

3rd December 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!)

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY

To help you celebrate, there is one gift you don't need to wait until the 25th to open!

This festive season we are contributing £15 for each colleague so that you can have a great celebration with your team. What that looks like is totally up to you – whether it's a meal out for the whole team or a quiet drink with a colleague – take the time to have fun and be merry.

To take advantage of the £15 gift, please use the expenses process to claim the money back and if you are organising an event for multiple people then please make a note of all colleagues who attended and keep the necessary receipts for your claim.



*'Tis three weeks before Christmas, and all through Dignity
Colleagues are rushed off their feet, being the best they can be
It's been a hard year, so much work to be done
There's been ups and downs, so it's time for some fun!*

*For your hard work this year, we can't thank you enough
From CMA to Covid, we know it's been tough
So let your hair down, celebrate with your team
The festive season is here, and we have a dream...*

*That every single colleague reflects on the year,
Is surrounded by friends and is filled with good cheer
It's over to you, to celebrate how you see fit
And from us to you, there's a £15 gift.*

TO CLAIM EXPENSES:

- Complete the **expenses claim form** as usual. You can download it from the intranet
- **Send it** to your manager for approval
- Your manager will forward your expenses to the Ledger Team
- The team will then **process your claim** for payment
- A Remittance Advice will be emailed to you once payment has been made
- Your £15 gift can be used up until the end of February 2022.

DECK THE HALLS WITH CHRISTMAS POSTERS

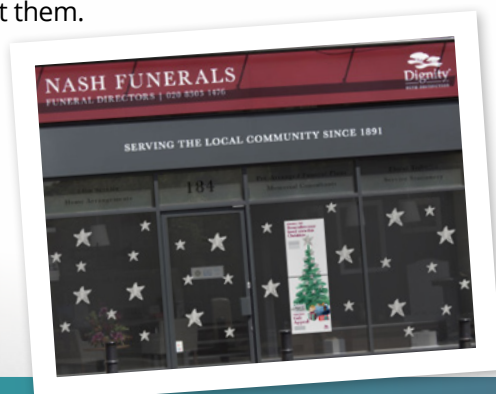
There's a great selection of marketing collateral available on the Dignity store.

It's time to dig out the decorations and create some fantastic wintery displays.

This Christmas our brand marketing team have created some great collateral which will help you offer your clients and communities a way to remember loved ones and show your support for a charity of your choice.

Log on to the **Dignity Store** and take your pick from a selection of window posters, memorial stars, window decals and Christmas cards to help you engage with your local communities.

Christmas can be a difficult time of year when it comes to bereavement. A loved one could have passed around this time of year, or it might be the first Christmas spent without them.



Send us your photos

We would really like to share your photos on Dignity Inside, on social media and in the press, so please send your memorial trees, gift appeals, window displays or anything else you may be involved in to brandm@dignityuk.co.uk.



Our memorial trees can help our clients feel connected to their loved one by writing a message to them on a memorial tag and hanging it on the Christmas tree in the branch.

We also know that many of you like to help out local charities on the lead up to Christmas with donation and gift appeals. So, new window posters can help you advertise your gift appeals, promote your local charity and spread some Christmas cheer.

There is also a press advert template for those wishing to advertise their memorial tree or gift appeal in the local press.

Our PR team can also help you with local coverage, so if you'd like to see yourself in the paper, please include a colleague in your photo and our PR team will contact you for a follow up.

PILOTS TAKE OFF

We've reached an important milestone in our organisational restructure.

This month sees the two pilots commence for our newly structured operating regions of South Central and South London.

It's a time of big change, starting with colleagues working in these newly formed regions, then also around the business once we finalise the rollout plan for the rest of our estate.

Let's not forget central support functions too, who also have a key role to play in making these changes a success – but more on that shortly.

Regional roadshows

Last week, Dignity took to the road and we were delighted to welcome nearly 300 colleagues to launch events in their respective regions.

South Central gathered at the Heart of England Conference Centre near Coventry, while South London colleagues met at Epsom Downs Racecourse.

Events were hosted by the recently appointed Heads of Region with the support of their Business Leaders for those brands and crematoria locations where vacancies have already been filled.

