

21st May 2021

Welcome to our latest news round-up from across the Dignity Group. Can't wait for the next issue? Then go to www.dignityinside.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 MORE VISITORS, SAFELY

Crematoria are ready for a change in the COVID-19 rules.

We recently reported on an update to regulations in England which no longer stipulate the maximum number of mourners who can attend a funeral.

Instead that number will now be determined by how many people the venue can accommodate with social distancing measures in place.

This is welcome news for families experiencing a bereavement, potentially allowing them to organise a funeral on a larger scale so that more relatives and friends can pay their respects.

However it's important to remember that the obligation to operate venues safely in order to limit the risk of transmission of COVID-19 remains in place. As such, attendance at funerals cannot be completely unrestricted.

Preparing our crematoria

Teams across The Crematorium and Memorial Group (CMG) have been busy planning ahead of the rule change.

This includes carrying out risk assessments at all 39 of our crematoria in England to establish their maximum chapel capacities based on people being socially distanced at one metre plus.

We're also continuing with established safety measures such as wearing face coverings, one way systems and rigorous cleaning and hygiene procedures to help safeguard families, visitors and colleagues alike.

Know your numbers

For the new rules to work and funerals to run smoothly, it's essential that the people organising the service are aware of the maximum capacity at their chosen venue.

If that's a CMG crematorium, please download [this list](#) to see the latest numbers for each location.

Remember there is always the option to webcast a service from the crematorium if some mourners are still unable to attend, or we can provide families with a recording for private viewing.



UPDATES TO NATIONAL FUNERAL OPERATIONS GUIDANCE

Restrictions may be easing, but we must still remain cautious to keep each other safe.

Many COVID-19 restrictions are easing across the UK, so we have updated our funeral operational guidance for each UK nation.

England has now entered step 3 of the roadmap out of lockdown, so we've updated the funeral attendance, wakes/commemorative events and additional information.

We have updated the guidance for **Wales** concerning wakes and social contact, as the nation enters alert level 2.

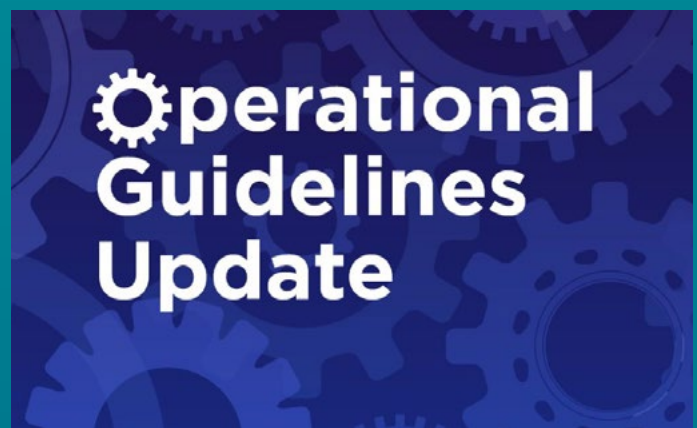
There are no changes to current **Northern Ireland** guidance until expected announcements on 24 May.

Guidance for **Scotland** has been updated to reflect protection level 2, with two exceptions.

Moray and Glasgow City Council areas will remain at level 3, and some of the Scottish island communities will move directly into level one. Those islands are listed [here](#).

Please make sure you read all of the guidance to understand the new instructions and what they may mean for you and your clients.

If you don't work within funeral operations, you may still find the guidance useful in terms of understanding how we are delivering our services to the bereaved.



Remain vigilant

Although rules are being relaxed, we are still living with the risk of COVID-19, especially in areas that are seeing spikes in infection.

In these areas we'd still ask you to follow local guidance and your own assessment of risk levels by asking the right questions of clients and visitors.

