

Emergency Services Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 11 - The positive relationships standard.
- Regulation 12 - The protection of children standard.
- Regulation 19 - Behaviour management and discipline.
- Regulations 40 - Notification of a serious event.

This HND Children's Care LTD policy sets out the procedures that should be followed when contacting or informing the Police / Emergency Services in line with the day-to-day duties of your role.

Relevant Policies:

'Absence / Missing Children Policy'

'Dealing with Aggression and Violence Policy'

'Positive behaviour Support Policy'

'Notifiable Events Policy'

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1. Requirement for Police Involvement:

This protocol is designed to provide a framework for ensuring best practice for Police involvement in HND Children's Care LTD children's homes. Its aim is to standardise our approach to dealing with incidents which arise within our establishments and to provide guidance as to what is expected of staff and Police forces.

A decision to contact the Police should normally be taken by the home manager or an on-call manager, unless a serious incident has occurred, in which case, staff may contact the police immediately then inform a manager. See Section 2, 'Categories of Response'.

The following situations are the most common ones in children's homes where Police involvement might be requested:

1.1 Violence by a Child on Another:

This section should be read in conjunction with 'Dealing with Aggression and Violence Procedure'.

Incidents between children within the home ranging from minor disagreements through to serious assaults where physical injury is caused. Such incidents can be complicated by



having two vulnerable parties. Staff will need to ensure that health and safety reporting procedures are followed, and risk assessments updated or completed.

Attendant factors for this category of offences are listed below, and this list does not reflect any order of priority:

- Wishes of the victim.
- Severity of the injury sustained / nature of threat received by the victim.
- Probability of a repeat incident
- Previous relationship between victim and offender
- Potential impact on the child following formal police involvement.
- Effectiveness of police action / court proceedings
- Future best interests of both parties
- Message sent to other children.
- Availability of alternative causes of action, e.g., restorative approaches with the consent of the victim
- Previous behaviour or offending, bullying / peer pressure / duress.

1.2 Violence to Staff by a Child:

This section should be read in conjunction with 'Dealing with Aggression and Violence Procedure'.

Violence towards staff can vary from verbal threats to physical acts amounting to assault. Whilst each home has the responsibility of care towards the children, their welfare needs to be balanced with the rights of staff not to be subjected to violence in the course of their duties.

Such incidents are affected by factors similar to those listed above, and staff should be encouraged to report any incidents that cannot be dealt with through alternative means. Where there is no immediate continuing threat of violence it is in the best interests of the staff member to take time to discuss and consider possible options.

This can include a referral to the Youth Offending Team / Service, via the relevant social worker, which will consider the necessary intervention. This, however, does not remove the individual's right to involve the Police. Following such incidents, it is important that staff utilise standard de-briefing processes.

HND Children's Care LTD Health and Safety reporting procedures should be followed. Staff should also ensure risk assessments are updated or completed in relation to the risk of violence or injury to themselves or colleagues. A professionals meeting could be a useful method by which to assess these risks and look at ways this risk could be reduced.

1.3 Criminal Damage within the Home:

The majority of criminal incidents involving Police relate to damage to the children's home.



It is important to see these in the context of the needs of the child and whether involving the Police is an effective and proportionate response. Factors to consider are listed and the list does not reflect any order of priority:

- Level / value of damage caused.
- Previous incidents of a similar nature by the same child or young person
- Suitability or effectiveness of Police involvement
- Impact of police involvement of the child's overall care plan
- Message sent to other children if applicable.
- Availability of alternative courses of action, for example referral to the Youth Offending Service, via the relevant social worker.

