







►►►► amounts in development courses and on-the-job training, our qualified professional teams can help families and care for their loved ones in a way that those with no formal training may not.'

Ingela explained the background into the move.

'Our previous building had come to the end of the lease, was very old and tired and was in serious need of refurbishment. We wanted to amalgamate the 24-hour Client Service Centre (which had been located in another building) so that all the head office staff could work together. We were also short of space and meeting rooms and we

favoured a better working environment for our staff.

'Staff retention was of paramount importance as well as remaining in the area to enable us to serve all other UK regions. Sutton Coldfield is geographically central which allows us to have good communication links with the rest of the country. This is our corporate headquarters housing our Company Directors, Business Development, Personnel, Finance, Pre-need Marketing, Property, Fleet, IT Development, IT Infrastructure...as well as the 24-hour Client Service Centre taking calls from branches at night, and advising on

pre-paid funeral plans during the day.'

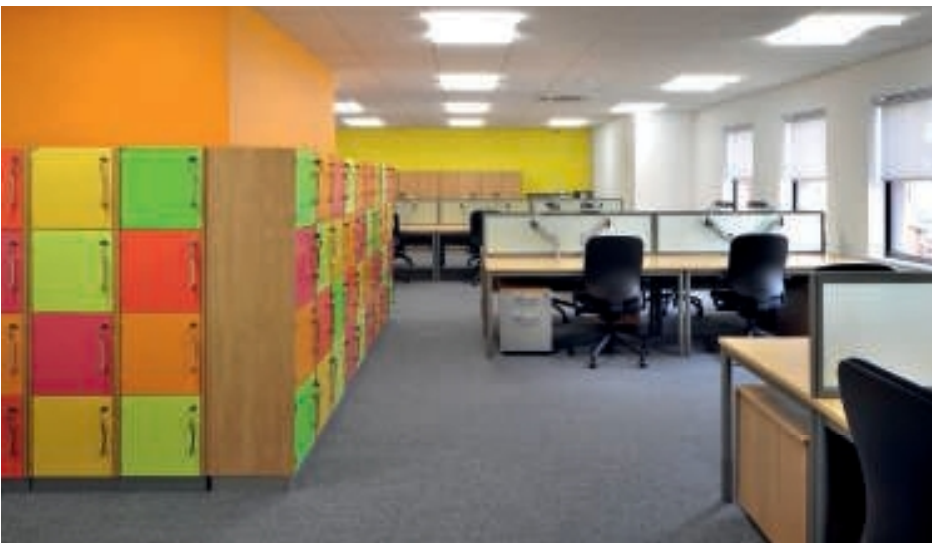
We asked Ingela to talk us through the thinking behind the design scheme.

'I am a great believer that a colourful, clean and uncluttered modern environment is a restful environment to work in. It means staff working to discipline in order to keep it so – and a clean desk policy was introduced with the onus on the staff to retain it. It is nice to come into the office in the morning and not see piles of paper to deal with to make you depressed – even if the same pile is hidden in the cupboard!

'Once the decision had been made to move, the internal Relocation Team took over, consisting of our Property Manager Michael Churchman, who led the overall project, myself as Project and Design Manager, IT Manager James Hodgkiss and Roy Brierwood, our Networks and Communications Analyst, covering all office services functions.

'The landlord, Tyne Investments 4, appointed Stephen Fern Associates as their project manager for their part of the building works and JC Construction Midlands as main contractor. We had input into carpet, tiles and colour choices with the Landlord.

'I managed the second fix and furniture installations as well as planning the three kitchens. Our IT Manager oversaw the very complex IT installations and connections to our 550 funeral homes. ►►►►►►►►►►



## Case Study



▶▶▶▶▶ Initially I held consultations with three different companies as to layouts and design ideas. Eventually, EFG was chosen for having the best understanding of the brief and the ideas I tried to convey – as well as a price that fitted our strict budget without having to compromise too much on the design.

‘It paid off that I had good product knowledge of their furniture as we have used them for many years in the Funeral Division, where their modular furniture fits

well into our small offices. Wherever possible we have created small meeting spaces within the offices for informal meetings. The larger meeting rooms can also be used by our staff in the regions for meetings via a booking system. We have two upmarket boardrooms where we can hold simultaneous meetings of the same calibre both with overhead projectors/TVs and drop down screens and lanterns.

‘The staff rest room is located in the middle unit and has become the centre to

meet up and meet staff from other departments as they would otherwise be isolated. I also believe in the importance of colour to make a relaxed happy atmosphere.

‘I used IKEA for the three kitchens as they have a good planning programme, good cheap products and could give us a modern environment on a strict budget. Being Swedish I probably have an inborn preference for simplicity and colour in design, and, like it or not, this probably steers my taste. I have always been interested in design and love innovation and progressive ideas.’

Despite a challenging move programme – the IT links to branches being especially critical – Dignity now occupies its new space. Clearly the company’s community spirit has been refreshed and revived in an appropriately simple building design.

‘The response from all concerned has been very positive,’ notes Ingela. ‘Everyone seems to like the facilities, are getting used to the ‘quirkiness’ of the building – and instead of going out for lunch they seem to meet up in the staff rest room instead to watch TV or chat to other staff. Just the way it should be.’ ●



### essential ingredients

Client • **Dignity PLC** [www.dignityfunerals.co.uk](http://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk)

Landlord Architect / Project Manager • **Stephen Fern Associates** 0118 9841604 | Construction • **JC Construction** [www.jcconstructionmidlands.co.uk](http://www.jcconstructionmidlands.co.uk)

Furniture Supply • **EFG** [www.efgoffice.co.uk](http://www.efgoffice.co.uk)

Fabric Blinds • **AM Curtains** 020 8478 5112

Decorative Lighting • **Oaks Lighting**

Roller Blinds • **Brightablind** [www.brightablind.com](http://www.brightablind.com)

Kitchen • **IKEA Business** [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com)

[www.oakslighting.co.uk](http://www.oakslighting.co.uk)