

17 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!)



THANK YOU - FROM ALL OF US

To mark over 100 days of lockdown, the Exec have recorded their own words of thanks for you to hear.

Thanks.

It's a little word, but it goes a long way.

And sometimes, we may not say it enough.

So, as we passed 100 days of lockdown last week (there's a milestone none of us ever could have predicted) our Exec team have each recorded their own special message for you.

From sheds, to home offices, to the bottom of gardens and certainly from the bottom of their hearts, they say thanks to all of you.

Whether you've been taking the greatest care of families in need, taking the greatest care of your own family by shielding, or taking

the greatest care working from your kitchen table - this message is for you.



FURTHER UPDATES TO FUNERAL OPERATIONS GUIDELINES

Following updated advice, we've made more changes to our Operational Guidance for funerals.

Since we published refreshed operational guidelines last week, we've had further clarification on some key points, as well as the new government guidance on the use of face coverings.

As a result, we have published updated **Operational Guidelines** to help you take the greatest care of our clients during these unusual times.

What's new?

- We have included new guidance about the use of face coverings in our funeral homes
- We need to explain to our clients that they now need to keep a record of attendees at their loved one's funeral
- A new requirement for us to make a record of people who attend services on our premises (Scotland only)
- Updated guidance on COVID-19 Untested & No Suspected Presence Advised, which:
 - Offers a 5th option (cremation only) to check for COVID-19 presence
 - Clears up the confusion of the requirement on MCCD or death certificate
 - Removes the need for a completed indemnity form for those being viewed

Please note this guidance is mandatory and we need you to follow it for the safety of you, our colleagues, clients and communities.

These new instructions replace guidance issued previously.

We'll continue to monitor government and public health advice as it develops to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and to protect the health of you and our clients.

If you are unsure about anything in the revised guidance, or have any concerns, please ask your line manager or Regional Manager for help.

“
Now following the process from first call, to bringing the deceased into our care, to making arrangements, to use of PPE, it's much easier to see what you need to do at each stage.

”

WHAT MANDATORY MASKS MEAN FOR US

We've decided to follow the government's new legislation for face coverings in retailers, in all our funeral homes.

Already mandatory in Scotland, wearing a face covering will become law when shopping in England from 24th July.

Although our branches are not technically classed as shops, our funeral homes can be similar environments. Taking the greatest care of you, our clients and our communities is at the top of our priority list, so we have therefore decided to follow the Government Guidance for Retailers and introduce face-covering guidelines for all branches across the UK.

What does this mean for us?

- We will ask all visitors to our funeral homes to wear a face covering when entering or leaving our premises, at any time.
- For all visitor and client contact on our premises, with the exception of arrangement meetings, you should wear the company-provided FRSM masks (such as the one pictured).
- You should continue to follow social distancing guidelines – wearing a mask does not stop the need for this.



What are the exceptions?

- You and our clients do not need to wear face coverings during arrangement meetings, as long as you maintain 2m social distancing.
- Children under the age of 3 and those with certain disabilities or who find them hard to manage are exempt.

What type of face coverings are acceptable?

A face covering doesn't need to be a surgical or medical grade mask. It can simply be a breathable cloth or textile that covers the nose and mouth such as a scarf, like this one here.

Remember, it's important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.



If you have any questions, please ask your line manager.

UNBLOCKING THE BACKLOG

As lockdown measures continue to ease, we're getting back to work to make sure our properties are safe.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have taken the greatest care to support our clients, and paused non-essential activities to make sure we were focused on getting through this critical time. This included putting a stop to property work, other than the most essential maintenance.

Three months down the line we have a backlog of property inspections, certifications and testing activities which we need to work through to maintain safety compliance across our estate.

Over the next few weeks, we'll be resuming site visits for statutory and mandatory inspections, tests and certifications, as well as supporting contractors to carry out remedial works. This means we started to allow contractors back on site to deliver these services from Monday 13th July.

Staying Alert: Safety First

The safety of you, our clients and our communities remains our top priority, so we've instructed our contractors to provide and wear their own PPE and to keep site visits as short as possible.

We also reserve the right to refuse access should we experience higher demand for our services, or indeed in the event of any local lockdown.

