

CHILD CRITICAL INCIDENT Toolkit

AVON AND SOMERSET

2024-25



Avon & Somerset

Violence
Reduction
Partnership

Child Critical Incident Toolkit

FOREWORD

I would like to introduce you to the Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership Child Critical Incident Toolkit. This has been developed over the past 18 months in collaboration with the five Local Authorities, Violence Reduction Partnership Coordinators, Youth Justice, and Children's Social Care. We have collectively combined our knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt in the wake of the tragic deaths of children in our community. We also consulted with Health and Education before finally sharing an agreed draft version with The Violence Reduction Partnership Delivery Group and then the Executive Board for further consultation and subsequence approval.

It is important to note that this toolkit is a guide for use if a child is murdered or harmed in the community. Not every action will be relevant, and each incident will have different considerations. Each response will be different according to the local area and community need. This toolkit draws on good practice and provides an additional resource alongside existing policies and procedures to support us all in providing a consistent and quality response for those impacted.

This toolkit should firstly be used as a planning tool, prior to an incident, to explore existing processes, stakeholders and resources so that we are all ready should an incident occur.

If local authorities and/or partners would like to reference the toolkit, please could I ask that The Avon and Somerset VRP Hub are consulted.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for their time and contributions.

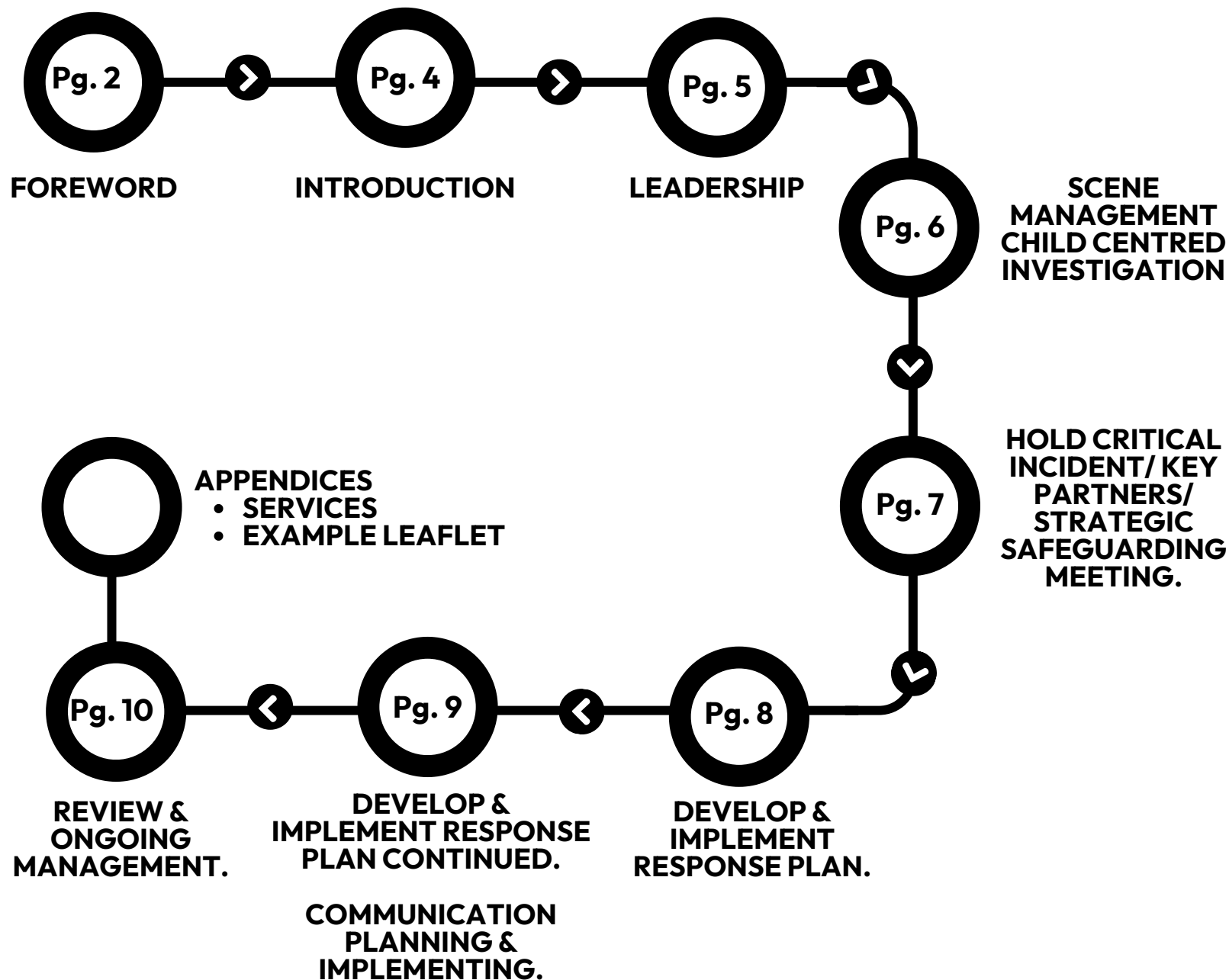
Kind regards
Larisa Hunt

Avon and Somerset Police Detective Chief Inspector
Crime Reduction, Early Intervention and Licensing
Tactical lead for Children and Young People
Trauma Informed Educator



Child Critical Incident Toolkit

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Child Critical Incident Toolkit INTRODUCTION

This toolkit has been created by Avon and Somerset Police and Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership in collaboration with Children's Social Care, Youth Justice Services and Education from all five local authorities. It is intended for use by professionals when a child is murdered or critically harmed within the community of Avon and Somerset as a result of extra familial harm. The purpose is to ensure there is a multi-agency response involving all key safeguarding partners that is child centred and trauma informed.

- Trauma Informed Practice - BNSSG Healthier Together
- Somerset Trauma Informed Network - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

For some individuals, families, communities and staff groups, this may not be the first incident of this kind that they have been impacted by, and some communities may be disproportionately affected. Consequently, work undertaken must demonstrate an acute awareness of and sensitivity to social, cultural and historical contexts surrounding each incident.

