

10th September 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!)



MESSAGE FROM YOUR CEO

Gary Channon talks about the positive changes coming to Dignity in a new video.

There are exciting changes ahead for Dignity.

In a newly recorded video message, CEO Gary Channon discusses how recent developments will ensure our standards remain incredibly high and that clients receive the very best service.

People are at the heart of Dignity. Colleagues need the correct tools for the job and they must feel empowered to do what is right for the client.

The changes being made will ensure we are all better supported in everything we do.

What are we aiming to achieve?

- Competitive pricing across the entire range of products and services so we can provide individually tailored funerals.
- Empowering colleagues to say 'yes' and find bespoke solutions for customers. Acting as business owners to offer the best service.

- Adopting the **Living Wage** across the whole company.
- Investing in facilities, from basic health and safety standards and care of the deceased, right through to the aesthetics and presentation of our premises.

You can watch Gary's message in full right now on **Dignity Inside**.

If you or your teams use RDS and you're struggling to hear the sound on the video, please copy and paste the web address into a browser outside of RDS, such as Google Chrome.

We'd also welcome your feedback and thoughts in the comments section.



CONFIRMING OUR PROPOSITION

New services and prices have arrived, marking our final steps towards CMA compliance.

After months of hard work, we're ready to go live with our new proposition for people arranging a funeral at the point of need.

The changes, effective from this week, create an appealing blend of quality, choice and value for our clients with consistency across the majority of locations.

Importantly, they also ensure we meet the various requirements of the Funerals Market Investigation Order made by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

Easy to compare

Let's focus first on what the industry has been instructed to do by the CMA.

As you know, every funeral director must put in place measures that will improve price transparency so customers can quickly compare offerings from different providers.

They have to present a Standardised Price List, detail costs for any Additional Services, state their Terms of Business and give a Disclosure of Interests (see our [A-Z articles](#) for explanations of these terms).



Crematorium operators also need to share pricing information, such as service fees and any additional charges made for particular days



Rita Wildman displaying price lists at RP Sherry and Son

or timeslots. Details must be supplied to local funeral directors, offered to customers if requested and displayed clearly at the operator's premises and on their website.

We've made excellent progress in collating this information across the business, with CMG advising each of our 46 crematoria are now compliant.

For at need, pricing materials are being updated on our local websites and branches have received PDF versions which can be printed out on demand.

Professionally printed copies are being distributed throughout this week ready for display in windows and on walls.

Once this is done, we'll have satisfied all of the CMA's requirements. And that's well before the 16 September deadline – a fantastic achievement!

Alternative funerals

The CMA Unattended Funeral is available across nearly all branches, the only exceptions being a small number that are not supported by a local CMG crematorium.

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This makes a great accompaniment to the established services we offer through Simplicity Cremations. One caters for clients who prefer face to face interaction with an arranger; the other conveniently services people online and over the phone.

We're pleased to be increasing access to alternative types of funeral and experiences from our branch trials of direct cremation services suggest it's something clients really do appreciate.

Competitively priced

We've taken this opportunity to review prices and build on the pledge made earlier in the year at our AGM to make the cost of dying more affordable.

Starting from £995, the Unattended funeral is one way to achieve this, but we're making strides with our core at need services too. The Attended Funeral is competitively priced and highly flexible so clients get exactly what they want.

For now, most branches will find themselves operating at the same price point since this was the quickest way to prepare for changes under the CMA.

Post-implementation, and without the pressure of a fixed regulatory deadline, we're very much open to individual branch pricing based on what's happening in local areas. Being alert and agile in this way



Please make sure you understand what's required to be CMA compliant and carry out any outstanding actions for you or your teams.

will help us maintain a competitive advantage and increase our market share.

Continuing the theme of delivering good value, CMG is holding current price levels for cremation services. This helps our clients, plus those from the many independent funeral directors that CMG serves around the country.

Are you ready?

We're getting close now, so please make sure you understand what's required to be CMA compliant and carry out any outstanding actions for you or your teams:

- All colleagues in Funeral Operations should have undergone a self-study assessment on the Dignity Academy Portal and attended a briefing session via Teams. There is also a final e-learning assessment to complete, again on the Academy Portal.