Arranging Access

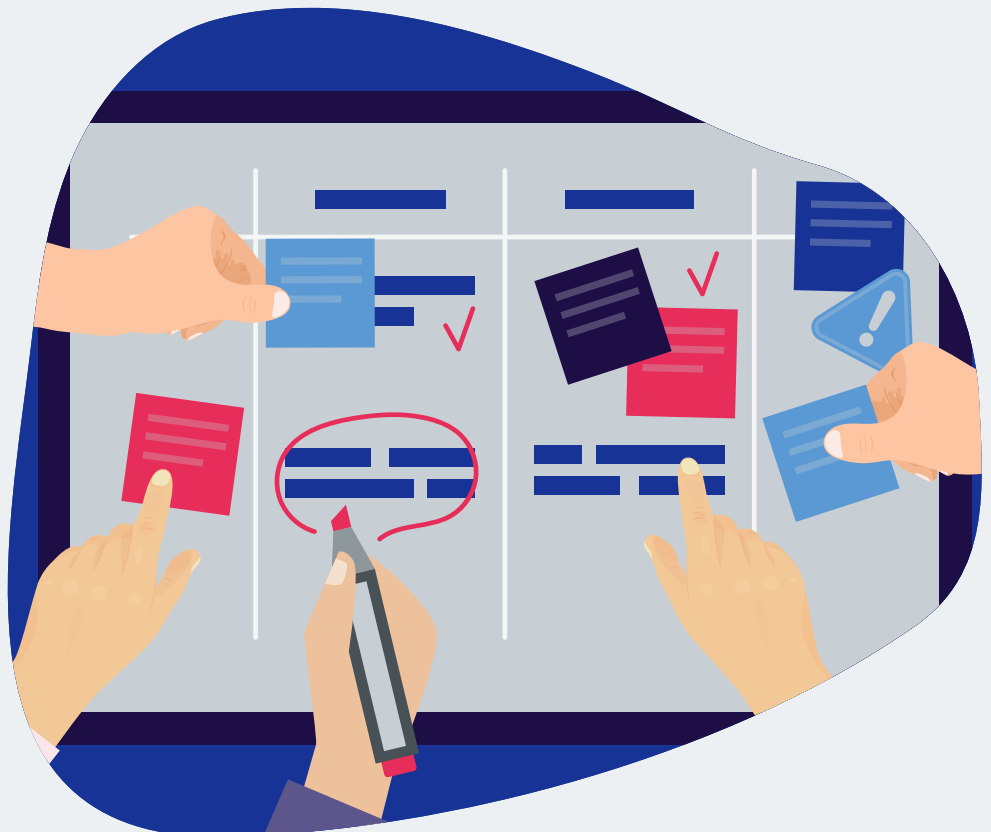
There is no change to how site visits will be arranged. The contractor will be given an access code and will contact the funeral home directly to confirm a mutually convenient date and time for their visit.

Who are our Contractors?

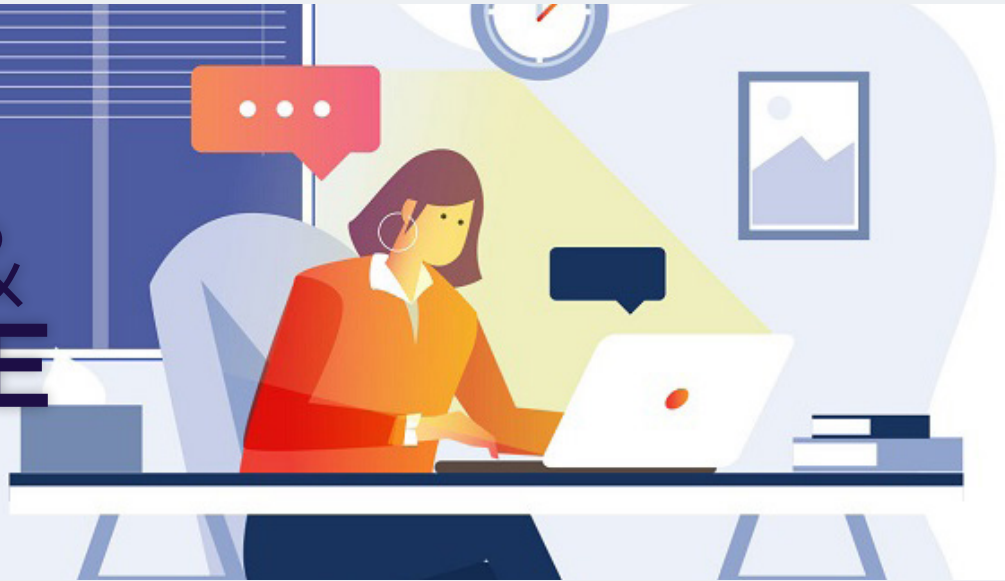
There is no change to contractors for areas such as fire safety, asbestos and electrical systems.

