

4th June 2021

Welcome to our latest news round-up from across the Dignity Group. Can't wait for the next issue? Then go to www.dignityinside.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!)

LOOKING THE PART

Proudly unveiling a major refurbishment at our Earl of Plymouth branch.

Being situated in a city famous for its naval history, it's fitting we've spent the last five months getting everything ship-shape at Earl of Plymouth Funeral Directors.

The premises on Wolseley Road in Milehouse have undergone a massive makeover to bring them right up to date.

In fact, at £375,000 this is the largest single investment we've ever made in one of our funeral homes – and going by the pictures, it's definitely money well spent.

The project includes two brand new arrangement rooms for clients and two new Chapels of Rest.

We've created a quiet and comfortable family area where mourners can spend time in private composing their thoughts.

Both the interior and exterior of the building have been completely redecorated, with new furniture, carpets and furnishings in every room.



Making clients feel welcome

There have also been improvements made to the mortuary and coffin preparation facility.

Funeral Director Matt Reynolds said: "This investment really allows us to continue providing a quality service for the people of Plymouth."

"The reaction from our clients has been very positive and they appreciate the modern, lighter ambience and comfortable surroundings we now offer."

Earl of Plymouth Funeral Directors was established by Bill Earl in 1947. The team plan on organising an official opening event to celebrate the refurbishment during the summer, with a blessing conducted by local religious and community leaders.



The reception room



One of the new arrangement rooms

"This is the largest single investment we've ever made in one of our funeral homes."



FRAMEWORK FOR OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

We've updated the way COVID-19 guidance is issued to make things easier as we head out of lockdown.

Since the start of the pandemic, we've provided guidance to operational colleagues to help protect everyone and minimise the risk of transmission.

This information has remained under constant review, with updates published to reflect changes in government restrictions or safety protocols.

As the country starts to ease its way out of lockdown, we can make corresponding amendments to our guidance.

And to keep things clear and straightforward, we've adopted a phased approach which echoes the alert levels system used by government.

Five levels of guidance

From now on, we'll set levels for our operational guidance ranging on a scale from 5 (most severe) down to 1. Guidance is colour-coded for ease of identification: Level 5 is red, then moving to amber (4), yellow (3), blue (2) and green (1).

The guidance itself should be familiar in its structure, but the contents and stringency of the control measures will reflect coronavirus infection rates.

If any particular areas experience a surge in cases, the different levels of guidance available gives us the

option to apply tighter restrictions as required.

Getting started

We're introducing this latest operational guidance at Level 3 (yellow) across the vast majority of our locations.

There are a few exceptions where Level 4 (amber) will be used and this has already been communicated to the relevant regional and area management teams.

Guidance across all levels is made up of the following documents:

- **COVID-19 operational guidance** for use by all client facing colleagues, operational colleagues and those working in the Client Service Centre
- **Infographics** to illustrate what PPE colleagues need to wear

- **Limousine guidance** including numbers permitted and household mixing
- **Summary guidance** tailored for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland which highlights any rules or restrictions specific to those countries. Note that Limousine and Summary guidance documents aren't tailored or colour-coded for different levels as the points covered apply in all situations.

Access the materials you need from the [Useful Documents](#) section on Dignity Inside. Please speak to your line manager or Regional Health and Safety Officer if you have any queries.

Remember that adherence to our operational guidance is mandatory for the safety of you, our colleagues, clients and communities.



GETTING BACK TO NORMAL

There's welcome news for clients as we start to resume much of our usual pre-pandemic proposition.



REOPEN

It's been a long time coming, but we're starting to see a number of our regular services and facilities for clients get reintroduced.

Decisions are aligned to the government's roadmap and the continued easing of coronavirus restrictions, so we're still taking all the necessary measures to stay safe.

But it does mean that some of those added extras or small touches that had to be suspended due to the pandemic can now gradually resume, making a positive difference to a client's overall experience.

Here's a quick round-up of the changes confirmed so far.

Funeral arrangements

We are no longer offering new clients 'Funeral Now, Service Later' (also known as our Timeless Funeral). This option was introduced last year during the first national lockdown when attendance at funerals was strictly limited.

The proposition was to hold an intimate funeral for close family members around the time of death, then help arrange a suitable

memorial or celebration of life at a later date after the lockdown had lifted.

Given the recent changes in attendance rules (see below), it feels like an appropriate time to return to focusing fully on our usual funeral service options. We can, of course, still offer assistance to any families wanting to organise a separate memorial event.

