

## 22<sup>nd</sup> October 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!)



# A BRAND NEW VENTURE

Dignity Ventures is our new division dedicated to supporting innovation in the end of life sector.

**We are excited to announce the introduction of Dignity Ventures, a brand-new division of the Dignity group that will help us increase innovation in our industry.**

Dignity Ventures will operate at arm's length from our usual businesses but will bring new and innovative companies and people into the Dignity family and encourage the end of life sector to thrive.

It is a first of its kind for the funeral and end of life sector, so we asked Gary to explain a little more about what Dignity Ventures is all about. You can view the video on Dignity Inside.

There are a diverse range of organisations in the end of life sector ranging from consumer comparison and information platforms, to green and sustainability focused initiatives, unique manufacturers, as well as digital and technology advancement specialists.

Dignity Ventures will aim to accelerate innovation and customer choice by supporting entrepreneurship and helping some of these smaller organisations succeed in delivering a positive experience for consumers.

The investment and support from Dignity will provide a much-needed resource and financial boost, in addition to access to our market leading knowledge and experience. Firms may receive support in the form of acquisition, investment or partnering.

Importantly, these companies will maintain their independence, strategic focus and culture.

### **Can colleagues put ideas forward?**

We know that you work with a range of suppliers and services every day. Dignity Ventures will be an exciting part of our future, and we would welcome any ideas of organisations you've come across that you think could benefit from this new initiative.

**Continued on the next page >**

## Introducing our first venture

We are delighted to announce that we have confirmed our first partnership through Dignity Ventures. We have acquired Funeral Choice, an online funeral information consumer platform.

The move will accelerate Funeral Choice's mission to support bereaved families and it will pave the way for the development of a best-in-class industry platform, where all UK funeral directors can appear. The ambition is for Funeral Choice to become the go-to destination for funeral related information and advice.

Since its founding in 2013, Funeral Choice has helped tens of thousands of bereaved families to research and organise a funeral. Our investment in the platform will help to build on the achievements of Funeral Choice to date by enhancing the depth of information and advice provided whilst expanding the platform's scale and reach.

Funeral Choice will operate as a stand-alone company with its existing and long-standing team remaining in place. Whilst the expansion plans for Funeral Choice are still being developed, the business will operate according to the following fundamental principles going forward:

- The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) rules and recommendations will underpin the entirety of the platform's mission, design and functionality
- Any UK funeral provider will be welcome to list its services
- All information displayed will be as clear, transparent and accurate as possible



**"We are delighted to have secured this next chapter of Funeral Choice's future."**

Alix Baldwin, Director of Funeral Choice

There will be no preferential treatment of one funeral provider over another.

**Alix Baldwin, Director of Funeral Choice** said: "We are delighted to have secured this next chapter of Funeral Choice's future. As one of the first sites of our kind, we have supported thousands of families over the past eight years to find a funeral director and navigate an exceptionally difficult moment in life.

"At the same time, we have also helped the majority of UK funeral directors to increase their online presence. We very much intend for this dual mission to continue under our new ownership, with even greater ambition and purpose; we truly hope that the industry will get behind us as we strive to achieve this."

Meanwhile, **Gary explains:** "We are pleased to be backing Funeral Choice in their endeavour to provide the best advice and guidance to those planning a funeral.

"Our aim is to assist in the CMA's desire to see greater transparency in the industry to help the bereaved make better informed decisions when choosing a funeral director. To achieve this, it is vital for Funeral Choice to operate at an arm's length from Dignity and have full editorial independence."



## HEADS OF REGION APPOINTED

Anthony Molyneux and Emily Skelton will take on the role in our new pilot regions, starting in December.

With plans progressing for the introduction of two pilot regions in our organisational restructure, we're making headway on the all-important task of recruitment.

Having strong leadership in each location is essential and so we're delighted to announce that appointments for the position of Head of Region have now been made.

Overseeing South Central in the Midlands will be Anthony Molyneux, while Emily Skelton has responsibility for South London.

They will lead a team of Business Leaders in the delivery of our operational services, a key difference being full integration between each region's funeral homes, crematoria, service chapels, cemeteries and service centres.

Heads of Region will also be accountable for developing pre-need activities across their respective areas, including adherence to forthcoming regulatory requirements as stipulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

### Leading by example

Dignity's Chief Operating Officer Kate Davidson said: "With these

appointments in place, the restructure is off to a strong start.

