

**1****What is an Immediate Response Group**

The aim of the Immediate Response to Critical Incidents involving Children and Young People protocol is to provide support to manage the consequences of critical incidents. For the purpose of the protocol a critical incident is defined as an event, or series of events:

- which is sudden and unexpected; **and**
- that resulted in (or could have caused) death or serious harm; **and**
- impacting on individuals and / or the wider community; **and**
- where an effective response **requires multi-agency co-ordination** to manage threat, risk, and harm.



**Diogelu Gwent  
Gwent Safeguarding**

## Immediate Response to Critical Incidents Involving Children and Young People

**2****Criteria & Timescales**

An Immediate Response Group (IRG) should be convened for all suicides (suspected or apparent) of children and young people under the age of 18 years. For other critical incidents, the following criteria should be considered prior to convening an IRG:

- Does the incident meet the opposite critical incident definition?
- Are there other processes / policies which should be implemented first? (e.g., PRUDIC, etc).

The IRG should be convened as soon as practically possible but no later than **two** working days after the critical incident.

**7****Immediate Response Group Meeting**

If the child has moved to Secondary school, consideration should be given to inviting the child's Primary School as they will have knowledge of the Community and be able to provide connections that would possibly not be gathered from any other organisation.

At the second IRG meeting, consideration should be given to support from the public health and regional suicide prevention leads if there are any concerns around potential contagion leading to a suicide cluster or for wider postvention prevention work.

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.

**3****Standing Group**

Several different individuals make up the standing group for an IRG any member of which may request to convene an IRG.

These include Police/ Head of Safeguarding (Health Board) /Safeguarding Children Board (Chair of Board represented by Business Unit)/ Head of Children's Service for respective Local Authority/ Head of Adult Services for respective Local Authority/ Safeguarding Manager respective Local Authority/ Chief Education Officer representative/ Emergency Duty Team Manager, if required/ Schools Counselling Service Lead/ Head of

**6****Immediate Response Group Meeting**

Care of children and young people already subject to Care and Support Plans or within the Looked After System needs to formally be handed to their key worker to ensure that their individual needs are met.

Agreement will be reached about information to be shared at briefings with staff, young people, and the wider community.

Each agency should consider how they can contribute help and support to meet the identified needs either themselves or by enabling other agencies, regional coordinators or third sector organisation's to do so, ensuring that consistent offers of support are made recurrently.

CAMHS will lower the threshold for their service in the immediate term. A triage process should take place to ensure a proportionate response is taken.

**5****Immediate Response Group Meeting**

The IRG Chair will outline the purpose and content of the meeting. The Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) will provide information relating to the critical incident.

Each agency present will share information relating to the child/ young person, their family, friends, and others (including, for example, witnesses to the incident) who may require support following the critical incident.

The group will identify significant dates or events which could include anniversaries of trauma and bereavement, and the level of risk should be identified for everyone discussed.

Support needed for those identified should be determined and agreed including confirmation of person(s) responsible and timescales

**4****Immediate Response Group Meeting**

The group will identify those closest to the young person, other young people who may be at risk and those involved in the immediate incident. This may include, for example, family, friends, boy/girlfriend, work colleagues, club membership, teams, staff, etc.

Sibling self-harm and suspected suicide attempts must be seen as an indicator of familial vulnerability.

Professionals should consider the guidance around Circles of Vulnerability here [Identifying and responding to suicide clusters](#) : to help identify those who are in geographical proximity, social proximity, and psychological proximity to the young person