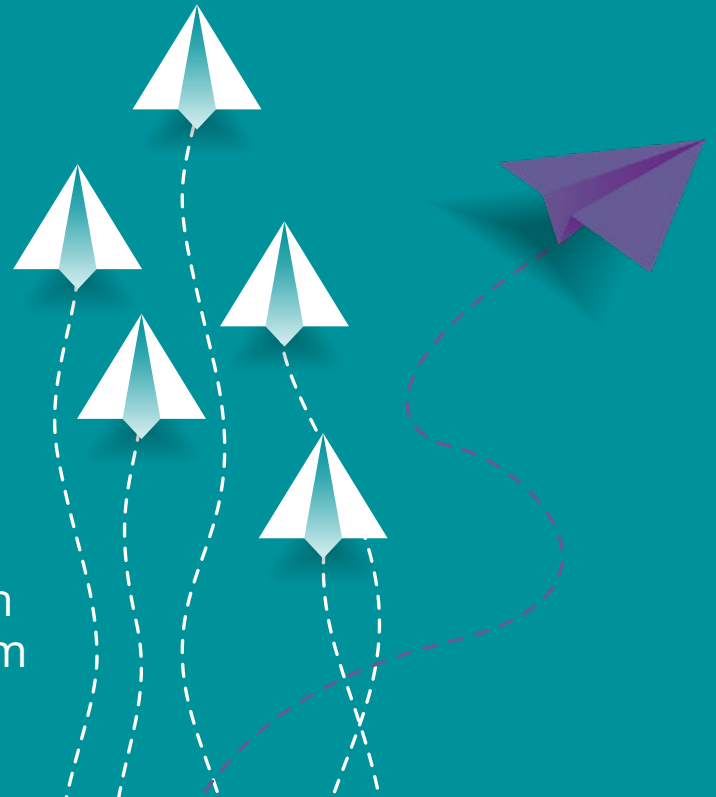
Remember, our operational guidelines are **mandatory** and we need you to stay alert to manage the risk of infection.

Please make sure you follow all instructions for the safety of you, our colleagues, clients and communities, and continue to follow the hands, face, space guidance.



REVISED STRUCTURE FOR CMG

Seven new cluster teams have been established within The Crematorium and Memorial Group.



The last month has seen some important updates confirmed to the operational structure of The Crematorium and Memorial Group (CMG).

Moving away from its previous three way regional split, CMG's 46 locations are now divided into closer-knit cluster teams.

There are seven of these new clusters in total, stretching from Scotland down to the South West, with up to eight crematoria in each.

All clusters have a Lead Manager assigned, while new Senior Leadership and Central Management teams are providing essential support such as training, development, memorial sales, technical services and health and safety.

Crematoria Director Steve Gant said: "Like any successful business, we need to continually adapt to meet the changing needs of our customers and respond to developments in the market.

"Among the learnings from our recent experiences, particularly during the pandemic, has been the

importance of quick decision making and this new cluster-based structure gives managers more capacity to drive change at a local level.

"There's a genuine sense of inclusion among the cluster teams and we're already seeing some great examples of collaboration when dealing with any issues or challenges.

"This approach puts us in the best position to consistently deliver outstanding service to our colleagues across Dignity Funerals and Simplicity, as well as the many other providers and independent operators we work with up and down the country."

Meet the teams

We can all familiarise ourselves with the new management structure and cluster breakdown by looking at these [summary charts](#).

And through Dignity Inside, we'd also like to help put some faces to names!

Let's start by introducing you to three of the new Lead Managers and telling you a bit about them and the sites they'll be representing.

Richard Shepherd

Cluster: North

Locations: Stockport, East Lancashire, Haltemprice, East Riding, Lancaster & Morecombe, Charnock Richard, Wear Valley

"My working life started on the grounds of Grenoside crematorium when I was 18 and since then I've had the pleasure of working with and learning from some fantastic people.

"I've progressed through every role, from chapel attendant to crematorium technician, then into memorial sales and now management. I also represent CMG colleagues on Dignity's Employee Forum.

"It's exciting to be part of this new phase and I'm proud to have been asked to lead my cluster. Our success is down to good communication and everyone working together to better serve the community and wider business."



Jane Baker

Cluster: Midlands

Locations: Telford, Emstrey, Wyre Forest, Birmingham, Trent Valley, Lichfield, Nuneaton (Heart of England)

"I've worked for CMG for nearly nine years altogether and under the new structure I've been spending a lot of time with my cluster sites and supporting them as much as possible.

