

3 July 2020

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
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 UNIQUE STORY: COFFIN PRODUCTION DURING THE PANDEMIC



Take a glimpse at the inner workings of our manufacturing facility and hear first-hand how the team have coped with the demand in production for coffins during the pandemic.

Changing the way we work has become second nature to all of us throughout lockdown, and that's certainly the case at our manufacturing facility in Driffield, Yorkshire.

With a much larger demand for coffins, our colleagues in manufacturing rose to the challenge to keep things moving to the benefit of all of us at Dignity. Without a doubt they have been vital in our response to COVID-19.

Listen-in as we get a few perspectives on coffin production during the pandemic.



From the Apprentice Supervisor who was proud to work alongside his colleagues in extraordinary circumstances to

the Manufacturing Manager who joined the business just as lockdown started – watch the team tell their unique story.



COVID-19: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Last week the Prime Minister relaxed many of the nation's COVID-19 restrictions. We've looked at what this means for us and answered some key questions here.

Last week (Tuesday 23rd June) Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a series of changes to the lockdown measures, including changes to social distancing, leisure facilities and shielding guidance.

We've been working through what the new guidance means for us as a business, and for you as individuals and are able to answer some of your key questions here:

What do the changes in shielding guidance mean for me?

Shielding will be paused in England, Northern Ireland & Scotland on 31st July and in Wales on 16th August, which means we can support colleagues who have been shielding to potentially return to work after these dates.

We are writing to all colleagues identified as shielding (including casuals) to confirm we will continue paying Company Sick Pay (CSP) until 31st July (16th August in Wales), with the expectation they can then return to work, depending on the rules for the UK nation they reside in.

We know some of you will be anxious about this, and we will work with any individual concerns on a case-by-case basis.

Can I continue to stay home to care for my child(ren)?

While we hope that the relaxation of lockdown measures and introduction of social bubbles will help, we know that some schools and childcare facilities are not yet open to your children and that many holiday clubs have been cancelled.

As a result, and to support those who may be protecting shielding family members, we will continue to pay Company Sick Pay for these colleagues until 31st July (16th August in Wales) and then ask them to make their own childcare arrangements from then on.

Does the decision to reduce social distancing in some situations change anything we're doing for the families we're caring for?

Social distancing will be reduced in certain situations from 2m to 1m from 4th July (in England), but nothing changes for us operationally.

It goes without saying that we should all stick to the 2m social distancing and **hygiene measures** and follow our strict **operational guidance** to make sure we minimise any risk of infection to clients and colleagues alike.

Can we offer a limousine service again now that social distancing has been reduced to 1m?

We are installing perspex screens on all of our limousine fleet and are actively reviewing what other services we may be able to offer again. We will let you know how and when we can add this into our provision.

Can we accommodate more mourners now social distancing has been reduced to 1m in some cases?

Although churches and other places of worship can reopen for services from 4th July, it is up to each establishment to decide the numbers they are comfortable accommodating.

We are reviewing what this may mean for our CMG crematoria and grounds. In the meantime, we are maintaining the two metres social distancing guidelines and are still working to these **capacities**.

The Government's guidance says that workplace canteens can open again from 4th July. Does this mean the kitchen areas in Head Office will reopen?

No, this is related to companies that prepare food for their employees. As such, there is no change to our policy for shared social areas such as the Head Office kitchen.

My question isn't answered here – who can I contact?

Please speak to your line manager if you have any concerns in the first instance, **check out our FAQs**, or contact your HR Business Partner if they are unable to help.





SUN, SEA & STAYCATIONS



The sun is shining, lockdown is easing and our thoughts have turned to holidays. Here's a reminder about COVID-19 and your annual leave.

After three months of not being able to go far, the news that restrictions have started to be relaxed will be welcome to many of us.

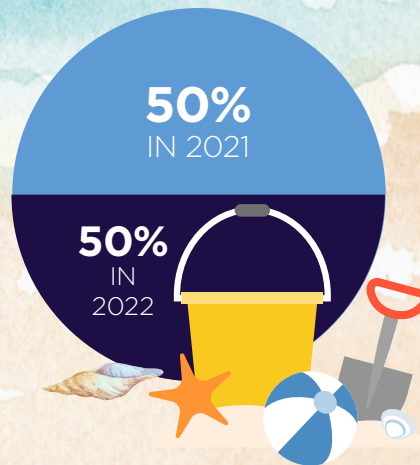
There's been lots of info about annual leave in various communications, so to make it easier for you to plan your well-deserved breaks, we've summarised the key points here:

Payment for 2019 leave

If you'd carried annual leave over from 2019, you'd ordinarily have had to use it by the end of March not to lose it. Of course, COVID-19 put a stop to many plans, so we've 'bought back' any holiday you had left over from last year and will be paying it in this month's payroll.

