

**16<sup>th</sup> July 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](http://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!)

# FINDING THE BEST PEOPLE

Funeral Director Sonika Saddi is fronting an exciting campaign to bring new talent to Dignity.



**Great people are the essence of what makes Dignity a successful business.**

They are integral to ensuring high levels of client satisfaction, as well as making our organisation a desirable and fulfilling place to work.

But alongside our fabulous existing colleagues, we need to continually attract new talent to the industry and give them compelling reasons to build a career specifically with Dignity.

That's the aim of our latest recruitment campaign, the first to make use of our new plc brand identity which was introduced in the spring and is reflected right here across the pages of Dignity Inside.

**Read all about us!**

Very soon we'll be appearing in the latest edition of *Jobs & Careers* magazine, a leading guide to recruitment and training for active job seekers

fronted by Baroness Karren Brady. It circulates within universities, colleges, careers offices, libraries, post offices, plus online and via social media platforms.

And who better to tell Dignity's story than someone who has worked here for nearly 20 years.

Sonika Saddi takes centre stage in our advertising feature, talking about her responsibilities helping grieving families in their time of need.

Starting as a part time Funeral Service Arranger, and now a Funeral Director based in Southall, Sonika never actually intended to stay in funeral services for the long term.

Her ambition was to be a Chartered Accountant and the role at the funeral home was just a way of paying the bills while she worked towards achieving a professional qualification and setting up her own accountancy firm.

Over time she realised it was supporting the bereaved that provided true job satisfaction and opted to return to a full time position with Dignity.

She speaks passionately about her work and we're hoping her words will inspire readers to discover more about the broad range of employment opportunities we can offer, even if they don't have prior experience.



You can read the article in full by clicking this [link](#) and check out more editions of the magazine on the [Jobs & Careers website](#).

# HOW WILL 'FREEDOM DAY' AFFECT US?

Getting ready for the next step in the government's  
roadmap for exiting lockdown.



**Prime Minister Boris Johnson has confirmed England will move to the final stage (Step 4) of easing coronavirus restrictions on 19 July.**

Updated guidance removes the legal requirement for social distancing and face coverings, but urges people to exercise caution out of respect and responsibility to others.

The relaxed rules apply to England only. Scotland and Wales are lowering their respective alert levels, but certain measures such as the mandatory use of face coverings remain in place. Northern Ireland is also easing restrictions according to its own timetable.

## **A measured approach**

After nearly 18 months of restrictions, it's fantastic that we'll be allowed to have large gatherings again, and to see sporting events and theatres reopen.

However, as we look after some of the most vulnerable people in society, we will be taking a measured approach to lifting COVID-19 restrictions for colleagues. Infection rates are still rising and we know not all of you are fully vaccinated yet.

## **Your questions answered**

We've tried to address the main issues affecting you, our clients and visitors to our premises in the following FAQs.

**We will be taking a measured approach to lifting restrictions.**



There are a few areas where decisions still need to be made, so if in doubt it's best to follow the existing rules as you have been throughout the pandemic.

You can also raise any additional queries with your line manager or HR Business Partner.

**Continued on next page >**



## I've been working from home until now, so should I return to the office next week?

Not just yet. While Step 4 means the government is no longer instructing people in England to work from home, it's down to individual businesses to control how this happens and at what pace.

For colleagues usually based at head office, there won't be a return en-masse to King Edwards Court and Duke Street during the summer. We'll take things steadily and start with people whose roles are less suited to home working, such as those in direct contact with our clients.

So unless you've been told otherwise by your line manager, please carry on as you are and work from home wherever possible.

Lots of activity is happening behind the scenes to ensure that when people do return the process is controlled and safe, plus we're giving full consideration to how more flexible working arrangements might be embraced in the long term.



## Is there updated guidance for colleagues in funeral operations?

Yes, we expect this to be available from next week.

Please be mindful of variations across the devolved nations and pay particular attention to the Summary Guidance which, as ever, will be tailored for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to reflect specific rules on matters such as funeral attendance.



## Do I still have to wear a face covering?

Outside of England, yes – the rules haven't changed.

In England, the legal requirement to wear a face covering indoors ends on 19 July, but government guidance says they are 'expected and recommended' in crowded and enclosed spaces when mixing with people you don't normally meet.

We are not able to formally enforce wearing face coverings in the workplace, although some of you will feel comfortable and protected by continuing to use them and that's absolutely fine. What we would expect is that colleagues are considerate towards each other and show respect for people's individual preferences.

