

20 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!)

ASHES TRACKING GOES DIGITAL

A new, efficient process will give extra reassurance to our clients.

Our promise to clients doesn't end when the funeral is over – returning the ashes safely and in good time is all part of the caring service we offer.

Until now, we've relied on pen and paper to track and sign for ashes, but thanks to a fantastic team effort between colleagues in Funeral Operations and IT, we can now digitally track every stage of the journey in Compass.

By removing the risk of paper records being lost or missed, the live tracking feature means we can see where ashes are at any moment, giving confidence to clients that their loved ones' remains are being cared for. Plus, it gives us a permanent digital record to help us answer any queries accurately and efficiently even years down the line.

After a successful trial in East Kent, we've sent full instructions to all Funeral Operations colleagues this week.

With so many ashes resting unclaimed, we hope the new system will allow ashes to be reunited with families much sooner after the funeral, showing how we take the greatest care every step of the way.

We also plan even more improvements – so watch this space!



A NEW PARTNERSHIP

The agreement will enable frontline teams to get items of PPE delivered directly within 48 hours.

Collins Dictionary might have declared ‘lockdown’ their word of the year for 2020, but we think there’s a good chance those working in the funeral profession would choose ‘PPE’ instead.

No longer limited to specialist circumstances, we need continued access to a range of PPE products in order to keep ourselves and our clients safe.

Like many businesses, we were faced with a major challenge in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic to find a reliable supplier for our PPE requirements in the volumes we needed.

And while things are much better now, we think colleagues are going to really welcome this latest advancement.

Introducing RS Components

RS will be assisting us with our PPE needs from next month, including essentials such as coveralls, disposable gloves, goggles, visors, masks and overshoes.

Unlike our current approach, where items have to be stored at our Regional Centres and forwarded on as required, RS Components will deliver directly in just 48 hours.

Orders will be collated and placed by a team of nominated colleagues working across all regions, which they can do via a specially designed online store.

PPE continues to be in great demand, however we’ve been assured that RS has sufficient stock in its warehouse and quantities will be reserved exclusively for our use.

How will it work?

We’re currently finalising the website and will soon be providing training to those operational colleagues who have been nominated to either place or approve orders.

Later this month, branches will receive details of who they need to email their order requests to within their particular region.

You should still be holding stock at your branches and we recommend there is enough to last a minimum of four weeks. Head office will work with you to help project how much you’re likely to need.

Branch stocks need to be managed and requests for new items sent in a timely manner to ensure you have a consistent supply and everyone stays fully protected.

Look out for more detailed information over the coming weeks, or contact procurement@dignityuk.co.uk if you have any immediate queries.





PROTECTION AGAINST FLU

We're offering help to colleagues who want to get the flu vaccine this winter.

Flu vaccines help protect against the main types of flu viruses, stopping people becoming ill and reducing the level of transmission to others.

For certain groups such as the over 65s, people with pre-existing medical conditions and pregnant women, getting flu can have serious consequences, which is why they are provided with a free annual flu vaccination through the NHS.

This winter more than ever, with COVID-19 still prevalent, it's important to reduce the risk of flu spreading as much as possible.

We have therefore been looking at options to extend the offer of a free flu vaccination to all colleagues.

Our initial aim was to partner with a pharmacy chain and issue vouchers, but despite discussions with a number of firms this has not proved possible.

Instead it has been agreed that anyone wanting the flu vaccine who does not automatically qualify for one under the NHS can get the cost refunded.

What you need to do

You'll need to arrange your own appointment, for example through a local chemist or pharmacy. Retain the receipt and Dignity will cover the cost.

Receipts should be scanned or photographed and emailed to HR.SharedServices@dignityuk.co.uk. Just add your payroll number in the subject header

and you'll be reimbursed via the next available pay run.

If you are unable to email your receipt, post it to HR Shared Services with a covering note that includes your payroll number.

Please be aware that the current demand for flu vaccination services is extremely high and it may be further into the season before new appointments become available. Keep checking online or by contacting your local provider.

In the meantime, you can find out more about the flu vaccine on the NHS [website](#).





