, I loved it - it felt like the job I had waited my whole life for," said Susan. "Like many women, a successful career hasn't come easy to me and I've had to work hard.

"I am a single mother to three children so juggling home life and a career is difficult and you have to be very organised. I do sometimes get told 'you wouldn't get a woman doing this in my day' but the reaction to female funeral directors is generally very positive."

## Jennifer Goldie

Jennifer is Branch Process Manager, working in the Branch Development team to launch, train, deliver and support new products, processes and initiatives into the branch network. Acknowledging that change is happening in our



traditional industry, she feels that Dignity still has some work to do to become truly inclusive.

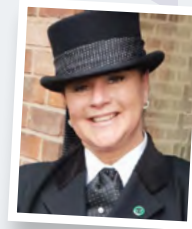
“There needs to be more women in senior roles who take an active part in the business and who are visible to people throughout the organisation to show how women can progress. There are plenty of ways in which women can contribute to this very rewarding industry.

“I have never felt being a woman has held me back, but I’ve had comments made on my appearance, which I don’t believe would have happened if I’d been a man. I think ability and knowledge should be

how we are judged, not on how we look. We also need to see a willingness to close gender pay gaps and more flexible working patterns.”

## Nicola Brookes

Nicola has worked at Ginns & Gutteridge in Leicester for the last 11 years, first as a Funeral Service Arranger, before being promoted to Funeral Director.



“*There needs to be more women in senior roles who take an active part in the business and who are visible to people throughout the organisation.*”

“My gender hasn’t really been a barrier to my ambitions as I’ve had a lot of support from my colleagues and the company,” said Nicola.

“However, my being a female Funeral Director does still surprise those outside the profession. When I first took up the role some people were surprised that a lady would want to be a Funeral Director, but I quickly realised this was the perfect job for me as I’ve always liked caring for others.”



The theme of this years International Women's Day is “Choose to Challenge” – which is somewhat appropriate for the funeral sector as it strives to cope with the changing demands of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We'll have more inspiring stories to share in our next edition.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Non-Executive Director Gillian Kent asks for your thoughts to help us become a better and more balanced business.

**We've been celebrating women in the workplace all week, finding out about our female colleagues in Funeral Operations, Head Office and CMG, as well as hosting two very energetic listening groups with over 100 colleagues.**

Now, we want to get even more insight from you. It's important that we truly make Dignity a great place to work for everyone – and making sure we treat colleagues fairly, regardless of gender, is an important part of that.

It's something that one of our Non-Executive Directors, Gillian Kent, is particularly passionate about.

“I joined Dignity's Board in June 2020, and have

been working closely with HR and the Senior Leadership Team to develop our Diversity and Inclusion strategy. It is a priority for me to help Dignity break through the barriers that may be holding some colleagues – or potential new colleagues – back.

“Please take 10 minutes to complete our anonymous survey and help us shape an even better place to work, for all of us.”

We're keeping the survey open for four weeks to allow as many of you as possible to take part. Take the survey by clicking [here](#).

We'll be sharing the findings and how we'll be using your insights to develop our organisation in the near future.

## FCA CONSULTATION BEGINS

The Financial Conduct Authority has begun consultation on suggested reforms to funeral plans.

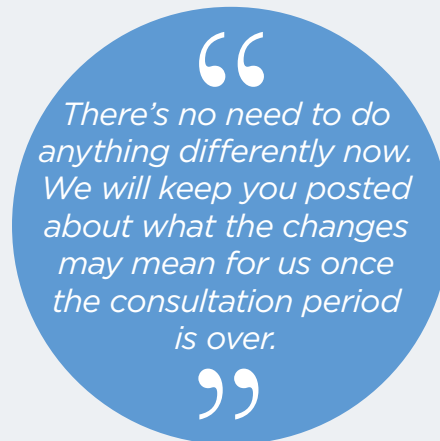
**Last week the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published its consultation paper on proposed changes for funeral plan providers.**

As a business dedicated to taking the greatest care at every stage, we're delighted that our calls for regulation to uphold high standards are continuing to move forward.

We're working through what the FCA recommendations may mean for us and will continue to work with them during the consultation period.

### **What's next?**

The FCA consultation on their proposed recommendations is



expected to close on 13th April 2021.

It's expected that the new rules will be announced in quarter three of this year, before coming into effect in July 2022. This is to give providers enough time to prepare, such as amending marketing literature, and training staff.

### **Why are the FCA recommending changes?**

Proposed changes are designed to make products work better for consumers, create competition and a stable marketplace.