Also on hand to discuss the new structure and answer any questions were Chief Executive Gary Channon, Chief Operating Officer Kate Davidson and Directors Andrew Judd and Steve Gant.

In his presentation, Gary highlighted our ambition to build the UK's leading end of life business. That means no longer treating services such as funeral plans, at-need funerals, crematoria and memorials as separate divisions or business areas.



Instead, we can be there for a client at any stage of that end of life journey and provide a great solution that combines value and quality of care.

Gary then talked about the roles of Head of Region and Business Leader and the differences between old-style management and the new approach of empowerment.

Colleagues shouldn't have to seek permission before taking action; if it's in the best interests of the client, then try it and call on the support of your regional leaders to help make it happen.

He also referred to lessons we can learn from many independent funeral directors, where strong leadership, targeted investment and time spent in the community all help to build successful businesses.

Dignity can do this too, but we have the added advantage of being able to share ideas and pool resources, sometimes locally and sometimes nationally.



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Benefits of scale

You may have heard the phrase 'matrix working' being used and the roadshows were an opportunity to show this in action.

Through our central support functions, Dignity has subject matter experts that the new regions can use to help enhance their businesses.

Don't think of them as people who work in a distant head office, but rather an extension of the regional team who can come to you and guide you in their respective fields.

Attendees at each roadshow spent part of their evening in a market stall, meeting representatives from functions including People, Property, Finance, Marketing, Health and Safety and IT.

They were able to learn more about what each function does, see examples of their work and ask any questions, while also enjoying a bite to eat.

"Pride in our region"

That's what Head of South Central Region Tony Molyneux told colleagues he was aiming to create, assisted by a team of Business Leaders.

He said we must equip people with everything they need so they can look at the brands operating across the region and feel proud.

Investment in facilities, resources and people are key to this, as well as making our processes simple so clients always get a satisfying experience.

Emily Skelton is Head of Region for South London and she spoke about the need for teamwork and open communication as driving forces for change.

Service for our clients has to be the best, but it's also important that colleagues have fun and enjoy their work along the way.

Introducing our Business Leaders

A number of Business Leader appointments have now been made and they hosted breakout sessions at each roadshow to introduce themselves and listen to feedback and suggestions.

There will be Business Leaders for each funeral brand and each crematorium over time and just like the Heads



The pilots are not to decide whether restructuring as we are is a good idea that's worth continuing; they are about finding the best approach by working with and learning from the people who are directly involved.

of Region their role is to guide and support colleagues, not instruct them on what to do.

What happens next?

As you know, we're running South Central and South London as pilot regions, however we ought to clarify exactly what that means.

The pilots are not to decide whether restructuring as we are is a good idea that's worth continuing; they are about finding the best approach by working with and learning from the people who are directly involved.

As such, feedback will be vital as we prepare to roll the model out to other locations and create an overall total of 12 regions across the UK.

That process begins in Q1 next year and the regions that will undergo restructuring are **North London, Home Counties** (a newly formed region), **North Central** (also new) and **North East**.

We'll communicate directly with colleagues in these regions once timescales are confirmed to explain exactly what will happen and when.

Similar roadshow events will also be organised ahead of each region going live and we'd encourage as many of you as possible to attend.



PRICING TO REFLECT LOCAL MARKETS

One size doesn't fit all, but a new tiered approach will ensure our clients continue to get good value.

We last reviewed prices for our at-need funeral services in September to get us ready for regulatory changes driven by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

This saw the introduction of the Attended Funeral, Unattended Funeral (in our case, a direct cremation) and a range of additional options and services for clients to choose from depending on their needs.

We said at the time that when it came to the Attended Funeral, starting out at the same price point across the majority of branches was the best way to ensure timely compliance with the CMA's requirements.

However, this was never going to be a permanent strategy. It's important we have a degree of flexibility built into our pricing so we can react to any changes we observe in certain areas.

Longer term, we envisage getting to a point where we can empower teams to make their own localised pricing decisions based on market knowledge and what's right for their community and client base.

INTRODUCING PRICE TIERS

Our journey starts this month, when we'll be moving to a pricing structure which has Attended Funeral charges split across four different tiers:

- Tier 1 – £1,695
- Tier 2 – £1,995
- Tier 3 – £2,225
- Tier 4 – £2,495

Those branches currently taking part in trial activity will continue as they are and won't join the tiered system for now.

