



## COVID-19 CLINICAL SOLUTIONS

### **What did you do?**

We have formed an in-house ethical issues team who will be available all hours to support clinicians and help aid in difficult situations and decision making.

### **Who are you?**

Jo Simpson, Domini James, Claire Anderton (Haxby Group, York)

### **What was the problem?**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, clinicians have been working in a very different way to their usual practice, working under considerable pressures and making difficult and challenging decisions. It was felt an ethical issues team would allow clinicians to share these decisions and legitimise seeking advice, ensuring no clinician was overwhelmed or felt alone in such situations.

### **What was the solution?**

The local CCG and a neighbouring hospital trust both have ethics committees for complex and long-term ethical issues but the turnaround time for these is longer with a central email process. Therefore, it was felt an in-house service with familiar/approachable GPs, a fast-turnaround and knowledge of the local population and resources would be of benefit. Four GP partners who are leads on palliative care, care homes, safeguarding and wellbeing make up the committee. They can be contacted anytime during the working day, with two members of the team and the referring clinician discussing each case with the aim of a same day decision.

Cases discussed thus far include complicated advanced care plans, DNACPR decisions, issues surrounding death certification, and complex decisions about patients in care homes. In general, it has mainly been less experienced clinicians who have sought advice from the team, but there has been a wide variety, including other partners. Those that have contacted the team have said they would use it again and recommend it to their colleagues as, 'it made me feel much more confident and supported in my decision'. The number of cases has started to slow as things settle with the pandemic but the continuation of the team is something the practice is discussing for future complex issues.

### **Where can we find out more?**

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