

6 November 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!)



No changes to funeral regulations – but work from home if your role allows it

On Saturday (31 October) the Prime Minister announced a four-week lockdown in England from just after midnight this Thursday.

The new measures clearly state that funerals can continue with a maximum of **30 mourners** – however, these should be **close family only** so that households are not mixing.

While this means there is **no change to our operational**

guidance, we would ask that you make this clear to families with funerals planned from Thursday 5 November onwards.

As the lockdown could well be extended and we head into what is normally a busy time of year, please **avoid deferring or delaying funerals** so we can manage our mortuary capacity as death rates sadly rise.

What about schools?

Unlike the first lockdown,

schools and childcare settings remain open. If your child's school closes due to burst class bubbles, please make local arrangements with your line manager.



Should I come to work?

The message is clear – people who can work from home should do so to prevent infections spreading. If your role means this is not possible, please make sure you strictly follow the guidance and wear the **mandated PPE** when needed.

DO NOT come to work if you have COVID-19 symptoms, have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case, have been tested or have had a positive test.

DO NOT travel between sites unless urgent and essential.

Should I shield?

The government will resume shielding for clinically extremely vulnerable

people, but we understand that this means you may be personally concerned. Please discuss potential options with your line manager in the first instance.

I have some more questions.

If you have any queries, please visit our **FAQs page** or ask your line manager in the first instance.

We will continue to monitor any changes to government measures and keep you informed.

Not in England?

Make sure you refer to your local national guidance, including mourner numbers.



SHIELDING DURING ENGLAND'S LOCKDOWN

The government is sending letters to clinically extremely vulnerable people this week. We answer your top questions here.

England has entered a four-week lockdown in an effort to combat the spread of Coronavirus.

If you were shielding last time, you may be wondering what this means for you, so we seek to answer some common questions here:

How will I know if I have to shield?

The government is writing to all people identified as clinically extremely vulnerable this week. If you're in receipt of this letter, then you should stay at home.

I got bored shielding last time. Can I still come into work?

No, unfortunately we can't let you come into work if you're shielding. We need to keep you safe and protect you from any risk, so you must stay home even if you feel fit and well. If you can perform your role from home, please discuss this with your line manager.

I didn't get a letter from the government. What if my GP advises me to shield?

We will accept the government letter as proof you've been

advised to shield. If you feel you should have had a shielding letter or receive this advice from a GP, please talk to your line manager in the first instance.

How long do I need to shield for?

The lockdown in England is from Thursday 5 November and is due to end on 2 December. Depending on whether lockdown is extended, you can return to work after this date.

Will I get paid?

Just like last time, we're committed to supporting you financially through these difficult times. This means if you are asked to shield by the government, we will pay you in full and it won't count as sick leave.

Someone in my household is shielding. Can I stay home to care for them?

If you live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable and they rely on your care and support, we will support you if you feel you need to shield as well. Please discuss this with your line manager in the first instance.

I'm not in England, what does this mean for me?

This new shielding guidance only applies to colleagues in England. If you're in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland please continue to follow your local guidance. However, our policy to support those who need to shield applies to all colleagues, wherever they work.

How can I get more help?

If you have any questions, please ask your line manager in the first instance. Or, contact your HR Business Partner or comment below and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.





TOP TIPS FOR PRE-NEED SALES:

Our latest video showcases the Dignity approach to talking about pre-arranged funeral plans with our clients.

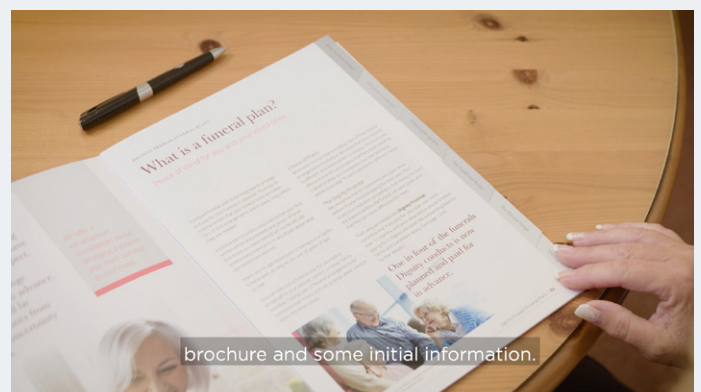
The purchase of pre-arranged funeral plans is on the rise, and with our latest video, we've pulled together top tips from Dignity arrangers and funeral directors on how they approach those "awkward" conversations.

Caroline Bryan, Branch Development Manager said: "There is definitely a subtlety to having conversations around funeral plans. And whilst it's a valuable service we offer for our clients, we've found that sometimes we shy away from having those discussions.