Our Unattended Funeral also remains unchanged at a nationally competitive price point of £995.

AGREEING WHAT TO CHARGE

Every branch has been allocated a tier. They'll receive new price lists and posters in readiness for the go-live date of 6 December, plus each local webpage will also be updated.

A lot of time and consideration has gone into agreeing which tiers are appropriate for each location so that we still offer clients value for money alongside our usual high standards of care and service.

Both Regional and Area Managers supported this process and we've made full use of all the insight



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colleagues have been proactively sharing through channels such as Slack and more recently the new **Competitor Pricing Tool**.

Most branches will be in Tiers 2 and 3, but having more available will help us to stay aligned with other providers where necessary.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

We're taking this opportunity to adjust what we charge for certain products, services and additional options so that the prices are more representative of the actual costs involved.

ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ATTENDED FUNERAL:

Viewing of the deceased. Reduced from £110 to £20. We need to charge a nominal fee to fit in with the overall requirements of the CMA's Standardised Price List.

Standard coffin (Park or Meadow). Increased from £190 to £270 in line with the quality of the finished product.

Clients can choose an alternative coffin for an additional cost.

These prices have also been reviewed so the range is structured appropriately as clients move up from the standard coffin.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:

Viewing of the deceased outside of normal office hours. Reduced from £135 to a total of £120 (£100 plus the existing £20 viewing fee). Charged at your own discretion. For example, the charge could be waived for a viewing not long after closing time, whereas attending the branch late at night is more likely to warrant it.

Transfer of the deceased outside of normal office hours. Increased from £225 to £325.

Co-ordination of ancillary services provided by third parties. Reduced from £95 to £45.

HELPING YOU PREPARE

There's a lot to take in, but don't worry because operational colleagues have access to a self study guide on the Dignity Academy Portal to take you through the details.

This will be followed by an e-learning confirmation of knowledge check, also carried out via the Portal, while Branch Development Managers will be on hand to answer any subsequent queries.

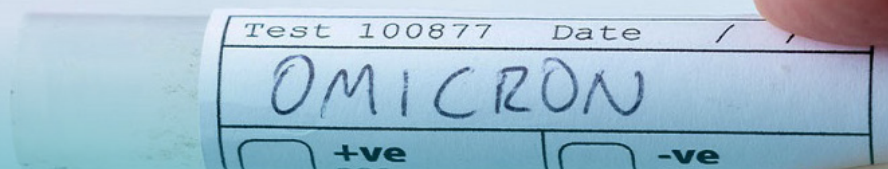
OUR FUTURE VISION

While we're confident this is the right approach for us now, pricing cannot remain static for too long. It's simply not how a competitive marketplace works.

As a business, our ultimate goal is to achieve agile local pricing which is driven entirely by frontline colleagues under the stewardship of what will be our new Business Leaders once the organisational restructure is complete.

Visit **Dignity Inside** to see Gary's thoughts on what you can expect to see from the tiered pricing roll out and how we expect to achieve a local pricing structure in the future.





LET'S ALL BE PREPARED

How do government guidelines relating to the Omicron variant affect us at work?

The discovery of the new Omicron virus variant, and subsequent confirmation of cases in the UK, has prompted some changes to the government's COVID-19 guidelines.

We've summarised what you need to know in relation to our services and working environments and tried to answer any questions you may have.

It's still early days and there could be more changes to come, but we'll keep the situation under regular review and update you as quickly as possible.

SELF ISOLATION

Close contacts of suspected Omicron cases are required to self isolate for ten days, even if they have been fully vaccinated.

In addition, people coming into the UK from abroad must take a PCR test and self isolate until they receive a negative result.

SYMPTOMS

While the main COVID-19 symptoms to watch out for are still a continuous cough, fever and loss of taste or smell, there are suggestions that those for the Omicron variant could differ slightly.

Fatigue, body aches and a headache have been cited, but as of yet nothing has been officially recognised either by government or the World Health Organisation.

VACCINATIONS

The COVID-19 booster programme is being expanded so that all over 18s are offered a jab. The minimum gap between a second vaccine dose and the booster is also reducing from six to three months in order to speed up the rollout.

