

Update

Transformation Programme newsletter



Welcome to your latest newsletter about our Good to Great plans. In each issue you'll be able to meet the team, find out what's going on and understand what our journey will mean for you. Let us know what you think!

It's time to work together



One of the things I like most about my job is getting out and about to visit branches and speaking to colleagues in the business. Most recently, I was in Stephen Rymer's area

in the North East and as I was chatting to the Area Managers, I kept hearing a common concern.

Namely, a fear that we were going to do something crazy as we transform from Good to Great and that we had allowed a whole lot of external people to come in and tell us what to do.

Now, I think this is probably a common fear across the business, so I want to tackle it head on. We are not going from Good to Great for fun. We are doing it because we have no choice – we have to change and differentiate ourselves from the rest of the market if we are to thrive.

We're already differentiating ourselves with the work we're doing on our two brands, Simplicity and Dignity - and as you'll remember from the last newsletter, we have seen some tremendously encouraging results on the back of the recent Simplicity marketing.

In Operations, we're making changes so we can support that differentiation. One example will

be making it easier for clients to arrange funerals at home. Another is using software to track and schedule our funeral vehicles. All designed to provide a better, more bespoke service for families. We will be testing these new ways of working and flexing where we need to, not just sticking rigidly to plans. We will not attempt to do everything at once. Instead we will be pragmatic and roll these changes out carefully when we know they work. That is why we have said this is a three-year programme.

Some of the changes we make might be difficult. Some you may not like. But ultimately, the team that are steering the Dignity ship have all been in the funeral business for decades. I hope this gives a degree of sanity to our planning and gives us perspective as we navigate our way forwards.

So while it's true to say that the experts we've brought in are not experienced in funerals, they are hugely experienced in their own areas – areas of expertise we simply didn't have in the business but which we absolutely need on board. It is the coming together of long-standing funeral experience (such as Anthony Driver, below) combined with the specific change and project skills of the transformation team which will make us successful.

Fearing change is natural, it is what makes us human. But please let me reassure you that by bringing together all of this experience and by working as a team, I am confident we will make Good to Great a success.

Mike
CEO, Dignity Plc

Pricing Online for Branches

With funeral costs under the media spotlight, we're leading the way with an exciting new trial to put clear, detailed prices online.



Our IT and Marketing teams have been working together to update our branch website pages, in time for a trial starting at the end of this month.

With the aim of encouraging potential clients to a branch to make an arrangement, the new features include online reviews, a clear breakdown of funeral costs and information around the choices people can make to remember their loved one.

The trial follows on from the online publication of our 'from' prices for Simple and Full Service funerals and reflects our commitment to providing clear and accessible information to people at their time of need, whilst also demonstrating Dignity's ethos of delivering the highest standards of care.

Industry bodies including the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) have been pushing for more transparency when it comes to funeral pricing,

so we're leading the way by publishing detailed prices, essential third party costs (including local crematoria prices), coffin options and more. With each page localised to a branch, we can

make sure that our online and in-branch information is joined up.

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The trial branches are also being asked to review the online information before it goes live, to make sure it's correct and that we're truly working together as one Dignity team. And if we're happy with how it's going, we'll have more branches online later this year.

A Great Place 'To Be'

Find out how colleagues from across the company have been working together to design new, future processes to help our business run smoothly.



John Boyle – Area Manager, Glasgow and Northern Ireland; Nick Bibby – Area Manager, Greater Manchester; David Harrison – Area Manager, North Tyneside; Richard Staniland – Fleet Management, Dinnington Service Centre and Matt Evans - Interim Process Lead, Transformation.

A big part of our Good to Great plan is to bring consistent ways of working to Dignity.

At the moment, each region and sometimes areas within regions, have their own ways of doing things – sometimes very differently - and this means we're not being as efficient as we could be, especially for a company our size.

Good to Great is seeing massive investment into improved systems and IT, so we've held 'To-Be' workshops to map out what our new processes could look like in future once these new systems are in place. For example, Resource Management workshops have considered how a new system could help us manage our vehicles and colleagues in future care centres. And for Arrangement, teams have come together to design new processes to improve the customer journey and make colleagues' lives easier. This has meant taking the best bits from our current ways of working, and understanding their roles in the new processes so everyone knows what they need to do to work more efficiently and consistently in future.