"It's a critical role that combines industry knowledge and business acumen with great people skills. We need the Heads of Region to create engaging and inclusive working environments which are fully focused on building market leading brands and achieving the best customer outcomes.

"In Anthony and Emily, we're confident we have the right people in place to lead by example and help us properly test and refine this new approach to how we deliver our services."

The pilot is due to commence on 1 December for a period of around three months. There will be 12 newly structured regions in total, each with its own Head of Region and supporting team of Business Leaders.



Anthony Molyneux joined Dignity in March 2019, initially supporting the Transformation programme as a Regional Change Manager and more recently as an Area Manager in Scotland. He has more than 30 years of experience in the funeral profession.

Emily Skelton is currently Area Manager in South West London and has experience of change and operational management both inside and outside of the funeral sector.

We're keen to share more insight into their career journeys, expectations and aspirations for the new Head of Region role. So we'll be catching up with each of them to discuss everything in greater detail.

Look out for special interviews appearing right here in Dignity Inside very soon. In the meantime, we extend our warmest congratulations to you both!

## THE LATEST ON OUR RESTRUCTURE

We speak to Kate Davidson all about the organisational restructure and Business Leader recruitment.



**“The ambition is to enable our best people to take on a instrumental, interesting and highly rewarding new role in both our funeral locations and crematoria.”**



We know you have lots of questions about the restructure and just what is going to happen in our pilot regions.

To get you all the up-to-date information, we sat down with Kate Davidson and asked her to give us the latest news.

In the video on Dignity Inside, Kate covers how we are progressing plans in our pilot regions and discusses what the new Business Leader roles are and what they mean for Dignity.

### **Here are the key details that you need to know:**

- We are well on our way to launching our exciting new organisational structure which begins with two pilot regions – South London and Central South
- This is the first step towards a more integrated organisation and teams and our colleagues are at the heart of this
- Following on from the Head of Region appointments, we have been engaging with those affected in the pilot regions, for the first stage of recruitment for the new Business Leaders
- This is an exciting new role for Dignity, giving a more strategic and autonomous focus on how local brands are run and how we meet our client needs

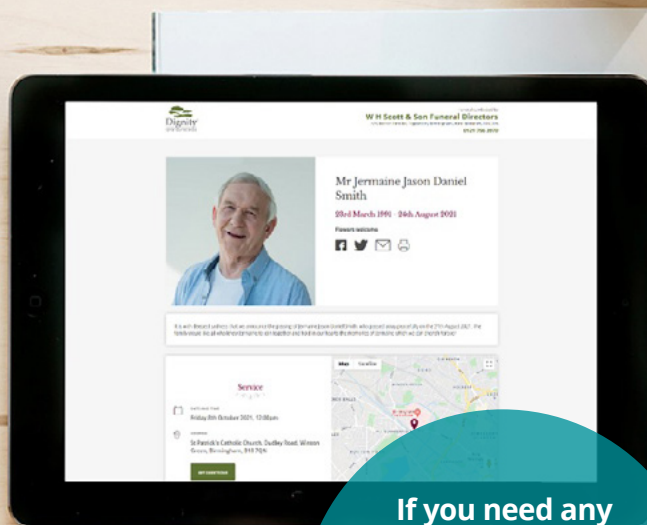
- The ambition is to enable our best people to take on a instrumental, interesting and highly rewarding new role in both our funeral locations and crematoria
- Business Leaders will have more autonomy, more say in how services are delivered through our branches, and they will be working strategically and closely with the Head of Region to understand how to grow and sustain market share
- Central functions will also offer support at a more bespoke and regional level.

The recruitment process will get underway shortly within the pilot regions to begin with. You will hear more about this very soon.

If you have any questions, please do speak with your HR Business Partner, or email us at [Internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:Internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk) and we will pass your messages on to Kate directly.

## BACK TO THEIR BEST

We no longer need to limit the information included in Funeral Notices, plus we've made some improvements.



If you need any help or additional information about Funeral Notices, please contact your Branch Development Manager.

**Funeral Notices are a great addition for our clients, enabling them to share details of their loved one's funeral in a simple and respectful way at no extra charge.**

Like many aspects of our services, Funeral Notices have had to adapt to challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

That's why when the government started limiting who could attend a funeral, and in line with industry guidelines from the National Association of Funeral Directors, we decided to make some important system changes.

