

COVID-19 POLICY BRIEFING – ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

20/03/2020

Summary - The framework intends to provide support to ensure consideration is given to ethical values and principles when organising and delivering social care for adults, recognising that as pressures and demand are expected to rise, challenging decisions may need to be taken on how to redirect resources where they are most needed and to prioritise individual care needs.

Key points

- The framework sets out an expectation that professionals, organisations and public agencies work together at a local level and that appropriate records are kept of which decisions are taken and their justifications, to ensure accountability as well as share learning with others as the outbreak develops.
- There is the recognition that local authorities and the wider health and care workforce are faced with difficult decisions every day, but that planning for and responding to COVID-19 as it develops will require making difficult decisions under new and exceptional pressures with limited time, resources or information.
- Alongside ethical considerations, every decision will require consideration of individual wellbeing, overall public good and the resources that are available. The values and principles should serve as a starting point to guide decision-making, supported by the views of lead professionals and collaboration across partners
- The framework sets out eight principles, but recognises that where resources are constrained and there are surges in demand, it may not be feasible to consider all the principles, but that actions should be set within the context of appropriate risk management and considerations of individual wellbeing, overall public good and available information and resources.
- The eight principles are:
 1. Respect
 2. Reasonableness
 3. Minimising harm
 4. Inclusiveness
 5. Accountability
 6. Flexibility
 7. Proportionality
 8. Community

Implications for Surrey

- The framework is aimed at strategic policy makers to support response planning and organisation of adult social care during and as COVID-19 develops.
- It also aims to support the work of those in the health and social care workforce who are developing policies in response to the outbreak, in line with their own professional codes of conduct and regulations.

- Local professional leaders, such as principal social workers and principal occupational therapists, will be key in ensuring the framework is applied and understood. As such, the skills of these professionals should be used to help develop and review locally agreed processes.

Further information

- [Ethical Framework](#)