This toolkit aims to facilitate a collaborative multi-agency assessment of risk, facilitate information sharing and communication at a strategic level. The primary lead professionals using this toolkit are anticipated to be the Police and Local Authority. The roles of who might be responsible have not been specified as this will vary depending on the local authority and the circumstances.

This toolkit is intended for use when:

- A child has died in the community as a result of extra familial harm.
- Consideration should be given to using the toolkit if there is an incident of serious harm to a child which has resulted in:
 - Significant injuries
 - Harm caused as a result of serious sexual offences
 - Multiple child victims
 - Significant impact on the community or significant ongoing risk to children.
- Whilst this is intended for use for incidents of serious violence to children, this can also be used as a guide for young people under the age of 25, particularly if they are children in care or care leavers.
- This should also be used prior to an incident as a planning tool, to evaluate existing processes, review stakeholders and resources so they are ready if an incident takes place.

Following the occurrence of an incident, this checklist has been designed as a quick guide to highlight key areas for consideration. It can help shape the leadership and approach to risk management by the Police and Local Authority while in an emergency and is designed to complement the processes and procedures that already exist.

Child Critical Incident TOOLKIT

LEADERSHIP	Named Lead / Comments
<p>Has a gold group been established? Is this police only or multi-agency? (A strategic meeting designed to improve the police response to an incident, crime or other matter. This involves bringing together appropriately skilled and qualified interested parties who can advise, guide or otherwise support the management of an effective response to the identified incident, crime or other matter).</p>	
<p>Police to document leads from the Major Crime Investigation Team (MCIT) or CID and Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) and the Early Intervention Team (EIT).</p>	
<p>Lead NPT officer to ensure all local authorities of child victims and suspects are notified. Local authority to document the Local Authority Leads. If there are children involved from multiple local authorities, the local authority for the home address of the child victim will take primacy. Community Safety Partnership members must be notified and included.</p>	
<p>Lead NPT officer to ensure all other statutory partners have been identified and informed as soon as possible after the incident (Local Authority, Health, Education).</p>	
<p>Local Authority lead to ensure that key health partners have been identified, informed and a lead contact identified (Hospital, General Practitioners, Mental Health, Public Health).</p>	
<p>Local Authority lead to ensure that all relevant educational establishments have been identified and a lead contact identified.</p>	
<p>Police and Local Authority leads to jointly ensure all key community contacts in their areas have been identified and informed.</p>	
<p>The lead Local Authority is responsible for ensuring all statutory notifications are made (Safeguarding Practice Review, Critical Incident report to the Home Office).</p>	

