Protocol for an Immediate Response to Critical Incidents

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| Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board | Date: 13th September 2022 | Status: Approved |
| Author: N Kingham – IRG Task and Finish Group | Previous version: December 2020 | Review Date: September 2026 |

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Immediate Response to Critical Incidents protocol is to set out the arrangements in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region to provide a rapid, multi-agency response to managing the consequences of critical incidents.

This protocol is complementary and in support of, but does not replace, other protocols and processes, i.e:

* Wales Safeguarding Procedures
* Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (PRUDIC)
* Emergency Planning Processes
* Critical Incidents in Schools

**If there any queries relating to which process to use please contact the Safeguarding Business Unit on Cwmtafsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk to discuss.**

1. **CRITICAL INCIDENT DEFINITION**

A critical incident (for the purposes of this protocol) can be defined as an event, or series of events;

1. That is sudden, unexpected and out of the realms of common human experience; **and**
2. it has resulted in (or could have caused) death, life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development; **and**
3. an immediate effective response requires multi-agency co-ordination to manage threat, risk, harm and the impact on a group of individuals and/or the wider community.
4. **CRITERIA AND TIMESCALES**

An Immediate Response should be considered for any critical incident where the above definition is met.

**If the critical incident involves the unexpected death of a child or young person under the age of 18 years of age then the Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (PRUDIC) process will be initiated and will take primacy.** If there is an identified need for a wider multi-agency response to manage threat, risk, harm in relation to a group of individuals (in addition to the direct peer group) and/or the wider community, then an Immediate Response Group can also be convened. Each case will be considered on an individual basis to identify how the IRG process will be managed alongside the PRUDIC process in these circumstances.

**Any agency can request an Immediate Response** to a critical incident via the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Business Unit (Cwmtafsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk). The Business Unit must then discuss and agree with the Police Superintendent (or a suitable deputy) who is responsible for making the final decision about implementing the protocol.

If an Immediate Response Group (IRG) meeting is required the Police Superintendent (or a suitable deputy) will chair the meeting. In cases where there is a more specialist input required, a suitable alternative Chair should be identified.

***Timescales***

Although the term immediate is used as a response to critical incidents covered by this protocol, the actual timescales will vary depending on the case.

Information relating to the case should be shared with agencies as soon as is practically possible but **no later than 2 working** days after the critical incident has occurred. This should ensure that any immediate risks to any individual or group of individuals are identified promptly.

1. **PROCESS FOR AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

***Notification of Incidents and Confirm Facts***

* The agency referring to the Business Unit must endeavour to clarify the facts of the situation as far as possible and consider the criteria for implementing the Immediate Response in the first instance. This would involve the agency considering its own legislative procedures specific to certain professions.
* At the same time, a safeguarding referral should be considered under the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

***Gather Information***

* In cases where it is clear that the incident meets the definition for an immediate response an IRG meeting will be convened.
* In some cases, it may not be clear what the risks are to individuals or what the wider community impact is, as a result of the critical incident. In these circumstances, the Police Superintendent may wish to gather information electronically before making a decision on whether an IRG needs to be convened.
* The Police Superintendent and the referring agency (if this is not the Police) will provide the CTMSB Business Unit with all the information they have on any individuals or groups that mat be affected by the critical incident.
* The CTMSB Business Unit will complete the actions template in Appendix 3 with the information provided and circulate to the relevant regional and local single points of contact for completion within 1 working day.
* The Police Superintendent will be provided with the information and will make the final decision on whether the risks and impact are being managed appropriately or whether the case would benefit from an IRG meeting.

***Convene an Immediate Response Group meeting***

* The CTMSB Business Unit will be responsible for convening the IRG meeting.
* All relevant partner agencies identified as needing to attend will be invited via email, followed by an electronic meeting request. The number of people attending should not be excessive and should be limited to those who are providing information and able to agree actions on behalf of their agency.
* A list of agency Single Points of Contact is provided in Appendix 2. Each agency is required to identify any other individuals that need to be invited, depending on the case.
* Any briefings to professionals/staff prior to the IRG must be agreed with the Chair. Any media briefings prior to the IRG will need the agreement of the Superintendent/IRG Chair and notification to the relevant Press Officer(s) in the agency/ies concerned.