"But it is often the client that approaches us about purchasing a pre-arranged funeral plan and the video looks at a couple of these scenarios to find out how we can best help our clients."

You can watch the video by clicking [here](#) or visiting the Good to Great website - and if you work in funeral ops, let us know your top tips by commenting underneath.

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SIMPLICITY SMASHES TARGET

The Return of Ashes trial has been hugely successful – and clients have been impressed too.

Our aim was to reduce the length of time it takes to return ashes to Simplicity clients, and by Jove we've done it!

Our trial target was to deliver ashes back to families within four weeks of cremation – but in 65% of the time we've managed to do this in two weeks or less. In fact, our average delivery time has been just 10 days. And as a result, we've seen a significant drop in complaints, which is fantastic news.

We really appreciate the effort that's gone into this, especially as we've seen more funerals and fewer colleagues due to coronavirus.

Your hard work means that as direct cremation becomes a more popular choice, Simplicity's customer experience stands apart from the rest. Just some of the feedback we've received shows delight at the ashes being delivered so quickly, and how smart and respectful the colleague was who hand delivered them.

We'll keep checking how the process is working so we can

make improvements as we go along. And soon, we'll update our Simplicity communications to let clients know how soon they'll receive their loved ones' ashes back.

Collaboration is Key

Working with colleagues from Funeral Operations, the Simplicity team has been able to create a clearer process, more defined roles and concise paperwork. Feedback has shown that our courier process is effective and that training was well-received. Combined, these have all contributed to the trial's success.

We want to keep up the good work, so while we continue to settle the new process in, you can help by:

Making sure a record of the ashes journey is kept for auditing purposes, even if they still need to be reunited with the family.

This needs to be done in Compass at each stage of the ashes journey so there is clear visibility of where the ashes are at any point in time. Please update the Simplicity

Co-ordinator (whose details you can find on the Ashes Delivery Schedule or the Delivery Note), who can update the Compass record.

Make sure the ashes are returned within four weeks –

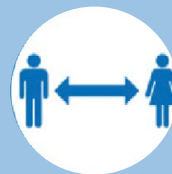
until they've been returned to the family, we haven't fulfilled our promise to them.

An important process reminder

The Simplicity Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring the ashes are reunited with the family within 20 working days. They can enlist the support of other centres and staff to make this happen. The Simplicity Co-ordinator should receive updates from the network when ashes are received, transferred, and returned. This information must then be entered into Compass. If the Simplicity Co-ordinator does not receive these updates, they should refer to their copy of the Ashes Delivery Schedule to follow up accordingly. It is crucial that the ashes journey is recorded.

If you have any questions or suggestions please email the Product and Client Experience Manager, rebecca.long@dignityuk.co.uk





**Safety Starts
With You**

HANDS. FACE. SPACE

Don't forget the basics to keep COVID-19 at bay

The second wave of COVID-19 is upon us and as more restrictions and rules come in, we thought we'd remind you of some of the basics when it comes to preventing the risk of infection.

Put simply, wash your hands, wear a face covering, maintain social distancing.

And of course, if you have symptoms, have been in close contact with someone with Covid or have been tested, you must **STAY HOME**.

Safety Starts With You!



Not sure when to stay home?

Read this [Staying Home Guidance](#)

Remember your actions have consequences.
[Watch this Safety Starts With You animation](#)



TOP OF THE CLASS

Congratulations go to Sam Painter, who was among the entrants that got all the questions correct in our themed quiz to celebrate Learning at Work Week.

Sam is a Funeral Service Arranger at Francis Chappell & Sons in Horsham, West Sussex, and receives a £100 Amazon gift card.

If you took part in the quiz and want to check the answers, we've added them to the quiz sheet [here](#).

Don't forget that we also made some additions to Dignity's Learning Zone during Learning at Work Week.

The **Personal Development category** now has extra modules on Learning Journeys, Practical Ways to Improve Your Learning and Personal Development Activities.

They join a long list of interactive resources we can all use to broaden our knowledge and enhance our skillset. Even without a gift card up for grabs, a visit to the Learning Zone is always a rewarding experience!

WORTH SHOUTING ABOUT



F M & J Wait provided a memorable funeral for Lichfield's much-loved town crier.

Colleagues at F M & J Wait in Lichfield planned and conducted a fitting funeral service for a prominent public figure.

Ken Knowles was known for his role as town crier, appearing regularly at community events and performing civic duties.

His funeral was held at our Lichfield & District Crematorium, with F M & J Wait's Funeral Arranger Linda Owen playing a key part in organising the day.

The funeral cortege was driven through the city centre and the streets were lined with people paying their respects.

It followed a special route incorporating local landmarks such as Lichfield's famous three-spined medieval cathedral, the Grade II listed Guildhall building and the Birthplace Museum of writer Dr Samuel Johnson.

