

**Advance care planning – message from Dr Chris Mills (Chair Clinical Strategy Group for Frailty) and Dr Eileen Burns (Consultant in Care of the Elderly, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust)**

We are all busy changing systems within our communities to cope with the new reality that we face. The amount of change we have achieved in a short space of time is staggering. We know that many of you are thinking about your residents who are at high risk, and specific actions to take.

Can we please encourage you to start by ensuring all your residents have an opportunity to discuss and agree an individualised advance care plan. Such plans should cover CPR, treatment escalation and preferred place of death, particularly if, in you and their doctors clinical opinion, they are unlikely to benefit from hospital-based treatment. We know people and their families welcome the opportunity to develop advance care plans and often express a wish to remain at home in their final days.

Sadly the Italian experience has been that severely frail care home residents who develop Covid-19 and become unwell enough to require hospital admission, have frequently died. However it is important that such decisions around advance care plans must always be patient centred and individualised. The death rate overall in Italy for all over 80 year olds (including those who are not in care homes) is reported as 15%-20%.

NICE has issued the following guidance - [COVID-19 rapid guideline: critical care](#). Whilst this describes criteria for accessing critical care it does give those community carers a sense of what 'in hospital' decision making will be, and so potentially help us in the advanced care planning conversations to come.

This guidance uses a [Clinical Frailty Scale](#) score of 5 or more as an indicator of prognosis. For those unfamiliar with the CFS, a score of 5 is applicable for someone with "mild frailty" - likely to need help with shopping/ finances/ medication possibly cooking but independent otherwise - ie fitter than the usual care home patient.

If anyone does have time to learn more about frailty scoring there's a [really good e-learning resource](#) which takes about 15 mins to complete.