***Prior to the IRG Meeting***

* Individual agencies should identify those closest to the subject(s). This may include, for example, family, friends, partner, work colleagues, club membership, teams, staff, etc.
* Individual agencies should also identify any other individuals, for whom this incident may be a trigger, potentially increasing their level of risk.
* For those individuals not known to services, consideration needs to be given to provision of support to the wider community, particularly for those groups highlighted as at increased risk.

***The Immediate Response Group Meeting***

* The IRG Chair will outline the purpose and content of the meeting (statement included within agenda in Appendix 3).
* The police officer present will be asked to provide a brief overview of the critical incident and, where possible, provide a list of those individuals who are potentially affected/impacted. This may involve family, friends and others (including, for example, witnesses to the incident) who may require support following the critical incident.
* Each agency will share any information they have on each of the individuals or groups identified and where necessary, provide information on any other individuals or groups who may be affected. **Information that cannot be obtained at the time of the meeting should be submitted to the Business Unit within 2 working days of the meeting being held.**
* The risks for each individual should be identified and discussed and actions to mitigate any risks and/or impact will be agreed and assigned to the relevant agencies involved.
* Care of individuals already subject to Care and Support Plans, Child Protection Plans, Adult Protection Plans or within the Looked After System needs to be formally handed to their key worker to ensure that their individual needs are met
* Where appropriate, the IRG will determine the agency who will work with the Police Family Liaison Officer (PFLO), if appointed, to establish contact with the family.
* Each agency should consider how they can contribute help and support to meet the identified needs either themselves or by enabling other agencies to do so.
* Organisations will also need to consider any additional resources required to support the IRG process to ensure that services are maintained whilst providing support in response to local identified need following an incident.
* Agencies first point of contacts should be aware of relevant services which they can signpost any queries to.
* The date and time of the next meeting to be agreed.
* After each meeting, actions should be undertaken as agreed at the IRG. This will be co-ordinated by the CTMSB Business Unit.
* Follow-up meetings will be held until the Chair is satisfied that all actions have been addressed. At the final IRG meeting an exit strategy will be developed to address care for family, friends and staff where appropriate, to be managed by mainstream services.
* Consideration will also be given to submitting a referral for a formal case review e.g. Adult Practice Review, Child Practice Review, Domestic Homicide Review.
* Agencies should maintain accurate records in order to collect relevant information to facilitate a review if required.

***Brief staff***

* The decision about who will brief staff and the content of the brief will be agreed by the IRG.
* Each agency will take responsibility for briefing staff as appropriate. Factual information will be provided, along with an outline of the actions to be taken and by whom.
* Information about supporting individuals will be provided including practical information about what to say, what signs of risk to look out for which may indicate the need for additional support, etc.
* Agencies have a responsibility to ensure that staff attending the IRG meeting or dealing with the critical incident are fully supported and understand the purpose.

***Additional information for supporting people who are affected when there is an ongoing criminal investigation***

* The decision about who will brief the affected individuals and the content of the brief will be agreed by the IRG.
* Formal support systems will be put in place prior to briefing.
* Affected individuals will be informed about the incident, providing them with factual information as agreed by the IRG.
* Information about the support available will be provided as part of the briefing.
* Agencies need to consider cultural and religious issues / differences and significant / specific events and should consider the ramifications of possible blame.
* Information should be imparted to affected individuals as early as possible (for example, not at the end of the school day).
* School-based or residential staff should monitor initial reactions in affected individuals and provide appropriate support, giving them the opportunity to talk through feelings, etc should they wish to.
* Agencies need to consider notifying people closest to those involved in the incident before telling others in order to lessen the impact and ensure ability to provide support.
* Staff should be aware that grief affects different people in different ways and therefore those closest to the subject may not necessarily be the most upset.

***Debrief Staff following the IRG process***

* Individual agencies will take responsibility to debrief staff in order to review their response to the critical incident and to clarify lessons learnt and further action to be taken.
* Individual services need to be aware of their staff input and how they feel about providing that support, ensuring that staff can access support for themselves.