Funeral Director Mark Simmonds said: "Due to current restrictions, only a limited number of mourners were allowed to attend. We used the live stream facility available at the crematorium and more than 500 people ended up watching the service online.

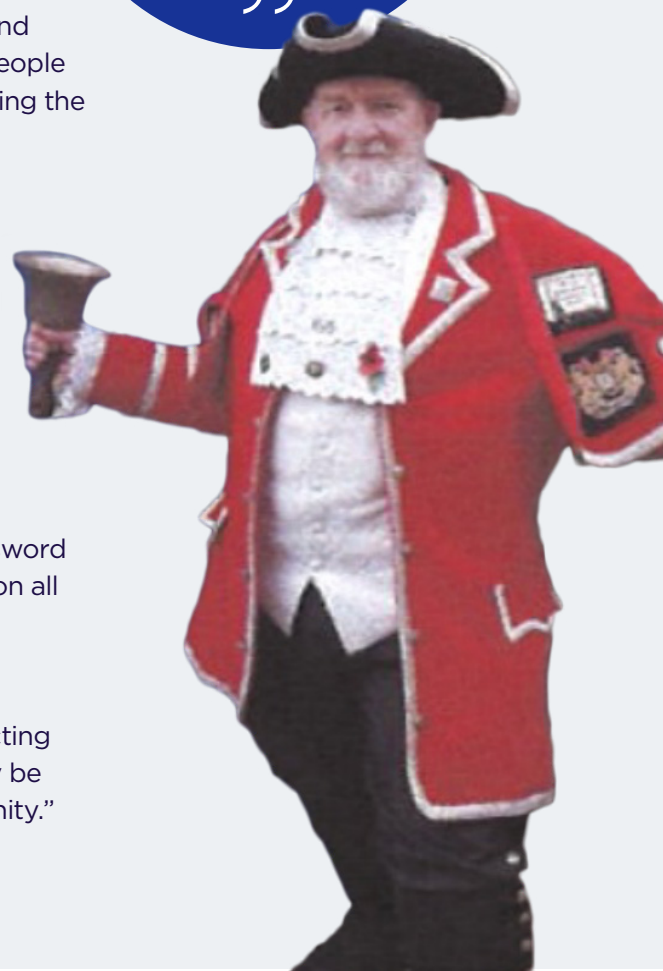
"Ken was a larger than life character, known for his cries of 'oyez' at over 110 decibels!

He was also Lichfield's ceremonial sword bearer, a tradition dating back to the 17th century where the sword is carried before the Mayor on all civic processions.

"We are very proud to have been entrusted with conducting his funeral. Ken will certainly be missed by the local community."

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LEST WE FORGET

Teams have been busy preparing for Remembrance Sunday and honouring the lives lost during conflict.

This weekend is Remembrance Sunday, when the nation unites to remember the service and sacrifice of our Armed Forces community.

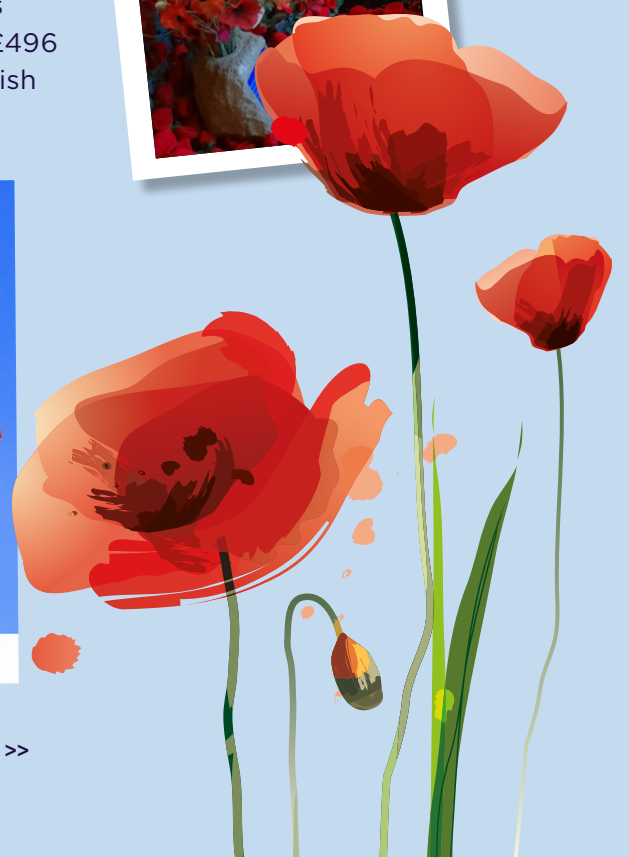
Tributes are being paid up and down the country and we're delighted to see so many of our colleagues getting involved.