People will be contacted when it is time to get a booster jab, although some age groups or at-risk groups can book online or call the NHS.

Don't forget that those providing funeral care services qualify for a booster vaccine now regardless of age under the banner of 'health and social care workers'. There's more information in our article [here](#).

And please remember to share details of your vaccination status with HR Shared Services if you're willing to do so. Details on how to do this are summarised [here](#).

FACE COVERINGS (GENERAL)

Rules have now changed in England to make face coverings mandatory on public transport and in shops. This brings the country in line with changes already implemented in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It has been confirmed that the funeral sector is not subject to mandatory face coverings, either at a funeral home or when attending a funeral service.

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"If you are using a face covering previously issued to you by Dignity, we'd encourage you to replace it soon."



FACE COVERINGS (AT WORK)

Operational colleagues should continue to follow the latest **operational guidance**. This remains at Level 1 and does not need to change at this time.

In office environments such as King Edwards Court and Duke Street, we expect colleagues to wear face coverings when moving around the building and in communal spaces such as kitchen areas and the canteen. They can be removed when sat at a desk.

We have good supplies of PPE – including face coverings – and items can be ordered in the usual way from our provider RS Components.

A quantity of new reusable face coverings has also been sent to King Edwards Court this week in case anyone needs one.

If you are using a face covering previously issued to you by Dignity, we'd encourage you to replace it soon. They are washable and reusable, but their effectiveness will diminish over time / multiple washes.

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AT HEAD OFFICE

We are partway through a three month trial of new working arrangements (November to January), which means more colleagues are attending office premises.

For now, the government is not mandating working from home in England (one of the tactics listed in its 'Plan B'). We'll continue with the trial, however the situation remains under review.

ARRANGING MEETINGS

It's a good idea for us all to consider whether meeting in person is absolutely necessary given the current situation, or if meeting virtually via Teams or Zoom would be equally effective.

There are circumstances where face to face is still the best way. In this case, we'd recommend delegates take a lateral flow test before attending and follow the COVID safety measures put in place by the host venue.

Accessing test kits is easy – order them **online** for free and packs will be sent directly to your home.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

We've all read the headlines: is Christmas cancelled? The answer is 'no', but a measured and slightly more cautious approach makes sense.

You'll have seen that we're offering colleagues a £15 contribution per head towards a social gathering with your team at Christmas.

This is now being extended to include January and February as well, so if you haven't arranged anything yet, or would rather wait a bit longer, then the option is available.

We want you to enjoy yourselves; we also want everyone to stay safe and protect our ongoing service provision for clients. As with attending meetings, please consider taking a COVID test before heading out just to be sure.





GIVE WINTER WOES THE COLD SHOULDER



Top tips for keeping our service provision consistent should the bad weather start closing in.



We've stepped into the final calendar month of the year, and along with it comes the official start of winter.

And while frosty mornings and snowfall might look appealing on a Christmas card, they can make maintaining operational efficiency a real headache.

The fact is, our clients need us come rain or shine (or ice, or snow), so it's a good idea to do some preparatory work before the season starts to bite.

Fortunately, at Dignity we have a wealth of experience to draw upon, especially in Funeral Operations where we always need to keep things moving regardless of the weather.

We're especially grateful to Regional Operations Manager Paul Hudson, who has pulled together a list of **top winter tips**.

It covers everything from travel plans to keeping vehicles on the road and our equipment fully functional, plus ensuring colleagues stay safe while going about their duties.

Even if your role is in another business area, this advice can still be helpful – and not just at work.

Hands up any hapless homeowners who've ever had to do battle with a burst water pipe or blocked driveway...

We think Paul's ideas are great, but what about the rest of you. Have you got any tried and tested ways of coping with the worst that winter has to offer?

Let us know on **Dignity Inside**.