"The new job role is very enjoyable, although it certainly keeps me busy as I'm also a dual site manager. However it's good to know we can also offer effective support to each other remotely moving forward as we have been doing very successfully over recent months."



Sue Goodwin

Cluster: South East

Locations: Hawkinge, South London, Surrey & Sussex, Beckenham, Randalls Park, Brighton (The Downs)

"I joined CMG nine years ago, coming into the sector after a long career in banking. I started as the manager at Hawkinge and added a regional support role in November 2019.

"This new role involves working with the other managers in my cluster as a team. We all have strengths and everyone is happy to help each other and share best practice. Already we're looking at areas such as procedures and implementing consistency across the different sites.

"Everyone is beginning to understand why we are making changes and we're seeing lots of positive improvements."



Look out for our second report covering the four remaining CMG cluster teams coming soon



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER APPOINTED

Kate Davidson re-joins Dignity in a new leadership role.

We are delighted to announce that Kate Davidson will be joining our leadership team in a new role as Chief Operating Officer for Dignity plc.

Many colleagues will remember Kate from her time with The Crematorium and Memorial Group, which spanned eight years, until 2019 when she left the company to pursue an exciting opportunity as Commercial Director at Westerleigh Group (crematoria provider).

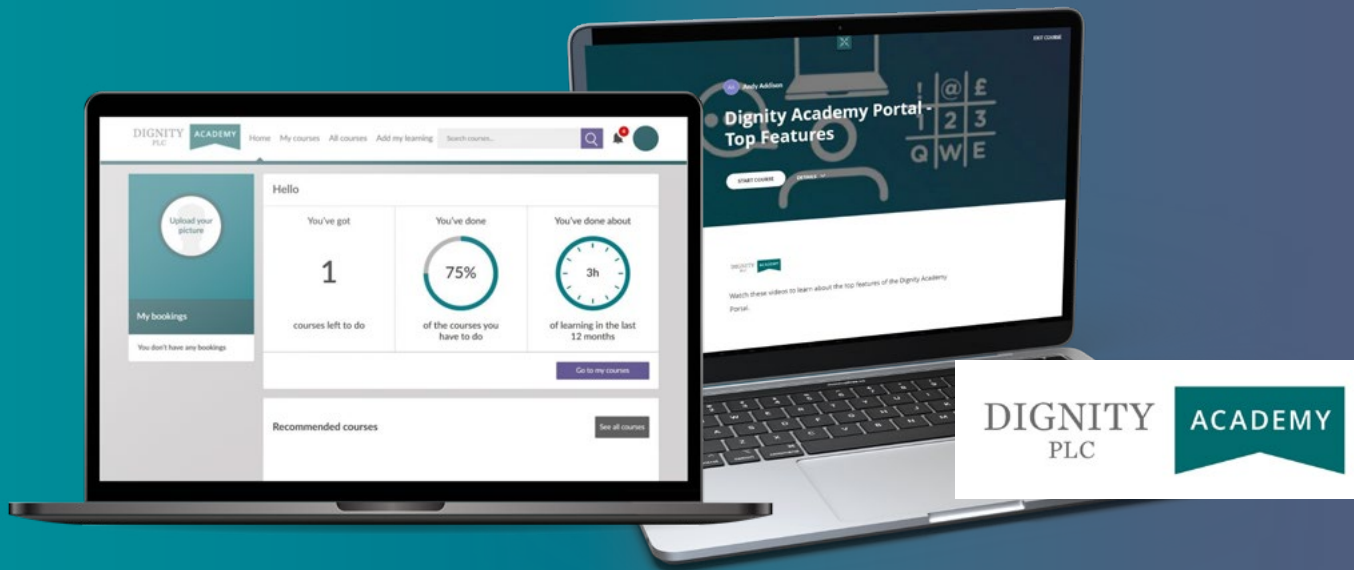
Kate will work with the Operating Board to support Dignity's ambitions to create a more collaborative and inclusive culture, and support future development projects.

She will report directly to Gary Channon, our Executive Chairman.

