

Lincolnshire Registered Services

Critical Incident Management Handbook

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The policy is designed as a guide to assist staff and young people in responding appropriately to incidents that are likely to cause trauma to individuals and/or affect the unit as a whole. The policy establishes basic procedures and reporting systems to cover preventative measures, immediate responses, and follow up actions to deal both with the immediate consequences and the longer term implications of a critical incident.

Given that the needs of the individual young people will vary and to allow for the individual abilities and judgement of staff, the policy is in broad terms and is designed to be amended to incorporate ongoing feedback which is essential to the management of all critical incidents.

It is the responsibility of the Manager to ensure that all staff receive a copy of this statement and are aware of the policy and basic guidelines that it contains. Copies should automatically be given to new employees when they report to work on their first day as part of the induction process.

While this handbook deals specifically with the management of critical incidents, it is not intended that it should stand alone but should be used in conjunction with other Lincolnshire Policies and Procedures.

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

INTERNAL

Janice Spencer	Head of Service	01522 554476
John Roberts	Service Manager	01522 568614
	Registered Manager	

EXTERNAL

Emergency Services		
Police		
Hospital		
Mouchel		
Gas		
Electricity		
Water		

Crisis counselling can be made with Employee Support and Counselling Service on the following number, by individuals or managers: 01522 836198

DEFINITION OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT

In general terms, a critical incident is defined as a traumatic event which does or is likely to cause extreme physical and/or emotional distress to staff and/or young people and may be regarded as outside the normal range of experience of the people affected. A critical incident may take place either on or off the premises. In other words, this policy is not limited to handling only those incidents that might occur on site.

Assessment of an incident must take into account both the reaction of the individual or individuals directly affected and the wider ranging effects on other staff and young people within the unit. It should also be borne in mind that people react in different ways both in their immediate and in their longer term responses to events.

A critical incident should be regarded as any incident which may put the staff or young people under significant risk or harm. In assessing a critical incident, consideration must be given to the prevailing factors and impact on the staff and/or young people at the time of the incident.

Some examples of critical incidents include:

- Any fatality, near fatality or incident likely to affect seriously a number of staff and/or young people
- Serious traffic accidents
- Murder or suicide involving young people/staff and their family members
- Serious physical or sexual assault
- Serious injury or death of a colleague
- Fire, explosion or bomb threat
- Hold up or attempted robbery
- Serious threats of violence and assault to staff/young people
- Major theft or vandalism
- Malicious or intentional threat of HIV infection
- Incidents involving abuse of children and young people
- Storms and natural disasters
- Serious pandemic incidents
- Hostage situations
- Infrastructure failure within the building
- Politically serious incidents

This is not an exhaustible list and will include any other serious incident which could result in a major failure of service delivery.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Formulate, implement and amend the crisis management plan
- Ensure a consistent approach to crisis management at the site level
- Co-ordinate and administer the resource allocation at site level
- Continue to measure the effectiveness of the crisis management plan
- Appoint and train personnel to all positions in the emergency control organisation
- Arrange for the conduct of evacuations and critical incident exercises
- Co-ordinate the promotion of crisis management at site level
- Negotiate and maintain a relationship with other appropriate external organisations.

An incident or potential incident should be reported to the Emergency Services immediately if there is an immediate risk of life or property. Where necessary, in such cases, evacuation procedures should be put in place.

If the incident does not appear to require the immediate despatch of Emergency Service, the Manager on Duty should be notified immediately and given the full details of the situation including the exact location of the incident and the type of incident. It is then their responsibility to pass on the information to Service Manager/Head of Service (or nominated deputy) who will determine the gravity of the situation.

The senior worker on shift will be responsible for the assessment and co-ordination of responses to the incident, although other staff members may be co-opted as necessary to deal with specific incidents.

Senior worker on shift will need to document events on a Critical Incident Log Sheet, accurately and in full details to assist in maintaining a true picture of the unfolding events.

All staff involved in an incident will be required to complete a Critical Incident Log Sheet at the earliest opportunity. This will assist in providing information for any inquiry which may follow at a later date.

PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

While it is impossible to foresee the events or factors that can lead to a critical incident, staff and young people are encouraged to be aware of the importance of planning to mitigate the effects of a traumatic event that could follow such an incident. The following should be used as a guide to prevention and preparation:

Emergency telephone contact numbers for External Emergency Services should be prominently displayed in all offices and public areas.

