

Decision Making Framework

Making decisions in the context of COVID-19

These six steps guide decision making (example considerations are provided):

Step 1 - Legal Requirements

Is there a relevant legislative requirement?

Is the decision reviewable?

What is proportionate from a human rights perspective?

Step 2 - Public Health Considerations

Are there relevant quarantine requirements?

Do any public health directives apply?

Step 3 - Immediate Danger/Immediate Safety

Is there immediate risk to a person's safety or health?

Is anyone currently displaying COVID-19 symptoms?

Step 4 - Risk Assessment

Are there vulnerable people to be considered?

What PPE, hygiene and social distancing practices may be utilised to mitigate risk?

Step 5 - Explore Alternate Options

Can the same outcome be achieved at a later date?

What technology can be utilised to support the outcome?

Step 6 – Communication

What relevant parties should be involved in the decision?

What is the most appropriate way to communicate the decision?



Guiding Principles

Child Safety is a critical frontline service and elements of service delivery to children, young people, parents, families and carers must continue in the context of COVID-19.

Service delivery will recognise the importance of everyone's health, be consistent with expert health guidance, and uphold, as much as is possible, the rights held by children, young people, parents, families and carers.

The principles of the **Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice** assist us at this challenging time:

- We always focus on safety, belonging and wellbeing
- We recognise that cultural knowledge and understanding is central to children's safety, belonging and wellbeing
- We build collaborative working relationships and use our authority respectfully and thoughtfully
- We listen to children's, families' and communities' views and involve them in planning and decision making
- We build and strengthen networks to increase safety and support for children, young people and families
- We seek to understand the impact of the past, but stay focused on the present and the future
- We are rigorous and hopeful in our search for strengths and solutions
- We critically reflect on our work and continue to grow and develop

Deciding Critical and Essential Services

In coming months Child Safety may be challenged by reductions in staffing capacity and decisions will need to be made about which services can be offered and by what means and which need to be deferred. As at 2 April 2020, the following services are categorised as critical and essential:

Critical

1. Investigations and assessments - particularly those with a 24 hour response
2. Support and monitoring for children subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement or Protective Supervision Order
3. Critical incident responses
4. Negotiating and maintaining safe placements for children who require care arrangements (including SOCs)
5. Maintaining family contact for children
6. Providing information to parents, particularly those concerned for their children
7. Supporting foster and kinship carers/Foster and Kinship Care Support Line
8. Intake
9. Obtaining emergent child protection orders when needed
10. Maintaining custody for children in need of protection subject to expiring orders

These critical priorities must continue. Workers will, in conjunction with their supervisors, determine the most appropriate method of delivery which may be face-to-face or via phone, email, Skype or Apps. Face to face family contact should be assessed on a case by case basis.

Essential

1. Placement meetings
2. Family Group Meetings and case plan reviews
3. Contact with young people who have stable living arrangements

These essential services may be offered by phone/teleconference/Skype. Ongoing record keeping for critical and essential services is assumed.