- Other client-facing colleagues such as agents in the CSC have been briefed. Everyone across the business should read the various CMA communications so we have sufficient understanding relevant to our roles. These include guidance on the prohibited activities of inducements and referrals targeted at third parties.
- Branch colleagues must display the required pricing information as soon as their materials arrive using the instructions provided. Any variations have to be authorised by an Area Manager.

Remember that implementation doesn't mark the end of our CMA journey. Maintaining accurate pricing information and regular business reporting are ongoing requirements and we're developing checklists to help ensure this happens.

Think of it as a new way of working going forward, always with the needs and best interests of our clients firmly in mind.

INTERIM HEAD OF PROGRAMMES APPOINTMENT

A new programme management function will enable stronger project and strategic delivery.

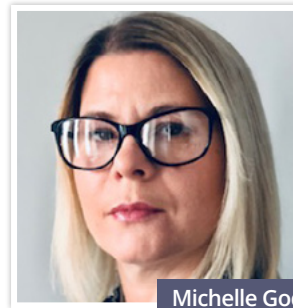
Michelle Godwin is taking on an interim three month secondment role as Dignity's Head of Programmes.

This new role will report to Kate Davidson, our Chief Operating Officer, with responsibility for oversight of the delivery of key projects and change initiatives across the organisation.

At a time with many conflicting, but equally important priorities, it is vital for strong programme management to ensure a joined up approach.

The Head of Programmes role will help achieve visibility and transparency of projects, monitor and report on progress to the Executive Committee, and importantly identify and manage risks.

Kate Davidson said: "Michelle's experience in project management and programme support for Dignity's IT department has been invaluable in providing clear prioritisation of key projects for our technology infrastructure.

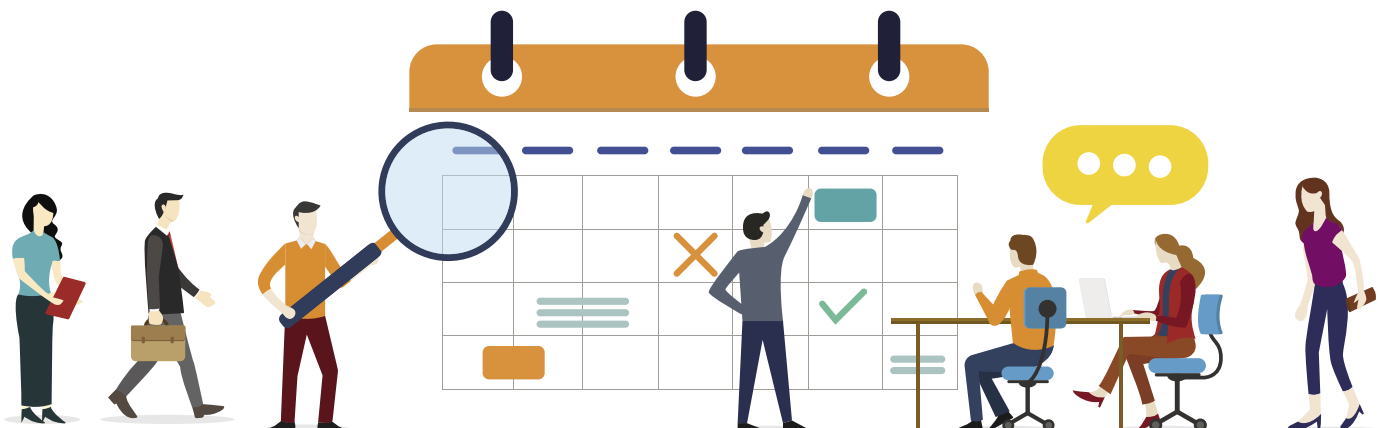


Michelle Godwin

"With plenty of change to come – FCA regulation, the property compliance programme, ongoing CMA implementation and much more – her expertise will be crucial to ensure strategic alignment and delivery.

"Moving this function centrally also allows consistent governance for all project implementation, enabling greater coordination of resource so we can deploy support and investment accordingly."

Over the initial three month period, Michelle will be working closely with Kate to understand how other project management roles across Dignity connect back to this central function, and what a more permanent Programme Management structure could look like.



NEW PROTECTION MEASURES FOR CARE HOMES

COVID-19 vaccination will be a requirement for care home staff in England and others working on site.

Throughout the pandemic, we've gone to great lengths to make our workplaces and working practices COVID-safe.

But many of us also have responsibilities to minimise the risk of infection when we're out performing duties in our local communities.

