

INSIDE: GPs ■ Community Healthcare ■ Warrington Hospital ■ Mental Health ■ Care Homes

COVID-19

A special 8-page supplement recognising the work of Warrington's health and social care heroes



THANK YOU

How town responded to challenge



Clap for carers at Warrington Hospital

THE past three months have changed all our lives beyond our comprehension.

But for the health service, the challenges of coronavirus has been extreme.

Bosses and staff have juggled with treating patients with Covid-19 while also continuing to see other people who needed treatment and those with other conditions.

And as lockdown hit, they also had to come up with new and innovative ways to keep the services running.

In this special feature we examine how the health service in Warrington has coped and we look at how GP surgeries have gone digital during the pandemic.

More than 40,000 e-consultations have taken place while doctors have seen patients in care homes via video link.

Warrington Hospital made headlines around the world with its innovative ways of treating Covid-19 patients.

Community healthcare staff working for Bridgewater NHS Trust say they have been 'overwhelmed' with support – which has included messages of thanks being beamed onto the outside of a Warrington building.

The pressures of mental health has led to challenges for the staff at North West Boroughs Trust which is based in Winwick.

And video consultations have helped to keep doctors in touch with patients during the toughest times of the pandemic.



Support for the NHS has been on show throughout the town

Doctors adapt to help keep patients safe in pandemic

GP practices in Warrington have had to change the way they deliver services during the coronavirus pandemic.

But they are still working hard to support patients with their health concerns.

To help surgeries deal with increasing demand on services and to protect patients and staff, Warrington practices are using a 'total triage' system.

This means that when patients feel unwell, they are asked to complete an online form on their own surgery website (eConsult) or call their surgery in the first instance.

The surgery then asks the patient for more information about their health concern so they can get the help they need. This enables surgeries to prioritise appointments for patients most in need and also stop any unnecessary visits.

The current advice for patients remains not to go into their surgery without an appointment.

From Monday this week, all visitors and outpatients in hospitals must wear a face covering at all times.

GP practices in Warrington are also adopting this measure and requesting that patients wear a face covering if they have to go into their surgery for an appointment. Instructions on how to wear and make a cloth face covering can be viewed at gov.uk.

Appointments are also being delivered in new ways such as by telephone and video call to reduce the number of people visiting surgeries. However, if a patient needs a face-to-face appointment, surgeries will agree an appointment time.

When patients arrive they will see practices are using social distancing measures, staff are wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and surgeries are cleaned to Public Health England standards.



Dr Flora Kyriakou, a GP at Springfields Medical Centre on Legh Street

The aim is to provide a safe place where face-to-face appointments can be given to those self-isolating

To support extremely vulnerable patients unable to leave their homes, some GPs have continued to visit their own patients at home during the pandemic while others have launched new home visiting services.

A small number of face-to-face assessment sites have also been set up. The aim is to provide a safe place where face-to-face

appointments can be provided to people who are self-isolating because they live in a household with someone who has Covid-19 symptoms.

They can also offer appointments to Covid-19 patients who need support with another health issue. The sites do not offer testing for Covid-19 however.

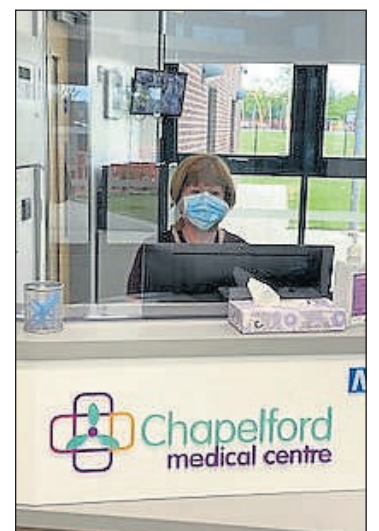
Appointments at the sites are arranged through a patient's GP practice.

However those with Covid-19 symptoms should use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service via 111.nhs.uk/covid-19 or if they need help with another health concern NHS 111 online via 111.nhs.uk or alternatively via phone unless it is a life-threatening emergency – then they should dial 999.

NHS 111 may refer them to their GP practice for assessment via phone or video call and then if clinically appropriate, a further appointment will be booked at one of the dedicated face-to-face assessment sites.

To ensure the safety of patients and staff, only patients with a booked appointment are allowed access to the face-to-face assessment sites.

