



Interim Protocol for a Rapid Response to Incidents of Suspected Suicide (Pilot)

THE MID AND WEST WALES SAFEGUARDING BOARD

Version	Revision Date	Owner	Date approved by Exec Board	Review Date
V1		Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board	18/10/2022	18/10/2024



Name of Policy / Procedure / Guidance	Interim Protocol for a Rapid Response to Incidents of Suspected Suicide (Pilot)
Consultation Period	02/08/2022 – 16/08/2022
Date of Publication	18/10/2022
Review Date	18/10/2024

Dissemination/ Implementation

Agencies are requested to undertake the following in order to ensure the implementation of this Policy/Procedure/Guidance

MAWWSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place on MAWWSB website within policy section • Send to Partner Agencies for dissemination • Disseminate to partner agencies training leads for inclusion within training as appropriate • Update relevant training to reflect Policy/procedure/ guidance
All Partner Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate Policy/Procedure/Guidance to all Service Leads/ Heads of Service/Safeguarding leads/ staff via appropriate communication channels e.g. LOGs • Place within own website and include a link with MAWWSB Website https://www.cysur.wales/ • Update in house Policies and Procedures to reflect Policy/Procedure/Guidance as appropriate. • Update in house training to reflect process as appropriate.

Assurance

Agencies will be requested to undertake the following in order to assure the MAWWSB with regards to dissemination and implementation of this policy:

MAWWSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek assurance from Partner Agencies that implementation has occurred
--------	--

Partner Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide MAWWSB with assurance that the above implementation have been completed
-------------------------	--

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Rapid Response to Incidents of Suspected Suicide Protocol is to set out the regional arrangements to provide a rapid, multi-agency response to managing the consequences and impact of incidents of suicide for children and adults across the Mid and West Wales region. The model will be implemented on an initial 12-month pilot/trial period. Progress will be reviewed by the regional task and finish group on a 3-month basis throughout the pilot phase.

This protocol is complementary and supportive of, but does not replace, other protocols and processes, i.e.:

- Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- 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 Board Business Unit via CYSUR@pembrokeshire.gov.uk to discuss.

The impact of a suicide can be far-reaching, both within a family and within friendships and communities. An unexpected death can cause a “ripple effect” spanning long periods of time. Individuals, groups and places can all be impacted by an unexpected death. Child Practice Reviews in Wales have highlighted how social media and online platforms can have a positive impact, however, such networks can sometimes contain hidden risks.

In terms of incidents concerning children, while the PRUDiC process is effective in coordinating multi-agency support for families of younger children and professionals working with them, the complexity of the peer and associated networks of older children often requires a wider focus than is the purpose of, or which is practical to manage, in a PRUDiC. One of the practical aspects is that those who attend a PRUDiC would not always be the necessary people to consider community safety, for example, of safeguarding in sports clubs or other community settings.

2. CRITERIA AND TIMESCALES

It should be noted only a coroner can conclude and determine an act of suicide and this will not have occurred at the time of the death. Agencies (usually the Police, as the likely first responder) will need to exercise judgement in consultation with the Local Authority regarding the circumstances of the death, to consider whether, on balance, the circumstances appear to indicate the person intended to take their own life. If so, the rapid response protocol can be applied if it is considered this is necessary and appropriate.

If the incident involves the unexpected death of a child or young person under the age of 18 years of age, then the Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (PRUDIC) process will be initiated and will take primacy. If there is an identified need for a wider multi-agency response to manage the risk of, or actual, harm in relation to a group of individuals (in addition to the direct peer group) and/or the wider community, then a Rapid Response Group can also be convened. For the reasons outlined above, this will be managed as a separate process to the PRUDiC.

A decision to implement the protocol is likely in most cases to be made by Dyfed Powys Police in consultation with the relevant Local Authority, although any agency can request a Rapid Response Meeting. Contact should initially be made with the designated officer from the local authority who will discuss with the relevant nominated officer from Dyfed Powys Police, and a decision made as to whether it is necessary and appropriate to instigate the protocol.

If a Rapid Response meeting is required, the designated person from the relevant Local Authority will chair the meeting. In cases where a more specialist input is required, a suitable alternative Chair can be identified if considered appropriate. There is scope within this Protocol for the chairing function to be delegated to another agency following consultation and agreement with that agency, if considered appropriate. An example might be to avoid undue delay in instigating the process or the initial meeting being convened.

Each Local Authority is responsible for developing and implementing a process locally to receive, assess and respond to any reports and requests for an RRM.

Timescales

Although the term “rapid” is used to describe the response to incidents of suspected suicide covered by this protocol, the actual timescales will vary depending on the circumstances of the case and those considered to be affected. A meeting should however in most cases be convened within 48 hours or 2 working days of the decision and agreement reached to instigate the protocol unless there is a justifiable reason not to. Relevant information should be circulated to meeting attendees where possible in advance of the meeting, to enable appropriate information to be gathered prior to the meeting.

3. PROCESS FOR A RAPID RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS OF SUSPECTED SUICIDE

Notification of Incidents and Confirm Facts

The agency who is the first responder to the incident (which, in most cases, will be Dyfed Powys Police) will undertake an initial assessment of the circumstances of the incident. If it is considered the circumstances meet the criteria for a Rapid Response Meeting, discussions will take place with the designated person in the relevant Local Authority, who will then convene and arrange the meeting, ensuring a chair and the appropriate administration is provided.

Gather Information

In some cases, it may not be immediately clear what the risks are to individuals or what the wider community impact is. In these circumstances, the designated Police Officer, in consultation with

the relevant Local Authority designated officer, may gather information from existing records and undertake further enquiries with relevant agencies before making a decision on whether an RRM needs to be convened.

