

Creating an Ethics Taskforce multi-disciplinary team

Isle of Wight Council

From March 2020, a high volume of Government guidance was published to assist care providers in their response to COVID-19. Isle of Wight Council (IOW) immediately identified that care settings would benefit from support to understand and apply the extensive and regularly changing guidance, given they were facing the complex challenges presented by the pandemic.

IOW Council, created an 'Ethics Taskforce' multi-disciplinary team (MDT) made up of relevant leaders which swiftly drew key messages from guidance for those working in various care settings, producing a range of quick reference guides to give managers and their staff fast, digestible and implementable information.

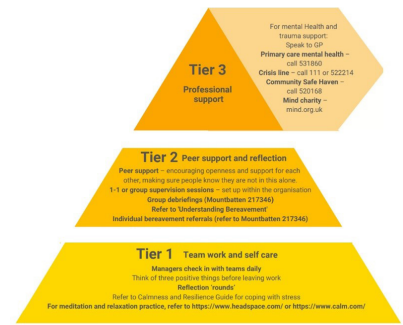
The taskforce was made up of experts who considered the guidance and created the necessary resources to provide the most appropriate advice. It included the Service Manager and Strategic Commissioning Lead, the Service Manager of the Integrated Learning Disabilities Service, the Safeguarding Adults Board Coordinator, the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Group Manager, the Director of Psychosocial and Spiritual Care from Mountbatten Hospice, the Head of Education and Training from Mountbatten Hospice, a CQC inspector and representatives from NHS Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group and the IOW Health Care Partnership.



“The Ethics Taskforce’s aim was to distil Government guidance, while nurturing and enabling a best practice response to the pandemic and ensuring that statutory responsibilities were met, amidst the changing landscape of the pandemic. The group had a clear vision and passion for what we needed to achieve and pulled specialisms together to deliver on a variety of resources that would normally take much more time to develop.”

Simon Homes,
Principal Social Worker, Isle of Wight Council

The team created a daily bulletin for all providers to disseminate key information and updates, in so doing also gathered best practice stories from providers on the island and recirculated them across the sector. When the effect of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of staff became apparent, the taskforce also developed straightforward, accessible [three-tier wellbeing resource](#) for managers, to encourage workforce resilience. This resource included [tools managers could use with their teams](#), as well as one-to-one counselling sessions for staff. The resources were developed with strong input from Mountbatten Hospice along with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).



The taskforce went on to provide webinars which enabled providers to share experiences during the outbreak and feel assured they were not alone in the issues they faced. In total 66 providers were involved in the roll-out of the taskforce’s coordinated response and all providers across the island were included.

Looking forward, the MDT will continue sharing guidance when necessary as well as the webinars, and to keep a focus on supporting providers with wellbeing and resilience. The wellbeing and resilience toolkit will be expanded to include informal and formal carers in the community, recognising that many of the support and advice mechanisms previously available to carers in the community are now no longer available.

IOW Council’s Ethics Taskforce has played a vital role in ensuring that local providers are best equipped to navigate the challenges presented by the pandemic, while also supporting the front line to respond to mental health implications of COVID-19.

Top tips for creating an ethics taskforce MDT



Get the right people in the room

By having key members from each relevant discipline, the Ethics Taskforce were able to fully consider the broad factors facing care providers at the time and provide appropriate advice and relevant and considered support efficiently.



Have a clear vision

The key members of this group were able to identify exactly what was needed to support providers, giving the group a clear vision on what they had to deliver and fostering an accelerated, cohesive, multi-agency, response as a result.



Create an open dialogue

This process also opened a dialogue with registered managers, making valuable connections which proved vital throughout the pandemic. It ensured that not only were the taskforce able to disseminate the necessary information, but also create a feedback loop where information and best practice from the front line could be harnessed and shared further.

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