They ensure that patients who are free from Covid-19 symptoms are seen separately from anyone who lives in a household that has a possible Covid-19 infection thus reducing any risk.



Receptionist Jo-Ann Clutton on hand to answer patients' enquiries



Chapelford Medical Centre nurse Vanessa Hitchin



Wearing their PPE are Vanessa Hitchin, Nikki Twambley and Lindsey Blackmore, nurses at Chapelford Medical Centre

Video calls used by GPs to stay in touch with patients

MORE than 40,000 e-consultations have been held with patients via the latest technology during the pandemic.

E-consultations, video chats with GPs and online forms have all helped patients be seen quickly and safely.

In the past 12 weeks since the start of the pandemic, 43,491 eConsults have been submitted by patients in Warrington.

Dr Andrew Davies, clinical chief officer for NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "We want to thank local surgeries who have worked tirelessly to ensure that appropriate and effective changes have been put in place in response to the pandemic.

"While the implementation of video and online consultations has been successful and for many has improved access, we acknowledge that some patients have been inconvenienced through experiencing longer waiting times when calling their local surgery.

"Please accept our thanks for your patience and your continued support and understanding.

"As the risk from the pandemic reduces and lockdown restrictions start easing, we are continuing to work closely with surgeries through our primary care networks.

"We are carefully considering how to reintroduce services while maintaining social distancing and ensuring the risk to patients and



Jenny Nestor, receptionist at Springfields Medical Centre, on Legh Street

colleagues in general practice is minimised.

However it is still important that patients only attend their local surgery when they have a booked appointment."

While the pandemic has also seen difficult challenges for the health service, the past 12 weeks have seen both patients and GP practices benefiting from some

of the technology that has been implemented.

One example is eConsult which is an online form that patients can complete on their surgery website to contact the practice.

The form can be completed at a time that is convenient for patients and they can get a quick response from their practice (usually within 48 hours).

It also helps practices to handle patient queries safely and effectively.

Patients who live in Warrington's care homes have also been able to access regular video consultations with their GP.

By patients, care homes and GPs being able to keep in regular contact during the pandemic, it has supported the health and wellbeing of patients during a difficult time.



Distancing advice is in place

We are carefully considering how to reintroduce services while keeping social distancing and ensuring risk to patients and staff is minimised

The biggest challenge of our lifetime



Dr Ian Watson

By Dr Ian Watson, chair of NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group and GP at Fearnhead Cross Medical Centre:

IN the past few months the NHS has faced the biggest challenge of our lifetime. However, as chair of NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group and a local GP, I have been astounded by the heroic efforts of our local health and social care staff, both in our hospitals and in the community, on the frontline and behind the scenes.

Despite difficult circumstances due to the coronavirus outbreak, I know all health and social care staff have gone above and beyond to provide care and support to everyone in Warrington who needs it. As a borough, we should all be incredibly proud of them.

I work as a GP at Fearnhead Cross Medical Centre and our practice manager, patient advisors, nurses, GPs and other staff have all worked incredibly hard to rise to the challenge and implement changes quickly and efficiently so we can continue to provide essential healthcare to everyone who needs it.

Please remember, the most important thing you can do to support NHS staff and services is to help stop the spread of the virus by continuing to follow Government and NHS advice.

If you are attending an appointment at a GP practice, hospital or another NHS service, please wear a face covering. We also continue to ask people not to go into their practice without an appointment. Please contact them online (eConsult on your practice website) or by phone in the first instance.

Finally, on behalf of all Warrington GP practices, I want to thank patients for their cooperation and understanding during these difficult times.



Dr Andy Davies



If you are visiting a hospital or attending an appointment at a hospital, GP surgery or another NHS service, you should wear a face covering.

A cloth face covering should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head.

Teamwork crucial in dealing with impact of coronavirus cases

STAFF at Warrington Hospital say they have been 'overwhelmed' with recognition and generosity during the pandemic.

The hospital has been hitting the headlines across the world for the innovative approach it has used for battling Covid-19.

A spokesman said: "If the pandemic has taught us one thing, it's the importance of working together as a team. For Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals that means not just our staff but our patients, their families, our volunteers and community too.

"We have been overwhelmed by the recognition and generosity of our Halton and Warrington communities as they have supported our patients and staff over the recent months.