Child Critical Incident TOOLKIT

SCENE MANAGEMENT

Assigned to
/ notes

MCIT/CID and NPT to ensure that the scene is being sensitively managed and that forensic tents are sourced and utilised as soon as possible.

MCIT/CID Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) or NPT lead officer to produce a message/communications that those carrying out scene guard duties can share with the community and partners

MCIT and NPT to consider role of partner agencies regarding the scene (messaging, support, welfare.)

MCIT/CID and NPT and local authority to ensure that once the scene is released, it is cleaned and that this is checked.

CHILD CENTRED INVESTIGATION

Assigned to
/ notes

MCIT/CID to ensure the Joint Agency Response (JAR) to a child death is initiated if a child has died. [Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance \(England\)](#)

MCIT/CID to ensure appropriate child witness strategies are in place. Accredited specialist child abuse investigators should be utilised for contact with and interviewing children. Consider IIC (Investigative Interviewing of Children – advanced) trained officers and Intermediaries.

MCIT/CID to allocate an accredited specialist child abuse investigator Detective Sergeant (DS) to lead on child protection strategy discussions for JAR, siblings of victims, peers and associates of victims where relevant. This should also include siblings, peers and associates of any child suspects where relevant.

Children's Social Care to appoint a lead practitioner for engagement with the DS leading on child protection strategy discussions for the investigation where there are multiple safeguarding concerns.

MCIT/CID to allocate a Detective Inspector to lead on managing any ongoing threats if applicable. Ensure information sharing with Community Safety Teams.

Child Critical Incident TOOLKIT

HOLD CRITICAL INCIDENT / KEY PARTNERS / STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING MEETING

Assigned to
/ notes

Arrange a meeting as soon as is practicable in the circumstances, ideally the first working day post incident. This should be attended by Children's social care, Community Safety, Public Health, Housing, NPT, EIT, VRP – local authority and OPCC, corporate communications for LA and police, education rep, health reps.

If Bristol – follow Rapid Risk and Response Assessment – Community Impact Joint Agreement (accessible via Local Authority and NPT leads).

Outside of Bristol – Lead Authority to chair the meeting (Consideration of co-chair with lead neighbourhood policing officer.) Suggested agenda:

1. Welcome and introductions/apologies

To include time to reflect on the impact of the critical incident for the family and community. Also – “We recognise these are really challenging circumstances and many of us in the room may be feeling distressed and impacted by what has happened, some of us may be more closely connected than others and this may overlap into our personal lives. Please do take care and access the support available from your organisations where you need to”.

2. Confidentiality statement

3. Previous minutes and Actions

4. Update from MCIT/CID

5. Information sharing

6. Risk and threat Assessment (individuals by exception)

7. Community Tensions

8. Assessment of impact on children

9. Wellbeing of professionals

10. Wellbeing of the community

11. Mitigating actions

12. Communications, internal, external and community – including schools and educational establishments

13. AOB

14. Date of next meeting

Agree frequency of meetings and phased reduction of meetings after the acute phase.