1. **MANAGEMENT OF LARGE SCALE INCIDENTS**

This may involve:

* The identification of a cluster of incidents
* Identification based on the number, timescale and proximity (geographically and socially) of incidents occurring locally.
* Consideration will need to be given to incidents occurring in neighbouring areas and the possibility of a single case locally being part of a cluster in a bordering area or vice versa.

Upon identification of a cluster of incidents

* In some cases (such as suspected suicides) the IRG may need to meet daily to monitor the situation and ensure that appropriate support and prevention services / activities are in place.
* Work will focus more intensely on providing support for those identified as at risk and for the wider community as a whole.
* A cluster of incidents would trigger a more senior interagency response requiring strategic level staff to meet on a regular basis in addition to the IRG.
* The strategic group will review information provided by the IRG including action(s) taken and will consider, for example, resource allocation to ensure that services are available to support local need and to work proactively to prevent further incidents.

1. **Media**

* The IRG will discuss and agree issues relating to the media.
* A single point of contact for all media queries will be agreed.
* Press releases should include information about appropriate help-line numbers and websites.
* It is important that there is liaison with the family before any information is released to the media so that they are aware and agree with information provided.
* In the case of a cluster of incidents the strategic group will agree how to manage media relations.
* Any media statements will require the agreement of the CTMSB Chair.

1. **Governance And Accountability**

* The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB) Business Unit will maintain all the records of IRG meetings, including the storage of all minutes.
* Disclosure of content of the minutes will be with the permission of the IRG Chair/Superintendent and the CTMSB Chair.
* The outcome of the IRG meetings will be reported to the CTMSB suicide review group to identify any lessons learned.
* Information relating to drug-related deaths can also be fed into meetings as part of the Drug-Related Deaths Protocol.

An IRG may need to be reconvened at future dates which coincide with significant events, e.g. anniversary of incident, etc.

**Appendix 1 – Flow Chart**

**Event or series of events identified**

**IRG to:**

**Confirm all information provided and Identify the risk for each individual**

**Agree support needed and identify responsibility**

**Discuss and agree next steps and future meetings**

IRG Meeting Convened

Business unit coordinate all agencies responses

Information shared via email

Agencies to identify involvements and what actions/ support they can provide.

Identify those closest to the subject(s)

Identify others at risk Identify those involved in the

immediate incident

Business Unit liaise with Police Supt

Refer to other relevant protocols or processes e.g. Wales Safeguarding Procedures, PRUDIC,

Emergency Planning, Critical Incidents in Schools

Contact the Business Unit [cwmtafsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:cwmtafsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk)

Does it meet the definition (outlined? in Section 2 of the Protocol)?

**Appendix 2 - AGENCY SINGLE POINTS OF CONTACT**

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| **CORE REGIONAL POINTS OF CONTACT** | |
| Police Superintendent  Investigating Officer | South Wales Police |
| Business Manager | CTSMB Business Unit |
| Head of Safeguarding | Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board |
| Primary Care Development Manager | Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board |
| CAMHS Manager | Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board |
| Chief Executive | Cwm Taf Morgannwg MIND |
| **CORE LOCAL POINTS OF CONTACT** | |
| Counselling Service Co-ordinator | Local Authority commissioned provider |
| Head of Youth Offending Service | Cwm Taf or Bridgend |
| Education Psychology Service | Local authority specific |
| Youth Service | Local authority specific |
| Communications Lead | Local authority or Board |
| Safeguarding Lead (or nominated deputy) – Children Services\* | Local authority specific |
| Safeguarding Lead – Adults Services | Local authority specific |
| Adult Mental Health representative | Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board |
| Mental Health Senior Manager | Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board |

\*if initial enquiries reveal that there are children active to the department then the relevant Manager should be invited to attend also

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| **ADDITIONAL REGIONAL AND LOCAL POINTS OF CONTACT DEPENDENT ON THE CASE** | |
| Senior Manager | National Probation Service |
| Detective Inspector (PPU) | South Wales Police |
| Substance Misuse Co-ordinator | Cwm Taf Morgannwg |
| Senior Manager | WAST |
| CSP representative (covering Housing and Public protection | Local authority specific |
| Headteacher | Relevant School |

**APPENDIX 3 – AGENDA, CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT, ATTENDANCE RECORD AND ACTIONS LIST**

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| **IMMEDIATE RESPONSE GROUP MEETING**  **AGENDA** |

**Date and Time**

**Venue**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**2. Outline purpose of the meeting:**

The purpose of this meeting is to consider [*critical incident*] and to manage any threat, risk or harm to individuals and / or the wider community.