However, we have a new contract for water hygiene services (Legionella) with Guardian Hygiene Services Ltd. Their work began this week.

If you encounter any issues or have concerns with any site visits, please email the property team at: property@dignityuk.co.uk.



SAFE & SECURE



We still need to protect confidential information, even while we're working from home.

As an organisation that regularly handles personal data from our clients, Dignity needs to ensure this material is properly safeguarded at all times.

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

Keeping data secure is challenging enough within a normal office environment; but with many of our colleagues now homeworking because of the coronavirus pandemic, the threat to information security is greater still.

Fortunately there's plenty of advice out there to help mitigate the risks associated with homeworking. We also have new guidance in the **Corporate Governance Documents** Library that everyone should read to ensure high standards are maintained.

We've captured some of the key messages here as an additional reference point.

PRINCIPAL RISKS

Confidential information is overheard during a call

Try to have conversations relating to clients or confidential business matters in private.

Be mindful of who else might overhear you – family, or someone visiting your home such as a friend or tradesperson. If needs be, use earphones to listen instead of the speaker on your device.

Business records or client data are seen by other people

Ensure your computer screen isn't positioned where others can easily see it and lock the screen when you're away from your workspace.

Don't leave physical documents lying around and store them safely when you're not working, ideally in a locked drawer. Keep work documents and records separate from your personal ones.

Confidential waste isn't disposed of properly

Follow our procedure for safe disposal and don't put confidential documents in with your home waste. We can arrange for shredding bags to be sent to your home if required.

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

Information, data or business records are lost

Report any losses to your line manager as quickly as possible. You can also notify the Information Security Privacy Manager or email privacy@dignityuk.co.uk.

If your work device is lost or stolen, this must also be reported in line with our existing procedure.

It's important to remember that our obligations within both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act still apply, regardless of the constraints put on us by COVID-19.

We pledge to always take the greatest care of our clients – that extends to how we collect and manage their personal data too.

For further guidance, check out this useful article from the Information Commissioner's Office on **how to work from home** securely.



GOING ANYWHERE NICE?

More holiday destinations are opening up without the need for quarantine, so we take another look at what the latest government guidance means for you.

With the summer holidays upon us, the prospect of getting away over the past few months will have seemed like a distant dream for many of us.

Since our update last week, the government has announced that holidaymakers to a number of destinations will no longer need to quarantine for 14 days on their return.

With more and more services reopening as restrictions relax, we think this is great news.

You can see the full list of countries with permitted travel corridors here.

If your holiday destination isn't on the list, we'd ask you to try and reschedule 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.

Take a break

Many of us had our holidays cancelled or chose to postpone our getaways to next year. However, it's still really important you get a proper break from work – even if that does mean pottering about in the garden or bingeing a few boxsets on Netflix.

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

After all, we all need downtime to recharge our batteries. So even if your main holiday is no longer on the cards, we'd still encourage you to take a decent spell of time off.

Carrying over 2020 annual leave

If you have lots of leave to take even after you've booked some time off, then don't forget that you can roll over unused annual leave from this year into 2021 and 2022.

We'd 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.



If you have any questions, please ask your line manager, or send an email to internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk.



WHO'S WHO: MEET ANDREW JUDD



In the second of our special features getting to know our leadership team, we check in with Andrew, who is responsible for over 3,500 colleagues and the funerals they deliver.

Name: Andrew William Judd.

Role: Director of Funeral Operations.

What are you responsible for?

3,571 colleagues delivering circa 70,000 funerals, through 906 properties, operating 1,595 vehicles including 360 hearses and 440 limousines.

How long have you worked for Dignity?

23.5 years.

How would you describe your job in one sentence?