It means that once the regulations come into force, companies that want to continue to sell or carry out funeral plans will need to be authorised by the FCA and conform to their rules and standards or risk committing a criminal offence.

### **What do I need to do?**

There's no need to do anything differently now. We will keep you posted about what the changes may mean for us once the consultation period is over.



# DISCOUNTED FUNERAL PLANS ARE BACK

Once again, we've increased the saving on prepaid funeral plans to £200 for colleagues, family and friends.

**After proving popular last summer, we're pleased to offer colleagues another chance to save more money on the cost of a Dignity Prepaid Funeral Plan.**

For the next two months (until 11 May), we'll combine the usual £100 staff discount scheme with a further £100 reduction – that's a £200 saving in total.

The discount can be claimed by colleagues purchasing a plan for themselves, or you can extend the opportunity to family members and friends.

Applicants can choose from the following Dignity Funeral Plan ranges:

- **Traditional Plans.** Limited, Amber, Pearl and Diamond.
- **Natural Plans.** Bamboo and Willow, which offer an environmentally friendly alternative to a traditional funeral service.

Head to **Good to Great** for more product information and prices.

## Peace of mind

Not everyone in the business is hands-on with funeral plans, so here's a quick reminder about how they work.

Purchasing a plan fixes the prices people pay now for the services they want, protecting them

against any changes in the future.

Plans offer reassurance the funeral arrangements specified will be completed and any personal preferences will be taken into account.

When the time comes, plans can be activated by a loved one with a simple phone call.

## Payment information

Plans can either be paid for upfront in full, spread over 12 months at no extra cost, or spread over a longer term of up to 25 years provided the planholder is eligible, in which case an additional fee will be incurred.

If the planholder chooses to pay for a plan over more than



12 months, it will also include the **Dignity Promise**.

Should the planholder pass away 12 months after they have taken out the plan, but before they had finished paying for it (or at anytime as a result of accidental death), the outstanding balance will be covered.

Please refer to the Instalment Payments section of the Dignity Prepaid Funeral Plan Terms & Conditions for further details.

## How to get a discounted plan

### Please follow these steps:

1. Send an email to [BranchDevelopmentAdmin@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:BranchDevelopmentAdmin@dignityuk.co.uk) saying you, a family member or friend wants to request a discounted staff funeral plan.
2. An application form will be posted to your home address. If the plan is for someone else, you will need to pass it on.
3. Complete the form in full, quoting your employee number in the space provided.
4. Return it to the Client Service Centre.
5. The £200 discount will be applied prior to the plan being set up.

**Remember, this increased discount is only available until 11 May.**



## A SWEET GESTURE

Bring smiles to children with an Easter egg appeal – and use our new posters to help raise awareness.

**We know many of our teams out there do fantastic work supporting local communities.**

With Easter fast approaching, here's a cracking idea that could help brighten up the holidays for local children's charities.

Why not put up some of these egg-cellent (OK, we'll stop now) window posters and run an Easter egg appeal!

Collect donations between now and the end of the month, then arrange to pass them on in readiness for the Easter break.

It could be children spending time in a nearby hospital, hospice or refuge. Or perhaps a charity that cares for children with disabilities or special educational needs.



Check with them in advance and if the collection is a goer, simply specify the name of the charity when placing your order so we can fill in the blank space.

### Getting your posters

Copies are available now. For the 'Dignity With Distinction' branded variant, please order in the usual way via the Dignity Store.

For copies printed in the new Dignity blue brand identity, send your requirements via email to [orders@dignitystore.co.uk](mailto:orders@dignitystore.co.uk).

Don't forget to confirm which charity name you'd like included. The recommended date for placing final orders is Monday, 22 March.

Hop to it! (sorry, couldn't resist one more)



## STRENGTHENING OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

New appointment confirmed to support Dignity's  
quality and standards ambitions.

### Natalie McKail will be joining Dignity's Senior Leadership Team in April.

She will work closely with Andrew Judd (Executive Director of Funeral Operations) and the wider Operating Board to help elevate the already excellent client care and service we provide through our funeral director and crematoria networks.

Natalie is a recognised and respected name in our sector. As the former Inspector of Funerals for Scottish Government, she led the development of a funeral director licensing and registration regime, as well as a new Code of Practice designed to help deliver consistently high standards of service to bereaved families.

Since 2019, Natalie has also held position as an independent working group Chair for the cross-



funeral industry initiative the Funeral Service Consumer Standards Review (FSCSR).

