

25 September 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!)

WELCOMING OUR CLIENTS BACK TO BRANCHES

We've created two new videos for our clients to let them know our branches are COVID-secure.

Mask? Check.

Hand sanitiser. Check.

These are just a couple of things on our list of 'things to take' when we leave the house now, but imagine the apprehension you may have about leaving your home to visit one of our funeral homes to arrange the funeral of a loved one during the pandemic.

To help reassure our clients and their families, we've created two new videos that show how we've adapted to current times in our branches - whether they want to visit us to discuss a pre-arranged funeral plan, or arrange the funeral of a loved one. From wearing masks, using hand sanitiser to having safety screens in our limousines - we've gone above and beyond to make Dignity funeral homes a safe space.

Andrew Judd, Director of Operations said: "Thanks to our dedicated branch staff helping to put in place the public health guidance, we've been able to



protect colleagues and clients alike.

"The videos we've created will help us to tell that story to clients, and reassure them that we can help them as they wish - whether that's in branch, on the phone or by email - or a combination of all three.

"Thank you to all of our colleagues in branch who are continuing to go the extra mile, supporting their teams and clients alike."

We're including the videos in all of our Dignity Enquiries response



emails. For colleagues working in branch, you can help us circulate the COVID-secure message by ensuring you capture email addresses of clients, or potential clients, when they get in touch with you.

We'll also be posting the videos on our social media channels.

AVOIDING SPIKES, SICKNESS AND SECOND WAVES

We need you to remain vigilant to help reduce the risk of virus transmission.

Spikes in COVID-19 cases means more of us are living with restrictions – whether we're in Caerphilly, Glasgow or subject to England's new 'rule of six.'

Many of us may be feeling more relaxed about the rules after all these months. But as we all want to keep infections down and our friends, families and colleagues safe, it's important you follow these three simple guidelines:

1 SPOT THOSE SYMPTOMS

If you exhibit any of these symptoms, **get tested** and stay

at home until you have a negative test result.

2 PASS THE TEST

Once you have received test results, you should let HR know the results straightaway at HR.SharedServices@dignityuk.co.uk.

You can find full instructions in our [COVID-19 Testing Policy](#).

If you get a negative result, you can return to work as normal. If you receive a positive result, you should continue to self-isolate in line with Government advice.

3 STAY HOME

Don't worry about being out of pocket while staying home – we'll pay you in full for the first 14 days of self-isolation. Casual workers will get an average of their previous 12 weeks earnings. This also applies if you've been contacted by the government's Test & Trace programme.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN THE CURE

Of course, the best way to keep the virus at bay is by following your region's rules and making sure you practise good hygiene.

If you have any queries about getting tested, staying home or are unsure what to do if you have symptoms, then please ask your line manager in the first instance. You can also find a wide range of [questions and answers here](#).

SYMPTOMS

Stay at home if you have either of the following COVID-19 symptoms



A NEW, CONTINUOUS COUGH

this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)



A HIGH TEMPERATURE

this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)



LOSS OF SMELL AND TASTE

this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

BECOMING COVID-19 SECURE

It's been a mammoth task, but we've very nearly completed all the COVID-19 risk assessments.

With hundreds more properties than even some of the country's biggest and best known retailers, making sure we're on the right path to becoming COVID secure has been a huge job - but we've done it, thanks to an incredible effort from colleagues in every corner of the company.

Looking at every detail to see what measures each individual site needs to meet the Government's requirements, the risk assessments have been completed for CMG, head office locations and (almost) all of Funeral Operations (we're nearly there!).



It means we have gained a fuller understanding of what's needed where, from extra keyboards, to floor stickers

and even to doorbells, to make sure we're ready to welcome visitors and colleagues alike.

Perspex screens, signage and extra kit are being delivered soon to sites that have been fully risk assessed. And once these are in place, each site can display one of the Government's COVID-secure posters, giving confidence to clients that their safety comes first.

If you have any queries or need more information, contact covidriskassessment@dignityuk.co.uk or get in touch with your Regional Health & Safety Officer.

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR NEXT OF KIN DETAILS

It's really important that we hold your next of kin contact details in case of emergencies.

We want to make sure that we hold the most up to date contact details for you.

Your address, phone number, email address and next of kin details are all held in Oracle and we'd appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to ensure they are all up to date.