I am an ordinary man in an extraordinary position, privileged with the responsibility to influence in one way or another 12% of all funerals that take place annually in the United Kingdom.

What does a typical day look like for you?

Early email, coffee, travel, phone, meetings, email travel phone, engaging with my Executive colleagues and whenever possible, meeting colleagues out in the business.

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

Knowing that what we do individually and collectively as an organisation makes a real difference to those who call on us at their time of need. Seeing and experiencing the richness and diversity of the people that make Dignity

what it is a real motivator for me and running successful business is a key driver.

What keeps you awake at night?

As with any funeral director – have I done everything I needed to do for tomorrow? Tragedies from inside our business or from the lives of those we serve can play on my mind. Getting it right first time and every time is a huge responsibility and knowing that all our deceased are resting safely and respectfully helps.

What has been your most memorable day at work?

In 2003 at RAF Brize Norton part of the repatriation team handling the first British war dead on return from the Iraq war.

Where have you previously worked?

Co-op Funerals, Independent Funeral Directors and as a security guard at Wimbledon whilst a student (I was on the front page of The Sun for not letting Boris Becker get a group of his friends in through the back door).

What makes you feel you've done a good day's work?

When a funeral has been delivered well anywhere in Dignity with pride and perfection or when an adverse situation in the organisation has been turned around with a positive and constructive outcome. Helping shape the

Company direction as part of the Executive is a real privilege as is still being able to arrange and conduct funerals at the coal face. For me, the best of both worlds.

What was your first ever job?

Saturday job aged 14 cleaning vehicles and making coffins at the local undertakers – that was and remains to this day whatever role I've been lucky enough to have – the best job ever!

What is your biggest challenge at work?

Not trying to directly control all the funerals that Dignity do and avoid getting too deep into the long grass of the business!

Tell us something people wouldn't guess about you

I was in the Les Dennis Laughter Show whilst at sixth form as an extra for some comedy sketches set around funerals.

Why do you love your job?

Our profession runs through my veins. I value what we do as a team and everyone's contribution matters in delivering an important and accountable service.

What do you most want to achieve in your role?

To serve our clients, my colleagues and the Company equitably and effectively with pride and distinction.

How and why did you get into the funeral industry?

Lived next door to one growing up and as fascinated from a young age about what went on. Finally got a Saturday job aged 14 – the rest as they say is history and I wouldn't change a thing.

I would describe myself as...

Warm, caring, honest, considerate and of generally high standards – but the ginger Celtic side in me can show itself at times as impatient and demanding.

About me...

I have been married to Mandy for 22 years

have three children: Elliot (20) at Bath University studying Architecture, Anabel (18) at Exeter studying French & English and Louis (13) in Year 8 Clifton High School in Bristol. We have an 8 month old wirehaired dachshund called 'Reggie' and two cats 'Honey' & 'Treacle.'

What hobbies do you have?

A lapsed windsurfer but I like cycling on and off road. I help with the local scout group and church, tinkering with my old land rover, spending time with my family – mainly the simple things give me the most pleasure like a BBQ in the garden on a sunny day or family quiz / session on the Nintendo switch – but I do get competitive! I also like meeting up with my pals down the pub or comedy club (seems like a distant memory now!).

How do you like to relax?

I'm not good at this but a good walk on the beach – I grew up on the beautiful Gower Peninsula in South West Wales and the beach was a huge part of my childhood.

What's the first thing you'll do once lockdown is over?

Go and see my mum and dad and take Reggie and the family for a long walk on the beach. I do like a cold beer and crisps – lots of them!

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OUTSOURCING SUPPORT FOR CSC

We've partnered with Equiniti to give us flexible, offsite call handling.

Following extensive training, we've started a 12-week pilot with an outsourced call-centre partner called Equiniti, to support our successful CSC team.

The last 100 days of lockdown has seen us pull together under the most extraordinary of circumstances, as we've faced increased call volumes, challenging conversations, and new ways of working.

The added pressures we've faced mean we need to be ready for any new challenges, such as a potential second spike of COVID-19. However, we're restricted by space at Head Office – even more so when we need to practice social distancing.

Flexible partnership

Working with Equiniti means we can use temporary, fully trained call handlers whenever we have the need, without having to have additional people on site, or needing significant managerial supervision.