Carrying over 2020 annual leave

Many of us will have postponed our holidays until next year, which may mean we don't manage to take all our annual leave this year.



You can roll unused annual leave from this year into 2021 and 2022, but we would suggest that 50% of this should be taken in 2021 and 50% in 2022 in agreement with your line manager to help us manage operationally.

Holidays abroad

While the government is considering 'air bridges' with some popular holiday destinations, current guidance means that we'd have to quarantine for 14 days on our return.

While some of us may be able to work from home, many others have roles where this simply isn't possible. Being away from your role for potentially four weeks may also be very difficult to manage operationally for local teams.

If you have a foreign holiday booked this summer, try and reschedule it for a later date to avoid the risk of quarantine without pay on your return. If this is a risk for you, please speak to your line manager.

Make sure you get a break

The past few months have been tough and it's important for your health and wellbeing to get the rest you need.

We want everyone to be able to take a break to recharge their batteries and enjoy some well-deserved holiday, so, even if your plans have had to change, we'd still encourage you to take time off rather than carrying lots of leave into next year.

If you have any questions, please comment below or send an email to internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk.





REVISITING MEMORIALS

COVID-19 has placed much of our memorial work on hold in Funeral Operations, but now it's time to let families know what's happening with their orders.

Having a marker to remember the life of a loved one – somewhere to pause and reflect, to lay flowers and visit on special occasions – is important to so many of the families we care for.

COVID-19 has seen many of our memorial orders put on hold, as third parties such as masons, local authorities and church administrators were forced to lay down their tools. But now that restrictions are being relaxed, we're starting to see them come back to work, which means we can once again progress the orders families have placed with us.

Taking the Greatest Care of our clients goes beyond the funeral, so we need to manage families' expectations and avoid more calls into CSC by being proactive and acting on their behalf. To help you take orders through to completion, at whatever stage they may be, we've created a **short guidance document** for colleagues in Funeral Operations.

Be prepared

It's important to have all the information to hand before you speak to the client, and taking the time to do a little work before you make the call can make all the difference:

- 1.** Prioritise orders by the date they were signed, starting with the earliest first.
- 2.** Find out what stage the orders are at, from permits and paperwork, to masonry.
- 3.** Contact the client and let them know what's happening with their order.

An occasion to remember

The installation and dedication of a memorial can be a significant event for the family, and one we can help make even more special with our Timeless Funeral (Funeral Now, Service Later).

If the family weren't able to have friends and family attend the funeral itself, an outdoor dedication service could be an ideal opportunity to remember their loved ones together.

If you think this may be something your families would appreciate, why not mention how we can help them when you talk to them?

Detailed guidance

Make sure you read and understand the more detailed **memorial guidance document** for Funeral Operations, and if you have any queries, speak to your Branch Development Manager.



WHO'S WHO: MEET CLIVE WHILEY



In the first of a new fortnightly series, we get to know more about the people behind our Executive team. This time, we begin right at the top, with our Non-Executive Chairman, Clive Whiley.

Name: Clive Whiley.

Role: Non-Executive Chairman. My appointment on 26th September 2019 was endorsed by key institutional investors.

What are you responsible for?

I am responsible for the PLC Board's strategic birds-eye-view. In short, my job is to encourage the Senior Leadership Team to manage the business to an optimal level, alongside allocating capital resources and governance appropriate to a public company with the unique funeral industry experience possessed by Dignity.

I would describe myself as...

I am self-motivated and have been challenge driven since I started my career on the shop-floor of an engineering business, over forty years ago. I strongly believe in supporting small shareholders by harnessing the people available to us as our greatest asset.

What keeps you awake at night? Fortunately, I still retain high energy levels, which is helpful as I have gravitated towards distress management across a wide array of industries and geographies, hence nothing keeps me awake at night.

How do you feel about the future of Dignity?

I consider it a privilege to be asked to guide businesses to the next stage of their natural development and, following the root and branch review of the business initiated upon my appointment, I have no doubt that Dignity is now prepared for any eventuality which may confront it, including COVID-19.