Child Critical Incident TOOLKIT

DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT RESPONSE PLAN	Assigned to / notes
NPT to complete a Community Impact Assessment and patrol plan in consultation with partner agencies	
Family Liaison Officers in MCIT will arrange Victim support / bereavement support as appropriate If victim is in hospital – discuss visiting needs and discharge plans (MCIT, Children’s social care and health).	
Mapping of child peers and associates of those involved to manage risks to them (NPT/EIT, children’s social care and youth justice services).	
Local Authority to implement outreach engagement work/detached youth work.	
Engagement with schools and educational establishments. Agree lead contacts and frequency of engagement. Ensure joint messaging from Local Authority and Police.	
Deploy therapeutic services to schools.	
Support schools with consideration of critical incident plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Incidents in Educational Communities - UK Trauma Council • Bystander Training - Responding to a Critical Incident • Critical Incident in Schools 	
Early Intervention Team to consider trauma flags/plans for police for children experiencing trauma as a result of the incident.	
Community meetings / engagement (Will these be police or Local Authority only or joint?).	

Child Critical Incident TOOLKIT

DEVELOP & IMPEMENT RESPONSE PLAN

Assigned to /
notes

Police and Local Authority to consider how the voices of children in the community will be heard? (Outreach workers to engage with children outside community meetings, school engagement etc)

Police and Local Authority to consider wider community impact and trauma and offer services to those affected. See Appendix 2.

Police and Local Authority to consider visiting community organisations, faith organisations and local businesses.

Police and Local Authority to create plans to manage memorials, tributes and funerals and communicate with relevant partners.

Each professional organisation to ensure there are appropriate wellbeing support plans in place for professionals working on this critical incident.

COMMUNICATION PLANNING & IMPLEMENTING

Assigned to /
notes

Identify lead agency for communications

Ensure clear, consistent and factual messaging about the incident from all partners.

MCIT to share MIPP portal details if utilised

Agree key communication channels

Monitor social media. Any significant tensions or issues to be raised in the critical incident strategic safeguarding meetings.

Child Critical Incident TOOLKIT

REVIEW & ONGOING MANAGEMENT	Assigned to / notes
<p>Arrange a multi-agency meeting to debrief the response, what worked well and what learning is required. Share all learning with the agencies concerned, amend policies and procedural guidance as required.</p>	
<p>Develop plan for managing key events such as birthdays, anniversaries, court dates, proceedings and inquests to ensure all appropriate agencies are updated – including children’s social care and education Recognise that these events may be triggering/re-traumatising for all those involved.</p>	
<p>Move from acute response phase to long term management. Who will lead and what will the communications and meeting structures look like?</p>	

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Support those affected by the sudden and unexpected death of a child or young adult aged 25 or under.

Website: 2wish.org.uk

Call: 01443 853125

E-mail: info@2wish.org.uk



Betsy de Thierry Trauma Recovery Training and Consultancy.

Responding to Critical Incidents.

Advice for parents, teachers and children.

Bristol Central Crisis Team



Crisis Line Bristol is a 24/7 severe mental health response. The team provide a variety of care and support.

Website link.

Call: 0800 953 1919.



Chat Health is a **text** health service for Somerset parents, carers and young people to confidentially ask a Health visitor for help on a range of issues.

ChatHealth is available Monday-Friday 9.00am-4.00pm



• Parents and carers of children 0-4 years:
07480 635514



• Parents and carers of children 5-19 years:
07480 635515



• Young People 11-19 years:
07480 635516



Creative Youth Network enables young people across Bristol and South Gloucestershire, no matter what their background or circumstances, to reach their own potential. Through 12 youth centres, a wide range of services and positive activities.

creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk



CrimeStoppers.

Speak up. Stay safe.



Crimestoppers is an independent charity that gives everyone the power to speak up to stop crime 100% anonymously.



Online or over the phone 0800 555 1111.

They are open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.



Family Lives provides targeted early intervention and crisis support to families. Providing emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life.



Call free: 0808 800 2222



E-mail: askus@familylives.org.uk

Website: familylives.org.uk

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Fearless is part of Crimestoppers, giving young people an [online service](#) to pass on information about crime 100% anonymously.



Drawing on national and international best practice and input from local organisations and people with lived experience of trauma and adversity. A Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Trauma Informed Practice Framework has been developed.



Click here to access their [Framework](#).



