

Critical Incident

This policy or proceeding plan does not replace contacting the Emergency Services as required.

This plan can be used in conjunction with but should not be used instead of other policies (e.g. Health & Safety Policy, Fire Policy etc)

What is a critical incident?

A Critical Incident is defined as an emergency affecting children, staff or property, requiring immediate responsive action beyond that which could be reasonably expected from the setting's own staff team during the day to day running of the site.

Purpose of a critical incident plan

The purpose and emphasis of the plan is to normalise the activities of the site in the event of an emergency with minimal disruption to everyone on site and in the local community. It should:

- Provide immediate practical support
- Establish how the incident will be managed
- Define roles and responsibilities of staff
- Outline how further appropriate support will be sought from outside the staff and management team
- Return overall responsibility for management of the post-impact phase to the site manager at the earliest opportunity
- Help to maintain the normal running of any parts of the site or service not affected
- Return the whole site to normal as soon as possible

Types of incident covered by the plan

- Extensive damage to premises
- Death, serious injury or potential health issues affecting staff or children
- A serious accident away from site
- An incident at the setting or in the community that affects the service

When an incident occurs, the manager on site or nominated deputy should take the action appropriate to the incident. This may be:

- Total or partial evacuation of the site
- Evacuation to another location or site
- Shelter within the site where it may be unsafe to leave the building
- Shelter within the setting for members of the community

The Critical Incident Response Plan is designed to cover a range of incidents. The degree of response activated will vary and be dependent on the type of any incident.

Whoever receives the alert should be prepared to ask for as much information as possible:

- What has happened?
- Have the emergency services been informed/are they attending?
- Exact location (and any access problems if not on site)
- Casualties

- Actions taken so far
- Name/contact at the scene (if not on site)
- What assistance is needed?

The manager on site must initially decide on the level of response needed:

Can the staff on site cope alone? - If not, contact senior management at Head Office.
Is further outside help required? - The Police or Islington Council for example.

Documentation

Remind all staff to keep a log of all contacts, decisions and actions

Arrange to inform (and keep informed):

- IPA Board
- Staff
- Children
- Parents
- The police, council, etc
- Others as relevant: Ofsted, HSE, etc

Longer Term Plans

A serious incident may have repercussions over many weeks. Consider arrangements for days two and three, when children may know more about what happened, and when staff may be exhausted and may need additional support.

Operational Debriefing

- Debrief all staff involved at the end of each working day/shift. Ensure that information is recorded and shared.
- At the end of the incident a team meeting should take place to ensure that all staff have access to any further support they might require.

On a practical note ensure that:

- The existence, whereabouts and contents of the setting's Critical Incident Policy is known to staff
- An identified member of the staff team or management is responsible for keeping the plan up to date
- Staff know their roles, which should be rehearsed

Return to Normality

- The plan will be 'stood down' once the incident has returned to a scale which the site can manage using its own resources.
- A debrief will take place as soon as possible.
- The plan will be reviewed and modified where necessary.

Useful contacts

To contact Islington Council about any emergency planning issues:

emergencyplanning@islington.gov.uk

In case of an emergency during and after office hours, call them on 020 7527 2000.

For details of local NHS hospitals, GPs, nurse-led service, A&E or advice on various medical conditions call 0845 4647.