All you need to do is head on over to **Oracle** - you will need your Dignity email address (this is your username) and your

password. If your password has expired, call the HR Shared Service Centre on 0121 726 4615 and we'll issue you a new one.

You can check out our mini guide to updating your details on Oracle by [clicking here](#).

If you haven't used Oracle before, you can always email your details directly to HR Shared Services (hr.sharedservices@dignity.co.uk) or give them a call and they will update your records for you.

If you've never logged into Oracle before - or you do not have a Dignity email address - you can use a personal email address to access Oracle.

But first you will need to call HR Shared Services (0121 726 4615) who will provide you with a password.

If you don't have an email address, please call HRSS to provide up to date emergency contact details over the phone.

COMBATTING RISING INFECTIONS

All colleagues must follow these important measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections.

As COVID-19 infections continue to grow at an alarming rate, we are re-implementing some essential rules which all colleagues must follow, no matter what area of the business you work in:

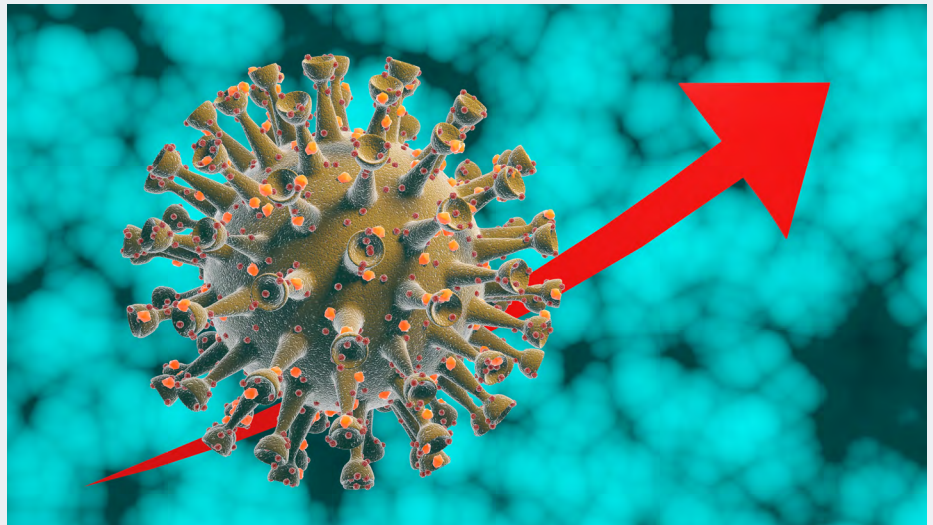
- **Working from home** – in line with the Prime Minister’s announcement yesterday, if you carry out your role from home effectively, you should ask your line manager if it is OK for you to do so.
- **No non-essential travel allowed** – this includes all non-essential inter-branch visits, site visits or meetings.

What does ‘essential’ mean?

Of course, in a business such as ours, we will still need to have some face-to-face meetings.

For example, your line manager having an important HR or wellbeing conversation with you, or a Health & Safety colleague making sure our sites are safe.

However, this does not mean we can return to ‘pre-Covid’ working practices. So, think about whether your meeting really needs to be face-to-face, or whether you can hold it over video call or by phone – and check if it’s OK first with a senior manager (Regional Manager, Area Manager, Head of Department or Exec member).



You can find some tips when thinking about visiting branches here.

We must always abide by our safe working practices and measures such as social distancing and good hand hygiene, to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to each other.

Getting Funerals Right

We are relying on you to help our funeral business plan effectively for the weeks and months ahead. Therefore, it is vitally important you:

- Make sure stock counts are accurate, particularly with PPE.
- Maintain accurate mortuary capacity counts.
- Pro-actively manage shortening the period of time between the date-of-death to date-of-funeral to help mitigate against mortuary capacity issues

- Use the correct PPE for the right scenario – we can see that not all PPE is being used accurately, which means your safety is at risk. You can find the **[PPE guidance here](#)**.
- Make sure you and our clients wear face coverings when travelling in our vehicles.
- Must comply with the latest operational guidance and understand any changes to it.

I know I can count on all of you to follow these important rules to help us take the greatest care of each other, our clients and communities.

If you have any questions, please ask your line manager in the first instance.

Please stay safe.