Junction 21 Mentoring and Advocacy Project

provide support for vulnerable young people aged between 10-21 years old. Delivering a range of youth services including: • mentoring • independent visiting • advocacy • missing children's interviews • acting as an Appropriate Adult. With interventions varying from short term



pieces of advocacy work to long term independent visiting.



[Website link.](#)



Call: 01275 888 360 or 07776 170 028

E-mail: junction21@n-somerset.gov.uk



Kooth provide free, safe and anonymous mental health support for children and young people [online](#).
Website: kooth.com



Krunch South West offer a wide range of services, from one-to-one mentoring to a twenty-week personal development programme. Supporting young people with a diverse range of personal and social needs.

[Website link](#)

E-mail: penny@krunch.org.uk



Learning Partnership West support young people aged between 6-25 years old. Building on their strengths, abilities and talents to overcome barriers to engagement and education; and to develop their own resilience and capability.



Website: lpw.org.uk



Mind in Somerset is there to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn for advice and support. Their core purpose is to provide services and support to anyone affected by mental illness, improving their quality of life and wellbeing.

Website: mind.org.uk

Call: 01935 474875 | 01823 334906

E-mail: info@mindinsomerset.org.uk



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Mind Bristol is a local mental health charity serving Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Offering community wellbeing services, counselling, information phone service and a confidential helpline which provides a safe place for anyone in distress. They are open every week Wednesday to Sunday from 7.00pm to 11.00pm



Website: mind.org.uk



The National Mind InfoLine is available Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 6.00pm



Call: 0300 123 3393

E-mail: info@bristolmind.org.uk



Mindline is a confidential listening service which provides a safe place to talk if you, or someone you know, is in distress. They also give basic information about mental health and local support services. Mindline Somerset Emotional support and mental health helpline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Call free 0800 138 1692



Call local 01823 276 892

NSPCC

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children): Their helpline provides information and advice to parents and others concerned about young people who may be involved or affected by gang activity. Their helpline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week



Website: nspcc.co.uk



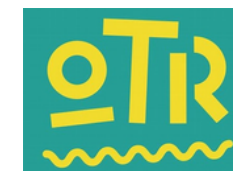
Call: 0808 800 5000



E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk



Off The Record is a mental health social movement by and for young people living in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset aged between 11-25 years old. Website: otrbristol.org.uk



B&NES Off the Record, provides a range of free, confidential and independent services for young people aged between 10-25 years old. Supporting their emotional health and wellbeing development. This includes a listening service. Website: offtherecord-banes.co.uk

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resolve west

resolving conflict, repairing harm

Resolve West is an independent charity working across Avon and Somerset providing restorative justice for those experiencing problems with a neighbour, someone in the community or at work. They also support those who have been affected by crime, hate crime or discrimination, offering fair and friendly help and support.



Website: resolvewest.org



The Samaritans are available day or night, for anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. Giving people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others.



Samaritans is not only for the moment of crisis, they're taking action to prevent the crisis.



Website: samaritans.org



Call free: 116 123



E-mail: jo@samaritans.org

shout

85258

Shout is a free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope. Shout is powered by the charity [Mental Health Innovations](http://MentalHealthInnovations.org).



Website: giveusashout.org



Text: 'SHOUT' to 85258 (available 24/7)



STAND AGAINST
RACISM & INEQUALITY

Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI) provides free and confidential support for anyone who is a victim of hate crime across Avon and Somerset.



Whether that's based on race, faith, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity, age, or sex.



website: saricharity.org.uk

Call: 01179420060



Somerset and Wessex Eating Disorders Association (SWEDA) offers a range of support services for children and young people with an eating disorder or who are concerned about someone with an eating disorder, including support and guidance sessions, counselling and support calls. Once you contact SWEDA, they can make an appointment for you. You can visit their friendly offices in Shepton Mallet or meet with a Support Worker closer to you where you live.



Website: swedauk.org



Call: 01749 343344



Somerset
Council



Somerset direct and targeted youth support, call to report a child or an adult at risk.