We stopped promoting the dates, times and locations of funerals so families could carefully manage the number of mourners, although all other elements of Funeral Notices remained in place.

Now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased, we're pleased to be

reinstating this function. Better still, it comes with improved flexibility.

### **Giving families the choice**

The publication of arrangement details in a Funeral Notice has become optional and something the client can choose to include or omit at their discretion.

This is because sensitivities around COVID-19 remain and new cases are still being recorded every day. Some families may wish to hold more intimate, smaller services regardless of the lack of restrictions, in which case sharing the full details online might not suit their needs.

With this in mind, our colleagues will ensure they discuss Funeral Notices in detail as part of the arrangement process and carefully explain to clients the different approaches available.

Whichever way a client decides to use their Notice, it is still an integral part of our offering that really adds

value and convenience to the process of organising a funeral.

### **Creating a Notice**

Are you using Funeral Notices? If so, here's a reminder of how to create a new Notice with or without service details.

- If the client would like the Service, Committal or Reception details displayed, tick the relevant box to add them to your template.
- If they would prefer the details to be omitted, keep each of the boxes unticked and move on.
- The Obituary box can be used to include any guidelines specific to the local area where the funeral is being held.
- You can also add an additional message or instruction here – attendance for immediate family and friends, by invitation only – and provide details for accessing a live stream of the service.

# ENDING OUR PARTNERSHIP

From 17 November, we won't be sharing information about Funeral Safe with our clients.

## It's been two years since we first started working with the financing specialist Funeral Safe.

This involved sharing product information with clients who were considering paying their bill gradually in instalments rather than as a single lump sum.

Our partnership with Funeral Safe will soon be ending, which means we need to remove references to the firm and its services from our branches, websites and correspondence.

There's still plenty of time, but we should make a start now rather than waiting until the designated cut off date of 17 November.

### Why is the partnership stopping?

Dignity is in a very different place in terms of our current business strategy. We're moving into a fully regulated market where we need to be accountable for every aspect of the customer journey.

Our products and prices are also different, with increased choice for families especially when it comes to more affordable options such as the Unattended Funeral which we offer in almost all locations.



### Is there a problem with the product or is the company in difficulty?

Absolutely not. Funeral Safe is trading as normal and continues to provide consumer credit for those wishing to spread the cost of all or part of their loved one's funeral.

### Are we still going to accept payment for a funeral via a Funeral Safe loan?

Yes, if the client has applied for finance directly themselves. However, Funeral Safe won't form part of our discussions during or after the arrangement process.

### What existing information or promotional materials do we have?

Until recently, there were references and links on our websites and in our enquiry emails. These have now been removed.

We mention Funeral Safe as a payment option in client letters and on invoices, but this will stop within

the next week or so. And there are leaflets in our branches; these will need to be taken off display and disposed of.

### When should we do this?

As soon as possible. We'll issue a reminder before the November end date, but please start immediately to avoid a last minute rush.

### What help is available for families who might still be struggling with funeral costs?

The government issues an allowance to eligible benefit claimants that pays for funeral necessities such as burial or cremation charges.

There are also Funeral Expenses Payments of £1,000 to help cover costs such as a coffin, flowers and funeral directors' fees (this is known as the Funeral Support Payment in Scotland).

And Funeral Safe still offers funeral finance directly to consumers both online and through its call centre.

### Who should I contact if I still have questions?

Your Branch Development Manager will be happy to assist.

# VACCINATIONS IN READINESS FOR WINTER

Now is the time to get a flu jab –  
and if you have to pay, we'll help cover the cost.

With winter looming, people are being urged to come forward for the flu jab to protect themselves and others from illness.

The continued presence of coronavirus in our communities is also driving the call to get vaccinated and help ease the burden on healthcare services.

In fact, this year will be the government's biggest ever flu programme, running in tandem with a COVID-19 booster campaign for certain groups.

### Who is eligible for free vaccines?

If you're aged over 50 (or will be by 31 March 2022), then you're entitled to a free annual flu vaccination through the NHS.

Younger adults with health conditions, frontline health and social care workers and pregnant women are covered too.

You should be contacted by your GP to arrange your flu jab, but it can also be done through a local pharmacy. Find out more about the vaccine [here](#).