The availability of appropriate resources and the development of safety measures will be monitored on a regular basis through Regulation 34 checks. Staff have a duty of care to bring issues of safety to the attention of their immediate supervisors who should bring such issues to the attention of management.

The Residential Services management Team will be responsible for updating emergency telephone contact numbers and developing rosters for the establishment of a 24 hour on call service, details of which must be provided to all staff.

The management Team shall assist in the preparation of handouts for people affected by the critical incident. This information should include key contact and telephone numbers, particularly of people and organisations that can assist with alleviating the stress caused by the incident.

The Learning and Development Team will be approached to consider the provision of training programs for staff in topics of responding to emergency situations and stress management.

All staff and young people are to be made aware of safety and evacuation policies and procedures that are in place.

THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

The key to an effective and relevant response to a critical incident is **COORDINATION**. This will be achieved by following these important steps:

The initial response to a critical incident will be notification of the incident to, if necessary, the Emergency Services (externally) and then to notify the on call Manager.

Notification should include the type of incident, the exact location and details of any person or persons who might be injured, in distress, or at risk.

If people are at risk, they will be removed from the area and/or assistance will be rendered as necessary. The incident area will be sealed off if required.

ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Identification of people involved and the resources needed.

Implementation of response in terms of people and resources.

Establishment of a central information point. A single spokesperson, normally duty Manager in consultation with Service Manager would be responsible to provide up to the minute, accurate information to staff, young people, families of those involved and relevant managers.

The Press Officer will be appointed to disseminate information and speak to the media and other persons involved with the incident. Any enquiries need to be directed to their department immediately.

Notification of counselling services. Counselling service and, if required, outside agencies will be notified and will make themselves available to assist all those affected by the incident.

Supervision of property. Steps will be taken to supervise property, both personal property and any building or structures which might be unsafe and in need of immediate repairs.

FOLLOW UP ACTION

As soon as possible following a critical incident a meeting will be called to brief managers of the incident, responses and outcomes. This will lead to the identification of a nominated Senior Manager to co ordinate an action plan to ensure all relevant agencies/parties are notified and policies and procedures in relation to Health and Safety are implemented, reviewed and actioned.

A critical incident does not end with the immediate response. Important follow up procedures must be implemented in the areas of counselling, information dissemination, and debriefing.

Disseminate information to staff, young people and all those affected by the incident. Any enquiries from the media regarding the incident need to be directed to the Press Office.

Monitor the need for counselling and maintain contact with those who may need ongoing support, often at times and in locations outside of the normal work placement. Consideration should be given to personal contact with victims and those affected by the incident outside of normal hours. In exceptional circumstances, we will assess those affected by the incident and make referrals for counselling and/or advice to agencies outside of those normally provided by Lincolnshire County Council.

Provide literature to those affected by the incident on the possible short and long term effects.

Conduct debriefing sessions for everyone directly involved in the incident including, if necessary, the wider department.

Staffing issues need to be considered and contingency plans need to be in place to ensure staff available to cover vacancies in emergencies. This will include staff being available from other units and relevant services within the authority where appropriate.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of the units response to a critical incident is essential to the ongoing development and effectiveness of the Critical Incident management Policy. The following guidelines should be noted:

Shortly after the incident, managers, in consultation with staff and young people, will evaluate the implementation of procedures and responses.

Procedures adopted in a particular incident will form the basis of improved responses to trauma management, with staff and young people encouraged to provide their thoughts and experiences in order to assist in the development process.

Ongoing consultation will be held with staff and young people on critical response strategies.

Staff will be encouraged to undertake training relevant to the handling of a critical incident and post trauma stress management. Training officers from the Learning and Development team will be expected to include such training in its annual programme.

Staff to be advised of the support provided through the Employee Support Critical Incidents.

DEALING WITH CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

MANAGERS GUIDE TO IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

When an incident involving emotional trauma has occurred, the immediate tasks are to ensure:

- That staff members physical and emotional needs are met.
- The sense of safety and security are re established with whatever sense of routine and normality is possible under the circumstances.
- The central stress factor of high arousal needs to be addressed to allow those involved to return to a more stable and normal level of activity.

In the period between the termination of the incident and the end of the work shift, a meeting should be held to assist staff to undertake the recovery process. This should be done by the line manager/supervisor.

It is important that managers react immediately after the incident and ensure all staff receive their support as soon as possible. It is important for staff to be assured that their current emotions are normal and to be expected. Staff should be given time to discuss their emotions and reactions.