This could be arranging and conducting funerals, or providing essential services such as attending the scene of a death and bringing the deceased into our care.

We therefore need to be mindful of other people's COVID-19 rules as well as our own, and in the case of care homes there are some important developments ahead.

Vaccination status

A change in law in England means anyone working in a Care Quality Commission registered care home will soon need to be fully vaccinated, unless they are medically exempt.

The same goes for volunteers entering a care home and people visiting for other work-related purposes, including funeral directors. Without proof of vaccination, a care home manager could refuse entry.

Vaccination offers the best protection against coronavirus for both staff and care home residents, who may be at higher risk due to their age, underlying health conditions or disability.

The new regulations come into force on **11 November**. They also apply to people who live in the other devolved nations, but have reason to travel to care homes in England.

Use the NHS Pass

The NHS COVID Pass service will be used to demonstrate to care home staff that the person attending is either vaccinated or exempt.



It works in tandem with the NHS App and website, plus NHS COVID Pass hard copy letters can be requested and carried with you (in the same way key worker status letters were given out during lockdown).

Click [here](#) for instructions on how to get started, or to find links to the equivalent services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland if required.



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Key dates to note

Anyone affected by the rule change who is not currently vaccinated needs to act fast.

A first dose would have to be administered by 16 September at the latest in order to beat the 11 November start date. This is to allow for the required eight week gap before the second dose of the vaccine is received.

What happens next?

Colleagues who have need to work in care homes should use the time available before November to obtain their Pass.

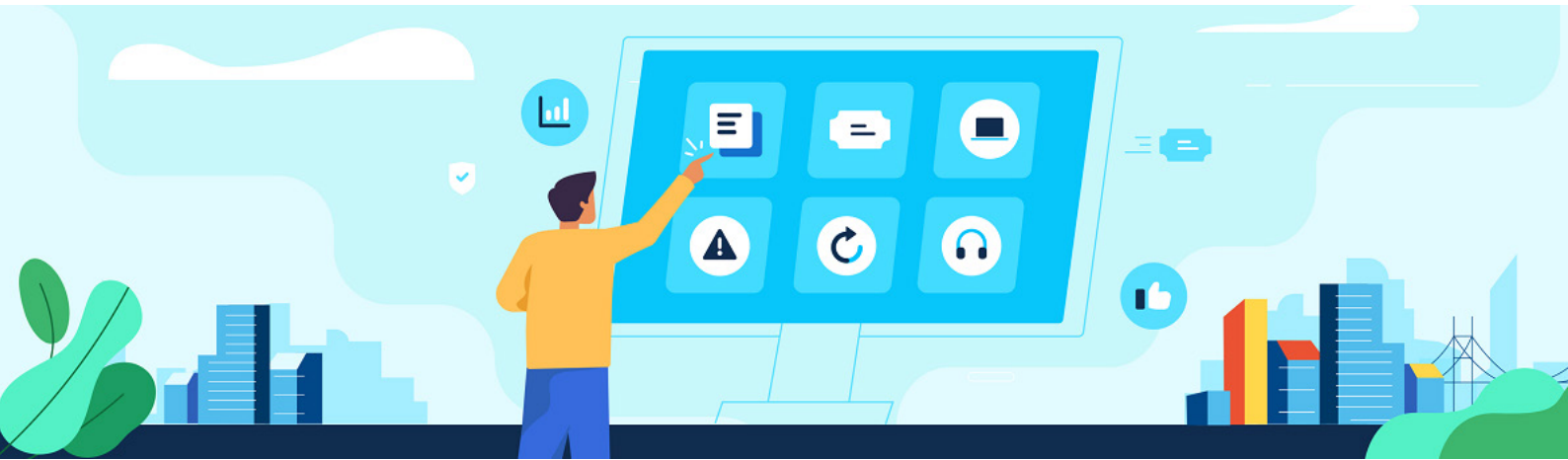
Send a copy to HR Shared Services by **email** or post and retain one for yourself ready to present to care home staff.



If you have any questions, please speak with your Area Manager or Regional Health and Safety Officer. There is also more information on the COVID-19 vaccine available from **the NHS**.

Anyone affected by the rule change who is not currently vaccinated needs to act fast.





AT YOUR SERVICE

Freshservice starts this week, a new way of requesting assistance from the IT Service Desk.