Attendance

In the main across the UK, this is now determined by the size of the venue and its capacity with social distancing in place, rather than a maximum number of mourners.

Scotland does still have number caps, expected to be 100 starting this month. But the venue size still has to be taken into account. If in doubt, please check our Summary Guidance documents.

Limousines

We can now accommodate up to six people from two households, including support bubble members, in our limousines when travelling to and from funerals. Until recently, this was limited to people from the same household or support bubble.

We still have screens in place to partition the driver from clients. All occupants must wear a face covering and vehicles are cleansed and sanitised after every funeral.

Witnessing

Now permitted again at CMG crematoria. Two family members can be witnesses when charging the coffin.

They must wear a face covering and gloves and we will ask them to remain in a designated viewing area.

Outdoor speakers

These are being switched on again at our crematoria in England so we can play music and audio for mourners attending a service.

People still need to be socially distanced when outdoors and it's important we discourage any larger gatherings outside the premises.

Organists

Later this month, when wider restrictions are fully eased, we intend to welcome back third party organists into our crematoria chapels to use our on-site organs during services.

REVISED STRUCTURE FOR CMG

New cluster teams have been established within The Crematorium and Memorial Group.

We recently summarised some important changes to the operational structure of The Crematorium and Memorial Group (CMG) and in particular the creation of seven new cluster groups.

It was also an opportunity to introduce you to three of the newly appointed Lead Managers who are helping to guide and develop crematoria in the North, Midlands and South East respectively.

Let's continue our whistle-stop tour of the UK and find out more about the remaining cluster locations, as well as those colleagues at the helm.



SANDRA NISBET

Cluster: Scotland

Locations: Houndwood, Holytown, Holmsford Bridge, Craigton, Moray Dundee.

"I am dual manager of Houndwood and, since September last year, Holytown, two very different locations that also operate differently too. We are part of a large, friendly network within Scotland and the rest of the UK.

"I have covered many roles since joining the industry, everything from administration to gardening, cleaning, organist, training as a cremator technician and carrying out memorial sales.

"This experience gives me a 'can do' work ethic and helps in the leadership and guidance I can now offer colleagues in our new cluster. That includes being a shoulder to offload onto when anyone feels their day has gone a bit awry!"



GRAHAM HOLMES

Cluster: Home Counties

Locations: Enfield, East London, Three Counties, Bentley, Counties, Loughborough, Oxford

"I started at CMG five and a half years ago, having previously managed health clubs. The localisation of our new clusters allows for a much faster response time in dealing with any issues. Hopefully all the teams are feeling a greater sense of inclusion and I have certainly experienced plenty of cross-cluster collaboration, which is a really positive start to the new structure being introduced."

REVISED STRUCTURE FOR CMG



AMY GROVES



Cluster: East

Locations: Grenoside, Rotherham, Earlham, Norwich St Faith, Fenland, Grantham, Sherwood Forest

"My background is in recruitment and that's how I initially built a relationship with the company – they were my client and I helped place a number of people in office roles.

"It's been a great experience since moving across three years ago and managing sites, starting at Grenoside and then adding Rotherham. This latest opportunity has come around quickly, but I like the challenge it brings and it feels like a very positive change.

"There is a lot more interaction between locations within our cluster; before it was all too easy to just stick to your own area."

"There is a lot more interaction between locations within our cluster; before it was all too easy to just stick to your own area. We're definitely breaking down those barriers and answering each other's questions. People are busy, but never bored and you can sense a strong vibe developing between each team."



Click [here](#) to see summary charts illustrating CMG's new management structure and all 46 crematoria locations sorted by cluster.

TAKE A BREAK, AVOID BURNOUT

Lots of us have annual leave left to take – make sure you book yours!

Have you still got loads of holiday left? Are you waiting for all restrictions to end before booking time off?

If so, then stop right here, we need to have a chat...

Lots of us have annual leave carried over from last year. That, plus this year's entitlement means we may have more holiday to take than usual.

With the months rolling by, we're at risk of everyone either wanting to take their holiday at once, or even having loads left over at the end of the year at our busiest time.

Unfortunately, if this happens we'll have to say no to some requests, as it's just not possible to run our business without enough people – and that's the last thing we want to see.

Planning our leave is vital. It's really important you talk to your manager about booking yours as soon as possible, so that everyone gets the break they deserve.

Remember, you must always seek approval for your holiday in advance to avoid disappointment.

Stress or burnout?

Stress feels like you have too much pressure, too many demands and too much to cope with.

Burnout feels like you haven't got enough emotional or physical strength to get stuff done, and may lead to feeling like you aren't good enough.

