

HALTON AND WARRINGTON CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) WEEKLY ROUNDUP

25 September 2020

Current situation

Global situation

Globally the scale of growth in detection of Covid-19 has stabilised at a significantly high level with over 270,000 cases identified each day, bringing the total number of infections to just over 32 million. Around 5,000 Covid-19 deaths are reported each day, this remains unchanged since July. There have been 982,000 deaths associated with COVID-19 reported across the world.

National situation

The UK has reported another 31,510 confirmed cases in the last week and now exceeds 409,000 in total, with deaths rising this week by 178 bringing the total figure to date of 41,777.

The number of daily reported deaths remains low. The current average of 25 per day is much lower than the peak of over 1,000; however, this has increased from an average of 14 last week and 7 the previous week.

Covid-19 positive rates are increasing across the country with the England rate increasing from 12 per 100,000 for the week ending 20 August to 42 per 100,000 in the week ending 20 September. North West England has seen a particularly large increase from a rate of 20 per 100,000 to a rate of 111.9 per 100,000.

There does now appear to be an increase in the number of people being admitted to hospital, with the daily seven-day average increasing from 233 to 262 in the last three days.

Local situation

The situation locally also shows increasing numbers of cases in both Halton and Warrington with 218 new confirmed cases in Halton in the week to the 22 September up from 105 the week before, and 258 new cases in Warrington up from 234 the previous week.

Cases have been confirmed across all age groups with most cases between the ages of 18 and 60, with a particular peak in the 18-30 age band in Warrington. Covid-19 cases are broadly proportionate in relation to ethnicity, with 3% of confirmed cases in the last 14 days from the BAME population compared to 4.5% of the population in Warrington and 2% of the population in Halton.

Areas with the very highest and very lowest areas of deprivation also show the highest number of new cases in the last 14 days. Although new cases have been reported across Warrington and Halton, Halton view in Widnes has seen the highest concentration on new cases with 32 in the last 7 days.

The number of confirmed cases within the Care Homes is also increasing, on the 8 August there were no reported cases in care homes. There are currently 15 cases in Halton care homes and 10 cases in Warrington care homes.

Deaths remain low with three deaths reported in the last six weeks across Warrington (2) and Halton (1).

Actions being taken locally

NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Halton Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council are working closely with local NHS providers, Public Health England (PHE), NHS England and other partner organisations, and are well prepared to deal with any outbreak.

In response to the increasing numbers of confirmed cases locally the system Health Protection Board has reconvened the fortnightly meetings, led by the respective Local Authority Directors of Public Health for Halton and Warrington. The membership of the group includes senior representatives from NHS Warrington CCG, NHS Halton CCG, Warrington Borough Council, Halton Borough Council, Public Health and main health providers.

The local incident control structures are stepping back up appropriately in order to oversee and co-ordinate the response.

Our priority is on protecting the most vulnerable living the community and those who are at most risk, whilst at the same time continue to ensure that local services continue to run and provide those essential services to our communities.

Halton Borough Council

There have been 134 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Halton residents in the last 7 days (to 16 September). The weekly rate of positive cases has increased, as we have seen across the region.

In total since the start of the pandemic there have been 956 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Halton residents (to 16 September). The percentage of people testing positive has increased during the past week. There have been 0 COVID-19 deaths in the week ending 4th September.

Further detail can be found [online](#), it is updated each Friday lunchtime.

Local restrictions:

New local restrictions came into effect across Halton on 22 September.

These restrictions mean:

- Residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble in private homes and gardens;
- Hospitality for food and drink will be restricted to table service only; and
- Late night operating hours will be restricted, with leisure and entertainment venues including restaurants, pubs, and cinemas, required to close between 10pm to 5am.

In addition, to further reduce the spread of the virus, residents are being asked to follow additional Government advice:

- Only to use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work
- Avoid attending amateur and semi-professional sporting events as spectators.
- Avoid socialising with people you do not live with, unless they're in your support bubble, in any public venue
- Avoid visiting friends or family in care homes, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Under the new restrictions, informal arrangements for childcare of children under the age of 14 or vulnerable adults are now allowed, when it's necessary for caring purposes – this does not extend to playdates or parties.

In this [short video](#) Cllr Rob Polhill, Leader of Halton Borough Council has asked local people to support efforts to reduce the spread of the virus by following the new restrictions and advice.

Further information about the restrictions can be found on our website www.halton.gov.uk.