Convene a Rapid Response Meeting

The relevant Local Authority will be responsible for convening the Rapid Response Meeting.

All relevant partner agencies required to attend will be invited via email. The number of people attending should not be excessive and should be limited to those who are able to provide relevant information and agree actions, which may include the provision of resources, on behalf of their agency.

Any briefings considered necessary to practitioners/staff prior to the RRM should be discussed and agreed with the Chair.

Any media briefings prior to the RRM will need be discussed and agreed by Dyfed Powys Police and the Local Authority, at Superintendent and Head of Service level. Discussion and agreement will be reached as to which agency should lead in respect of this and the relevant Press Officer(s) in the agency/ies concerned will be briefed and notified.

The relevant Safeguarding Board Chair and RSB Business Unit will be informed of any media statements releases in advance.

Prior to the RRM

Individual agencies and organisations invited to attend the meeting should identify those closest to the subject(s). This may include, for example, family, friends, peers, work colleagues, club membership, teams, staff, etc.

Individual agencies and organisations 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 Rapid Response Meeting

The RRM Chair will outline the purpose and content of the meeting (statement included within agenda in Appendix 1).

The police officer present or other relevant agency will be asked to provide a brief overview of the incident and, where possible, provide a list of those individuals who are potentially affected/impacted.

Each agency will share any information they have on each of the individuals or groups identified and where necessary, provide information on any other individuals or groups who may be affected. Information that cannot be obtained at the time of the meeting should be submitted to the Chair within two working days of the meeting being held.

The risks for each individual should be identified and discussed, and actions to mitigate any risks and/or impact will be agreed and assigned to the relevant agencies involved.

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.

Where appropriate, the RRM will determine which organisation/agency (including third sector) is best placed to support the family/peers/community.

Each agency/organisation should consider how they can contribute to meeting any identified need, either themselves or by enabling other agencies to do so. They will also need to consider any additional resources required to support the RRM process to ensure that services are maintained whilst providing support in response to local identified need following an incident.

A date and time of a follow up meeting may be agreed by agencies at the RRM if considered necessary. Agencies taking forward actions from the RRM will ensure these are completed and updates provided without delay and within agreed timescales.

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. The decision about briefing parents/carers and content of the brief will be agreed by the RRM.

Parents/carers will be provided with factual information as agreed by the RRM, together with an outline of the support 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.

Staff Welfare

Individual agencies should be mindful of the effect such incidents may have upon staff's emotional health and well-being, which may not always be obvious. Agencies should always pay due regard to their internal staff well-being policies and processes, ensuring support is provided to staff where appropriate. As a minimum requirement, managers and supervisors should ensure at least one debrief session takes place following a rapid response meeting, to identify any support that may need to be provided.

5. MANAGEMENT OF LARGE SCALE INCIDENTS

This may involve:

- The identification of a cluster of incidents, which may include incidents of attempted suicide as well as suspected suicide
- Identification 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;

- In some cases, the RRM may need to meet daily to monitor the situation and ensure that appropriate support and prevention services/activities are in place.

- 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 RRM.
- The strategic group will review information provided by the RRM, 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.
- Statutory Directors, the relevant Regional Safeguarding Board Chair and the Regional Safeguarding Board Business Unit should be briefed as soon as possible upon identification of a large scale or cluster of incidents.

6. Media

The relevant agency Communications Strategies will be implemented as appropriate, and the RRM will agree who will be the lead agency in respect of this.

Appropriate consultation and discussion will take place with the Regional Safeguarding Board Business Unit, who will brief the relevant Safeguarding Board Chair on any agreed communications strategy and plan.

7. Governance and Accountability

This is a regional multi-agency process agreed as part of the governance arrangements of the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board to support effective and robust multi-agency safeguarding practice.

A [Regional Information Sharing Protocol](#) is in place to support robust and lawful information sharing between agencies.

In the event that significant professional differences arise that cannot be resolved informally, a [Regional Professional Differences Resolution Protocol](#) exists to support agencies.

The relevant Local Authority will be responsible for the storage and management of the minutes in accordance with their local data protection and control policies. Information in respect of relevant themes/trends etc. may need to be provided to the Regional Safeguarding Board periodically for audit purposes and to support best multi-agency practice as part of the Boards Performance and Quality Assurance Framework.

APPENDIX 1: Confidentiality Statement and Agenda

RAPID RESPONSE MEETING AGENDA

Date and Time

Venue

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Outline purpose of the meeting:**

The purpose of this meeting is to consider an incident of suspected suicide, and to manage any threat, risk or harm to individuals and/or the wider community.

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.

During the course of the meeting, you may hear information which some people may find difficult or upsetting. Relevant support and debrief will be provided by your agency as a matter of routine.

The meeting will make recommendations for agencies to complete.

All attendees at this meeting agree by their attendance to comply with 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 minutes may be subject to requests for disclosure under the Data Protection Act 2018.

- 3. Case Overview (including persons known or suspected to be affected by the incident)**
- 4. Relevant agency/organisation information share for each individual or group**
- 5. Consider links to other processes (e.g. Child Protection, Adult Protection)**
- 6. Consider links to other recent incidents to identify potential cluster development**
- 7. Identification of risks and mitigating actions (for each individual or group)**
- 8. Determination of any need for support and responsible agency/organisation**
- 9. Agree person(s) responsible and timescales for individual tasks**
- 10. Consideration of any family/community briefings needed**
- 11. Any staff welfare issues identified and action needed**
- 12. Consider necessity/appropriateness of any media releases and lead agency**
- 13. Any Other Business**
- 14. Time and venue of next meeting**