When it comes to clients visiting our funeral homes, please refer to the forthcoming operational guidance. This will highlight the importance of understanding and mirroring what each client wants to do, while still wearing face coverings when working in close proximity with colleagues.

Given the larger numbers of people involved, we will be politely requesting that attendees at our crematoria do still wear a face covering, however this cannot be made mandatory.



## Do the hygiene measures introduced at the start of the pandemic still apply?

For now, yes. Over time we may revisit some aspects of our approach in terms of health and safety, but in the short term please follow the current guidelines, for example:



Washing your hands regularly and using the hand sanitiser provided on arrival and departure



Keeping windows open to provide natural ventilation



Not using shared kitchen and canteen areas to prepare and eat food; not using communal items such as crockery and cutlery.

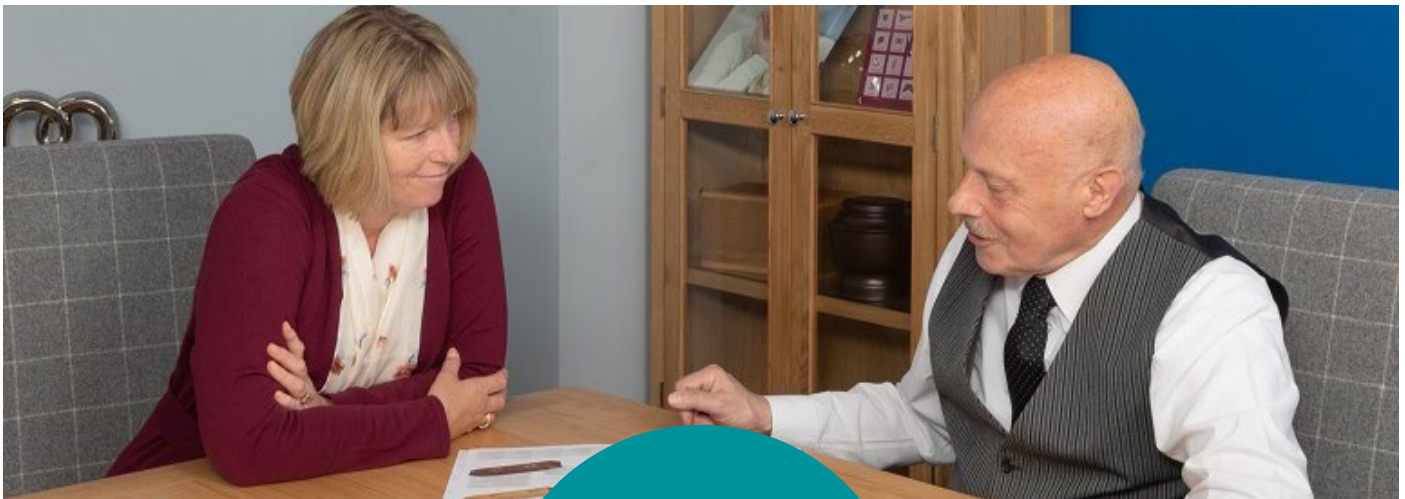
We are continuing to monitor government advice and infection rates, and will let you know about any further changes to working arrangements as soon as we can.

And of course, it goes without saying that if you have COVID-19 symptoms, or test positive, then you must stay at home.



# CONSISTENCY IS KEY

We've made some important changes to how we offer prepaid funeral plans to our branch customers.



**There are changes happening that alter how we promote and arrange Dignity Funeral Plans via our branches.**

The aim is to ensure a consistent experience for customers, regardless of whether they purchase a plan directly from us, or through one of our trusted partners.

Some changes also form part of the continuing journey towards FCA regulation for the whole of the funeral plans market.

Here's a summary of the key points you need to know. All changes became effective on 12 July.

## **Removal of Index Linked plans**

The Index Linked option is no longer being offered against any of our branch plans. All plans are instead Guaranteed, which makes our overall product range easier to manage and ensures the choices for customers are the same across all of our distribution channels.

**The aim is to ensure a consistent experience for customers.**

Index Linked products account for a very small proportion of the total number of prepaid funeral plans we sell in branches and they tend to have a higher cancellation rate.

Index Linked plans have now been removed from sale and any final products submitted before 12 July are being processed.

## **Customer age range**

While Dignity Funeral Plans are marketed as products for people aged 50 and over, we can, at our discretion, offer them to the over 40s.

