

Dealing with
Emergency
Situations

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is the duty of the Registered Manager, supported by staff, to take all reasonable steps to ensure that emergency situations are avoided, if at all possible. However in the event of an emergency within the home, clear guidance and procedures are necessary to ensure that everyone is aware of what to do.
- 1.2 This policy highlights specific situations that could arise within a children's home and gives guidance on what actions to take. Whilst it is important that regular formal checks are carried out, staff should take responsibility for the day to day monitoring of the home identifying potential hazards as they arise; bringing them to the attention of the Registered Manager and in the case of immediate danger e.g. smell of gas, reporting the risk to the appropriate agency.
- 1.3 In any emergency, the overriding concern must be the protection of people and not property.

2. Aim of the Policy

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to highlight the importance of every member of staff knowing what to do in the event of an emergency and, in some circumstances, how this links to the wider Emergency Plan within the Authority.

3. Legislative Context

- 3.1 This policy links with the home's Business Continuity and Recovery Plan.
- 3.2 The policy also complies with **Standards 20** and **26** of the [Care Standards Act \(2000\)](#).

4. Emergency Arrangements

- 4.1 Risk Assessment should be carried out by the Registered Manager in relation to the home's premises and grounds and also in relation to the children/young people who live there. The assessment should be reviewed at regularly agreed intervals in line with departmental policy and procedure.
- 4.2 Each home should ensure that a notice detailing the location of gas and electricity meters, stop valves and any other cut out device is displayed prominently in the office and every member of staff has had this information drawn to their attention as part of their induction when joining the home. Staff should also be shown the actual location of the services concerned and where the emergency collection point is in the case of an evacuation.
- 4.3 Each home should include information about the emergency procedures that are relevant to them and their safety in their young people's guide. Children/young people should also be shown the service points that they need to know for their safety and in particular they should be shown the collection point in the event of an emergency evacuation. This information should be given at the time of admission and be reinforced at regular suitable occasions e.g. fire practices and key work sessions.

5. Action Immediately Following an Emergency Situation

- 5.1 In the event of residents not being allowed back into the home within half an hour of an evacuation, arrangements should be made for their transfer to The Play and Sensory Centre which will act as temporary holding accommodation. **Please refer to the home's Business Continuity Plan for further guidance.** Staff must take with them the home's bum bag which contains information and items that will assist staff in an emergency. In the event of transportation not being available, a taxi may be used if there is no access to a site car.
- 5.2 As soon as practicable following an evacuation, the staff on duty should notify the following people:

- The Registered Manager
- The Out of Hours Service if out of office hours
- The Residential Families First OOH Manager if out of office hours

5.3 The Registered Manager/OOH Manager will be responsible for notifying the Responsible Individual and Senior Managers of what has occurred, if it is deemed necessary.

5.4 If a return to the home does not appear possible within a reasonable period, bearing in mind the needs of the residents' involved, alternative arrangements should be made to provide children/young people and staff with suitable, alternative accommodation. The following are examples of suitable alternatives:

- Based on a risk assessment, a child could stay with a family member or well-known friend.
- Another Warrington Borough Council children's home, where space allows and risk assessments of all children/young people make this a feasible option.
- Children/young people with complex needs in receipt of short-term care, would usually return to their parents or full time carers.
- Accommodation arranged through the Housing Department.
- Nearby Bed and Breakfast or hotel that has been sanctioned by Children Services as appropriate accommodation.

6. Action Once Situation is More Stable

6.1 As soon as possible notify Ofsted, social workers and parents/carers.

6.2 A meeting should be held to make arrangements for re-establishing stability in the home. The meeting should be chaired by the Registered Care Manager, or the Service Manager (Families First)

6.3 The attendees should formulate an action plan that determines where staff should be based, if the home cannot be returned to, and where children/young people should live

temporarily.

- 6.4 The action plan should ensure appropriate mid to longer-term arrangements are made for residents.

7. Fire Emergencies

- 7.0 In the case of fire alarm activation, staff and children should follow the published and practiced fire procedure for the home.

