

## Protocol for the Immediate Response to Critical Incidents

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Author: IRG Task Group	Previous version: November 2012	Review Date: December 2019

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this protocol is to provide support to manage the consequences of critical incidents in Cwm Taf in order to ensure that those who are affected, including friends, family, professionals and the wider community, are effectively supported.

This protocol is complementary and in support of, but does not replace, other protocols and processes such as:

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008)
- Interim Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse (2013)
- 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 01443 424550 to discuss.**

## 2. CRITICAL INCIDENT DEFINITION

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

- Where an immediate effective response requires multi-agency co-ordination to manage threat, risk and harm; **and**
  - it is sudden and unexpected; **and**
  - it has resulted in (or could have caused) death, life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development; **and**
  - it impacts on a group of individuals and / or the wider community.

## 3. CRITERIA AND TIMESCALES

An Immediate Response Group (IRG) should be considered for critical incidents where the following criteria are met:

- Does the incident meet the above critical incident definition?

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

- What are the immediate threats, risks and harm that need to be managed?
- Are there other processes / policies which should be implemented first (eg PRUDIC, Child Protection, Schools Critical Incidents, Adult Protection)?
- What is the wider community impact?

Any agency can request for an IRG to be convened via the CTSB Business Unit (Telephone: 01443 484550). The Business Unit must then discuss and agree with the SWP Police Superintendent who will chair the IRG meeting and is responsible for making the final decision about implementing the protocol.

In cases where there is a more specialist input required, a suitable alternative Chair may be identified.

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

## 4. PROCESS FOR MANAGING 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 convening an IRG in the first instance. This would involve the agency considering its own policies, processes and guidelines.
- At the same time, a referral should be considered under the relevant Child or Adult Protection procedures.

### ***Convene an Immediate Response Group***

- The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Business Unit will discuss and agree with the Police Superintendent (or a suitable deputy) the details of the critical incident and confirm the need to convene an IRG.
- An IRG will be convened to include key partner agencies and other key personnel that members identify as needing to attend.
- A list of agencies Single Points of Contact are provided in Appendix 2. Each agency is required to identify any other relevant agencies and operational staff and managers 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.
- The CTSB Business Unit will be responsible for convening the IRG meeting.

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

## ***Prior to the IRG Meeting***

- Individual agencies should identify those closest to the subject(s). This may include, for example, family, friends, boy/girlfriend, 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 with agenda in Appendix 3).
- The Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) will provide information relating to the critical incident.
- Each agency present will share information relating to the subject, their family, friends and others (including, for example, witnesses to the incident) who may require support following the critical incident.
- Identify significant dates or events.
- Level of risk should be identified for each individual discussed.
- Support needed for those identified should be determined and agreed including confirmation of person(s) responsible and timescales.
- 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
- The IRG will determine the agency who will work with the Police Family Liaison Officer (PFLO), if appointed, to establish contact with the family where appropriate.
- Agreement will be reached about information to be shared at briefings with staff, young people, adults 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 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.
- Telephone help-desks and similar should be aware of relevant services which they can signpost any queries to.
- Date and time of next meeting to be agreed.
- After each meeting actions should be undertaken as agreed at the IRG.

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

- 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.
- All staff need to be briefed including support staff, admin, transport, volunteers, etc as they may also be affected.
- Staff will be informed about the incident, providing them with factual information as agreed by the IRG.
- An outline of actions to be taken and by whom, including an explanation of support to be made available, will be given.
- 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.

## ***Brief those affected***

- 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.

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

- 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.

## ***Briefing for parents / carers***

- It may be necessary in some circumstances to brief parents / carers about the situation and the support being made available for their child(ren) or the person(s) that they are caring for, e.g. incidents affecting a school community.
- The decision about briefing parents / carers and content of the brief will be agreed by the IRG.
- Parents / carers will be provided with factual information as agreed by the IRG together with an outline of the support that is being made available.
- Contact information will be included should they want to talk to someone themselves or to access support for their child(ren) or the person(s) that they are caring for.
- Contact information will also be made available using alternative media such as websites and press releases.

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

- Individual agencies will need 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.

## **5. MANAGEMENT OF LARGE SCALE INCIDENTS**

When dealing with large scale incidents, consideration must be given to other appropriate procedures (see Section 1) to identify the most appropriate course of action.

- The identification of a cluster of incidents will be agreed by the IRG.
- Identification will be 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 the IRG will meet on a more frequent basis, with frequency to be established by the IRG.
- In some cases (such as suicides) the IRG may need to meet daily to monitor the situation and ensure that appropriate support and prevention services / activities are in place.

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

- 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.