“

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About you: I have been married for 33 years, have four children and two grandchildren and enjoy my family for the sense of perspective it provides when I am not working.

And finally, do you have a message for Dignity colleagues?

Keep up the good work! I look forward to meeting more of you in the business once we return to a more normal pattern of working.



CALL ME MAYBE?



How we can Take the Greatest Care of our clients – read our top telephone tips here.

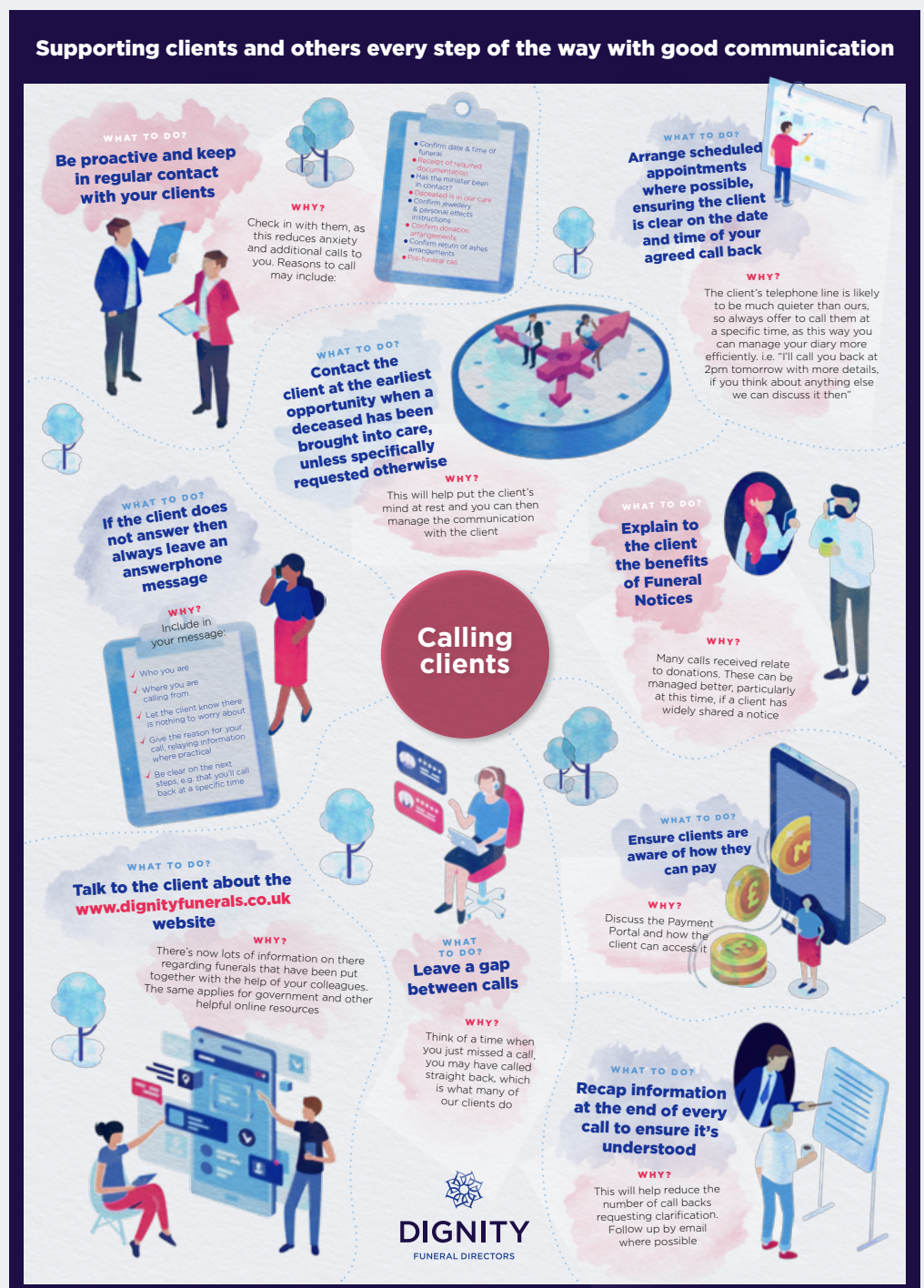
It's good to talk, and while we are encouraging more email communication so more clients can reach us when they need to, sometimes only a phone call will do.