Branch teams, for example, have worked together to ensure Remembrance is appropriately reflected within their local communities. This is particularly important given the cancellation of traditional public events such as church services, concerts and parades because of COVID-19.

Here's a snapshot of what you've been doing.

Super shoppers

Customers at Morrison's in Allness gave generously when Caitlin and Jim Murray from D. Gunn Funeral Directors spent the day collecting £496 in donations for the Scottish Poppy Appeal.



Colourful contributions

Staying with D. Gunn and the branch premises in Dingwall has a special window poster on show. It was given to them by 10 year old Sophie Campbell, who wanted to help the team in raising awareness of Poppyscotland.

At J & A Porter in Lytham St. Annes, the creativity continues. We love this poppy collage put together by Royles Brook Primary School where Funeral Service Arranger Rebecca Bates' son Oliver is a pupil.

Artistic flair

Debbie Owens and her colleagues from John Bardgett & Sons, Ponteland, have raised £300 by selling Poppy Appeal pin badges. Also taking pride of place in the branch are three original paintings by a local artist depicting the 'Silent Solider' silhouette, a Royal Navy warship and a trio of Spitfires.

Dressed to impress

Lots of branches have joined John Bardgett in adding striking and poignant Remembrance displays to their window spaces.

There's a selection in the gallery on the Good to Great article, including Ronald P Sherry & Sons in West London which was put together by Funeral Arranger Rita Wildman. The team will be making a donation to The Royal British Legion in place of the money they would usually raise through poppy sales.

A V Band in Worcester like to apply a theme to their annual displays and for 2020 it's War Brides. Administrator Jayne Warrilow prepared bride and groom mannequins, dressing them in an RAF uniform and a gown covered in poppies that were all individually sewn on.

Jayne even made the wedding cake, all of which creates an impressive showcase with remarkable attention to detail.



OVER THE MOON

Branch teams in Hampshire walked as one to raise vital funds for a local hospice.

At first glance, embarking on a moonlit coastal walk sounds more of an indulgence than a challenge.

But factor in the time of year (deep into a wet and windy autumn) and the distance involved (nine miles from start to finish) and you realise there's more to this charity event than meets the eye.

That didn't deter our hardy fundraisers from the South East region. On the evening of Saturday, 24 October, ten of them set off on the Moon & Stars Memories Walk in aid of Rowans Hospice in Waterlooville, raising more than £1,000.

It was a virtual activity, meaning teams plotted their own course, and replaced two previous walks that the charity was forced to cancel because of coronavirus. The only rules were to walk after dark, limit group sizes to six and maintain social distancing.

Business Manager Rebecca Lambert oversaw Dignity's entry, with seven local branches represented: Carrells in Havant; A G Stapleford & Sons in Portsmouth, Fratton and Portchester; W Wraight & Son



Over
£1000
raised

in Emsworth; and Solent Funeral Directors in Gosport and Lee-On-Solent.

Walking in two groups of five, team members started outside Carrells, headed south towards Hayling Island and then followed a section of the Hayling Billy Coastal Path.

Rebecca said: "The hospice does fantastic work and has cared for many of the friends and families we have served during the past year. Taking part in the walk enabled us to remember those we have lost and support the essential work charities like Rowans Hospice provide to those in need."

This isn't Rebecca's first challenge for Rowans Hospice – in recent years she has been skydiving and even abseiled down the Emirates Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth.

At least this time she managed to keep her feet firmly on the ground and we're sure you'll join us in congratulating her, and all the Dignity walkers, for their fabulous fundraising efforts.



GOOD DEEDS INDEED

Give your colleagues an online pat on the back

If someone's done you a good turn, is doing something amazing for the community or is generally a bit of a shining star, why not give them a pat on the back with our Good Deed Feed?

The Good Deed Feed is chock full with tonnes of great stuff from around the business, such as the JH Kenyon watercolour story below - but in a year such as this, it would be great to have even more good news and cheerful things to talk about.

You can **submit good deeds directly on the website**. Simply tell us who you are, who you're nominating and why. You can even upload a picture!



PICTURE PERFECT

J H Kenyon has its very own artist.

We're all super-impressed with this fabulous watercolour painting by Funeral Arranger Paul Hardy.

It shows the historic premises of J H Kenyon Funeral Directors in Bayswater, West London, and was presented to Manager Philip Smyth as a birthday gift.

Paul has been with the

business for nearly three years and recently took up painting as a hobby. Given that he's also an award winning photographer, perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that Paul is so talented with a brush!

Philip said: "I was delighted to find this stunning painting on my desk and it was all the more special that it was created by a member of my team."