### Voucher codes available now

We want to extend the offer of a free flu vaccination to more of



our colleagues, so we're running a scheme with Boots that will cover the cost.

### Here's how it works:

1. Message HR Shared Services and tell them you'd like to get the vaccine.
2. Have your date of birth, email address and/or mobile phone number to hand.
3. HRSS will arrange for a voucher code to be sent out.
4. Once received, follow the instructions to book an appointment online with a local Boots pharmacy. Enter the voucher code when prompted.
5. Voucher codes have a valid-until date, so don't leave it too late to redeem yours.
6. On arrival, tell the pharmacy team member that you're using the Corporate Flu Jab Service and have a copy of your voucher code available to show if asked.

Don't have an email address? Please call HRSS (0121 726 4615) and they'll arrange to print and post your voucher code instead.

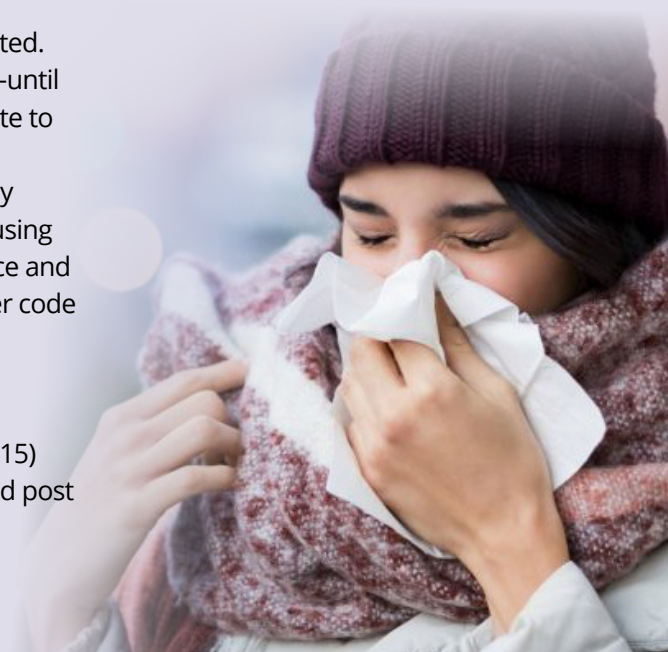
### Don't forget about boosters

Over 50s, people with health conditions and health and social care workers all qualify for a COVID-19 booster vaccine, which can be administered six months after a second dose.

Those providing funeral care are also included, so we've posted out a letter of confirmation to all frontline colleagues in case you need to prove eligibility.

Where practical, people may be offered the booster alongside their flu vaccination and health professionals say it's fine to have both at the same time.

See the [NHS website](#) for further information to see if the coronavirus booster applies to you.



# SHOWING YOUR COVID STATUS

Make sure you know how the various pass and certification schemes work.

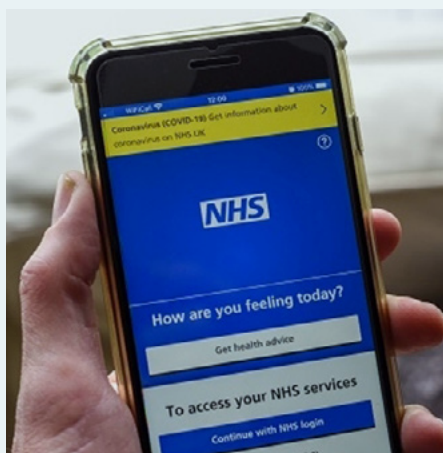
There are a number of situations, both in and outside of work, where we might be asked to demonstrate a COVID-19 test result or our vaccination status.

We reported last month on a forthcoming change in the law for those carrying out duties at care homes in England which will require proof of vaccination (or medical exemption) from 11 November onwards.

Other instances could include overseas travel, entering certain venues and events, or negating the need to self-isolate for ten days if you are identified as a close contact of somebody with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

The **NHS COVID Pass** is the recognised secure method for logging and sharing your vaccination records and test results for people living in England.

The government has also recently added guidance for how the same Pass system can be used by individuals who are unable to be



vaccinated or undertake COVID tests for medical reasons.

All exemptions need to be confirmed by a doctor, specialist clinician or midwife before you can use the NHS COVID Pass. Please click [here](#) for more information.