Having conversations upfront and being proactive with our calls not only means we can put clients' minds at ease, but also reduces the need for them to call us when they have questions.

From calling them to give them updates at agreed times, to recapping information at the end of calls, we can make sure their experience with us is as good as can possibly be in one of the most difficult time of their lives.

Here are some of our top telephone tips – why not share any others you have too by [leaving a comment?](#)

Supporting clients and others every step of the way with good communication



WHAT TO DO?
Be proactive and keep in regular contact with your clients

WHY?
Check in with them, as this reduces anxiety and additional calls to you. Reasons to call may include:

- Confirm date & time of funeral
- Request of required documentation
- Has the minister been in contact?
- Discussed is on our care
- Confirm jewellery & personal effects instructions
- Confirm donation arrangements
- Confirm venue of ashes arrangements
- Pre-emptive call

WHAT TO DO?
Arrange scheduled appointments where possible, ensuring the client is clear on the date and time of your agreed call back

WHY?
The client's telephone line is likely to be much quieter than ours, so always offer to call them at a specific time, as this way you can manage your diary more efficiently. i.e. "I'll call you back at 2pm tomorrow with more details, if you think about anything else we can discuss it then"

WHAT TO DO?
Contact the client at the earliest opportunity when a deceased has been brought into care, unless specifically requested otherwise

WHY?
This will help put the client's mind at rest and you can then manage the communication with the client

WHAT TO DO?
If the client does not answer then always leave an answerphone message

WHY?
Include in your message:

- ✓ Who you are
- ✓ Where you are calling from
- ✓ Let the client know there is nothing to worry about
- ✓ Give the reason for your call, relay information where practical
- ✓ Be clear on the next steps, e.g. that you'll call back at a specific time

WHAT TO DO?
Explain to the client the benefits of Funeral Notices

WHY?
Many calls received relate to donations. These can be managed better, particularly at this time, if a client has widely shared a notice

WHAT TO DO?
Ensure clients are aware of how they can pay

WHY?
Discuss the Payment Portal and how the client can access it

WHAT TO DO?
Leave a gap between calls

WHY?
Think of a time when you just missed a call, you may have called straight back, which is what many of our clients do

WHAT TO DO?
Recap information at the end of every call to ensure it's understood

WHY?
This will help reduce the number of call backs requesting clarification. Follow up by email where possible

WHAT TO DO?
Talk to the client about the www.dignityfunerals.co.uk website

WHY?
There's now lots of information on there regarding funerals that have been put together with the help of your colleagues. The same applies for government and other helpful online resources

Calling clients

DIGNITY FUNERAL DIRECTORS

DON'T FORGET THE **GOLDEN RULES**

It's never too late to remind ourselves of best hygiene practice, and so we're going to do just that!

With certain elements of lockdown beginning to ease, there are a few things that are holding firm, and we need to continue follow the government's guidance for the health and wellbeing of our families, colleagues and clients.

The guidance below may look very familiar – in fact we published it back in March, but we're standing by it and you should too:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home if you are sick. Don't leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the bin. Follow with hand washing or sanitising. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve and not your hands.
- Avoid close contact and keep up with social distancing. Keep two metres or more away from others.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as mobile phones, keyboards and doorknobs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

You can continue to check the latest government guidance by [clicking here](#). And keep your eyes peeled on the Good to Great website for all of our latest advice and guidance for Dignity

and CMG. You can also [download and print our poster](#) to remind colleagues and clients alike of good hygiene practice.



MOVING OUR **ASSETS**

Over the years, we've acquired many different funeral homes and crematoria and brought them under the banner of the Dignity brand.

While most (about 90%) have belonged to Dignity Funerals Ltd, acquisitions since 2014 have belonged to a separate legal entity called Dignity Funerals No.3 Ltd. This has allowed us to finance our business flexibly, rather like a mortgage and a personal loan (just on a bigger scale!).

We now want to simplify this and propose to bring most of the 10% into Dignity Funerals Ltd.

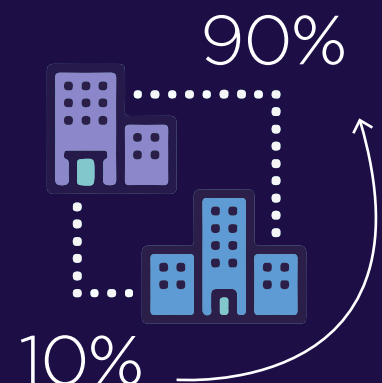
Not only will it mean less confusing

paperwork for colleagues working in these locations, but it will also mean the business can use its cash to pay back long-term debt and become even more secure.