Call: 0300 123 2224.

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Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS) offers free, confidential advice and support to anyone whose life is being adversely affected by drug and/or alcohol use. They offer help to anyone whatever their age, as well as their partners, other family members and friends. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Somerset Turning Point is part of SDAS and has two main hubs in Taunton and Yeovil, plus a satellite office in Street (which is appointment only). They also work out of many outreach locations across Somerset.



Website: turning-point.co.uk/services/somerset



Call: 0300 303 87 88



E-mail: sdas@turning-point.co.uk



Somerset
NHS Foundation Trust

Somerset Early Psychosis Team (STEP) are a specialist service for people aged between 14-65 years old, experiencing, or at high risk of developing, their first episode of psychosis.

In addition to providing a clinical service the team offers training for professionals working in health, education and other sectors, as well as the general public.



Website: somerseftt.nhs.uk



Call: 01823 368555



E-mail: STEPReferrals@SomersetFT.NHS.UK



Somerset
NHS Foundation Trust

The Somerset NHS Foundation Trust website has information on guides to self-help that can help you to overcome common mental health problems and links to other information and advice that could be helpful. This includes Somerset Partnership Talking Therapies, a free talking therapy for over 18s.



Website: somerseftt.nhs.uk



Somerset Phoenix project Support for children and young people who have experienced child sexual abuse, they also offer support for families and training for professionals Service (facilitated by Barnardo's and SARSAS). They are open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4.00pm



Call or Text: 07590 627693



E-mail: somersefttphoenixproject@barnardos.org.uk



The Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support

Service is a project within Mind in Somerset and is delivered countywide on behalf of Public Health Somerset. They work in partnership with Cruse Bereavement Support who provide 1:1 bereavement support, and the local Samaritans who offer a listening ear.



Website: mindinsomerset.org.uk



Call: 0300 330 5463

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The Ben Kinsella Trust

The Ben Kinsella Trust is a charity that tackles knife crime through education and campaigning. They provide education to young people on the dangers of knife crime and help them to make positive choices to stay safe. They also offer resources for practitioners and parents, which are designed to empower others to work with young people on a difficult and sensitive topic.



Website: benkinsella.org.uk



Tellmi is a safe, anonymous app where young people can talk about absolutely anything. From anxiety to autism, dating to depression, or self-harm to self-esteem, sharing your experiences with the Tellmi community can help you to feel better.

The moderators check everything to keep young people safe and their in-house counsellors are always on hand if extra support is needed.



Website: tellmi.help



The King's Trust (formerly known as The Prince's Trust) help young people aged between 11-30 years old, from disadvantaged communities and those facing the greatest adversity by supporting them to build the confidence and skills to live, learn and earn.

Website: kingstrust.org.uk

Call: 0800 842 842



The Trauma Recovery Centre (TRC) exists to provide highly specialised trauma recovery support to children, youth, young adults and parents/carers.

Website: trc-uk.org

E-mail: admin@trc-uk.org



Trading Standards. If your child has been illegally sold a knife, you can report it to your local authority trading standards service. Enter your postcode on the "Find my Council" page to find a Trading Standards office near you.

Website: gov.uk/find-local-council

Call: 03454 040506



Trauma Breakthrough is a charity based in Bath, supporting the South West. They are a specialist mental health services and community support for adult survivors of abuse and all forms of trauma. They also provide trauma-informed practice training.

Website: traumabreakthrough.org



UK Trauma Council provide [resources](#), [training](#), [research and practice](#) for critical Incidents in Educational Communities.

