



Birtley
House

Birtley House and Mews Update

5th June 2020

Dear Families,

As we navigate through a gradual unlocking of 'lockdown' we are having to continually reassess what the new 'normal' looks like. Garden centres, car showrooms and outdoor markets have reopened. We are also being told we can spend more time outdoors, in groups of up to six people. For some of us our children have been given the opportunity to start back at school this week. That has certainly been a cause for celebration in our household! In all scenarios we must adhere to the strict social distancing guidelines we have become very familiar with over these last weeks.

Throughout this crisis, we have worked tirelessly to keep the lines of communication open with you all and have endeavoured to explain our reasons for any decisions taken to keep your relative safe. It therefore gives us all a collective boost that we now feel able, after 10 weeks, to 'open' our doors to visits once more. Letters have gone out to both nursing home and mews residents' families to explain how the visits need to be conducted. For those of you who have already reserved your slot, we look forward to welcoming you from Monday.

Continuing with the celebratory theme, on Thursday, we held our inaugural 'Birtley Heroes Bash' with tea and cake, lots of laughter and good cheer. All staff received 'Birtley Hero' badges and cards from Sylwia to say 'thank you.' This initiative is going to be rolled out on the first Thursday of each month as a way for all staff to get together to recognise and celebrate all our unique efforts across all departments, no matter big or small. As has been abundantly clear throughout this critical time, **all** our staff have played their part in getting us to this point. I realise that the word 'hero' has perhaps been overused lately but it ticks the box we far as we are concerned. We will all wear our badges with pride!



As mentioned last week, Janet and Trish, our physiotherapists, have made a welcome return to Birtley. It is just like they have never been away! The timing couldn't have been better as one of our regular respite residents has just returned to us for some rest and recuperation and much needed intensive physio. Our residents are definitely feeling the benefits already.

The temperatures may have dipped slightly but residents are still very eager to get into the gardens for some fresh air and that all important vitamin D hit. Earlier in the week a few of the ladies enjoyed an al fresco lunch on the roof terrace. Afternoon tea is regularly taken outside, as has always been the case in previous years. Activities continue whether in small groups or one-to-one; there is always a jigsaw to complete or a Sudoku grid to mull over. There is obviously lots of growing excitement at the prospect of seeing family members from next week!

As we prepare to take our first tentative steps out of the restrictive lockdown, we need to be mindful that it is not 'back to normal' quite yet, and won't be for a long time to come. As we have previously said, the rhetoric from Government does not readily apply to our sector so, with cautious optimism, we welcome families back but in a safe and socially distanced way.

Please see below a message from our Registered Manager, Sylwia.

Take care, stay safe, Sinead

Message from Sylwia

As you can appreciate we have been inundated with coronavirus information throughout this pandemic. Indeed at times it has been quite overwhelming to digest and keep step with it all. Rest assured all staff have been privy to all information updates via our company intranet. It is very important to me that all staff are armed with all relevant guidance and feel confident about the job they are doing.

We are pleased to announce that we have been offered some free refresher sessions on Infection Control next week, run by a representative from our local CCG. In light of the current rules these sessions will take place outside in the grounds, in small groups, adhering to social distancing protocol, of course. This short refresher will be mandatory for all staff.

We are very fortunate to have had steadfast support and reassurance from our area CQC inspector Lucy Hubball. Her affirming words have been very welcome during these times of uncertainty. We include her in all our communications so she is understandably thrilled that we continue to be Covid-free. She applauds our positivity and genuine team spirit.
'Well done Team Birtley!'

