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### What is an Immediate Response Group (IRG)?

An Immediate Response Group (IRG) provides support to manage the **impact** of critical incidents. For the purpose of the protocol a critical incident is defined as:

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

**You will see above the main focus of a IRG is managing the impact of the critical incident upon those affected.**



**Diogelu Gwent  
Gwent Safeguarding**

## When does a critical incident involving a child need a multi-agency Immediate Response Group?



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### How does a critical incident qualify for an IRG?

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 critical incident definition in **box 1**?
- Are there other processes / policies which should be implemented first? (e.g., PRUDIC, etc).
- **The main focus of a IRG is managing the impact of the critical incident upon those affected.**

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

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For advice and guidance on whether an incident should be considered for an IRG, please contact Gwent Safeguarding Board at: [gwent Safeguarding@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:gwent Safeguarding@caerphilly.gov.uk).

Please use this link to access the Immediate Response Group protocol

[Childrens-Immediate-Response-Group-Protocol](#)

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### What is the purpose of an IRG?

The IRG members will identify those closest to the young person, who may be at risk and those impacted by in the incident. This may include, for example, family, friends, boy/girlfriend, work colleagues, club membership, teams, staff, etc.

For those who are identified as affected, sibling self-harm and suspected suicide attempts must be seen as an indicator of familial vulnerability.

Those agencies invited to attend the IRG should consider the guidance around Circles of Vulnerability here [Identifying and responding to suicide clusters](#) : to help to identify those who are affected.

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### Examples of when a IRG has been convened

- Suicide **attempts** where there will be a wider impact on the community, for example if the child was a member of a local football/rugby club so had a wide circle of friends.
- Incidents of suicide attempts in school settings, or in view of the public, such as on bridges where a number of other children may have viewed the critical incident.
- Fatal Dog attacks- because of the impact on witnesses, friends, family, neighbours and the wider community.

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### What is the purpose of an IRG?

Agreement will be reached about any 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 organisations 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.

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### What is the purpose of an IRG?

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

Any support needed for those who are identified as part of this process should be agreed, including confirmation of which agency / worker will carry this out.