Avoiding burnout

Taking leave isn't just an operational matter, it's good for your health too. These are the signs of burnout to watch out for:

- **Poor sleep.** You never feel rested and are constantly drained.
- **Poor concentration.** You forget things and can't focus on your work.
- **Poor physical health.** You get headaches, dizziness or shortness of breath.
- **Poor temper.** You're more prone to anger, arguments or feeling anxious.
- **Poor mood.** You lose interest in things you used to enjoy and avoid spending time with people.
- **Poor connections.** You feel disconnected and become slow to respond to messages or calls.

If this sounds like you, check this [factsheet](#) from our Be Supported Employee Assistance Programme partners, call them in confidence on 0800 072 7072, or visit <https://axabesupported.co.uk/> (user name: dignity, password: supported).



MADE FOR LEARNING

This year's Learning at Work Week is a perfect opportunity to check out the Dignity Academy Portal.

Learning at
Work Week
2021

The chosen theme is Made for Learning, a celebration of self-empowerment and our capacity to learn new skills throughout our lifecycle.

It highlights the importance of making time to focus on personal development and reaching career goals.

Our new Dignity Academy Portal can help in achieving this, so especially for Learning at Work Week we've compiled a list of ten things colleagues may not know about the system and its various features.

#1 Access is for all

Everyone can use the portal and it isn't reliant on you having a company PC. Personal devices will work and there are shared laptops located out in the network. Use this [guide](#) to help find the best route in.

#2 Pick your moment

Flexibility is key because you need to be in the right environment to learn effectively. As an online system, you can visit the portal whenever (and wherever) suits.

#3 The personal touch

It's easy to upload a profile picture. Click on the link next to your name (and give us a smile!).

#4 Monitor progress

The dashboard on your homepage gives an at-a-glance view of courses you have left to do, courses completed and how much learning you've done in the last year.

#5 All learning counts

If you've completed an activity outside Dignity, such as a first aid course, it can be added to your record via the 'Add my learning' tab. And you can capture any learning reflections here too.

#6 A blended approach

Variety helps us to learn well. So you'll find different activities are delivered in different ways, ranging from videos and PDFs to fully interactive e-learning sessions.

#7 Broaden your horizons

Don't wait for a learning activity to be prescribed. Click on 'All courses' and browse what's on offer. There's a huge range, but the Dignity Top 5 is a good place to start.

#8 Go at your own pace

Learn in manageable chunks. If you can't complete an activity in one session, the system will remember where you got to and mark the status as 'in progress' ready for when you resume.

#9 Say what you think

You can give a course a star rating and post a comment to tell colleagues how you found it.

#10 Study at university

The Open University to be precise. We've linked to hundreds of courses through this trusted provider, all available free of charge.



REMEMBERING DAD

Let's show appreciation for all the fabulous fathers out there and support people who have been bereaved.

While it's a welcome celebration for many families, Father's Day can be a tricky time for those experiencing loss.

That's why we're coordinating a nationwide campaign to remember dads, grandads and father figures who have passed away – and it's something we can all get behind.

People are being invited to use one of our forget-me-not bow tie tributes to leave a message of remembrance. There's also a black and white version they can colour in themselves for that extra personal touch.

Tributes can be downloaded from Dignity's website or collected from a branch. Participants then have the option to display their completed bow tie at home, take a picture of it to share on social media or ask their local branch to put it up in the window.

The more families that join in, the more positivity and communal

Seeking expert help

Both our [website](#) and social media feeds will be signposting grief and bereavement advice for those who may need it.

Content will be tailored for Father's Day, but would benefit anyone who is finding it difficult to cope with the loss of a loved one.

Don't forget to email any photographs of your displays to internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk.

support we can show the bereaved on this difficult and emotionally-charged occasion.

How do I get involved?

If you work at a branch, your team can order window posters and create a themed display ahead of

Father's Day on Sunday, 20 June. They're available in sizes A1, A2 and A3. For blue brand posters, place orders by emailing orders@dignitystore.co.uk; burgundy ones can be ordered online via the [Dignity store](#).

With every poster, you'll receive five colour and five black and white bow ties to get your display started.

For those of us elsewhere in the business, help spread the word by supporting the campaign on social media.

There will be regular posts on Dignity's national Facebook and LinkedIn pages and we'll be using the hashtag #rememberingdad. As well as pictures, we'd love people to share uplifting memories of their dads via these channels too.

And of course, any colleagues wanting to remember their own fathers are welcome to download and personalise a bow tie themselves.