Whether you're a fully-fledged technophile, or a self-confessed technophobe, we all need help with our computers from time to time.

Good thing then that Dignity colleagues have the IT Service Desk. They're here to keep our systems running smoothly and our devices performing at their peak.

And now there's a convenient new way to get in touch with the team and ask for their support.

Introducing Freshservice

We **previewed** Freshservice back in June, but essentially it's a platform for logging any issues or requests with IT.

Filling in your details generates a virtual ticket which is then sent directly to the IT Service Desk along with an alert.

That means no more waiting on hold if the phone lines are busy, or hoping that email you wrote gets picked up by the right person.

Use Freshservice if you need to:

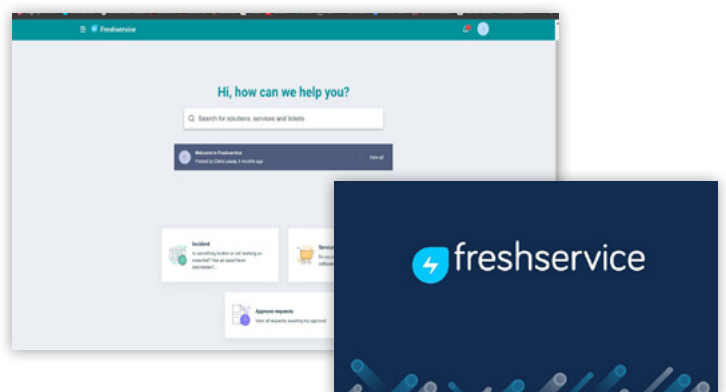
- **Log an incident.** Something might be broken or not working as expected. Perhaps your device has been lost or stolen.
- **Raise a service request.** Get hold of new hardware or software. Arrange permissions or some other form of IT change.

Find Freshservice via the button on the Intranet homepage. The system is intuitive and simple to navigate (dare we say easy-PCI!), but there are four brief instructional videos available if required, also located on the **Intranet**.

At the moment, Freshservice works for any colleague who accesses the network using their own Dignity username and password.

It supports single sign on, so as long as you're logged in at the time the platform will open up and be ready to use straight away.

We hope to make Freshservice available to everyone in the future, but for now if you don't have Dignity credentials please continue to contact the IT Service Desk by telephoning 0800 151 3795.



CREATING HOPE THROUGH ACTION

Today is World Suicide Prevention Day.
We're here to help.

Did you know that one in every 100 deaths worldwide is as a result of suicide?

With thousands of such deaths each year in the UK (three-quarters of whom are men), this high statistic means many of us will be affected, either through a sad personal experience, or caring for a traumatised family at work.

Suicide is devastating, so for World Suicide Prevention Day we wanted to raise awareness, reduce stigma and provide information that could lead to positive, preventative action.

What are the signs?

According to AXA, our Employee Assistance Programme partner, they can be hard to spot.

Changes in behaviour or personality are good indicators that something may be up, although people show or hide their mental distress in different ways. Some act on impulse; others may have harboured suicidal thoughts for a long time.

The reasons someone has to take their own life are complex and varied, but there is always an alternative.

If you're at all concerned, please seek help. Our **mental health factsheet** is full of sensible advice, while our **self care factsheet** looks at physical and mental wellbeing.



Where to find help

If you have been experiencing feelings of wanting to harm yourself, or are concerned that someone else might be, don't be ashamed, embarrassed or afraid to speak to someone who can offer support.

You can call the NHS on **111**, or **999** if it's an emergency, or ring The Samaritans on **116 123**. Our Employee Assistance Programme is also available 24/7.

You can reach them in confidence on **0800 072 7072**, or go to <https://axabesupported.co.uk/> (username: dignity, password: supported).

Seeking mental health champions

We'll soon be asking for volunteer mental health champions to become trained in mental first aid, be a trusted peer support for colleagues and to help spot where a mental health intervention may be needed.

If you would like to be involved, keep your eyes peeled for more information coming soon.



COMMUNITY MEMORIAL UNVEILED

The installation in Buckinghamshire recognises those affected by COVID-19.

Colleagues at K Y Green were invited to unveil a COVID-19 memorial stone at a local crematorium.

Funeral Directors Samantha Janes and Daren Winser attended the service at Aylesbury Vale Crematorium, with Samantha saying a few words based on her experiences as a key worker supporting bereaved families.