Website: uktraumacouncil.org



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Homicide Service. The service is offered to bereaved families by their police family liaison officer (known as the FLO) or the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) country caseworker. The FLOs are key partners with Victim Support in the provision of support.
Website: victimsupport.org.uk
Call: National Homicide Service 0300 303 1984
E-mail: Homicide.referrals@victimsupport.cjsm.net



Young Somerset is a voluntary and community sector youth work organisation in Somerset. Delivering a range of services that are aligned to statutory provision and support for young peoples' personal, social, economic, educational development.
Website: yongsomerset.org.uk



Youth Connect South West is an independent non-profit charity dedicated to supporting young people in Bath, North East Somerset and beyond. They offer a wide range of opportunities for young people aged between 11-25 years old, both universal and targeted, to help them thrive.
Website: youthconnectsouthwest.org.uk



The Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) brings together specialist partners, at both the strategic pan Avon and Somerset and local authority level. Together they work to identify and understand the underlying causes of local violent crime and provide an effective response to reduce and deter people from carrying out these crimes.
Website: asvrp.co.uk



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APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLE OF A SUPPORT LEAFLET

The following support resources are available:

Knowle West Community Website has up to date information.

KWA - The Knowledge - Knowle West's community website

HWCP Community Website

HWCP - Supporting the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community

KWHP 01173 772252

NHS Talking Therapies

If you are suffering from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, excessive worry or low mood, then NHS Talking Therapies can help.

Vita Health Group provides the local Talking Therapies services on behalf of the NHS to adults 16-years and over, who live and are registered with a GP in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Visit: vitahealthgroup.co.uk

Call: 0333 200 1893




KNOWLE WEST ALLIANCE
rooted in the community growing for the future

NHS
Bristol, North Somerset
and South Gloucestershire
Integrated Care Board

To request this leaflet in an alternative format, email bnssg.customerservice@nhs.net or ring 0117 900 2655

Responding to a critical incident in your community



This leaflet explains how your body and mind may react after experiencing a critical incident.

We are all unique and have different experiences in life, as a result we respond in our own way to the world around us. We may not understand why we feel this way, or why we are having difficulty feeling anything at all. This is OK and by no means unusual; it is normal to experience conflicting emotions, thoughts and behaviours following a critical incident.

We hope this leaflet reassures you that how you and others may be interpreting and interacting with your environment is your body's natural way of responding to a critical incident.

What might we experience after a critical incident?

- Feeling scared for the safety of your family or friends.
- Feeling agitated or jumpy, sometimes phrased as being on 'high alert'.
- Feeling anxious or unsafe and actively looking for signs of danger.
- Experiences of flashbacks. These may consist of visions, sounds or sensations which can feel real and overwhelming.
- Struggling to fall asleep or consistent broken sleep.
- Feeling extra sensitive or reactive.

- Aggression and anger such as losing your temper over minor inconveniences or snapping at those around you for no real explanation.
- Feeling in shock, on autopilot or in 'survival mode'.
- Feeling numb or struggling to express emotion.
- Tiredness, a lack of motivation or less interest in things you enjoyed.
- Being withdrawn, not wanting to spend time with others or go outside.
- Loss of appetite or eating more than normal.
- Needing the presence of others to feel safe or take your mind away from difficult thoughts or feelings.
- Desire to escape your own reality, such as increased screen time, gaming or being on social media.

These responses are natural defence mechanisms our mind and body produce to help assess, react, and protect us from perceived or actual danger.

Often these reactions and emotions will naturally subside as we learn that we are safe and are able to return to day to day life.

However, for some, the emotions associated with a critical incident will stay with us, even when we no longer believe it necessary. We may feel stuck with these thoughts and feelings because we have not been able to truly process what happened.

If these feelings are persistent, feel unproportionate or overwhelming, it may be our body communicating that it needs more support to understand and heal from the incident.

What can I expect in the future?

Everyone's experience is different and being impacted for a period after an incident, when others have seemingly moved on is completely normal.

For example, you may find that you worry more, are more concerned about the behaviours of those around you or feel dependent or demotivated in your day to day activities.

You can reach out to someone you trust for an honest conversation, or a local service, charity or organisation which can support you in navigating how you feel.

Why do we respond this way?



2024 - 2025 **AVON AND SOMERSET** **CHILD CRITICAL INCIDENT TOOLKIT**



Avon & Somerset

**Violence
Reduction
Partnership**

VRMHub@avonandsomerset.police.uk

This final version was approved with partners as of October 2024, and will be reviewed every 12 months.