

Preparing for and responding to a serious incident



A guide to help organisations prepare and respond to incidents effectively

Preparation

Bring your team together regularly to talk through how to respond to a range of scenarios. Have a short, written plan, so everyone knows what to do. Practice procedures for evacuation and locking down the premises with your staff and volunteers.

Know who's attending your service. Make sure that everyone (including visitors) is properly registered and signed in, and that you can quickly access contact details in an emergency. Make sure all staff/volunteers/visitors have visible ID.

Always have up to date paediatric first aid trained staff present, and a stocked first aid kit on site. Make sure that all staff have emergency numbers on their mobile phones – Designated Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Duty Officer.

Be alert and supervise proactively. Staff should always be listening, observing and aware of what is going on, particularly any activities or higher risk areas such as entrances, exits and toilets.

Be clear and transparent with children/young people about your role as a staff member/youth worker, how the service manages disclosures, and that you have a zero tolerance policy for weapons.

Don't assume that serious incidents will always involve young men. Young women and children can also be involved and affected. Have a diverse team that is relatable to a wide range of young people.

Report any disclosures, early warning signs, near misses or concerns. Don't try to tackle it on your own – get help both for the young person and for you

Ensure you have an up-to-date emergency contact list, ideally 3 contacts per child/young person that is refreshed regularly.

Ensure you have a written Risk Assessment, which includes Serious Incidents. Include evacuation and lockdown procedures (and rehearse with staff). Review security – locking doors and gates, where possible and ensure staff are supervising entrances. (Further info link in final slide).

Key considerations



The Incident Scene

Protecting People

Responding to the Victim/s

After the incident

Follow up

The Incident Scene

Move children/young people away from the scene and ring the police straight away on 999.

Ensure children/young people or staff don't contaminate the incident scene.

If the incident is inside your setting, take all children/young people outside the building, if possible.

If the incident is outside your setting, take all children/young people inside, if possible.

Once outside/inside, take a register of all children/young people if it's safe to do so. You may need to move the children/young people to a nearby location where they can receive support.

Shut the setting and contact parents/carers to let them know what has happened until the police arrive.

Preserve the incident scene until the police arrive.

Protecting People

Keep calm

Staff need to move children / young people away from the incident.

The member of staff must call 999 and report the incident to the designated safeguarding lead for your organisation. In a serious incident, the police will attend.

Depending on the seriousness of the incident, the setting may need to close. Speak to the senior worker or your line manager.

Look after children/young people, staff and potential witnesses to ensure they feel supported



If the incident occurs outside the setting

- If the serious incident takes place outside the building, staff need to get all children/young people inside the building as quickly as possible.
- Lock the doors to the building.
- Ring 999 and wait for the police to arrive.

If weapons are involved

Where staff identify that a young service user has a weapon, staff may have to respond quickly, based on their judgement about the risks involved.

Responding to the victim/s

At least one member of staff looks after the victim/s

Call 999 for ambulance and police.

Apply first aid if needed

Call parents/carers to notify them of the incident and that the police / ambulance are on their way.

Staff to notify parents/carers if young person needs to be taken to the hospital.

If parents/carers unable to travel to hospital, then a member of staff to accompany ambulance and young person to hospital to wait for parent/carers arrival.
Consider staff ratios, link in resources slide.

If the child or young person is safe, the parents/carers may arrive at the setting. The senior practitioner needs to take the parents/carers somewhere private to talk through what happened and what steps were taken to ensure the child or young person was safe. The senior practitioner should listen to the concerns of the parents/carers. Parents/carers are likely to be upset, and the senior worker should aim to be patient, understanding, and tactful.

After the incident



After the incident (as soon as reasonably possible, ideally within an hour), notify the manager and the designated safeguarding lead for your organisation.

Consider holding a debrief for staff / volunteers and signpost to support.

Contact Children's services (phone numbers below)

Write up the incident as soon as possible. Look after your staff and make sure that they get home safely.

If your provision is funded by the Local Authority, inform your Commissioner/Contract Manager.

RBKC:

Children's Services (Mon– Fri 9am – 5pm)

0207 361 3013

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours):

0207 737 2227

WCC:

Children's Services (Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm)

0207 641 4000

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) :

0207 641 2388

Follow up after the incident

Following day

- Check in with each staff member to see how they are and obtain an account of what happened. Review and update your risk assessments and supervision procedures to incorporate learning.

Following day

- Agree what information may be appropriate to share. See slide 9 on information sharing.

Within 2-3 weeks

- With the agreement of police and children's services, it may be possible to meet with the perpetrator and their parents. Depending on how serious the incident is, there may be various outcomes that include permanent exclusion, temporary exclusion where a behavioural agreement is reached or restricted hours (e.g. one day a week where you know you have additional staff available)

PRIORITY



Information Sharing between partners

If there is an incident that occurs elsewhere which you think *could* impact on children/young people attending your setting please consider the following:

It is important not to spread false information – we would advise against speculating about any rumours

Be aware that the spread of sensitive information can add to the trauma that family and friends are going through

At times, the Police/the Council may not know all information and therefore may not be able to share information

It is your organisation's responsibility to share information with statutory partners (police and children's services). See link in resources slide.

Resources

Department for Education - [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings](#)

NSPCC - [Adult to child ratios for working with children](#)

Department for Education - [Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)

To access further children's safeguarding training please view the LSCP training programme: <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/lscp/training-and-resources>