STAY SAFE, STAY WELL

With winter approaching, and more COVID-19 restrictions in place, we need to talk about mental health.

As coronavirus restrictions tighten, and those of us in England are back into lockdown, we'll inevitably be spending a lot more time at home.

People may feel anxious, frustrated, bored or lonely. We know staying at home is important to protect ourselves and others, but that doesn't stop it being difficult to cope with and potentially damaging to our mental health.

This is why we've decided to revisit our Stay Well campaign, sharing tips and advice on how to manage your wellbeing and signposting where to go for help.

Let's start with seven simple steps for staying well this winter.



1 STAY CONNECTED

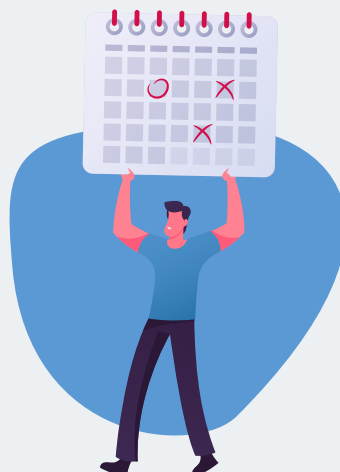
Opportunities for face to face contact are sadly limited, but remember how adept we all got at Zooming and Skyping back in the spring? Use technology and social media to keep in touch with family and friends.

If rolling news about coronavirus is making you worried or distressed, then limit how often you check the headlines and stick to trusted sources.

2 FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

Try not to speculate on what might happen in the future; instead concentrate on what you're doing in the here and now.

It's also helpful to maintain a routine and structure your days. Find ways to create a clear distinction between your job and your free time when working from home.



3 DISTRACT YOURSELF

Promote self-care by doing things you enjoy. From bingeing on box sets, to baking banana bread (other cake recipes are available), it's about choosing activities that help us relax.

Get the family involved if you like, however never feel guilty about having some 'me-time' to properly unwind.





4 KEEP ACTIVE

Our physical health affects how we feel. Don't be put off by the cold weather and dark evenings; head outdoors for regular exercise and stay close to nature because it's a great mood-booster.

If you really can't get out, or you're missing those visits to the gym, then try an online workout in the living room.



6 LIVE WELL

It's easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour, so eat the right kind of foods, avoid smoking and don't drink too much alcohol.

Getting good quality sleep also makes a big difference to how we feel.

If you need help of any kind, please don't be afraid to ask.

All colleagues have access to our Employee Assistance Programme, with online resources and a confidential telephone helpline overseen by specialists in wellbeing and mental health.

Visit www.my-eap.com (with the username DFLwell) or call 0800 1116 387.



5 EXERCISE THE MIND

Keep yourself mentally stimulated. Read often, try puzzles and brain teasers or get creative by doing arts and crafts.

Maybe this is your chance to gain a new skill like speaking a foreign language or playing a musical instrument. Through work, we can also offer personal development opportunities via our **Learning Zone**.



7 REACH OUT

Everyone is facing some degree of restrictions right now because of COVID-19. Ask others how they are coping in case you can learn from their experiences.

perational Guidelines Update

SELF-ISOLATION CHANGE TO FUNERAL OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Due to the latest restrictions and government guidance, we've updated our guidance on mourners and self-isolation.

We've updated our Operational Guidance to reflect new self-isolation guidance for mourners in England, Scotland and Wales.

What's new?

When arranging a funeral, you must let the client know that if a mourner who is self-isolating chooses to come to the funeral, they must let us know in advance. We can then contact the local crematorium or cemetery to understand their latest guidelines.

This will help us manage their expectations and let them know what options are available to them.

This applies to England, Scotland and Wales.

You can find the updated guidance in section 3, page 5.

What about Northern Ireland?

Northern Ireland is excluded from this. However, with guidance being continuously monitored, it's important you keep up to date with the local guidelines and restrictions in your nation. If you're unsure, please ask your manager for help.

There are no other changes. Please note **this guidance** is mandatory and we need you to follow it for the safety of you, our colleagues, clients and communities.