In cases of acute emotional trauma, prompt assessment by qualified counsellors if recommended to reduce the likelihood of post incident stress related problems. Otherwise, it is normal for the need for professional debriefing to be assessed after a period of 24 to 48 hours by qualified counsellors. As an immediate response, Managers should adopt the following simple post incident management steps as part of a defusing process:

Step 1: Gather group together and summarise what has happened. State what you know and what you don't know.

Step 2: Ask staff if they have any questions. This should lead to discussion, clarification and personal expression.

Step 3: Decide what will happen next in relation to the incident and make interim arrangements for work responsibilities.

Step 4: Present the support arrangements for staff until the next shift (this should include contact arrangements after hours if required)

Step 5: Provide information on reactions and assistance available. A Critical Incident (Emotional Trauma) Management handout sheet is provided by the manager.

Step 6: Assess staff members' immediate needs for personal support and practical help.

Step 7: Give advice on what to do next and how staff can take care of themselves (use the information provided on the handout sheet – stress the 'normal reaction to an abnormal event' and expected reactions and things to manage these reactions).

Line managers/supervisors will arrange for a senior executive manager, respected by the staff involved in the incident, to address the group to show support and consideration.

In the case of traumatic incidents or for crisis counselling, 24 hour contact can be made by contacting the Employee Support and Counselling Service on 01522 836198.

**CRITICAL INCIDENT (EMOTIONAL TRAUMA)
MANAGEMENT**

Remember, what is happening to you is

A NORMAL REACTION TO AN ABNORMAL EVENT

Traumatic Stress Reactions	Dealing with your Reactions
<p>Over the next few weeks, you may experience some of the following reactions to the incident you have been involved in. These reactions may include:</p> <p>Physical Reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Change in sleep pattern * Nightmares * Being easily startled * Fatigue and exhaustion * Hyperactivity * Under activity * Health problems (eg appetite) * Headaches, digestive problems * Change in sexual behaviour <p>Thinking Reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Flashbacks * Difficulty with concentration and decision making * Memory disturbance * Inability to attach any importance to anything other than the incident <p>Emotional Reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fear, anxiety, guilt, depressions * Emotional numbing, grief * Feelings of helplessness * Over protection of self and family * Over sensitivity * Mood swings * Anger – which may be manifested by scapegoating, irritability, frustration with bureaucracy, violent fantasies * Feeling isolated from or different from others 	<p>These feelings, however painful, are a normal part of the healing process. However, there are things you can do to reduce their impact.</p> <p>Things to try:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Within the first 24-48 hours, periods of strenuous physical exercise, alternated with relaxation, will alleviate some of the physical reactions. * Structured your time – keep busy –go out even if you do not feel like it. * Remember you are normal and having reactions – do not label yourself. * Talk to people – it is the best healing medicine. * Be wary of numbing the pain with overuse of drugs and alcohol. This can just make the reactions worse. * Drink plenty of water. * Keep your life as normal as possible. * Spend time with others. * Help your co workers as much as possible by checking out how they are doing. * Realise you will have good days and not so good days – that is normal. * Keep a journal: write your way through those sleepless hours. * Realise that those around you are also under stress, including family members. * Eat nourishing, well balanced meals. * Do not attempt important life changes. * Do make as many daily life decisions as possible.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO WILL LISTEN TO YOU?

You can contact the Employee Support and Counselling Service if you need help, support, advice, counselling or information:

Employee Support and Counselling Service
Working together with LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

HOW DO I MAKE CONTACT?

You can contact us on:

Telephone: 01522 836198

Email: emp.supportandcounselling@mouchel-lincoln.com

Post : Employee Support and Counselling Service

Mill House

Brayford Wharf North

Lincoln, LN1 1YT

(Please mark Personal)

Appendix Four

FLOW CHART FOR CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Significant Incident

Notification

Emergency Services	Duty Manager
Evacuation Procedure	Service Manager
	Head of Service Assistant Director

Incident Log

Establish Central Information Point

Deal with Incident

Staff and Young People's Support	Debrief	Collection of Information and Notifications
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Review and Evaluate

Identify Training and Changes to Plan

**LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
CRITICAL INCIDENT LOG SHEET**

LOG SHEETS MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL STAFF INVOLVED IN AN INCIDENT

- COMPLETED LOG SHEETS WILL
- Assist in maintaining a true picture of the unfolding events
 - Assist in providing information for any inquiry which may follow an incident

Your Name Job Title

Place of Work Date

Time	From/To Name, Position, Organisation	Message Details	Action – Decision/Reason