It also serves as a lasting tribute to the NHS and other key workers within the community who pulled together to help others during the crisis.

Dignity's Area Manager for Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire Kevin Evans said: "We are honoured and proud that K Y Green Funeral Directors were approached and asked to carry out the unveiling of this new memorial.

Made from polished black granite, the memorial is a focal point at the crematorium where visitors can remember those who have died with coronavirus.

"It was also very moving to hear Samantha speak from the heart about her personal experiences during what has been an exceptionally difficult period for so many people."

ACCESSING THE ARCHIVES

Window display honours those killed on the day of Lord Mountbatten's assassination.

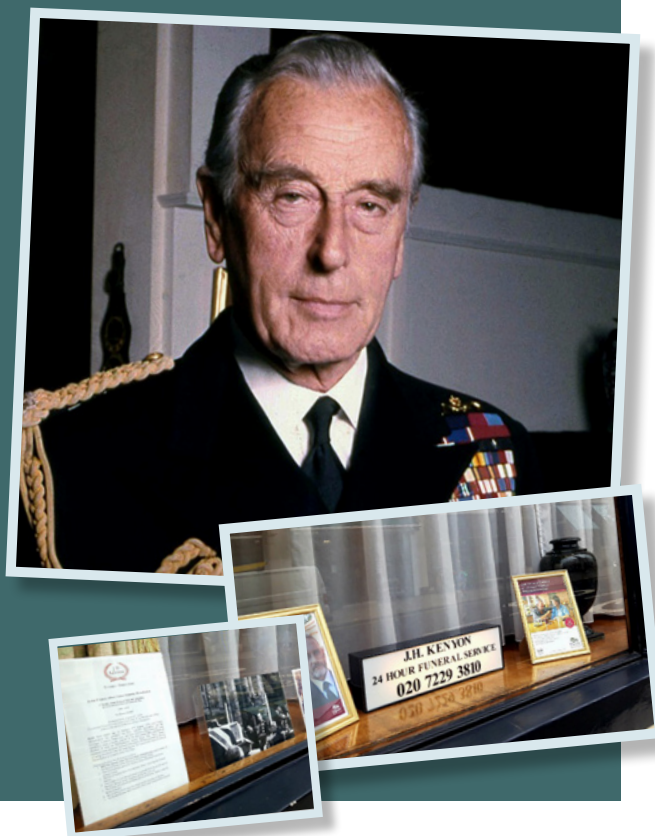
J H Kenyon has been commemorating the Queen's second cousin Lord Mountbatten, 42 years after his death.

The firm were involved in the funeral arrangements for Lord Mountbatten and his family members.

He was buried with full ceremonial and military honours at Romsey Abbey in Hampshire, following a funeral service at Westminster Abbey.

Archival items were on display in the window of J H Kenyon's Bayswater funeral directors at Westbourne Grove.

Lord Mountbatten was killed in Ireland on 27 August 1979 during a fishing trip. Three other members of the holiday party also died when a bomb planted aboard his small boat was activated.



A ROARING SUCCESS

When it comes to local marketing, Clive Hopkinson are definitely on the ball.



We know we have great people delivering top class services, but sometimes it pays to shout about these things.

Hats off then to colleagues at Clive Hopkinson Funeral Directors in Worksop, Nottinghamshire.

They've netted a winning sponsorship deal with Worksop Town Football Club to help promote their business to the local community.

Nicknamed the Tigers, Worksop plays in the Northern Premier League Division One East and was originally founded in 1861.

As well as placing signage at the Sandy Lane stadium, the Clive Hopkinson name is being used for the Directors' Box, ensuring strong visibility on match day.

Moreover, the club now streams its games online, creating more opportunities for people to catch a glimpse of our distinctive branding.

Funeral Manager Amanda Birks said: "We are very proud of the partnership we have built up with the football team.

"There are thousands of people attending to watch matches every week who will see our signs, plus the club often hosts charity events and soccer schools for kids of all ages.

The Clive Hopkinson team are Amanda Birks, Funeral Manager, Mark Hopkinson, Funeral Director, Nigel Richardson, Funeral Assistant, Elisa Parker, Funeral Assistant and Amanda Espin, Funeral Assistant.

"The Tigers also have facilities for holding wakes at their ground, so this is another way we can join together and help families who need us."