PRECAUTION AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING

We have Anti-Money Laundering measures in place to prevent our business being used to launder money.

Money laundering is where criminally obtained money or other assets are exchanged for clean money or assets with no obvious link to their criminal origins.

As one of the precautions against money laundering, the Board has imposed with immediate effect, a limit on the amount of cash

that can be taken from any one client of £8,000 per transaction or linked transactions.

If you are involved in the receipt of cash from clients, whoever they may be, please **implement this limit immediately**. Strict adherence to this limit is essential in order to comply with statutory obligations.

APPLICATIONS MADE EASY

Now there's a better way for colleagues to search and apply for an internal vacancy.

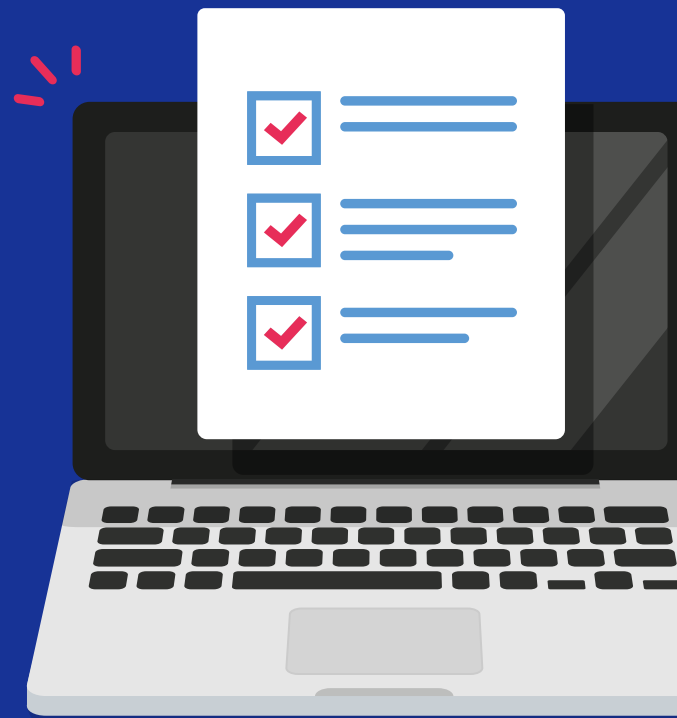
From this week, you'll notice a few changes to how we promote internal vacancies.

The application process will be a little different too, but don't worry - it's all designed to save you (and our Resourcing Team!) some precious time.

Rather than viewing the latest opportunities on a document saved to the Intranet, they will now be uploaded to an interactive recruitment portal.

This portal will also support any applications you submit, track your progress and provide you with status updates via email.

Current vacancies can be viewed at any time, but Resourcing will continue to issue regular email bulletins highlighting the most recent additions. These can easily be printed off and shared with non-PC users.



How it works

If a vacancy catches your eye, here's what to do.



VACANCY

STEP 1:

Head to the **Dignity Intranet**; click on the link marked 'Vacancies' to access the new portal (you'll find it in the centre of the page alongside the logos for iHASCO and BUD).



STEP 2:

On your first visit, you'll need to register using your individual work email address (we don't recommend using shared mailboxes, such as those for a branch). If you haven't got one, then a personal email account is OK.



STEP 3:

Read through the detailed job description for the role you're interested in.



STEP 4:

Fill out the digital application form and upload your CV.



STEP 5:

You'll receive regular email notifications as your application progresses. If you're selected for an interview, the appointment is booked through the portal.



An improved experience

The new system brings a number of benefits, not least for our colleagues in Resourcing.

Rather than working across multiple spreadsheets and forms, they can now connect with our hiring managers and recruitment partners to manage everything in one central location.

Applicants too will notice the difference, as Head of Human Resources Tracey Rose explains:

"These improvements will make internal vacancies more accessible for those eager to progress in their career. The system is easy to navigate and works on mobile devices as well as PCs.

"There is such a breadth of talent at Dignity, so we need to ensure new vacancies get maximum visibility. The ideal candidate for a role can often come from within the business and we don't want anyone to miss out."

