



ChevrahKadisha

20 March 2020

Dear Community Members

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

At the Chev we have had our heads down over the past few weeks dealing with the urgent matter of protecting (shielding) our frailest and most vulnerable community members - the nearly 1,000 residents of our facilities. We are conscious of the gravity of our responsibility and take it extremely seriously. Nothing is more important at this time than protecting those entrusted to our care who are aged and more susceptible to this virus. I would like to share with you the steps that have been taken so far in this rapidly-evolving crisis, which should please G-d soon be behind us.

Access Control

Because Covid-19 is so easily transmitted and people may be infectious long before symptoms become evident, we moved early on Friday 13th March and took decisive steps to close our facilities to the public. We adopted a policy of *speed over perfection* by blocking access to our campuses to everyone besides staff and service providers and adapting to circumstances as they arose. Every single staff member and service provider now carries identification and is screened before being allowed access to our properties. Our residents and community have responded positively.

Furthermore, we instituted a policy of '*shielding*', which is a step beyond social distancing. We created three bubbles around our most frail residents. Bubble #1 is our outer perimeter which does not allow anyone (aside from staff and contractors) to enter the facilities. Bubble #2 is at the receptions of the various facilities which ensures that even staff and contractors who have no reason to be there, can go no further. Bubble #3 starts outside every frail care unit and is manned by a qualified nurse further blocking access to staff and residents who are not specifically authorised to go into these units. For those who work in these units, a second screening will take place here.

Cleaning:

We have also doubled down on our cleaning regimen to meet the highest levels of infection-control hygiene. Given the size of our facilities, cleaning all handrails, surfaces, food trolleys, lift buttons, door handles, etc. multiple times throughout the day requires additional staff and training.

E-visiting:

Family and friends are currently barred from visiting our residents and we understand how difficult this can be. We have set up an e-visiting system via Skype and WhatsApp which can be arranged through contacting our e-visiting hotline on 063 212 4193. This is not a



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ChevrahKadisha

general information line - for that the community is encouraged to call each facility and if after hours our 24-hour hotline 082 499 1010.

Residential Activities:

We continue to run a full range of on-site activities to keep our residents busy and entertained. We still have movies, exercise classes and shiurim in smaller groups. Life continues normally for them with delicious catering, Shabbat shul services (albeit without visitors), and the gardens, Nosh Café and Tea Garden which are busy, social and active. Residents sit outside enjoying the sun and each other's company.

Vaccinations:

We are offering free flu vaccinations to all residents, staff and Chev community welfare beneficiaries. Although this is not a Corona vaccine, it will improve the overall health of the community.

Financial and Social assistance:

Community members using these services can only get access to the main campus by appointment but are barred from entering bubbles two and three. Please be advised you will be subjected to standard screening protocols.

Cemetery:

We are asking that funerals be kept to less than 100 people and in time we may need to further restrict this number. We have closed the Ohel to everyone except for **immediate** family, the funeral processions will begin outside the Ohel.

Expert guidance:

I am most grateful to our Board of Governors and the experts who are guiding us every step of the way at this crucial time, most notably Dr Richard Friedland who is a member of our Board and chairs our Medical Advisory Committee.

Staff:

I wish to pay tribute to our incredibly devoted staff at the Chev who go over and above the call of duty. I thank our crisis management team, our medical care professionals and our cleaning and security staff, who are at the coalface of this challenge. We have a dedicated research team constantly looking into international best practice in aged and care facilities. This assists us in learning and gleaning new information every day while we try to stay ahead of the curve.

National Coordination:

The Chev has been asked to take on the role of coordinating Jewish care facilities nationally. We have set up a communication group and are working together to share documents, research and protocols. This forum is proving very valuable.

In conclusion, I have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from you, our remarkable community. You have offered encouragement, understanding and practical





ChevrahKadisha

assistance. I have had calls from suppliers to donate products and from donors to enquire as to how they can help with the additional expenses we are facing at this time.

Thank you all for your care and assistance as we navigate these uncharted and turbulent waters. We are uplifted by your genuine concern and humbled by this responsibility.

Please stay safe and keep well,

Saul

Saul Tomson
Chief Executive Officer
Chevrah Kadisha Group

Arcadia

Selwyn
Segal

Our
Parents
Home

Sandringham
Gardens