This is already possible for plans sold through another Dignity channel or an affinity partner.

Branches can now follow this approach too across the full range of Dignity plans.

## **Choice of Funeral Director**

Amber, Pearl and Diamond plans sold through a branch can be allocated against our wider network of nominated Funeral Directors if requested. Only our Limited and two Natural plans (Bamboo and Willow) are restricted to Dignity-owned Funeral Directors.

This change also applies to our back-book where customers have a Guaranteed option plan.

## **Customer information**

Both our Terms and Conditions and Key Features Summaries have been updated for all branch plans in order to reflect the above changes, plus new marketing literature is available in all branches.

If you have any questions regarding Dignity Funeral Plans, please speak to your line manager or Branch Development Manager.

## CRAFTED WITH CARE

There are definitely no long faces after Dignity Manufacturing saddles up to help out in the community.



**The team at Dignity Manufacturing are justifiably proud of the skill and care that goes into producing quality coffins for our clients.**

Recently, however, they've been plying their trade in support of a very different cause by coming to the rescue of a local riding school.

The project started when Head of Manufacturing Tim Snowden visited Bleach Yard Stables in the Yorkshire town of Beverley.

He said: "My daughter has a horse there and I've got to know the owner Joyce Fearn quite well over time. As well as running the riding school business, she's also a renowned trainer who has coached Olympians and does a lot of charity work with disabled children.

"We noticed that in one area there wasn't a proper stable door separating the horses and what was being used instead was quite worn and rickety.

"That's when I thought we might be able to give something back to the community. I offered our services at the factory to make and install a proper door and that's exactly what we've done."

Tim asked his maintenance apprentice Isaac Ellis to design and fabricate the bespoke door.

"He's really talented and what he managed to produce was excellent," said Tim. "My only instruction was to make the door strong, because the horse it will be used for has a reputation for being a bit unpredictable!"

### Doing good with wood

Manufacturing's support for Bleach Yard Stables is far from being a one-off.

For more than three years now, colleagues have been able to take away any wooden offcuts to use in a burner or for carrying out DIY projects at home.

In exchange they're asked to make a donation to our nominated charity, formerly British Heart Foundation and soon to also include Teenage Cancer Trust.

Then 12 months ago they partnered with the Hull-based charity **Recycling Unlimited**, which runs a joinery

workshop that turns used timber into garden furniture, planters and bird feeders.

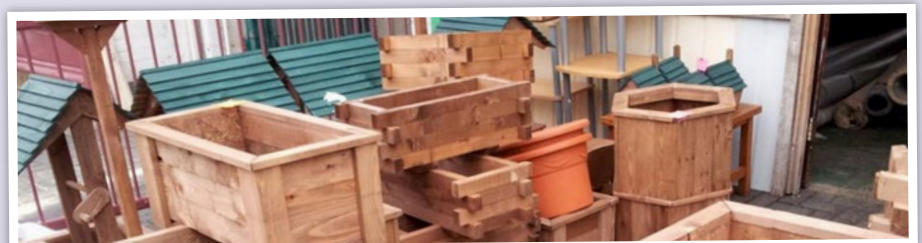
Items are sold via the charity's own factory outlet, with all profits put back into supporting people affected by issues such as mental health and disability.

Tim explained: "We provide them with waste materials from when we're working with solid oak. Excess wood is kept to one side after we've machined it, then the charity collects it every fortnight ready to use in their workshop.

"Anyone can experience difficulties with their mental health, so it's important for us to support a charity specialising in this area and especially one that's active locally."

This caring, compassionate attitude typifies Dignity and our people.

We'd love to hear about any community projects you and your teams are involved in. Please send details to the Internal Communications team via email.



# LET'S TALK ABOUT CANCER

This month's StayWell theme in partnership with AXA is Let's Talk About Cancer.



**One in two people born after 1960 will be diagnosed with some form of cancer in their lifetime.**

This powerful insight comes from Cancer Research UK and it shows just how important it is to spot cancer and take action as early as possible.

We know our own bodies best, so it's a good idea to be aware of the different signs of cancer to look out for.

As well as taking part in national screening programmes (breast, cervical and bowel are available on the NHS), regular self-checking can be an effective way to notice any changes as they occur.

Not just lumps and bumps; rashes, changes to moles and heavy aches can be some of the early warning signs to look out for.