Kate's first day will be 1 June and we're sure you'll all join us in offering her a warm welcome back!

More information will be shared regarding Kate's responsibilities and remit in the coming weeks.





CLICK AND LEARN

It's all systems go for our exciting new learning and development hub, the Dignity Academy Portal.

After months of planning and meticulous testing, it's finally time to open the doors to the Dignity Academy Portal.

The portal becomes our new go-to place for all things related to learning and personal development.

It's packed with features designed to help make learning more accessible, using a wide range of techniques via a system that's clearly laid out and simple to navigate.

Everyone has access and even if you don't have any scheduled activities taking place right now, we'd still encourage you to start exploring so you can get a feel for how the portal works.

And to help you on your way, here's a quick overview courtesy of our colleagues in the Learning and Development team.

What is the Dignity Academy Portal?

An online learning management system. Think of it as the starting point for any learning journey you want



to make. Much of that learning will be carried out within the portal itself, plus everything you do (or plan to do) will show up on your personalised learning record.

So does that mean we won't have face to face training anymore?

No, there's still a place for traditional classroom learning, but we'll be much less reliant on it. It isn't always necessary to gather people together when technology allows them to gain the same knowledge via the portal. This approach also allows greater flexibility (learn at a time to suit you) and it cuts down on travelling.

How do I access the portal?

The address is: <https://dignity.kallidus-suite.com>. There are also shortcuts from both the intranet and desktops for those using company PCs. Because the system supports single sign on, you won't need to enter any additional credentials if you're connected to the network.

There are other routes in for colleagues not on Dignity's network or who are using their own devices.



Please use this [summary](#) to help you. One final thing to remember is the network of more than 100 shared learning laptops we've set up. Choose the most convenient [location](#) in your region, then call the host venue in advance to book a slot.

What will I find on the portal?

You'll start with your dashboard, summarising what learning you have done and what's coming up.

From here you can also browse any optional learning you might want to try. Over time, the system will offer recommendations too – just like Netflix!

There are lots of additional things to discover, so look out for further updates in the next edition of Dignity Inside.

I'm not good with technology. Is it really that easy to use?

We think so! But don't just take our word for it. 'Intuitive', 'simple' and 'user friendly' were among the comments from colleagues who helped to trial the Dignity Academy Portal before we launched.

What support is available?

Contact Learning and Development if your query is about using the portal itself. The IT Helpdesk can assist with any technical problems. And you can discuss specific development needs with your line manager or HR Business Partner.



DELIVERING A GREAT MESSAGE

A new campaign is underway to support branches in promoting the benefits of prepaid funeral plans.



It's a big week for our pre-need team and a number of branches across the country as they embark on a comprehensive marketing campaign for Dignity Funeral Plans.

They'll be spreading the word on Dignity at a local level and explaining how to prepare for a funeral in advance with the help of a prepaid funeral plan.

There are 180 branches taking part using a range of tactics, which include:

- Delivering around 10,000 leaflets and letters to carefully selected households within a four mile radius of each branch, roughly 1.8 million in total!
- Sharing information in local newspapers, either as display adverts or loose inserts
- Creating eye-catching branch window displays.

Activity started on 17 May, but we're staggering it over a number of weeks so that responses come to us in a manageable way and we have the flexibility to react to any unexpected changes.

Local expertise

A really important aspect of this campaign is highlighting the expertise people will find at their local Dignity Funeral Director.

All the materials we've produced are tailored so that this local contact information is clearly visible, even down to including a photograph of the branch premises.

Our branches are, of course, COVID-safe and ready to welcome visitors for a private consultation, but for

those who prefer to gather information and make purchases online, the campaign has that covered too.

There's a brand new webpage (www.dignityfuneralplans.co.uk/local) from which people can click to either find a local funeral director or request a free brochure. Once they reach our main website, there's also the option to buy a plan.



Is your branch part of the campaign?

If it is, here's a quick reminder about the importance of capturing client information correctly.

All new enquiries must be entered via the remote desktop app 'Funeral Enquiry'. Be sure to select the most appropriate option from the drop down menu that shows how the person heard about us.

