

How has your care service adapted during the pandemic? We have developed new systems of working practice to ensure we are still providing the highest quality of care in the safest possible manner. As well as accommodating the challenges of enhanced hygiene, regular testing and PPE implementation, we were proactive in implementing new procedures, such as; separating staff into teams to look after a set number of residents on specific floors and limiting staff interaction. Although we've had to update our policies and working procedures many times during 2020, our staff remain resilient and positive.

Has your local community worked together? The local support we've received has been absolutely overwhelming.

- Charities, businesses, volunteers, individuals, friends and family have all contributed towards the welfare of the staff and residents which has helped keep up spirits and boost morale within the team.
- Some of the amazing things our community has done for us this year:
- We received free PPE from various charitable and religious organisations as well as individuals
- Staff accommodation and transportation was offered to us free of charge.
- Our residents received pen letters, posters and cards from the local community.
- Various food packs and cash donations were made to the staff from generous friends and family.
- We received an amazing donation of Facebook portals from local CCG groups which have helped us keep families and residents connected.

Has the pandemic created innovations and improvements in your service? Fortunately, we felt we were ahead of the game as we were already using what is probably one of the biggest innovations in care - digital care planning. This has turned out to be a huge blessing during these times as relatives could see the daily care their loved ones were receiving 'live' via the online Relatives' Gateway portal. The introduction of Facebook portals for WhatsApp calls was a huge comfort to our residents. Zoom calls, Skype and other digital innovations have helped ease anxiety for residents during lockdown and continue to do so.

Naturally, there have been significant improvements in infection control since the pandemic started and the home has really benefited from this extra layer of cleaning and awareness.

How did you raise residents' and staffs' spirits during lockdown? Our staff keep every single aspect of the home running. Day-in day-out they turned up with smiles on their faces. It was very important to us that staff were made to feel

valued and looked after so that in turn they could carry on giving the best care to the residents. We had plenty of daily discussions with the staff and implemented an open-door policy for anyone with concerns, questions or just needed a bit of support.

We produced a COVID-19 handbook for our staff with relevant, useful and up-to-date guidance on all the latest policies and procedures relating to the Coronavirus. We provided all staff with "Letters For Entry" to ensure they could use retailers' designated shopping times for care staff. We also secured discount vouchers for them to use locally.

Additionally, we put together Staff Welfare packs which included cash bonuses, food packs, hot food takeaways and toiletries for all staff who could not get to the shops. We also ensured staff received travel PPE packs for safe travel to and from work on public transport.

Although all external visits to residents were cancelled, we ensured that our residents were able to stay connected with loved ones through the use of technology and we continued with a

full activity programme in-house, including lots of singing and dancing!

How are you approaching 2021? As we near the end of 2020, we approach the thought of a new year with hope, optimism and a renewed sense of togetherness. Of course, we're all hoping for a vaccine which would enable us to open up more to friends, family and social activities.

Having already seen the benefit of the use of technology, we're open to new innovations and ideas to help both our staff and residents. We are also in the exciting process of implementing EMAR, which will help us increase our resident's safety with medication management. It will also give nurses more time to look after residents, reduce errors and increase the welfare and wellbeing of all involved.

We're under no illusion, that this virus won't be with us for much time yet to come, so we're approaching 2021 with a sense of caution, ensuring we continue to follow best practices, maintain good levels of PPE and build resilience within our teams.