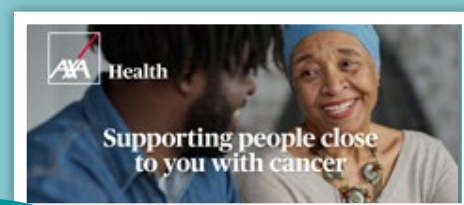
Check out the AXA Health **self-checking factsheet**, as well as this one about **bowel cancer** which affects 42,000 people in the UK every year.

### Calling all men

Yes, you. We know that many men are rubbish at going to the doctor, so this one's for you.

The majority of our male colleagues are over 50, which means they're more at risk of prostate cancer.

Make sure you read this **prostate cancer factsheet**, which gives some useful tips on spotting the signs and seeking help sooner rather than later.



**1 in 8 men are affected by prostate cancer every year in the UK. It's the most common cancer for men to have.**

### Supporting people with cancer

The words 'I've got cancer' are nothing other than a bombshell.

They ricochet around families and friendship groups and can leave many of us wondering what the right thing to say is, and how best to offer support.

Unfortunately, with one in two people likely to be diagnosed at some point in their life, there's a

**Continued on next page >**



## FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

If you need advice, help or just someone to speak to about your cancer journey, please get in touch with the Employee Assistance Programme:

- Online at <https://axabesupported.co.uk/> (username: dignity, password: supported)
- Call the free and confidential helpline, 24/7 on 0800 072 7072
- Visit the [AXA Health cancer centre](#) for videos, articles and more information
- Speak to AXA's **dedicated cancer nurses**, who are on hand to offer 24-hour phone support to EAP members and their families, every step of the way.

You can also find support for living with cancer, advice on treatments and more online at [Macmillan Cancer Support](#).

good chance you'll be asked to support someone through their cancer journey one day.

Everyone's experience will be different and there are no hard and fast rules to follow, but hopefully these ideas, also available for [download](#), will come in useful.



**Don't shy away**  
Don't ignore the big C-shaped elephant in the room. Ask them if they want to talk about it, but don't be offended if they don't.

**Be there for them**  
Whether it's a hug, a daily text or being there to listen to the worries, offer support if they're open to it.

**Get practical**  
If emotional support isn't your thing, offer help with errands, housework, or delivering some home-cooked meals.

**Look after yourself**  
If you're supporting someone through a tough experience, remember to take care of yourself too.

# DELICIOUS DISCOUNTED DINING

Tuck into half price meals when you purchase membership to tastecard through Dignity.

**There's less than one month to go for colleagues who would like to access our special offer from tastecard.**

Until 30 July, you can register for a 12 month tastecard membership at the exclusive rate of £29.99.

Tastecard members receive 50% off the total food bill, or 2 for 1 dining, at thousands of restaurants nationwide.

These include local independents, as well as high street chains such as Giraffe, Prezzo, Wildwood, Café Rouge and Ask.

You also benefit from offers on:

- Cinema tickets
- Food collection and delivery services
- Days out
- High street shopping
- And other exclusive member perks.



To sign up, simply visit this [website](#) and enter your details.

You can purchase a membership for yourself, plus up to six additional ones for family and friends at the same rate. The payment is then deducted from your salary.

Remember, discounted memberships for Dignity employees are only available until 30 July.







## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Share the latest team news and celebrate great achievements via our brand new Your Story page.

A new section has arrived on Dignity Inside and believe us when we say it's all about you!

**Your Story** is a place to celebrate, congratulate, acknowledge and remember our fantastic people and everything they do to help make Dignity great.

And while we're not going to set the agenda – it's your page after all – here are some suggestions for stories you may wish to promote:

- Long service milestones
- Welcoming new starters
- Promotions or taking on new roles
- Passing exams and achieving new qualifications
- Bidding farewell (retirements and leavers)
- Celebrations outside of work (marriages, new babies)

To get featured on Your Story, simply send some brief details and ideally an accompanying photograph to [Internal.Communications@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:Internal.Communications@dignityuk.co.uk).



No need to email us – Good Deeds can be uploaded directly to Dignity Inside.

Not got access to email? Give us a ring on 07458 136511.

### Keep those Good Deeds coming

Our Good Deed Feed is still going strong. In fact, you've shared nearly 150 inspiring posts since the feed was first introduced last year!

It's the perfect way to tell colleagues about what you and your teams have been doing to care for our clients, help others and show support and kindness within your local community.

Click on the Good Deeds tab, hit 'Submit a Good Deed', fill in the form and it will go live as soon as we get the chance to review the content.



## YOUR STORY