We're trying lots of different methods to generate responses and, in the case of the door drop, comparing the effectiveness of two different creative approaches as well. Logging information accurately will give us the insight we need when it comes to reviewing the campaign in a few months time.

Also adding a prospective client's contact details means we can, with their consent, talk to them about a funeral plan in the future.

So for everyone involved, look out for the detailed briefing pack that's been prepared for you. Thanks in advance for your support and let's do all we can to make this a successful campaign.



IT'S GOOD TO TALK

We want to make conversations about mental health natural.

We wouldn't get embarrassed about having a broken leg, or battle on at work if we had pneumonia.

We wouldn't worry about what people might think if we had chicken pox. So why is it so difficult to be open about mental health?

Whether it's anxiety, depression, intrusive thoughts, eating disorders or unhealthy dependency, mental health can manifest itself in a myriad of different ways.

Stigma around mental health is thankfully lessening, but there's still some way to go before it stops being spoken about in a whisper.

We think this needs to change, and want to make it completely natural to talk and seek support if you need it.

For this year's Mental Health Awareness Week the theme has been 'nature'. Evidence suggests being in nature can have a positive impact on mental health and walking outside and visiting green spaces have been popular ways to cope during the pandemic.

Nature is our great untapped resource for a mentally healthy future, so why not try these things:

Experience nature

Take time to recognise and grow your connection with nature. Smell the flowers, hear the sounds, touch

the bark. This [walking video](#) from our Employee Assistance Programme, Be Supported by AXA is a great place to start.

Share nature

Take a photo, video or sound recording and share your discoveries. Join the discussion on how you're connecting with nature by using the social media hashtag #ConnectWithNature.

Talk about nature

Talk to colleagues, friends and family about finding new ways to connect with nature in your local environment. Maybe use this as a way to talk about how connecting with nature can help improve our mental health.

Challenge your nature

Focus on your roots around the following five themes: Values, Fear, Hope, Self-Compassion and Decision-Making, with a new challenge each day. Download the challenge [here](#).

Need some help?

If you want to talk and need confidential, free support, our Be Supported Employee Assistance Programme can help you at:

- **0800 072 7072** – free and confidential helpline, 24/7
- <https://axabesupported.co.uk/> (user name: dignity, password: supported)

GET FIT AND WIN BIG

Our partnership with Hussle offers discounted access to gyms, plus we have a year's membership to give away.

After a few lockdown-related interruptions, the nation's gyms are finally open again.

Cue cries of 'hooray' or 'oh heck' depending on your current state of fitness and enthusiasm!

And while we can't take away the pain of an intense workout, we can ease the pressure on your bank account thanks to a partnership with firm called Hussle.

First announced early last year, this employee benefit could save you money when using a gym or leisure club.

National network

Rather than restricting you to a particular location or gym chain, Hussle provides unlimited access to a UK-wide network of venues for a single monthly fee.

That fee buys you one of four different levels of pass, starting at £27 per month for Basic and rising to £120 for Deluxe.

The more you pay, the more sites and range of facilities you get to choose from. Online classes are also included with every pass if you fancy the occasional home workout.

How to register

Go to the Hussle [website](#). Pass prices are exclusive to Dignity employees, so you'll need your payroll number to register, as well as an active email address (work or personal) for correspondence.

Registering will enable you to search locations and find your nearest participating gyms.

You won't be charged anything to browse, but if you do decide to go ahead and purchase a pass this is all done online through the same webpage.

Competition time

Hussle have kindly offered one Dignity colleague a free Standard pass (£45 per month) valid for 12 months.



To enter, first get registered with Hussle (you don't have to purchase a pass). Then we're asking colleagues to join Dignity's Strava group.

If you haven't used Strava before, it's a popular platform for tracking fitness activities such as running, walking, hiking, cycling and swimming. The basic package is free.

Strava members then need to search for the group 'Dignity Plc' and select request to join.

We'll keep the competition open until 20 June, after which one name will be drawn at random to receive the Hussle pass.

If you have any queries about Hussle or need help joining our Strava group, please email Claire.Hopkins-Razzaq@dignityuk.co.uk.

Good luck!