"As we plan for recovery we want to continue that close collaboration and invite our communities to help us continue to deliver excellent care to our patients.

"Throughout the pandemic WHH has had plenty of recognition in the news, with the local, national and international media showcasing our innovative approach to supporting patients with Covid-19. Our use of the adapted 'black box' CPAP machines which has played a fundamental role in the recovery of patients was featured in a Sky documentary on Warrington.



Warrington Hospital has healthcare and nursing opportunities for those looking to join its teams

We are keen to support those who are disadvantaged, displaced or furloughed due to the pandemic

"The programme showcased the wide variety of amazing people who make up our WHH family in all their different roles, each bringing different skills to the frontline.

"As we emerge from the pandemic there has never been a better time to care and there are plenty

of opportunities for people to join our team and support us from the inside. We offer flexible roles, full training, generous packages and the chance to be part of an amazing team in an exciting place to work.

"Healthcare assistants that sup-

port our nurses, deliver direct care including personal care, nutrition and running basic medical checks.

"Full training is given and there is the opportunity to progress into nursing associate roles.

"Nursing associates are apprenticeships that give you the opportunity to earn as you learn, gaining valuable skills and experience as you work towards your qualification. You'll be hands on assisting nurses in the ongoing assessment, planning, management and evaluation of care. You will undertake clinical observations and tasks and

help to teach and coach others.

"There is also the opportunity to progress onto a two-year nursing apprenticeship."

Chief Nurse Kimberley Salmon-Jamieson said: "We are keen to support those who find themselves disadvantaged, displaced or furloughed due to the pandemic.

"There has never been a better time to take up the opportunity to help make a real difference to the lives of the patients, families, carers and staff of Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals."

To find out more, visit whh.nhs.



Professor Simon Constable

'We have never dropped standards or compromised care'

A message from Professor Simon Constable, chief executive at Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust:

'Stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives' was the clear mantra for the UK in the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A very simple message which actually describes a public health strategy – all about a range of interventions (including self-isolation, social distancing and shielding within the whole population) which stopped the NHS (including

Warrington and Halton Hospitals) being overwhelmed so that it could not cope.

If I reflect back to February and early March, we were all struck by images coming from other parts of the world, especially Italy which also has a sophisticated and well-resourced health service. We were worried we would run out of beds, run out of ventilators for the sickest patients, or have doctors and nurses forced to work well outside of their training and experience. That has not happened.

We have continued to operate

within safe and effective limits so that we have never had to drop our standards or compromise care; although we are very conscious that has been far from a 'normal' service and we haven't been able to look after all of our patients in the way we would want to. Although we have always continued to provide urgent non-Covid-19 care, including operations for certain types of cancer, we are now gently and cautiously restarting other services in a way that keeps everybody safe.

WHH staff have been amazing

in their approach.

They have done this in the face of significant anxieties in the early stages – there is much about this disease we did not and do not understand.

They have embraced new and challenging ways of working as well as living in a wholly changed world which has affected us all.

But what has been especially remarkable is that we have clearly done this together alongside a hugely supportive and generous community response.

Thank you.

Nurses & Health Care Assistants, join Team WHH today

Warrington & Halton Hospitals are currently looking for nurses & health care assistants to join our ranks:

NURSES (Whether active or retired) & **HEALTH CARE ASSISTANTS** (Experienced or aspiring. Full training and support provided)

Flexible Hours

Fast Track Recruitment

Warm, friendly, supportive team

Weekly Pay

To apply, or for an informal discussion, please email Jennifer.mccartney@nhs.net

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

There has never been a better time to care

'Overwhelmed' by the kindness of community

THE team providing health services in the community of Warrington say they have been overwhelmed by support from the public.

And they are now planning for the 'new normal' of life in a Covid-19 world.

Strengthening priority services, adopting new ways of working and redeploying staff have been the key areas of focus for Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Ensuring the most poorly and vulnerable patients continue to receive the care they need in their homes and supporting nursing and residential homes have been at the heart of the approach.

For children, young people and families staff have ensured safe delivery of essential services and safeguarding support.

The next steps will be to reintroduce more services providing care and support. Protecting staff, providing them with the tools and equipment to deliver safe and effective care, has been a priority.

Bridgewater's chief executive Colin Scales said: "We have received compliments from our patients, their families and our partners and been overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of our communities."