Shielding:

The government is not currently changing its guidance on shielding, and so residents in Halton are not being asked to shield.

Schools:

There are currently confirmed cases in a number of schools across the borough and we are working closely with school leaders to manage these cases appropriately.

Warrington Borough Council

Over the latest confirmed seven day period (up to 18 September), Warrington had 214 new confirmed cases of coronavirus (102.1 per 100,000 population).

This has varied slightly over the past few days, but is above the PHE threshold of 50 per 100,000.

National government guidance:

- Use of public transport for essential purposes only
- No spectators at amateur/semi-professional sport
- Allow only 15 people to attend weddings from Monday 28 September
- Wear face coverings in hospitality settings when not sat at your table, and in taxis (unless exempt)
- Workers who can work from home, should do so
- Hospitality for food and drink will be table service only
- Late night restriction of operating hours, with hospitality, leisure and entertainment venues required to close between 10pm and 5am

Additional Warrington restrictions:

From Tuesday 22 September, new regulations **in Warrington and other specific areas of the country** also states no mixing of separate households in one house or private gardens (unless you have formed a household support bubble).

[Read more about the coronavirus restrictions and FAQs on the council's website.](#)

Further advice:

These new restrictions should also be supported by people continuing to:

- **Follow the 'rule of six'**, that is – a maximum of six people can meet from multiple households outdoors or at indoor venues, as long as you continue to socially distance from people outside your households (please remember that you can't meet other people in your household or private garden, or theirs). Additional guidance for Warrington currently however, given the local restrictions, is that people are advised not to:
 - **socialise with people you don't live with** (or aren't in your household bubble) in any public venue
 - visit people in care homes, unless in exceptional circumstances

Shielding:

If you live in Warrington, the current government guidance is that you do not need to shield.

Schools:

There are currently confirmed cases in a number of schools across the borough and we are working closely with school leaders to manage these cases appropriately.

St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

As of 25th September 2020 the Trust has **22** positive COVID -19 inpatients. 2 patients are in ICU. Sadly, the total number of patients that tested positive for COVID-19 and have died since the beginning of the outbreak is **210**

Operational Update:

The Emergency Department is operating as normal; average daily attendance in the last 7 days **329** compared to a usual figure of 350 per day.

In terms of ED Attendances in September to date these have increased to around 96% of September 2019 levels.

Bevan Court, Specialist Frailty Unit opens at Whiston Hospital

Bevan Court will serve as a specialist frailty unit providing vulnerable older people with rapid assessment, treatment, and discharge following an emergency admission or referral from the community.

Healthcare teams based at the unit will provide specialist assessment and treatment for older people living with frailty who need short-term care, with the aim of helping them to recover quickly and supporting them to live independently at home as soon as possible.

It will allow the multi-disciplinary frailty team to provide the very best treatment and care in line with the latest healthcare standards, helping to reduce acute admissions to the hospital.

With access to a 'frailty-friendly' environment and the latest clinical equipment, the team, including consultants, nurses, and therapists, will be able to provide best practice care tailored to the specific needs of each patient. The new unit care pathway is also designed to connect the frailty service to local community frailty teams and social services to improve continuity of care following discharge.

Mike Horner, Consultant Geriatrician said, 'The opening of Bevan Court will help to transform the way we provide services to older people in the area. It will allow us to take a more collaborative, compassionate, and patient centred approach to frailty care. Because we've got a dedicated multi-disciplinary team, patients will be seen by the right people at the right time. This will help to speed up treatment and recovery so they can return to the safety and familiarity of their home as soon as possible, whilst maintaining their independence.'

Trust Chief Executive, Ann Marr, OBE, said, 'Bevan Court will improve experiences and outcomes for some of the most vulnerable patients in our local communities. As a Trust we are committed to developing innovative ways of working, and the opening of Bevan Court is a time of excitement for the Trust. I would like to thank our suppliers and subcontractors, and all our partners who have made this happen by working together'.

Annual General Meeting

Due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, the Trust's 29th AGM will be broadcast at midday from the Trust's website on Monday 28th September 2020.

The AGM will be chaired by Richard Fraser with the review of the year delivered by Ann Marr OBE and members of the executive team.

The agenda includes information relating to 2019/2020 including:

- activity, quality, and performance
- highlights of the year
- the Trust response to the Covid pandemic
- priorities for the year ahead

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Widnes Urgent Care Centre

The Urgent Care Centre in Widnes will be open for an additional hour from Monday 28 September and will be open from 8am until 9pm, seven days a week. This will increase capacity to meet patient demand.