Bringing her experience from Scotland, she has driven forward the work of the FSCSR to develop a similar code for the wider UK funeral industry, working with many of the leading providers, not least ourselves.

Andrew Judd highlights that "Natalie's experience in Government, partnered with a strong understanding of the funeral profession, will be invaluable and bring an exciting new dynamic to Dignity's Senior Leadership Team."

Our Executive Chairman, Clive Whiley, also welcomes Natalie's appointment. He said: "After a hugely testing year for us all, it is pleasing to be able to share this positive news, which forms part of a longer term strategic commercial and cultural change for our organisation."

## UPDATE TO FUNERAL OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

If you're looking after the deceased and their families,  
make sure you follow the latest guidance.

**We've updated our Operational Guidance document in line with the latest government advice to reduce the spread of COVID-19.**

### What's new?

- We've updated the funeral arrangements guidance in section three to include current restrictions on funeral gatherings.

- England - in section one we've added the roadmap out of lockdown to include the four tests and safe behaviours. We've also updated the guidance in section three for mourners who have COVID-19 symptoms or who are self-isolating.

There are no other changes. We expect the next national reviews

for Scotland and Northern Ireland to be within the next two weeks.

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

**If you have any queries, please ask your manager for help.**

# TAKING CARE IN EVERY SENSE

Introducing a series of articles on protecting personal information and why it's something we are all responsible for.

**When we talk about taking the greatest care of our clients, what's the first thing that comes to mind?**

Is it attention to detail so we get the funeral arrangements just right? Is it treating people with respect and compassion during our discussions? Is it how we look after their loved one and prepare them for the funeral service?

All these actions, and more, are without doubt hugely important. But how many of you would have said the way we use and protect a client's confidential personal information?

It may not be as obvious, but it's just as significant. Making mistakes can cause distress, financial loss and even result in remedial action being taken against us.

## Meeting our obligations

There are strict rules in place to protect consumers and their personal data.

Introduced in 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) governs how such information should be collected and processed, while giving



much more control to individuals over who can use it and for what purpose.

GDPR also requires us to secure information, whether digital or physical, in an appropriate way.

Any businesses that break the rules, lose data or leave it exposed, could face large fines and significant reputational damage.

## Knowing what to do

Data protection and information security are wide-reaching and sometimes complex subjects. However, hopefully you can start to appreciate why they are so relevant to us.

We all need to be aware of the

main issues and risks, even if we're not directly handling sensitive data in our day to day roles.

So over the months ahead, we'll keep coming back to these subjects through a series of features supported by our IT team. Together we'll be offering insight, tips and summaries of the key procedures everyone needs to follow.

It starts in the next edition of Dignity Digest when we look at GDPR in a bit more detail, specifically the right of an individual to obtain the personal data an organisation is holding about them.

And if there are any particular topics you'd like us to address in future articles, feel free to send in your suggestions.



## LET'S QUICKLY RECAP

Rounding up the features from our health and safety awareness month, plus YOUR chance to win a prize!

**And just like that, our first awareness month promoting health and safety in the workplace has come to an end.**

**Or not quite...**

We wanted to remind you of the topics we've covered and provide links to the various articles in case there's anything you might have missed.

- Why health and safety is important for us all; meet Dignity's Health and Safety team ([click here](#))
- Fire safety and what to do in an emergency ([click here](#))
- Manual handling; good technique for avoiding injury ([click here](#))
- Introducing SHE Assure, our new health and safety software portal ([click here](#))
- The most common workplace hazards and how to avoid them ([click here](#))

Obviously we've shared all this information to help colleagues stay safe, but there's another advantage too.

It should provide enough clues to help you in our competition to win one of SIX £100 Amazon gift cards.

The image (right) contains a total of **10 different hazards**, most of which we've touched on during the month.



Prize winners will either get all 10 answers correct or the highest total number of correct answers out of all entrants. If there are more winning entries than prizes, the recipients will be drawn at random.

**Good luck!**

Finally, the Health and Safety Team would like to offer their thanks to colleagues across the business, not just for participating in the awareness month, but for continuing to work safely and responsibly during these testing times.

Everyone has adapted swiftly to new processes and shown willingness to promote good health and safety standards in order to keep us and our clients protected.

**Your support is very much appreciated.**



**Safety Starts With You**

Spot as many of the 10 as you can, write down brief descriptions (it doesn't matter what order they are in) and send your entries via email to [internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk)

Entries must be received by no later than Wednesday, 31 March and we'll notify the winners shortly afterwards.