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WINTER PREPARATION

Print
out and
keep

CARS & VEHICLES

- Ceremonial car locations: distribute across multiple sites for easier travel in bad weather.
- Clean ceremonial cars the night before to avoid disruption if colleagues are unable to attend due to bad weather.
- Park cars facing the correct direction for ease of manoeuvring.
- Have de-icer in each vehicle. (Ceremonial, ambulance and pool cars).
- A small torch on each car keyring is useful.
- Ambulance vehicles to be parked across geographical areas for easy call out/additional teams on standby if required.
- Where possible all vehicles are to be fuelled towards end of day/minimum $\frac{3}{4}$ quarters full.
- Have the correct screen wash to sub-zero temp level rather than summer mixture.
- Vehicle maintenance issues to be bought up to date so to maximise availability across busy period/poor weather.
- Ensure the Ceremonial cars have umbrellas for client use.
- All tyres on vehicles to be checked and where required, winter tyres to be fitted.
- Small drink/food boxes in vehicles in-case stranded for some time.
- Check roads daily, and utilise Navman if installed, to monitor journey times to adjust ETAs when required.
- Ensure wheel biers are available for coffin movements if carrying becomes difficult.

ADMINISTRATION

- Have the laptops available for key roles to work remotely if required. (NOC/Fleeter).
- Ensure all staff have relevant phone numbers for clear communication within the team.
- Utilise Whats App for communication to the team rather than paper based at pick up points to save on journeys/clear escalation process.
- Utilise the option of split shifts/night shifts.
- Ensure that all staff have up to date call out/work rotas.

PEOPLE

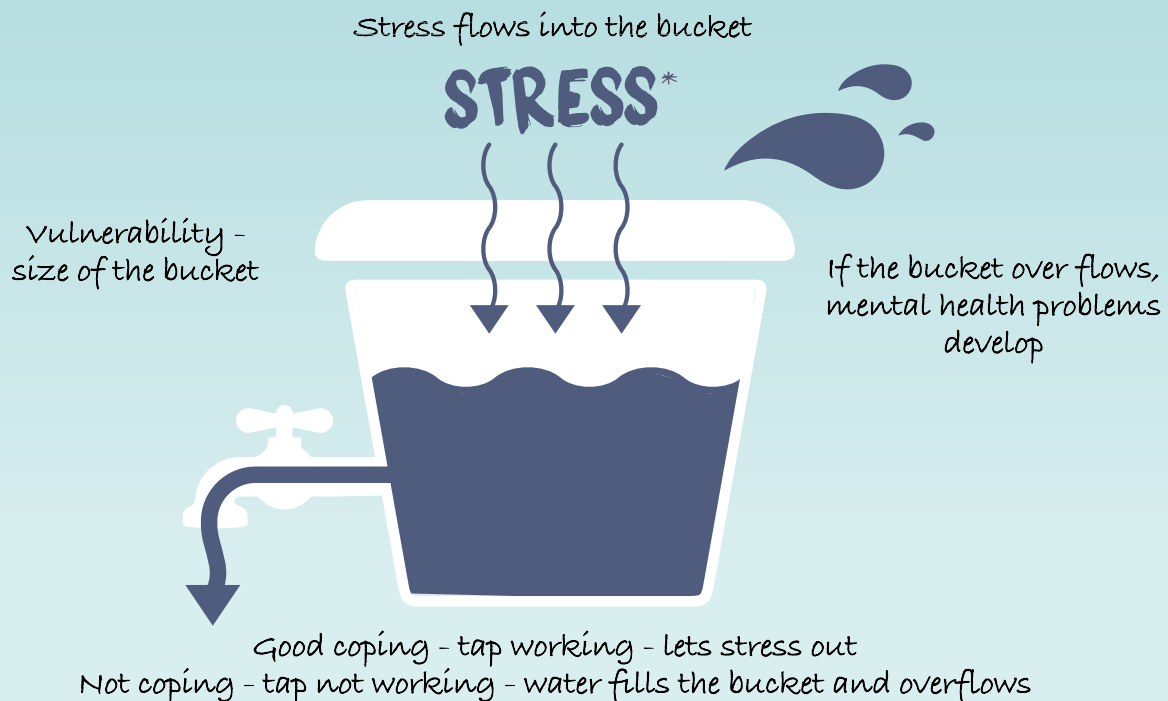
- Allow frequent team meetings to discuss future weather challenges and review the week's events, use of TEAMS or Face Time if required.
- Ensure all staff have the correct footwear in good condition.
- Gloves to be ordered now if required.
- Check the team have the correct coats.
- Embalmers to be allowed flexible working to ensure Deceased care is consistent through bad weather.