The centre continues to ask patients to call 0151 495 5000, who will be offered an appointment after a telephone assessment. A number of appointments are also available via NHS 111.

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

There are currently 22 COVID positive inpatients at the Trust, of which 4 are in ICU. To date the Trust have tested 22982 inpatients/community of which 1338 have tested positive (cumulative). The Trust have discharged 425 patients (cumulative), however sadly 141 patients have died (cumulative). Covid-related Staff absence

(Symptoms + Medical suspension + Shielding + Track & trace) has risen to 5.27%, up from 4.79% at start of the week

Please note: *The Trust's Covid data is now updated daily on its website [here](#)*

Operational Update:

Patients attending the Emergency Department are slightly down on previous week with 1,502 in last 7 days (previous week 1,618). Urgent Treatment Centre visits are similarly slightly down with 418 in the last 7 days (479)

Visiting arrangements:

Due to the current rate and presentation of COVID in our region, we will continue to restrict visiting to maintain patient safety and reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 within our hospitals. **In general:**

- If visitors have to come to our hospitals then they should **ALWAYS:** Wear a face covering at all times. Sanitise hands on arrival. Observe strict social distancing
- If attending A&E, Urgent Treatment Centre or Outpatients attend alone unless meeting one of the exceptions below.
- Child visitors under 16 will **not be** permitted at any time

Note: The following exceptions are in place:

- **End of Life Patients** - A maximum of two visitors at the bedside at any time – visiting supported by the nurse in charge
- **Women in Labour** - One birthing partner
- **Neonatal Unit** - Both parents
- **Pregnant women undergoing ultrasound scan** - Partner may accompany
- **Intensive Care** – nominated visitors up to one hour per day (same visitors throughout patient stay) and subject to screening assessment. All visiting subject to nurse in charge daily approval.
- **Children's Unit** - One parent or appropriate adult visiting a child at once
- **Carers/patient supporters** – one carer/visitor that is supporting someone with a mental health issue such as dementia, brain injury, a learning disability or autism, where not being present would cause the patient to be distressed.
- **Individual requests** will be considered only in exceptional circumstances

Each ward has virtual visiting in place using tablet devices – please ask the nurse in charge to arrange this.

The Trusts Family Liaison Service continues to offer a daily contact service with nominated loved ones.

Important Information:

- Everyone should follow the expert national guidance on social distancing and self-isolation, staying at home wherever possible, to help limit the spread of coronavirus, protect the most vulnerable people in our communities and our NHS.
- Visitors with any symptoms relating to Covid-19- coronavirus including a cough or temperature must not visit the hospital the guidance issued by NHS1111 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>
- If visitors have a general cold, including cough, cold, runny nose they must not come to the hospitals.
- Visitors with any symptoms relating to a stomach upset, including diarrhoea and/or vomiting should not come to the hospitals.

The Trust advises visitors to contact its Patient Advice and Liaison Service if they have specific concerns beyond this guidance, the service is available on weekdays on [01925 275512](tel:01925275512) or e-mail WHH.Pals@nhs.net

NHS Contact Tracing APP

The Trust have introduced QR Code scanning in our waiting and treatment rooms to support the NHS Contact Tracing APP which is available to download from the App and Google stores for smart phones. Patients are now able to 'check in' to specific areas on arrival supporting the national efforts to contain the spread of the virus. More information about the APP is available here: <https://covid19.nhs.uk/what-the-app-does.html>

North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

North West Boroughs Healthcare remains in a stable position, with low case numbers amongst both staff and patients. We are monitoring this daily and are continuing to provide a testing service for staff and their household members with symptoms, as well as routine testing for patients on our wards as part of our 7-day rolling swabbing programme.

The Trust are continually monitoring the local position, but, for now, we are continuing with our plans to restore and recover services, including reintroducing face-to-face appointments where appropriate. Changes are only made following risk assessments and with appropriate safety measures, including PPE.

Your appointment web page

To make sure patients attending our sites for an appointment know what to expect, the Trust have created a new page within the public-facing coronavirus hub on our website. We are asking staff to direct patients and service users here for the latest information: www.nwbh.nhs.uk/your-appointment

The Trust are also updating patient appointment letters to include additional advice and information, including a link to our [coronavirus information hub](#)

Updates will be provided on a weekly basis each Friday afternoon until further notice