EQUINITI

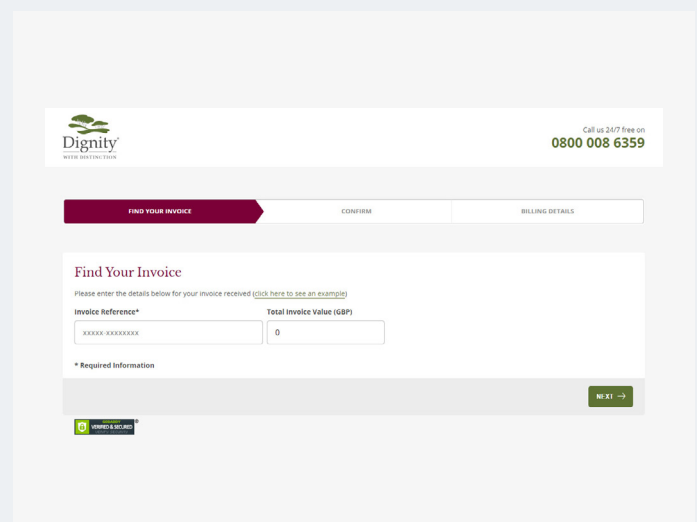
The partnership, which builds on a historic 16-year relationship for other services, will give us flexibility to deliver a continuous service to our clients at their time of need – especially welcome where we face challenges in our resourcing plans (such as part-time or evenings) or if we ever have any business continuity or disaster recovery needs.

REMINDER - SAFER PAYMENTS FOR CLIENTS

Paying for Dignity funeral services online is the safest way for us to accept payment from our clients – and the safest way for them to pay.

The **Client Payment Portal** was set-up in 2019 to allow our clients to pay safely and securely online for the funerals of their loved ones. In fact, we currently take about 6% of our payments using the portal but this could be much higher. It's convenience and safety credentials should make it a popular payment method for our clients.

It's easy to use and all funeral operations colleagues should be encouraging their clients to use it instead of cash or cheque. All they need is their credit or debit card, their invoice number and a Wi-Fi connection to head to <https://payments.dignityfunerals.co.uk>. Further details along with screenshots can be found [here](#).



The screenshot shows the 'Find Your Invoice' page of the Dignity Client Payment Portal. At the top, there is a navigation bar with three tabs: 'FIND YOUR INVOICE' (active), 'CONFIRM', and 'BILLING DETAILS'. Below the navigation bar, the 'Find Your Invoice' section is displayed. It includes a sub-header 'Find Your Invoice' and a prompt: 'Please enter the details below for your invoice received (click here to see an example)'. There are two input fields: 'Invoice Reference*' and 'Total Invoice Value (GBP)'. The 'Invoice Reference*' field contains 'XXXX-XXXXXX' and the 'Total Invoice Value (GBP)' field contains '0'. Below these fields, there is a note: '* Required information'. At the bottom right of the form, there is a green 'NEXT' button with a right-pointing arrow. The Dignity logo and contact information are visible at the top of the page.

WINDOW TO THE PAST

Creative branch display shows how coffin furnishings have changed over time.

Dignity has a rich heritage, with many of our funeral homes and crematoria proudly serving their local communities for generations.

One such business is J H Kenyon© in London, which was established in 1870 and today has six funeral homes around the city.

J H Kenyon© has established a tradition of celebrating its history through regular exhibitions and window displays.

And with the streets steadily getting busier again as London emerges from its coronavirus lockdown, the team decided it was a good opportunity to rummage through the archives once more.

COFFIN FURNISHINGS

Take a stroll past J H Kenyon© / J Hemp Funeral Directors in Bayswater and you'll discover some fascinating facts about the furnishing of coffins.

There's an array of historical artefacts on show, including ring and bar coffin handles, closing screws and extracts from period promotional material.

Among the most striking items are the elaborate metal nameplates (also known as breast-plates)

that were fixed onto the coffin lid to record the identity of the deceased.

In the Victorian era, these pieces weren't just functional – the design and colours chosen also gave a strong indication of the person's status in life.

Business Manager Philip Smyth said: "Many of the items we have gathered together date from more than a century ago and the display demonstrates the different ways coffins have been furnished throughout the years.

"While preparing the window, we also decided to add a small tribute to Forces' sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn following her death a few weeks ago.