BUILDINGS

- Any empty buildings or rooms which have any wet systems to be heated and regularly checked.
- Continually complete your own risk assessment for ad hoc issues through adverse weather.
- Check outdoor spotlights are working especially around the Care Centres.
- All outside taps to be insulated where possible.
- Ensure all water/hose/jet washes are placed away for the cold so not to freeze.
- Order rock salt now for Care Centre and difficult drives, where required.
- Ensure there are snow shovels in all Care Centres.

WHAT'S IN YOUR STRESS BUCKET

Our Wellbeing focus this week is all about coping with stress.



Stress is something we all deal with day-to-day

Imagine you have a bucket, inside your body, that collects all of your stress.

Events and everyday things such as work, family, finances, illness, relationships... they all add stress to the bucket. Sometimes that bucket might feel relatively empty, and other times it could feel very full.

Stress is not one size fits all. We all have stress buckets of different sizes, and so we vary in how much stress we can individually manage. Equally, an event that we find very stressful, someone else might find only slightly stressful or not stressful at all – and that's OK. We're all different!

When we are going through a particularly difficult time, it is normal for our buckets to feel full. We might feel like too much stress is pouring in and the bucket is

overflowing. This can lead to feelings of anxiousness, fatigue and generally feeling burnt out.

If you notice yourself feeling like this, it's important to try and let some of the stress out. We can do this by adding some taps to our buckets – coping mechanisms that help reduce stress.

These coping mechanisms will be personal to you. What works for one person won't necessarily work for another.

It could be something as simple as taking a tea break, having a bath or meditating. Perhaps it's making time to catch up with an old friend, getting into the gym or losing yourself in a good book.

Whatever it is, plan some time into your schedule to take some 'me time' and let some stress out of your bucket. Start a conversation to share with others what works for you and open up those taps!

WELLBEING CHAMPIONS: AN UPDATE

We're getting ready to launch our Wellbeing Champion trials.

Back in October we put the call out for volunteers to step forward and become Wellbeing Champions.

We were absolutely overwhelmed by your response and, clearly, wellbeing at work is just as important to you as it is to us.

So, we have great news. As of February, we will be launching a six-month trial where three types of Wellbeing Champion roles will be rolled out.

There will be:

- **Wellbeing Ambassadors** who will promote health and wellbeing activities, events and information, encouraging a positive environment that promotes mental health;



- **Wellbeing Champions** who will be an ear to listen to anyone who needs support, effectively signposting those in need to appropriate mental health support while also promoting health and wellbeing activities, events and information;

- **Mental Health First Aiders** who will be on hand to identify those who require mental health support and will be able to effectively guide colleagues in need to appropriate mental health support.

All of our Wellbeing Champions, Ambassadors and Mental Health

First Aiders have now been selected and will be completing their training over the next couple of months in preparation for the trial.

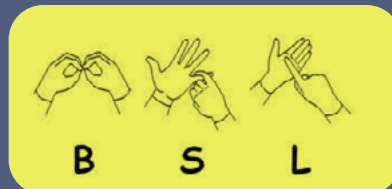
Our goal is to help colleagues to manage their own health and wellbeing whilst looking out for others. We have over 40 Wellbeing Champions who are going through training now, but if Wellbeing is something you are interested in then it's not too late to apply.

Following the six-month trial we will be evaluating the best methods of supporting colleagues and rolling out further training, so please get in touch by emailing Internal.communications@dignityuk.co.uk to add yourself to the future training list.

A SIGN OF TIMES

This International Day of People with Disabilities, why not learn some sign language?

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if you woke up one morning and couldn't hear?



There are a staggering **11 million people** in the UK who are deaf or hard of hearing and only 151,000 people who use BSL (British Sign Language).

Today is International Day of People with Disabilities and we

wanted to show our support for the deaf community by offering a **self-study video** to help our colleagues learn the BSL alphabet.

This course has been added to the inclusion catalogue on the

Dignity Academy Portal and is available for anyone who wants to try their hand at British Sign Language.

Also, look out for a webinar on 16th December, hosted by our very own COO, Kate Davidson. She will be going over some BSL basics in a live webinar – **CLICK HERE** to sign up.

11m

people in the UK are deaf or hard of hearing