"Our staff have been clapped in the streets, people have made scrubs, visors, wash bags, multi-national companies have delivered drinks, hand creams, chocolates and businesses have sent in breakfasts and lunches."

"As we move to the new normal



Messages of support have been beamed in town

we are looking at how we can reintroduce more services safely so that our communities receive more of the care they need.

"We are keen to embrace the technology that allows our clinicians to assess their patients via video where appropriate, but will continue to call at people's homes, ring to check on their health and wellbeing and support them with

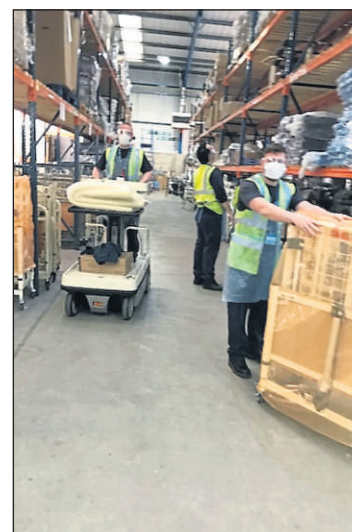
the kindness, compassion and professionalism which has shone through these difficult times."

Staff have provided support to the integrated hospital discharge team, helping to ensure that patients are discharged in a timely way and receive the community care they need.

Bridgewater's community equipment store, which provides essential aids and adaptations to some of the most vulnerable, ramped up operations to support this activity.

Praise for their 'professionalism, kindness and compassion' has come from patients, carers and families, council colleagues and Bridgewater staff.

The district nursing service has continued to deliver round the clock essential care in patients' homes, nursing and residential homes, strengthened by the skills and knowledge of redeployed colleagues from across Bridgewater.



The community equipment store

As we move to the new normal we are looking at how we can reintroduce more services safely

Thanks to the heroes of the NHS



The community catheter team

NHS workers from across Warrington have been praised by residents for their heroic efforts throughout the pandemic.

We have been inundated with messages of support and thanks from readers.

Here are just a few:

I would like to praise the community catheter team for keeping going in this awful time. The team are working longer hours and put their health at risk every time they go out.

I am writing to thank all the team at Chapelford Medical Centre. They go out of their way to help and make sure I see a doctor, even if it is virtually.

I want to thank all the nurses on the Covid-19 ward at Warrington Hospital. They are angels, caring for my husband and keeping me up to date with what was happening until he could be home.

Thanks to all the district nurses helping me to live safely at home. They never grumble despite the current situation, I would be lost without them.

I want to thank the heroes working on the maternity ward at Warrington Hospital. They helped in my granddaughter's birth. Even though I can't see her at the moment, it is lovely to know she was well cared for.

Thanks to Manchester Road surgery for all they have done to see patients in the pandemic.



One of the messages of support to nurse Angie Alderton

Need urgent mental health help?

Call Warrington's mental health crisis line on **01925 275 309**.

The crisis line provides support 24 hours a day, seven days a week to people of all ages, including children and young people, who need urgent mental health support.

You can also call the crisis line if you are concerned about someone close to you who is experiencing a mental health crisis.

For more information, visit: www.nwbh.nhs.uk/help-in-a-crisis



NHS

**North West
Boroughs Healthcare**
NHS Foundation Trust



Staff and patients

The new systems in place for hospital patients

A message from the team at St Helens and Knowsley Hospital:

THE world is looking a lot different.

But while the look of St Helens and Knowsley Hospital and services may change, one thing that will remain the same is the level of care.

Many patients from Warrington travel to St Helens or Whiston depending on where

they live – or for specific services such as stroke clinics.

Doing things digitally – the trust has been leading the way with telehealth consultations since 2018.

With 100 per cent positive feedback, both patients and staff have hailed this video technology as convenient and reliable, and it allows clinicians to speak to patients in their homes.

St Helens Hospital is a non-Covid environment

and has been named the region's cancer surgery hub. This means patients can have surgery in full confidence that the risks of Covid in our hospital are minimal.

Checking your temperature – as a further precaution, the hospital has been trialling body temperature scanners.

It is early days, but if the trial is successful bosses will be able to pick up those who may be experiencing

a high temperature before they enter. When you come to see us you will notice we look a little different.