"Both displays have caused much positive comment, with passers by even stopping to take photos."



SAVE MORE ON FUNERAL PLANS

There's an increased discount for Dignity employees on the cost of a prepaid funeral plan.

It's worth remembering that Dignity employees qualify for financial assistance with funeral and cremation services – benefits that can help both you and your family.

These include reduced costs on funeral arrangements and fees at CMG-operated crematoria, details of which you can find in our Employee Handbook published on the [company intranet](#).

What you may not realise is that colleagues can also get money off one of our prepaid funeral plans. We're pleased to say the existing staff funeral plan price discount has been doubled to £200 for the next three months.

This is to celebrate Dignity having now helped almost one million people make provisions for their funeral costs in advance since we launched the UK's very first funeral plan back in 1985.

What's the offer?

The £200 discount is available from now until 30 September. After this date, it reverts back to the usual amount of £100. Discounts can be claimed by colleagues wanting a plan for themselves, plus you can **extend the offer to family and friends**.

Payment can be either upfront in full, spread over 12 months at no extra cost, or spread over a longer term of up to 25 years provided the plan holder is eligible, in which

case an additional fee will be incurred.

If the plan holder chooses to pay for a plan over more than 12 months, it will also include the **Dignity Promise**.

Should the plan holder pass away 12 months after they have taken out the plan, but before they had finished paying for it (or at anytime as a result of accidental death), the outstanding balance will be covered. Please refer to the Instalment Payments section of the Dignity Prepaid Funeral Plan Terms & Conditions for further details.

Applying is simple

Any requests for a discounted staff funeral plan should be sent by email to the Branch Development Admin team: **BranchDevelopmentAdmin@dignityuk.co.uk**

An application form will be posted out to the staff member's home address. If the plan is for someone else such as a family member, you'll need to pass the form on to them.

Complete the form in full, making sure you quote your employee number in the space provided, and return it to the Client Service Centre. The £200 discount will be applied prior to the plan being set up.

Applicants can choose from:

- Traditional Plans: Limited, Amber, Pearl and Diamond
- Natural Plans: Bamboo and Willow, which offer an environmentally friendly alternative to a traditional funeral service.

You can find product information and prices on the **Good to Great** website.

Peace of mind

We are proud to be one of the UK's largest funeral plan providers. It's an integral part of our service proposition, as Branch Campaign Manager Sharron Cooke explains: "We regularly have conversations with clients about the need to plan for the future, but it's important to consider our own personal situation as well."

"Funeral plans help people secure the type of funeral they want at today's prices and have peace of mind that all the necessary arrangements are in place."

"We hope this offer will give even more colleagues, and their loved ones, the chance to take advantage of the benefits a funeral plan can bring."



SIMPLICITY TO SPEED UP ASHES DELIVERY – AGAIN!

With restrictions easing, we're revisiting our plans to introduce quicker delivery of ashes.

In February, we introduced new processes to reduce the time taken to return ashes to Simplicity families.

Then COVID-19 arrived, and this work naturally had to take a backseat.

Incredibly, despite the strain the pandemic has put on Funeral Operations, we've still managed to return an impressive two-thirds of Simplicity ashes to families during lockdown.

In fact, the majority have been delivered within the new four week target time - saving two weeks on previous delivery timeframes. This is a truly remarkable achievement given the pressures of the last few months, and we'd like to say **a big thank you** for the effort you have put in under such difficult circumstances to manage and exceed our clients' expectations.

Now, as we cautiously return to normality, we want to extend these improvements to the rest of our Simplicity clients.

Refreshing your memory

Rather than simply starting where we left off, we've held a focus group to understand any additional improvements we could make when we reintroduce the new processes next month.

So, if you work in funeral operations and are involved with Simplicity, please look out for these refinements, a reminder of your roles and responsibilities and a refresher on the training you received earlier this year, over the next few weeks.

What's next?

Once we've assessed how successful the four-week deliveries are, we'll aim to exceed the expectations of our clients and reduce the timeline for ashes delivery to just three weeks, giving us a real competitive advantage. In addition, we're also planning to introduce a delivery tracking system and an official, promotable service to return jewellery and personal effects.

We'll keep you posted on these developments as soon as we can.



Simplicity
Cremations

ASHES DELIVERY ROUTE