The content of this meeting is confidential and should not be shared outside this meeting without the permission of the Chair and this includes the content of any minutes. The minutes may be subject to requests for disclosure under the General Data Protection Regulations. Each request will be considered on its merits and by agreement of the Chair.

The meeting will aim to reflect that all individuals who are discussed should be treated fairly, with respect and without improper discrimination. Everyone present needs to share all details that they have in relation to the individuals discussed in order to ensure that we are able to identify levels of risk and to agree appropriate support to meet their needs.

Everyone present should be mindful that anything disclosed during the meeting could be used as part of a criminal investigation.

During the course of the meeting you may hear information which some people may find difficult or upsetting to hear. As part of this work we all acknowledge that we cannot always get things right but will endeavour to get things least wrong.

The meeting will make recommendations for agencies to complete.

**3. Senior Investigating Officer to give report**

**4. Share information known**

**a. Consider links to other recent incidents to identify potential cluster development**

**b. Consider links to other processes (e.g. Child Protection, Adult Protection)**

**5. Identify the risks and mitigating actions for each individual or group**

**6. Determine the need for briefing, counselling and other support**

**7. Identify and agree person(s) responsible and timescales for individual tasks**

**8. Protection of front-line services**

**9. Media response**

**10. Any Other Business**

**11. Time and venue of next meeting**

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| **Immediate Response Group Attendance Record** |

Case:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

**When you sign the attendance sheet you are signing up to the following confidentiality statement. All agencies should ensure that the minutes are retained in a confidential and appropriately restricted manner.**

The content of this meeting is confidential and should not be shared outside this meeting without the permission of the Chair and this includes the content of any minutes.

The meeting will aim to reflect that all individuals who are discussed should be treated fairly, with respect and without improper discrimination. Everyone present needs to share all details that they have in relation to the individuals discussed in order to ensure that we are able to identify levels of risk and to agree appropriate support to meet their needs.

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| **Name** | **Role / Job Title and Contact details for receipt of minutes (Please state preference – secure email or hard copy)** | **Signature** |
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**PROTOCOL FOR AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

**Immediate Response Group Actions List**

**In Relation to: (Please include Name, Gender, DOB, Age, Address)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **BRIEF SUMMARY OF CIRCUMSTANCES** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **METHOD** | **SEXUAL ORIENTATION** | **HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS** | **EMPLOYMENT STATUS & OCCUPATION** |
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| **SERVICE** | **DETAILS OF CURRENT INVOLVEMENT** | **DETAILS OF PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT** |
| **MENTAL HEALTH (LRI, SBAR)** |  |  |
| **OTHER HEALTH eg GP** |  |  |
| **ADULT SERVICES** |  |  |
| **POLICE (RUI, PB, CB)** |  |  |
| **CHILDREN SERVICES** |  |  |
| **SUBSTANCE MISUSE** |  |  |
| **PROBATION** |  |  |
| **EDUCATION** |  |  |
| **COUNSELLING SERVICES** |  |  |
| **OTHER (please specify)** |  |  |

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| **TRIGGERS / INDICATORS** | | | | | | | | | |
| **RELATIONSHIP ISSUES** | **FINANCIAL /JOB LOSS** | **LONG TERM PAIN** | **ILLNESS/ DIAGNOSIS** | **ISOLATED** | **BEREAVEMENT** | **DV PERP** | **DV VICTIM** | **CARER** | **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| **INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS IMPACTED AND ACTIONS AGREED** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **INDIVIDUAL AT RISK** | **RELATIONSHIP** | **DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS** | **ACTIONS REQUIRED / MEASURES TO MITIGATE RISKS** | **RESPONSIBLE** | **DATE OF FOLLOW UP & PROGRESS UPDATE** |
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**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**