7.1 Once the home has been evacuated and a roll call has been taken at the Home's collection point, then no decision to re-enter should be taken until the senior fire officer attending the incident has given authority to do so. Missing staff or children should be dealt with by the emergency services.

- 7.2 If unable to re-enter the home follow [Section 5](#) of these procedures.

8. Power Failure

8.1 It is important that all gas, electrical and plumbing installations/equipment are inspected at least annually. Where the gas supply fails, switch off all gas appliances as well as turning off the gas at the mains to avoid leaks when the supply is re-connected.

8.2 In respect of electrical appliances lights may remain on if you are staying in the building, but heating, cooking appliances, hair dryers and electric showers should be switched off if they were on at the time of the power failure.

8.3 Once it has been ascertained that the power failure is external i.e., it affects other buildings, streets etc, staff should contact the relevant supplier to gain some estimation of the likely length of disconnection to assist in contingency planning.

8.4 The impact of power failure will depend upon a number of factors such as:

- How long the power will be off
- Whether the supply affected is the only source of power
- The time of night / day
- The time of year
- Any special vulnerability / risk factors in respect of young people and staff.

8.5 In the first instance attempts should be made to keep children in their own home and evacuation should only take place where the period of power failure is likely to be lengthy or circumstances are injurious to health. All homes have emergency lightening in the event of a power shortage and in addition to this all homes must be equipped with a rechargeable torch – on no account must candles be used.

8.6 Where the power failure is lengthy or conditions are likely to be injurious to health, staff should contact the Registered Manager or OOH Manager who will decide on what action staff should take.

8.7 If the home is vacated, all power switches should be turned off; the Building Maintenance Unit and Out of Hours should be informed and the building should be secured.

9. Suspect Packages

9.1 On finding a suspect package or an object that cannot be identified or accounted for, staff or children should not attempt to touch or move it, but should evacuate the building immediately avoiding where possible the immediate vicinity of the suspect package/object.

9.2 Staff and children should assemble at the home's collection point (which should be at a safe distance to protect from explosion) and a roll call taken. Missing staff or children/young people should be dealt with by the emergency services.

9.3 The police should be informed by dialling 999. This should be done by landline telephone

to avoid the risk of mobile / radio communication potentially detonating any explosive device.

- 9.4 If there are sufficient staff available, attempts should be made to alert inhabitants of nearby buildings. If sufficient staff are not available, then attempts should be made to enlist the aid of members of the public who may be at hand to undertake this task.
- 9.5 Inform the Registered Manager, or the OOH Manager
- 9.6 The home should only be re-entered on the authorisation of the emergency services.
- 9.7 Should there be significant delay in re-entering the home or waiting outside becomes injurious to health, then contingency plans outlined in Section 5 of these procedures should be followed.

10. Public Disorder

- 10.1 Where a number of people are creating public disorder outside the home and they are neither staff, nor residents of the home, this will principally be a matter to be reported to and dealt with by the police along with other emergency services as appropriate. Staff should report the matter to the police and not form the view that it is nothing to do with them, or assume that someone else has reported the matter.
- 10.2 The primary concern for staff is to keep children resident in the home and themselves as safe as possible. This would normally be done by withdrawing into the home with the children, locking doors and distracting the children/young people, so that they do not provoke an escalation of the situation.
- 10.3 If children or staff are out and due to come back to the home, then staff should either attempt to contact them and keep them away from the disorder whilst the situation is in progress, or failing this let the police know of the risk. It is possible that managers not on duty or staff from other homes may reach them more safely.

- 10.4 Dependent upon the time of day or night, and whether during the week or weekend, contact should be made with the Registered Manager or OOH Manager, so that contingency planning can take place.
- 10.5 The Registered Manager or OOH Manager will consider whether evacuation of the home is necessary. Should the need for evacuation be sudden, staff and children should make their way to the Play and Sensory Centre. It may be necessary for the police to assist with the evacuation. Providing it does not put staff or children at risk, the home should be made secure before leaving.
- 10.6 Arrangements should be made to ensure that any child or member of staff, who is away from the building at the time of evacuation, does not wander back into danger, unaware of the risks.