Andrew Judd

Director of Funeral Operations



TEST & TRACE IN BRANCHES

We're capturing visitors' details to help us stop the spread of the coronavirus.

This week we've updated our operational guidance to include Test & Trace in our branches for the first time.

Many of us will have got used to leaving our details when we go on a day trip or pop out to a café, but with COVID-19 infections continuing to rise, it's important we also do our bit to help stop the spread.

This means that starting now, we are asking everyone who visits our branch (client, contractor or other Dignity employee) for more than a few minutes to record their name, telephone number, number

of people in the party (where relevant) and their arrival and departure times.

You can download the template here.

NEW!

The NHS Test & Trace App has been launched in England & Wales. Download it from the Apple Store or Google Play

This is an important addition to our guidance and one we hope will be useful should there be a positive test amongst our colleagues or any of our visiting clients.

If you work in branch, please remember to capture these details. For everyone else, please remember that any non-essential travel between our sites is not currently permitted.

INDUSTRY APPRENTICESHIPS COMING SOON

We're excited to announce two brand new apprenticeships for Funeral Team Members and Funeral Directors.

Apprenticeships are a great way of building a career by combining hands-on work with the opportunity to train, study and gain recognised qualifications.

We're big advocates of apprenticeships at Dignity, both for new starters and to support existing colleagues who want to develop additional skills.

Now, for the first time, we are able to offer access to industry specific funeral apprenticeships in England and you could be part of the inaugural programme when it begins in November.

What qualifications are available?

We will be running two schemes in partnership with the training provider PeoplePlus:

'Funeral Team Member'

This is a Level 2 apprenticeship (intermediate, equivalent to the educational level of GCSE) and is suited to those in roles such as Funeral Service Operative and Funeral Service Arranger.

'Funeral Director'

This is a Level 3 apprenticeship (advanced, equivalent to A level).



Apprenticeships

We can accommodate up to 60 candidates in this initial cohort, although we will look at the possibility of running more programmes in the future if there is sufficient demand.

How do apprenticeships work?

An apprentice combines practical training in their job with related study. Training and study time must account for at least 20 per cent of the employee's normal working hours.

Anyone who is over 16 can complete an apprenticeship and there is no upper age limit.

For full time colleagues, the funeral apprenticeships will last around 12 months, culminating in an end point assessment.

Those working part-time may need a little longer to finish the programme.

Annie Pamplin, Senior Learning and Development Business Partner, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for those in operational roles to enhance their skills and achieve a formal qualification.

"It complements our existing range of apprenticeships and means this rewarding and highly effective way of learning is now more widely available within the business.

"We want to hear from colleagues who have a genuine passion for what they do and are eager to progress to the next stage of their career at Dignity."

Sounds interesting! How do I find out more?

Signing up for an apprenticeship is a big commitment and we expect people will have a number

of queries. As a starter, we'd suggest heading to the Good to Great site and reading the following documents:

- [Apprenticeship FAQs](#)
- [Eligibility criteria](#)
- The 'learning journey' for your preferred apprenticeship
 - [Funeral Team Member](#)
 - [Funeral Director](#)

In addition, we have arranged a series of information sessions that you can dial into. Each will be hosted by members of our Learning and Development team and training experts from PeoplePlus.

There are various slots to choose from between Monday, 28 September and Thursday, 1 October. Please book a place in advance by clicking on this [link](#), where you'll also find joining instructions.

I'd like to put myself forward

Fantastic! Please make sure you have discussed it with your line manager first as they will need to endorse your application.

Then simply complete this online [expression of interest form](#) and the Learning and Development team will contact you in due course to discuss next steps.

As we said earlier, initial places are limited to 60 and you must live in England in order to take part.

This is because funding is being provided through our participation in the Government's Apprenticeship Levy, which is only available in England. Unfortunately colleagues in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Jersey are not able to use the levy for apprenticeships.

The deadline for applying is Friday, 9 October and we look forward to hearing from you.

FROM RATS TO RECYCLABLES

Thanks to their superb buying power, our Procurement team are now managing some key services.

'Where there's muck, there's brass' as the saying goes – and with a keen eye on getting the best services for the best price, the procurement team have negotiated some great deals on some essential services.

Historically sitting within the Property team, things like pest control and feminine hygiene are now being managed by Procurement, freeing up Property to concentrate on estate management and repairs.