LOOKING GOOD

Giving our branch teams the tools they need to successfully promote pre-need funeral plans.

We're busy raising awareness of funeral plans – and there's brand new point of sale material in all our branches to help communicate the benefits.

From eye-catching outdoor posters, to handy information leaflets and brochures, we've given everything a design refresh and provided quantities to funeral homes and admin centres right across the country.

The materials neatly capture the many advantages prepaid plans can offer families and include a reminder to act soon before next month's scheduled price rise.

Sharron Cooke, Branch Campaign Manager for our pre-need business, said: "It has been a huge logistical operation, but we're really pleased with how smart and professional everything looks now it's in place.

"The campaign ensures we are delivering consistent messages to our customers about pre-

need products and creating an environment where colleagues can feel confident instigating conversations* about planning ahead for their funeral."

What's on display?

Take a look at [this](#) picture gallery to see examples of the various items in-situ.

Externally we've provided new frames so that posters can be prominently displayed (some orders for those frame units are still in progress, but we're aiming to get the whole network covered as quickly as possible).

Inside branches the new materials are available in arrangement rooms, making it easier for clients to pick them up and refer to during discussions.

We've also circulated new leaflet and brochure dispensers along with new poster frames.

Each of our admin centres now has quantities of funeral plan leaflets that are personalised to

the branches they support ready for inserting into client invoice envelopes.

We'd love to hear what you think about the new materials and what feedback you've received from clients. Let us know in the comments on Good to Great!

** Don't forget about our latest video offering top tips for talking to clients about funeral plans. Watch it [here](#).*





DON'T FORGET ABOUT HOLIDAYS

We're encouraging everyone to take their allocated leave, but if you have days to carry over here's what to do.

As thoughts start turning to Christmas - whatever it may look like under the current COVID-19 restrictions - many of us are looking forward to a well-deserved break.

We've talked a lot about holidays this year, with plans and indeed policies having to be flexible in response to challenges presented by the pandemic.

It's great to hear from our colleagues in HR that many of you have been able to take your full holiday entitlement for 2020, however we appreciate that for others this simply hasn't been possible.

To remind you of what's been agreed, we are honouring the government's guidelines that unused annual leave can be rolled over into 2021 and 2022 if required.

If anyone does need to carry over some of their holiday, here's how it will work.

- For up to five days, you will be able to take these in 2021, subject to approval by your line manager.
- These days do not all have to be taken before the end of March, however it makes sense to book them as soon as possible to minimise clashes with those trying to arrange their planned 2021 leave.
- If you are carrying over more than five days, our guidance is that half the allocation should be taken in 2021 and the remaining half in 2022.

It's important that our records remain up to date, so please check that all your holiday dates for 2020 have been correctly logged in the Perform system.

HR will be using these records to write to colleagues in early January and confirm the status of your holiday days, including the balance of any being carried over.

And while we know people are busy and travel plans are limited at the moment, try to ensure you still take some time out. It's good for our physical and mental wellbeing and helps to prevent burnout.



HELP IS AT HAND

Don't struggle alone. NHS Volunteers can help support people shielding or isolating from COVID-19.

Shielding and self-isolating brings with it some practical problems, such as going shopping, collecting prescriptions or even the need for a chat with someone if you're alone.

The NHS Volunteers Responders Programme aims to help with exactly these sorts of problems. We thought it was such a fab idea that we had to share it, hoping it may help you or one of your loved ones.

Who's eligible?

If you're shielding, vulnerable for another reason, self-isolating, or a carer for someone, you can get help and support.

What can they help with?

The volunteers can help with tasks that you may find more difficult due to the pandemic, such as

shopping for essentials, picking up prescriptions and even having a friendly chat over the phone.

How does it work?

You need to register for support and once you're in the system, a volunteer will call you about your needs, such as what shopping you need and how to pay.

How do I sign up?

If you'd like more info, or to sign up to the scheme for yourself or someone you care for, call the NHS Volunteer Responders Support Team on 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week).

You can find more information and other useful links [online](#).