We have introduced our Stay Safe social distancing measures and our staff will all be wearing masks and PPE.

There's no need to worry though, you can expect to receive the same friendly welcome, safe environment and outstanding care you would expect from the country's best NHS trust.

Mental health help is more important than ever before

IT is not just the Covid-19 virus which has been damaging to health during the coronavirus pandemic.

The impact on mental health in Warrington is being felt as well after more than 12 weeks of lockdown.

North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust runs mental health services in the town.

It has a base at Hollins Park Hospital in Winwick as well as operating out in the community.

The trust explains how it has managed during the pandemic and the changes that have been brought in.

"Covid-19 may be a virus that affects us physically but the restrictions of lockdown, worries about the virus, and uncertainty around the future have undoubtedly had an impact on our mental health too.

"For those who were already living with a mental health condition before the pandemic, the situation has been even more challenging.

"That's why it's so important that mental health services are still there for those who need them throughout this difficult period.

"In Warrington, community mental health services have continued to support people during the pandemic but have had to find new ways of working to protect the safety of staff and service users.



The Warrington Recovery team at North West Boroughs

"Mental health practitioners at North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust now use a video consultation tool called Attend Anywhere to facilitate routine appointments with service users wherever possible.

"Just like a face-to-face appointment, patients check-in and enter an online waiting area for their appointment to begin.

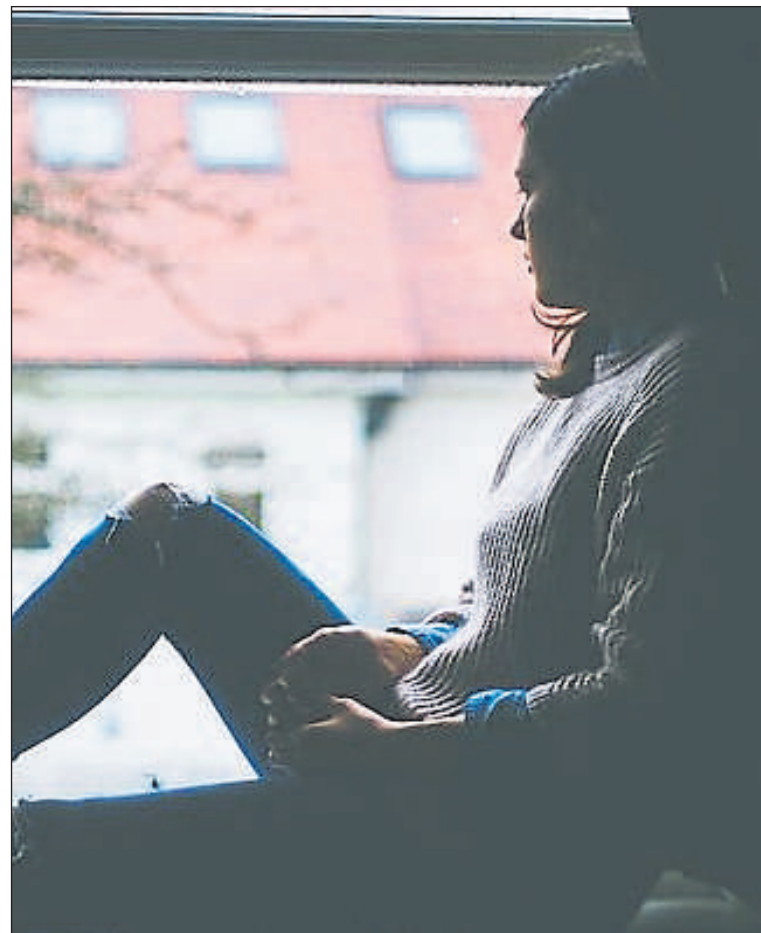
"All that's needed is an internet connection and a smartphone, tablet or computer with a camera, microphone and speakers.

"Most of the time appointments can be facilitated virtually, but depending on the individual needs,

practitioners may need to see patients for a face-to-face appointment. In these cases staff will wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and practice social distancing to maintain both their own safety and the safety of our service users.

"Mental health inpatient services have also continued to operate throughout the pandemic.

"As with before the Covid-19 outbreak, the aim is to keep people out of hospital wherever possible but a small number of people will need inpatient care to support their recovery, and that is still the case during the pandemic.