As usual, the team have made the most of our size and buying

power to make sure we use our preferred suppliers nationwide.

This means we should all be using:

- Rentokil Pest Control for pest control
- Veolia, Shred-IT and Initial Medical for general, recyclable, confidential and medical waste
- Waterlogic for water coolers
- Greenworks for washrooms and feminine hygiene

If any of these means a change of supplier for you, then we'll be in touch with Area Managers to



help move you over.

You can find details of all our suppliers and FAQs about these services on the [Procurement intranet page](#).

If you can't find what you're looking for, or are currently using a different supplier to the ones listed above, please drop a line to purchasing.team@dignityuk.co.uk so we can advise you.

DIGNITY CONDUCTS FUNERAL OF LAST DEVON D-DAY VETERAN

One of our very own funeral directors has conducted the funeral of a gentleman who was thought to be the last D-Day Veteran in Devon.

The late Geoffrey William Pyne, aged 100, passed away in August, and his family instructed Mitchell's Funeral Directors in Exeter to conduct the funeral.

Geoffrey Pyne served with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) and was the last living REME D-Day veteran in the UK. In 1944 he stormed the Normandy beaches during World War II and later received France's highest military medal, the Légion d'honneur, for his contribution to the liberation of France.

His funeral was attended by military personnel from all over the country, and Mr Pyne had a guard of honour, standard bearers made up of serving soldiers and Royal British Legion representatives, and a flypast by a Spitfire.

Sheril Udberg, Funeral Director at Mitchell's said: "It really was a wonderful send off for a man who



saw and faced more than we could ever imagine, in order for us to be here today.

"The team here at Mitchell's were

honoured to be part of Mr Pyne's final journey, and we did all we could to make the day special and fitting for his family, friends and military personnel. And I have to say, I'm particularly proud of the team here for their commitment and dedication to giving our clients the best possible service."

The funeral was televised on ITV West Country.



WHO'S WHO? MEET MARK HULL MARKETING DIRECTOR

Ever wondered who makes all the big decisions about our marketing and promotions?
Then step this way...



If I am lucky, I get to immerse myself in a budget spreadsheet for a few hours reconciling spend and forecasts across the department. And then of course there is the wonderful task of endless emails to manage! But it's this variety and breadth of work that makes me love every day of work.

How long have you worked for Dignity?

Seven years.

How would you describe your job in one sentence?

We ensure that when someone has a need for our services – that they can find us, no matter where they look and we present ourselves in an attractive manner with the right products and services that they choose us for their funeral or funeral plans.

What does a typical day look like for you?

There are a few, some, several, a lot, there are a lot of meetings. But typically, they're good productive sessions, where we get to debate through a lot of challenges and come up with some great solutions.

Some of the points we might be discussing include the development and performance of our websites, designs of new literature, pricing projects and how we implement them efficiently, going through updates and progress on digital services like Funeral Notices, improving our customer experience for Simplicity, overseeing our brand reputation especially on things like social media, reviewing creative for campaigns and TV adverts or managing our media schedule for upcoming promotional activity.

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

If it's not my son Arthur literally pulling me out of bed, it's typically to get up to go training.

What has been your most memorable day at work?

When we won Marketing Team of the Year at the Chartered Institute of Marketing awards in 2019.

Where have you previously worked?

I have worked for large finance companies (Barclays, Bank of New York, Invesco Perpetual), telecoms (T-Mobile) and just prior to Dignity I spent two years at Sky, managing their customer communications.

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

My inbox has nothing in it! Ah alright - being serious, if I've managed to move something forward or solved a problem that's a good day's work. A great day is when several months of those good days come to fruition and we deliver a completed project or campaign.

What was your first ever job?

I am going to discount the paper round and the Saturday job – what I class as my first proper job was as a lifeguard during school holidays and whilst at University.

Tell us something people wouldn't guess about you

I have performed in the West End and at the Edinburgh Festival as part of the National Youth Music Theatre.

How and why did you get into the funeral industry?

I was in a fortunate position of being able to choose between a couple of jobs when I left Sky – remaining in Entertainment, pet insurance or Dignity. I chose Dignity and the funeral industry because as a marketer there is just so much opportunity as the industry starts to fully embrace marketing and goes through a digital transformation.

