

# Essential Caregiver Information Package and Guidelines

*Please review these guidelines and expectations below*

An Essential Caregiver (EC) is designated by the resident and/or their Power of Attorney or Substitute Decision Maker (POA/SDM) for care. Essential Caregivers, may visit in the resident's bedroom to provide direct care to the resident (e.g., supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making). The ECs may also take their resident to the Patio on their Home Area OR out the front doors for a walk on the Dearness Home grounds (the resident must also be masked, as tolerated).

## **At Dearness Home:**

- Unlimited ECs may be designated for each resident, but only two of them may be in the Home to visit the resident at one time
- The same person may be designated as an EC for more than one resident, but:
  - o the EC may only visit 1 Home area per day
  - o the EC may not visit another resident for 14 days after visiting a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic and/or the Home area is in outbreak
- ECs must be over 18 years of age
- All ECs at Dearness will be educated in person prior to gaining access to the Home, and will review the training package every 3 months thereafter
- All ECs will wear appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) in the Home and during their visit
- EC access to the Dearness Home ends when the resident is discharged or passes away

COVID-19 can be fatal for those who live in long term care (experience elsewhere shows as many as 50% of those not vaccinated die if infected) so keeping COVID-19 out of Dearness Home is extremely important. Accordingly, Essential Caregivers must respect and practice the infection control measures required to keep our residents and staff safe. Before Essential Caregivers come in to the Home to provide care they will receive approximately one hour of in-person education on general expectations and infection control practices (including how to safely put personal protective equipment on and take it off). They will also attest to reviewing the visiting policy every month and the training package every 3 months.

If you are the POA or SDM for care, please speak with your loved-one in the Home and your family to decide if you want to designate Essential Caregivers. If so, decide who the Caregiver(s) will be and then please contact Cheryl Gilmour, Manager Community Life by email [cgilmour@london.ca](mailto:cgilmour@london.ca) or by phone **519-661-0400 x8271** to work with you to arrange a mutually

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agreed upon training time. Please check all the latest updates on the Dearness Home website <https://london.ca/living-london/community-services/senior-supports/dearness-home>

## General Expectations of Essential Caregivers:

### The Essential Caregiver must:

- Before coming to Dearness Home:
  - Read the Dearness Home “Visits During Pandemic” policy each month
  - Attest that you have reviewed the training package every 3 months
  - Come to the Home during COVID-19 visiting hours (9am to 8pm, Monday through Friday and 9am to 4:30pm at the Weekends and Holidays)
  - Self-screen at home and do not visit Dearness if there are signs or symptoms of COVID-19
  - Ensure only **two** Essential Caregivers visit the resident at any given time
- Upon entering the home:
  - Place their Essential Caregiver identification sticker on their chest or where it will be **visible at all times**
  - Sign in and out at the Entrance/Exit
  - Pass active screening before entering the building at each visit
  - **Attest that you:**
    - READ THE “VISITS DURING PANDEMIC POLICY” EVERY MONTH?
    - REVIEW THE ESSENTIAL CAREGIVER EDUCATION EVERY 3 MONTHS?
    - HAVE NOT VISITED ANOTHER RESIDENT WHO IS SELF ISOLATING OR SYMPTOMATIC, AND/OR ANOTHER HOME IN OUTBREAK IN THE LAST 14 DAYS And, only when Dearness is currently in outbreak, public health require it and you have not provided the Home with proof or immunization, attest that you:
    - HAVE DOCUMENTED PROOF OF YOUR NEGATIVE, PCR TYPE TEST RESULT FOR COVID-19 WITHIN THE LAST 7 DAYS AND THAT YOU HAVE NOT SUBSEQUENTLY TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?
  - If you have not provided Dearness Home with proof of full immunization, proceed to the COVID-19 testing area (to the left in the lobby) to register with the nurse and get rapid tested (immunized ECs are not tested)

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## **Vaccination -**

The government now allows greater freedoms where both the EC and the resident are fully vaccinated. For the EC to be recognized as fully vaccinated:

- The EC must have received both doses of vaccine
- There must be at least 14 days since the second dose was received
- The official confirmation of the second vaccination must be shared with Cheryl Gilmour or her delegate

Fully vaccinated ECs will visibly wear a green EC sticker when in the Home.

All other ECs will visibly wear a red sticker when in the Home.

## **Infection Prevention and Control Measures –**

### The Essential Caregiver must:

Follow all the guidelines provided in the in-person education (also included in the educational hand-out), including:

- Practicing good hand hygiene, prior to entering and upon exiting the home
- Wearing the supplied surgical mask and eye protection appropriately at all times while in the home and when walking outside with the resident (note that eye protection is not required where both the resident and the EC are fully vaccinated)
- Using alcohol-based hand rubs as the preferred method of cleansing (unless hands are visibly soiled, when soap & water would be preferred)
- Where the resident is in isolation, wearing the designated droplet/contact personal protective equipment (surgical mask, eye protection, gloves, and a gown) and following protocol to properly put on PPE and remove PPE
- Asking staff for assistance by using the call bell if unsure how to follow these steps
- Physically distancing:
  - If either the EC or the resident are not fully vaccinated, the EC will remain 2 meters distant from the resident during visits, aside brief hugs
  - If both EC and resident are fully vaccinated, EC may have physical contact with the resident (e.g. holding hand, hugs)

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## Essential Caregiver Expectations while in the Home –

### The Essential Caregiver must:

- Wear the applicable Essential Caregiver identification sticker on your upper body and ensure it is clearly visible at all times
- Proceed directly to the resident's room (if the resident is in the common areas, the Caregiver will take them to their room) – Essential Caregivers will not stop to talk to others and will not travel to other areas of the home to visit others
- Stay within the resident's room and use the call bell if anything is needed outside of the room unless the Essential Caregiver wishes to take the resident to the Home Area's balcony/patio, or outside of Dearness Home for a walk in the grounds  
(for more information on resident absences from the Home, please see "Residents Leaving and Returning to Dearness Home")
- Resident meal times:
  - If either the EC or the resident are not fully vaccinated, the EC will remain in the resident's room if staying to assist through a mealtime (the resident meals will be served in the resident's room)
  - If both EC and resident are fully vaccinated, EC may choose to join the resident in the dining room to assist
  - The EC's mask must remain on at all times
- At the end of the visit, directly proceed to exit the building
- Acknowledge that the failure to follow expectations is a serious matter that may result in a discontinuation of Caregiver access

### **Outbreak Precautions or Failure of Febrile Screening**

- In the event a home enters into a COVID-19 outbreak in the resident's Home area, continuation of visits will be discussed with the Essential Caregiver to review risks of continued visits.
- In the event a resident is isolated, the Essential Caregiver will be notified that they will be required to wear the appropriate PPE and will discuss whether they wish to continue the visits
- In the event a home enters into a COVID-19 outbreak, Essential Caregivers will be notified if public health require a negative PCR test result within the last 7 days to enter the Home