What this means for you

Although we're all part of one company, we technically have to sell Dignity Funerals No.3 Ltd's assets to Dignity Funerals Ltd.

This includes colleagues, whose employment will be transferred from Dignity Funerals No.3 Ltd to Dignity Funerals Ltd under legal regulations called TUPE. There will be no change to their terms and conditions or benefits, no risk to employment, and colleagues' length of service will be protected.



As we now have the Dignity Employee Forum, we're consulting with them to agree our approach and expect the proposed transfer to complete on 25th July.

If you have any queries, please contact internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk



MUSIC TO THEIR EARS



Care home visits hit the right notes with residents as the Charity Organ comes to town.

Here's a great sounding idea to show support for local communities.

Branch teams in the North East have been taking the Dignity Charity Organ out on the road to visit nursing and care homes throughout the region.

The Victorian-style fairground organ, one of five in use across our network, has proved popular with residents and staff members alike, who enjoyed the music recitals from the safety of their rooms and communal areas.

J Rymer Funeral Directors in York were first off the mark, attending homes including Connaught Court, Meadowbank and the Chocolate Works Care Village, which is built on the site of the former Terry's chocolate factory.



Funeral Manager Richard Jackson said: "We understand how difficult it must be to coordinate and plan activities for care home residents who are having to remain shielded during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The organ is a popular attraction at events such as village and school fayres, agricultural shows and charity fundraisers. It's easy to transport and we were able to set up and perform at each home while following the necessary social distancing guidelines."

More recently, colleagues at Lawrence Funeral Service in Halifax offered to bring the organ to several care homes around Calderdale.

One was Trinity Fold, where Team Leader Jodie Charlesworth thanked the team for their efforts.

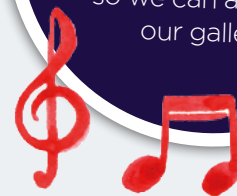
"We really appreciate them coming round to see us and the residents absolutely loved being entertained," she said.

Proof if any were needed that when it comes to caring for the community, Dignity always puts in a note-perfect performance!

If your team has been out with the Charity Organ, send a photo to internalcommunications@dignityuk.co.uk so we can add it to our gallery.

What else have you been doing to maintain links with local communities during the pandemic? We'd love to hear your stories – please email us or [leave a comment here](#).

If your team has been out with the Charity Organ, send a photo to internalcommunications@dignityuk.co.uk so we can add it to our gallery.



SLEEP EASY

If you find getting a restful sleep is the stuff of dreams, try making it a reality with our helpful guide.

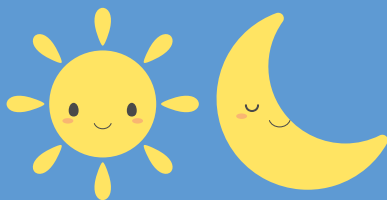
A good night's sleep is essential for keeping us active and refreshing the mind for the day ahead.

As a general rule, between seven and nine hours of sleep is considered best for adults – less than that can affect our mood, energy levels, mental sharpness and ability to cope with stress.

If you sometimes struggle with sleeping, or have seen your sleep deteriorate since the coronavirus outbreak, then you're not alone. In a recent poll by Ipsos MORI and King's College London, half of all respondents said the pandemic was having a negative impact on their sleep and 38% were experiencing more vivid dreams.

Finding the cause

Wondering why you can't sleep? Forget counting sheep and just count to ten using our list of ten things known to interfere with sleep patterns, along with tips for how to deal with them.



1 Changing your routine

Preserve your usual sleeping pattern, even if life has changed because of lockdown. Get up and go to bed as you would normally and resist the temptation to nap during the day.

2 Feeling anxious

Try not to take your worries to bed. Whatever is troubling you, tell yourself it can be dealt with later, plus a decent rest might alter your perspective and make the problem easier to manage.



3 Thinking about work

Similarly it's easy to be distracted by your to-do list or replaying a conversation you had in the office. Put these thoughts to one side, or write them down as a way of clearing your mind.

4 Strenuous exercise

Just to be clear (and clean!), we're talking about high-intensity activities such as going for a run or doing a workout. Finish one or two hours before bedtime so your body can settle again.