### Equivalent schemes operating elsewhere in the UK

- Scotland – **NHS Inform** / COVID-19 status
- Wales – **NHS COVID Pass**
- Northern Ireland – **COVID certificate**

### Operational colleagues and care homes

As mentioned above, the new rules for care homes are effective from 11 November.

A care home manager could refuse entry if a person working at the site or visiting for work related purposes is unable to show their vaccination status.

If this affects you and your job role, you'll need to obtain an NHS COVID pass.

It would also help us if colleagues could share the same information on vaccinations with **HR Shared Services** so we are clear on who meets the new legal requirement for attending care homes in England.

Even if you're not someone who is likely to be called to a care home, we'd appreciate it if you'd be willing to inform us of your vaccination status so we can ensure the continued health and safety and COVID secureness of our workplaces.

Copies of Pass documentation or screenshots can be sent to **[HR.SharedServices@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:HR.SharedServices@dignityuk.co.uk)** or posted to the team at our King Edwards Court head office address.

Thank you for your assistance.





# PROTECTING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

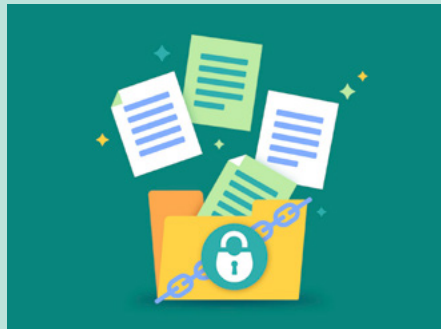
Taking care of our clients extends to how we collect and manage their personal data too.

It doesn't matter if we're based in an office, or working remotely from home, we all need to ensure personal data from our clients stays properly protected.

The same goes for any confidential or commercially sensitive business information we have access to, both in digital and hard copy formats.

Keeping data secure is a shared responsibility across all job roles and working environments, although **home working** does present some additional risks that need to be managed carefully.

Here are some essential do's and don'ts everyone should follow to help prevent any unwanted incidents.



**DO** keep your discussions private.

Be mindful of where you hold Teams calls and who might be able to overhear you.

If the conversation relates to a client or confidential business matters, go somewhere private and use earphones to listen instead of the speaker on your device.

**DON'T** have business records or client data on show.

Position your computer screen away from other people and lock it when you leave your workstation.

Physical documents must not be left lying around. Store them safely after you've finished work, ideally in a locked drawer.

**DON'T** mix confidential and regular waste items together.

Follow our procedure for safe disposal.

If you're working from home, ask for shredding bags to be sent out and never put confidential documents in with your domestic waste.

To help reduce levels of waste, only print documents containing confidential information or personal data when absolutely necessary.

**DO** report losses immediately.

If any information, data or business records are lost, inform your Line Manager or email [privacy@dignityuk.co.uk](mailto:privacy@dignityuk.co.uk).

Also tell us if your work device is lost or stolen.



# GIVE AN HOUR

Could you put the extra hour we gain this month to good use for our nominated charity?



While the longer nights are a bit of a drag, at least when the clocks go back next weekend we gain an extra hour.

What do you plan to do with yours? Perhaps you'll be sleeping in, or just enjoying a leisurely breakfast.

Maybe you'll take the dog for a walk. You might even put the rest of us to shame and hit the gym an hour earlier than normal!

Whatever you have in mind, our friends at **Teenage Cancer Trust** are asking us all to think a little differently this year and support their latest fundraising campaign.



## Gain and give

The concept centres around giving back the hour we gain, starting with a monetary donation based on an hour's salary.

There's a simple calculator on the charity's [website](#) along with a quick-link for making an online donation.

Alternatively, why not give an hour of your time instead? Use it to plan a fundraising activity like a coffee morning or cake sale. You can find lots of creative suggestions on the Teenage Cancer Trust [fundraising page](#).

Thea Karavasili-Campbell, Corporate Partnerships Manager at Teenage Cancer Trust, said: "Every day, seven young people aged 13-24 hear the words 'you have cancer'.

"Your generosity can make sure they get the nursing care and support they need, through their cancer treatment and beyond."

The clocks go back at 2am on Sunday, 31 October, so make a note in your diary.

And for a reminder of how money raised can help young people and their families, take another look at our overview [here](#).

Even gifts of under £10 have a meaningful impact, while £30 can pay for an hour of care from a specialist Teenage Cancer Trust nurse.