About you: are you married, have children, any pets?

Married to Katy for eight years and have two

children – Molly (9) and Arthur (7), and Tetley the dog.

What hobbies do you have?

I have been training to complete an Ironman (now postponed to next year) – but I am taking part in a half distance at the end of September (1.2mile swim, 56 mile bike, 13 mile run) so that takes up a fair amount of my spare time. I also enjoy the theatre and like to perform when I can still... and in lockdown I have been learning the Piano – the Simply Piano App is great!

Thanks Mark! Next time, we check out what makes Steve Gant, CMG Director, tick.

TO TEST OR NOT TO TEST...

...that is the question we provide some guidance for here

You can't have failed to miss the recent news headlines about the challenges of getting a coronavirus test: people trying for hours online or being sent to a far away test centre.

With the usual back-to-school autumnal sniffles doing the rounds, many of us will be wondering if that tickle at the back of the throat is actually COVID.

The main symptoms to look out for are a new, continuous cough, lack of taste and/or smell and a high temperature.

If you have any of **these symptoms**, please make sure you stay home and get tested. If you don't have these symptoms (a runny nose typically isn't one of them) there is no need to take a test.

You can find out more and book a test here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Waiting for results

You will need to stay at home and

If you're unsure or have questions about self-isolation, please ask your line manager or visit our [FAQs page](#).

self-isolate until you get your test results back. If they're negative, you can come back to work when you're well enough, unless you have been contacted by Test & Trace, in which case you must continue to self-isolate.

If you've tested positive for COVID-19, you will need to continue self-isolating for the full 10 days.

Once you have received your test results, let HR know

the results straightaway at HR.SharedServices@dignityuk.co.uk.

Please don't worry about being paid. As always, we have your back and will pay you in full for any period of self-isolation, or an average of your last 12 weeks earnings if you're a casual worker.

It's important we take the greatest care of each other, and by extension our wider communities and only use up a test if we really need to.

Struggling to arrange a COVID-19 test? Ask HR and they'll be happy to help you.



FABULOUS FUNDRAISING

From sequins to stamps, our teams are doing their bit for charities across the country.

As far as fundraising ideas go, we'd score this one a perfect ten.

Caitlin Murray is taking to the floor in support of armed forces charity Poppyscotland as a participant in their annual Come Dancing challenge.

A Funeral Arranger at D. Gunn Funeral Directors in Dingwall, Caitlin is aiming to raise at least £2,000 between now and the event date next March.

As well as seeking donations, there's the small matter of learning to dance! Lessons in Latin and ballroom come courtesy of local dance school Toe 2 Toe, who have paired Caitlin with a professional dance instructor who she will also perform with during the competition.

She said: "I'm really excited to be taking part, but we need to work out an effective way of training together that fits in with social distancing guidelines.

"There's still plenty of time and I can study the dance routines myself at home as well. It's also an opportunity to focus on my

CAN YOU HELP?

To sponsor Caitlin in her quest for the coveted Glitter Ball trophy, please visit her Just Giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/caitlin-murray2>

Do you have any stamps you can spare, either from home or your workplace? Please send them to Tamsin at: Phillips Funeral Services, Treeves House, 52 Shenley Road, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 1DS.

fundraising for Poppyscotland and try and beat that initial target."

Her branch colleagues are joining in too – the team at D. Gunn completed a sponsored hike to the summit of Ben Wyvis, Funeral Manager Jim Murray is running 10km a day for a week and Business Manager Annette MacDonald has organised a teddy bear making class starting on 10

October. All proceeds will be added to Caitlin's grand total.

Of course you don't have to don your dance shoes to be a first class fundraiser. Just ask Tamsin Colliver, Funeral Service Arranger at Phillips Funeral Services, Borehamwood.

For Tamsin, it's recycling stamps that helps to support her chosen charity, the RSPCA's Southridge Animal Centre in Potters Bar.

"It's a very simple way of fundraising to help sick animals and I've been donating stamps to the centre for more than 15 years," she said.

"They accept used and new stamps and they can be UK or foreign ones. The charity then boxes them up and sells them on in batches to collectors.

"A number of nearby branches and crematoria have joined in and we even have local families dropping off their stamps to us as well. It would be great if more colleagues wanted to contribute and help the charity continue providing its services."