COVID-19 and you

Dear

We do understand that the current outbreak of COVID-19 may be particularly worrying for you and those you support. As you are identified as someone who looks after another person, we are reaching out to let you know that we recognise you may be facing increased caring challenges and we haven’t forgotten about you.

We have included some information and resources with this letter which will offer advice about the options you may want to take and point you to support that is available, should you need it.

We also ask you to consider what support you might be able to discuss and arrange in the short-term from your family and friends and the wider community support, that could help you to manage your caring role and other life matters.

We appreciate that the current restrictions may make it more difficult to carry out your usual tasks related to caring and for you to get a break for yourself during the day and you may be challenged about your movements. As we recognise your needs are not always well understood, we have provided a letter for you at the end to use should you be challenged. This will help you identify yourself and your needs, so these can be easily met by retailers and others.

If you haven’t already due to time pressures or other priorities, we encourage you to try to put some plans in place to ensure that you consider how best to look after your own health and wellbeing. We may write to you again in the near future when more relevant advice becomes available so that you receive an update on support and how to access it. If this information is not relevant to you and you do not want to receive further communication from us, please do let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Presmeg
Executive Director for Adult Social Care
Key contacts:

**Essex Welfare Service**
The Essex Welfare Service is for people who are unable to access the support they need at this time and is run by Essex County Council and Provide.
Website: [www.essexwelfareservice.org](http://www.essexwelfareservice.org)
Telephone: 0300 303 9988

**Carers First**
Essex County Councils commissioned Carers Support service providing telephone and online support, wellbeing checks and helping carers to co-ordinate the support they need in their locality.
Website: [https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/essex](https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/essex)
Telephone: 0300 303 1555
Email: hello@carersfirst.org.uk

**Action for Family Carers**
Provide support across Essex including telephone befriending (Essex Befriends) and support with health and wellbeing (Feeling Good Caring Well):
Website: [www.affc.org.uk](http://www.affc.org.uk)
Telephone: 0300 770 80 90
Email: care@affc.org.uk

**Essex Carers Support**
Providing a local point of contact and support for family carers living in North Essex.
Facebook: Essex Carers Support
Telephone: 01255 474410
Email: admin@essexcarerssupport.org.uk

**Essex Carers Network**
Providing a point of contact and support for families carer of a family member with a learning disability.
Email: wendy@essexcarersnetwork.co.uk
Telephone: 07876025480

**Adult Social Care Connects**
For queries relating to social care needs for yourself and those you support, care packages and emergency plans.
Telephone: 0345 603 7630
Textphone: 0345 758 5592
[socialcaredirect@essex.gov.uk](mailto:socialcaredirect@essex.gov.uk)

For out of hours queries contact the **Emergency Duty Service**
Telephone: 0345 606 1212
Useful information:

- For guidance on caring for friends or family during the virus outbreak and what do if you or the person you care for has symptoms, visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-providing-unpaid-care/guidance-for-those-who-provide-unpaid-care-to-friends-or-family

- For information specifically related to people who look after someone, including resources and answers to frequently asked questions, please go to the Carers UK Coronavirus page: https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19

- In this difficult time, people in the community are coming together to plan how they can be aware of and provide support to those in their community who need it. You may have neighbours of people locally who are willing to help, with things like help getting shopping and medications. Some people are also using technology to check in with others to help reduce the effects of burnout or feeling isolated. Local social media groups are being set up to coordinate volunteers and we have been working with people locally and our community partners to set up a new Facebook group, which you may want to join if you can. Someone supporting you or family members could also support you by joining: https://www.facebook.com/groups/essexcoronavirusactionsupport/


- If you’d like to access some reading to support you in explaining to members of your family or those you support about the virus, Books Beyond Words have produced 4 books which are free to download from: https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/downloads-shop

More information about COVID-19 can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public


* Please note this information is subject to change so please check the above website regularly.
To whom it may concern

RE: COVID-19 – Accessing the Community

The adult you have stopped is identified as an Unpaid Carer by Essex County Council and its partner organisations. They are responsible for looking after a family member, relative or neighbour with their health and social care needs. The tasks required of a Carer include:

- Support with personal care and dressing
- Support with medication and meal preparation
- Shopping and cleaning tasks
- Financial and other practical support, such as socialising and accessing community-based activities.

We need to support Carers during this time to access what they need to look after their own health and wellbeing, and of those they support. He/she needs to spend time outside of their home to carry out the tasks associated with being a carer.

Their accessing the community is in line with the latest guidance below, and the person they care for’s support plan:

You can leave your home for medical need. If you (or a person in your care) have a specific health condition that requires you to leave the home to maintain your health - including if that involves travel beyond your local area - then you can do so. This could, for example, include where individuals with learning disabilities or autism require specific exercise in an open space two or three times each day - ideally in line with a care plan agreed with a medical professional.

We thank you for your understanding. However, if you have any particular concerns about a situation please contact us on the details below.

socialcaredirect@essex.gov.uk
0345 603 7630