Matt Evans - Interim Process Lead, Transformation; Matt Fairbairn – Funeral Manager, South Essex; Martin South – Area Manager, Bristol; Craig Wilson – Funeral Manager, Herts & Essex and Matthew Keysell – Area Manager, Sussex.

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It has been a great opportunity to be involved in these workshops, to understand the work going on behind the scenes, and to work with colleagues across the business to contribute to the transformation and future ways of working.

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Matthew Keysell – Area Manager, Sussex

The successful workshops have seen colleagues from around the business work together for the first time, with new connections being made with people who do similar jobs to them. Not only has that meant a greater understanding of what is needed to make the new processes a success, but we've also seen colleagues from neighbouring networks planning to help each other share resources now – a great result!

“This has been a somewhat daunting task, as we have differing processes throughout the country. But it's been with a view to make our jobs easier, with the principle focus being our client. Being able to share experience, network across the business and form new relationships, has been hugely beneficial, as we are able to link this in with the expertise and foresight of the Transformation Team. In the long run, the long hours and hard work will be worth all the effort.” added John Boyle – Area Manager, Glasgow and Northern Ireland

If you'd like to get involved in any future Good to Great workshops,
Let us know at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk



60 Seconds with... Anthony Driver



Name:

Anthony Driver

Role:

Regional Manager North West

Where are you based?

Lancaster – Preston Ireland Bowker

How long have you worked for Dignity?

28 years

What does a typical day look like for you?

As a Regional Manager there is no typical day, but it often starts for me when my local Costa opens (only 100 yards away!) where I try to deal with any outstanding emails, review the previous day's calls and make notes on conversations – an old habit! I then review my 'To Do' list.

I like to get difficult calls dealt with first then hopefully they won't distract me. Then jump in the car and drive to wherever I am going. From where I live on a clear day across the estuary I can see Colwyn Bay and Barrow – both towns with a Dignity location, but both can take over 2.5 hours to drive there! I'm not great at grabbing lunch, though. Bad habit. Often stopping for calls and to answer emails. I have always enjoyed visiting branches on my own, I find staff often prefer this approach and speak more openly, though I never say where I'm going next! Hopefully home for 6.30pm. As Business Lead for Property, the Transformation

programme is taking a fair chunk of my time but BAU (Business As Usual) is fundamentally important.

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

I work with some lovely caring staff who help people they love go to Heaven and other nice places to be happy forever.

What's the most unusual/most eventful thing that's ever happened to you at work?

During particularly heavy snowfall in the South East, an ambulance became stuck in a snowdrift about 10 miles from Orpington during a coroner's removal. I asked for a group of volunteers and then five of us set off (in two 4x4 Subarus) armed with shovels and bags of grit. We eventually managed to recover the ambulance with the assistance of a very kind passer-by in pick-up truck. Some things just have to be done!

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

Fewer emails.

What song/piece of music would you choose for your own funeral?

Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor – the full 11 minute version!

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

Listen to clients. Learn from their feedback. They are rarely wrong.



Jargonbuster

Don't know your BAU from your ROI? Then we're here to help!

Steering Group

You may hear a bit of talk about the steering group, and as Mike alludes to in his blog, these are the guys that steer the ship. The Steering Group is made up of the Exec team and they oversee the Good to Great programme. They:

- Provide strategic direction to the Transformation programme
- Control the overall success of the programme
- Provide resources to the programme
- Ratify/ Approve decisions regarding changes to scope and deliverables.
- Resolve issues and remove barriers

Economies of Scale

This means using our size to our advantage. As we're a bigger business, we can use our size to become more efficient and get better deals with our suppliers, so we can stabilise our market share and be more competitive than other funeral directors.

Got a phrase that has you bamboozled?
Let us know at goodtgreat@dignityuk.co.uk

New! Listen in!

If you want to hear about transformation in more detail, why not listen in to our Good to Great dial in? Simply call free on **0800 0086371** to hear Transformation Director Paul Turner speak – don't forget leave your question or feedback at the end (10mins).



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 drop us an email at goodtgreat@dignityuk.co.uk