Mental health support has continued

"The safety of staff and patients is North West Boroughs Healthcare's top priority and measures have been put in place to protect this.

"All inpatient staff are required to wear a surgical mask, gloves, goggles and an apron on the wards during their shifts.

"Unfortunately face-to-face visit-

ing has been temporarily suspended on the wards until it is safe to reinstate this, in line with national requirements.

"In the meantime, the wards have used iPads to set up video calls so service users can stay connected with loved ones."

For more visit nwbh.nhs.uk/coronavirus

For those already with a mental health condition, the situation has been even more challenging

Widnes Urgent Care Centre

To ensure the safety of all our patients and staff during the coronavirus pandemic we are an appointment only service.

If you require urgent care for an illness or injury please call **0151 495 5000**.

Patients will only be offered an appointment (either face-to-face, telephone or video) after an initial telephone assessment.

Open **8am to 8pm** - 7 days a week.

NHS Widnes Urgent Care Centre, Health Care Resource Centre, Oaks Place, Caldwell Road, Widnes, WA8 7GD

NHS

Bridgewater
Community Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

‘Incredible’ staff are keeping care home residents healthy

CARE homes in Warrington have faced unprecedented challenges during the coronavirus pandemic but their staff, working alongside the local authority and NHS, have shown exceptional dedication in protecting and supporting residents.

In Warrington there are 32 care homes providing residential or nursing care to more than 1,600 older people. There are also 81 assisted living settings, supporting 530 people with disabilities and additional needs.

During the pandemic all care home staff, including managers, carers, catering and domestic staff, have worked together showing true teamwork, care and courage.

There are many ways that staff have gone above and beyond to care for the most vulnerable residents.

Examples include staff moving into homes and living away from their families, covering additional shifts to provide an appropriate level of care and using social media and video calls to ensure residents can communicate with their families and healthcare



Staff at Rosevilla Care Home in Burtonwood

professionals. Their efforts have been supported by Warrington Borough Council and NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group who have put in place a range of new and bespoke measures over the past three months to help improve the health and wellbeing of people living and

working in care homes. Some of the changes put in place include providing care homes with:

- Weekly calls offering guidance and assistance to access appropriate PPE.

- iPads to enable video consultations to take place with GP practices.

- Medical equipment such as state of the art thermometers and pulse oximeters to support the clinical assessment of residents.

- Face-to-face training such as infection, prevention and control, correct use of personal protective equipment and swabbing.

- A secure NHS email account so they can safely share appropriate medical information to help residents.

- A mental health and wellbeing resource pack to support staff, residents and their families facing a difficult, challenging and emotional time.

As well as mental health support the pack, which is regularly updated, also contains information on staff resilience, suicide prevention and bereavement support.

- Information on offers and discounts that were available to care workers as a way of saying thank you for all their hard work.

Tara Winterburn and Jessica



Staff at Arlington House in Stockton Heath

We now have plans in place to begin the phased re-opening of the home to visitors, with strict measures

Bruton, joint registered managers at Rosevilla Residential Home in Burtonwood, said: “At the start of the pandemic we took action quickly by restricting visitors and providing regular updates to families.

“We set up ways for residents to keep in touch with their loved ones over FaceTime, Skype and WhatsApp, with connections reaching as far as South Africa and Australia. We also used online resources to continue with social worker reviews and GP appointments.

“We made frequent videos to keep spirits up including capturing VE Day and Easter celebrations, garden parties, and even attempted the toilet roll challenge – all of which were brilliantly received by friends and families.”

“As a team we have been focused on keeping calm and carrying on and I am very proud of our achievements.

“We’ve managed our PPE stocks well and staff have been supported, with a wellbeing room set up to

allow them to have some time out during their shift if they are feeling overwhelmed.

“Our residents have been well cared for at all times throughout the pandemic by our dedicated staff.

“We now have plans in place to begin the phased re-opening of the home to visitors, with strict measures which are being communicated to families.”

Michelle Creed, chief nurse for NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “We would like to say thank you to all staff working in the care sector for all that they are doing.

“The incredible commitment and compassion they have shown to their residents under difficult circumstances has been inspirational.

“In the NHS we have worked incredibly hard to support them along with our colleagues in the local authority and we will continue this support for as long as is needed.”



Arlington House residents enjoy some exercise



St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

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