**IMPORTANT: CORONA VIRUS UPDATE SEPTEMBER 23rd 2020**

Dear parents and carers

In the light of the recent Covid-19 announcements and (local) restrictions coming into place (for Merseyside including Wirral, Warrington and Halton). We felt it was important to update you all on the current situation for Claire House to hopefully reassure you and address some of the questions and concerns you may have about coming to the hospice or accessing support from the hospice teams.

**What does this mean for Claire House  Children and Families: The hospice remains open and this is why:**

* We have worked really hard together over the last 6 months to ensure that **the hospice is a Covid-19 SAFE environment**
* We have good supplies of all the right PPE and staff have been fit tested and we have our own fit test training in place
* We have clear guidance around PPE and what and when to wear the different levels of PPE to provide all levels of care
* We have got lots of child friendly visors and gowns (see photos)
* Masks are now being worn by everyone in all areas in the hospice building
* We have all worked really hard to follow all the recommendations to ensure that the hospice is a **Covid SAFE** environment for both staff and families
* We were able to have separate areas designated in the hospice and we have single rooms for all the children
* We have guidance in place regarding visitors to the hospice and this is currently being reviewed
* There is clear and regular updates regarding policy and practice from Public Health England, NHS England around PPE and infection control measures and we have quickly adapted our care and practices to reflect this guidance
* We have access to NHS testing for care team staff when required
* We have a clear regular and deep cleaning schedule for the hospice building
* We have successfully managed throughout the strict full lock down to provide end of life, emergency respite and butterfly suite support

**Current Situation**

* Over the last 3 months, after consultation with CH families we have also been able to successfully deliver a small amount of much needed planned respite within ‘bubbles’ and clear guidance is in place with regards to the limitation of movement around the hospice and also for interaction between children and staff caring for them
* The feedback from you has been very positive Thank You, overall this has gone well and our current plan is to increase this from October to blocks of 3 nights with children being admitted in ‘bubbles’ as before to minimise the risk to children and staff. It is very likely that this model of respite will continue for the foreseeable future.
* **We believe we have all the right equipment, PPE, practices and appropriate guidance to ensure a SAFE environment for both staff and children to currently continue to offer both planned and unplanned care at the hospice and to continue the home visits that have been agreed in partnership with families to be safe and needed. Staff will also wear the appropriate PPE for home visits.**
* **At this stage we will also continue to offer a blended approach of both ‘virtual’ and face to face counselling and support and activity groups, as currently they are identified as being exempt from the ‘rule of 6’. We are also able to use our Liverpool site for groups too.**

**Additional measures to be put in place**

* We are looking to reduce the number of people coming into the hospice and will be:
  + Reviewing our visitors guidance and will share this with you asap
  + For all planned stays we are looking how we can complete most of the care plan and medicine reviews before you come to the hospice
  + We will continue to try and stagger admission times and would really appreciate you adhering to your time slot and where possible request that **only one parent / carer  drop off and picks up your child** from the hospice. Both of these will be discussed individually pre-admission
* Clearly this plan will be reviewed regularly and also as soon as there is any clear guidance from local or national public health or  from the Government that directs us to stop all planned care respite, we will action this and notify families as soon as possible.
* However, even if planned care has to be suspended again we would continue as before to be available for end of life care and emergency respite requests
* **Our goal** is to ensure that we can continue to provide care and support as **safely** as possible to every family that needs our support.

**These continue to be difficult and unprecedented times  and as before this is once again a quickly changing situation, which we will monitor and**

**respond to as quickly as needed if further changes are required and will keep families updated as soon as possible**

Please do post any questions and concerns that you may have or contact Jenni Bell or Ruth Varey at the hospice.

With our very best wishes for your child and family to stay safe and well

Jan Sutherland Oakes