11. Industrial Action

- 11.1 Official industrial action should always be balloted for and notified to employers by the appropriate trade unions and as such can be planned for. In such circumstances the home's management together with senior management will draw up contingency plans for the provision of service.
- 11.2 In the event of sudden unofficial action known as 'wildcat strikes', which are illegal, this should be reported to both line management and Human Resources. In such an event the priority is always the safety and well-being of the children. Staff should not walk off shift as this will place them in violation of their contract. This should be pointed out to staff, but managers should not attempt to physically prevent staff from leaving the work place.
- 11.3 Dependent upon numbers of staff participating, other competent members of staff should be brought on duty to replace missing staff members. Dependent on occupancy levels, homes may also be able to pool resources to maintain provision of services to children and young people living in the home.

11.4 As a last option, consideration should be given to children who can safely go home for a short period of time. This should not happen if there is a court order preventing this or current child protection concerns.

12. Death of a Resident

12.1 On discovering a child you suspect to be dead, call an ambulance immediately. If the circumstances appear suspicious, then call the police as well, avoiding moving potential evidence as far as possible.

12.2 Alert the Registered Manager or OOH Manager of the situation. Where there are two members of staff on duty, one staff is remain with the child concerned.

12.3 Other staff should keep the remainder of children occupied away from the scene of the suspected death. Re-assurance should be given and other children should be kept calm. One member of staff should be available to admit the ambulance crew to the home when they arrive.

12.4 A member of staff should always accompany the child to hospital and remain there until relieved. This is consistent with good parenting and will help to reduce distress for parents / family.

12.5 If death is confirmed by a doctor attending the home and the body is not removed by ambulance, arrangements should be made for an undertaker to remove the body. This should be done in consultation with the parents/carers. Any difficulties that arise must be discussed with the Registered Manager or OOH Manager.

12.6 At the earliest opportunity the social worker should be informed of the death. A Critical Case Briefing Form should be completed by the staff member most involved and submitted to the Registered Manager, Responsible Individual and Service Manager. The Head of Service, Ofsted and the Secretary of State at the Department for Education will then be informed by the CIC Service Manager.

12.7 Unless there are specific instructions, or Police advice is to the contrary, the parents/

carers of the child should be notified without delay. This task is normally done by the social worker, but advice should be sought if waiting for the social worker could cause delay.

- 12.8 The Registered Manager or other appropriate manager should decide how to share information about the death with the children living in the home in a sensitive manner. The need for and provision of counselling/support for children/young people/staff should always be considered.

13. Death of a Member of Staff in the Home

- 13.1 On discovering a member of staff you suspect has died, call an ambulance immediately. If the circumstances appear suspicious, then call the police as well, avoiding moving potential evidence as far as possible.
- 13.2 If there are other members of staff available then alert them and ensure that one member of staff remains with the body. If there is only one member of staff left, that person may have to lock the room the body is in whilst they summon an ambulance and other staff to come on shift or to come from another small group home to assist.
- 13.3 Children should be kept occupied, calm and away from the scene of the death. It is appreciated that if there were only two members of staff on duty, that it will be a challenge for the remaining member of staff to have to carry this task in addition to responding to the death until support arrives.
- 13.4 Contact should be made with the deceased person's next of kin as a matter of urgency. Homes should keep a register of staff member's next of kin in the Business Continuity Plan which is secured in the office and which can be accessed if the need arises. Help may be required to physically contact the next of kin if telephone contact is unsuccessful.

NB Only a doctor can certify death, so do not tell a relative that someone is dead until this has been properly certified.

- 13.5 At the earliest opportunity inform the Registered Manager (if not on duty), the Service Manager and Human Resources or if out of hours the OOH Manager
- 13.6 Responsibility for arrangements in respect of the body lies with the next of kin. However staff should give such assistance as is possible and reasonable.