## 6. Media

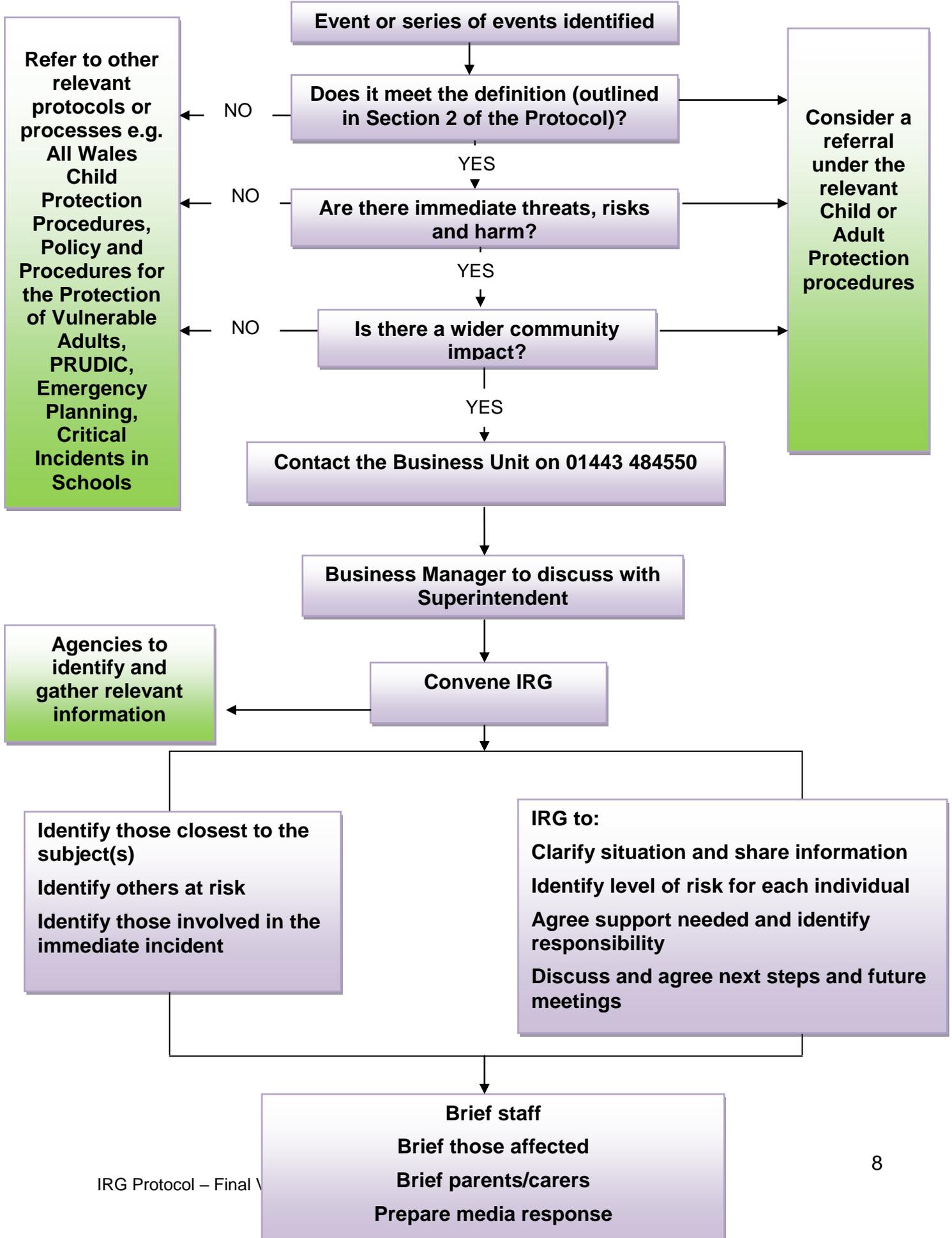
- The IRG will discuss and agree issues relating to the media.
- A single point of contact for all media queries will be agreed.
- Press releases should include information about appropriate help-line numbers and websites.
- It is important that there is liaison with the family before any information 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 CTSB Co-Chairs.

## 7. Governance And Accountability

- The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Boards (CTSB) 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 CTSB Co-Chairs.
- The outcome of the IRG meetings will be reported to the CTSB via the relevant Operational Committee (Adults, Children or MASH).
- Lessons learnt should be fed back to the CTSB Case Review Group or Adult Review Group.
- 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.

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

## Appendix 1 - IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS PROCESS



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## Appendix 2 - AGENCY SINGLE POINTS OF CONTACT

<b>CTSB Business Manager</b>
Police - Chair (Superintendent) Investigating Officer Detective Inspector (PPU)
Head of Safeguarding (Health Board)
Head of Safeguarding and Support – Children Services (RCT)
Service Manager (Safeguarding) – Adults Services (RCT)
Principal Manager for Safeguarding (MT)
Emergency Duty Team Manager
Counselling Service Co-ordinator (Cwm Taf)
Head of Cwm Taf YOS
Cwm Taf Education Psychology Service
Inclusion Manager (MT)
Probation
CRC

# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

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

### 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 Data Protection Act 1998. 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)**

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5. Identify level of risk for each individual
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

## 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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# CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARDS

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 THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

### Immediate Response Group Actions List In Relation to:

**IRG CONVENED ON:**

**PRESENT:**

<b>INDIVIDUAL AT RISK</b>	<b>RISK LEVEL L, M, H</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS</b>	<b>ACTIONS REQUIRED / MEASURES TO MITIGATE RISKS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DATE OF FOLLOW UP &amp; PROGRESS UPDATE</b>

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**