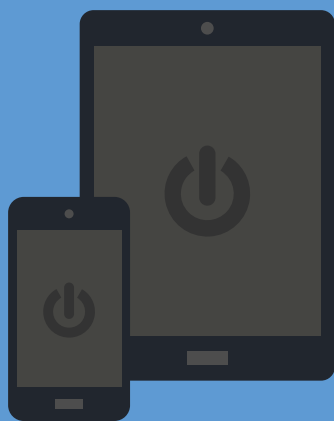
5 Watch what you eat

Don't eat a large meal late in the evening, especially one containing fatty, spicy or acidic foods. You may experience indigestion or heartburn when trying to sleep.



6 And what you drink

A nightcap to aid sleep is something of a myth – alcohol might make you drowsy, but it can also cause you to wake up early through dehydration. Avoid caffeinated drinks around bedtime too.



7 Digital distractions

Put your phone or tablet down, or better still switch it off. The brightness of the screen can make you alert when you should be relaxed, as can the content if it's an intriguing social media post or a piece of breaking news.

That said, there are mobile apps that have been specifically developed to promote good sleep by playing soothing ambient noises or telling stories. Headspace is an example which offers a range of unique 'Sleepcasts'.

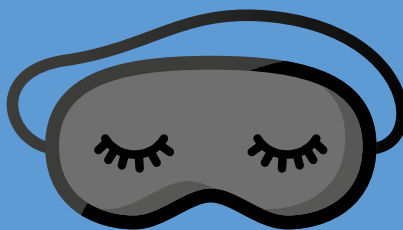
8 Must-not see TV

Again, the brightly glowing screen won't help you nod off, while watching lively, action-packed shows will get the mind racing rather than winding down. Stick to some light reading instead.



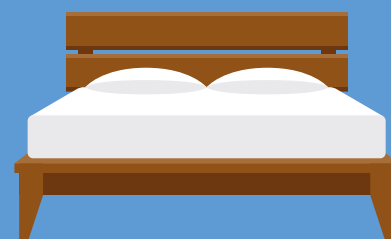
9 Your sleep space

If the room lets in a lot of daylight and it wakes you up too early, consider fitting a blackout blind or wearing an eye mask. Cut out unwanted noise by closing windows or putting in ear plugs.



10 Time for a replacement

Which is more tired, you or your bed? Mattresses in particular can be a problem and lose their shape and strength after about eight years. Comfort and support are vital for good sleep.



The Sleep Programme

Dignity's Employee Assistance Programme website has several articles and videos in its Wellbeing section about the art of good sleep. You can also take part in its Sleep Programme, a seven day sleep diary that helps monitor trends in your sleep and provides advice for those experiencing difficulties.

Visit www.my-eap.com (with the username DFLwell) or call 0800 111 6387.

The Sleep Council is a national body for sleep health that's worth checking out.

If you're having persistent sleep problems and are worried about how it's affecting your physical and mental health, speak to your GP.



WINNER

THANKING OUR FORCES



We loved seeing your salutes for Armed Forces Day - check out the pictures in our gallery.

The nation paid its respects to the men and women who make up our Armed Forces community last weekend, with many Dignity branches getting involved.

While all public events had to be cancelled because of coronavirus, that didn't stop people celebrating Armed Forces Day in other ways on Saturday, 27 June.

At John Bardgett & Sons in Ponteland, Northumberland, and Westerhope in Newcastle upon Tyne, the teams put up window displays to honour the troops.

While over at J Rymer Funeral Directors in York, these brilliantly decorated Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army cakes baked by Funeral Services Arranger Heather Tong definitely ranked highly in the creativity stakes.



We also invited colleagues to Salute Our Forces as a visual tribute to service personnel, their families, military reservists, cadets and veterans.

As promised, everyone who sent photos was in with a chance of winning a box of goodies to share from the charity Help for Heroes.

And that prize goes to... the team from Earl of Plymouth Funeral Directors in Milehouse (main image).

Area Manager Vincent Young gathered together a number of colleagues who all used to serve in the forces to take the salute outside the funeral home.

Many thanks to everyone who took part. Please send any additional snaps to internalcommunications@dignityuk.co.uk and we'll add them in.



Taking the salute inside the branch



All present and correct at Ernest Brigham, Bridlington



FSO David Garnett



DID YOU KNOW?

When serving personnel salute an officer, they are acknowledging Her Majesty the Queen as Head of State and saluting the rank the officer holds rather than the individual themselves.