1.4 Theft within the Home or Placement:

Most offences of theft within the home are likely to be of low value, but the possible start of criminal behaviour, although it should be emphasised that value is a subjective issue relative to the victim. Factors to be considered include (this list does not reflect any order of priority):

- Wishes of the victim.
- Nature and seriousness of the allegation
- Requirement for formal investigation, e.g., insurance claim requires a crime reference report.
- Availability of alternative courses of action, e.g., restorative approaches

1.5 Criminal Damage to Staff Cars or Property:

Factors for consideration should be similar to those in Section 1.3, 'Criminal Damage within the Home', and again this list does not reflect any order of priority:

- Nature and seriousness of the allegation
- Requirement for formal investigation, e.g., insurance claim
- Wishes and best interest of the victim.
- Availability of alternative courses of action, e.g., restorative approaches

1.6 Disorder in or Around the Home or Placement:

The area of disorder is subjective and requires judgement by staff to avoid unnecessary Police involvement for minor infringements of behaviour expectations. The main factors that should be considered are:

- Nature and seriousness of the disorder
- Risk or threat of violence
- The wishes of and impact on the immediate community
- The availability of alternative courses of action



1.7 Trespass within and Around Home or Placement:

All incidents of trespass by persons unknown should be reported to the Police as visits / trespass by outside associates of residents can be dealt with effectively under the Harassment Act, which will protect children and staff.

1.8 Substance Misuse:

Please read this section in conjunction with 'Drugs and Substance Misuse Procedure'. The misuse of controlled drugs within a home is a serious issue and it is essential that the response is prompt and effective.

All staff are responsible for ensuring the following, and the following forms our principles:

- To help children to resist drugs use in order to achieve their full potential in society.
- To reduce the acceptability and availability of alcohol and other drugs to children.
- To minimise the health risks and other damage associated with substance use by children.
- To increase the safety of our home, and the community from drug related crime.

HND Children's Care LTD staff will need to balance these principles with their duty of care for the children in the home or placement and their role in managing children's behaviour as part of their care responsibilities as well as their responsibilities to the wider community.

It is important that children are made aware that the possession or taking of any drugs or alcohol within the home is unacceptable and is a criminal offence.

Managers and staff are expected to implement measures to prevent any such issues and contacting the Police for assistance in these matters could be considered an option and strategy if deemed appropriate and necessary.

1.9 Hate Crime (Racist, Religion, Homophobic, Gender, Disability):

A hate crime is defined as a criminal offence committed against a person or property which is motivated by an offender's prejudice or hatred of someone because of their:

- Race
- Religion
- Gender or gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

A hate incident is defined as any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate. Hate incidents are defined as follows:



- Racist Incident - any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.
- Homophobic Incident - any incident which is perceived to be homophobic by the victim or any other person.
- Transphobic Incident - any incident which is perceived to be transphobic by the victim or any other person.
- Faith Related Incident - any incident which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the faith of the victim or so perceived by the victim or any other person.
- Sectarian Incident - any incident which is perceived to be sectarian by the victim or any other person.
- Disablist Incident (or sometimes referred to as a disability incident) - any incident which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the victim because of their disability or so perceived by the victim or any other person.

All possible steps should be taken by the Police at local level, in consultation with local government and other agencies to encourage the reporting of racist incidents in crimes.

It is important that the agency that receives reports of racist incidents is well equipped to deal with them and no one should be given the task without adequate training.

It should be made clear that all behaviour policies held within homes should cover the areas indicated as hate crime and it be made clear how staff and children should deal with it. Homes and placements should themselves handle low level daily occurrences and their management of this aspect of discipline should be subject to inspection.

A multi-agency approach to such incidents can ensure that help is provided to victims of these incidents providing them with a range of options for reporting and ensuring that the children are sufficiently supported.

When dealing with the incidents outlined as Hate Crime in relation to racist incidents, whether or not the incident amounts to a crime, the person reporting should be asked to consent to the disclosure of this information to other agencies for the sole purpose of prevention or detection.

2. Requirement for Ambulance Services:

This protocol is designed to provide a framework for ensuring best practice for using 999 to request an ambulance in our homes. Its aim is to standardise our approach to dealing with incidents which arise within our establishments and to provide guidance as to what is expected of staff and services.

A decision to call an ambulance should normally be taken by the home manager or an on-call manager, unless a serious incident / injury / accident has occurred, in which case, staff



may contact them immediately and then inform a manager.

The following situations are the most common ones in children's homes where an ambulance might be requested:

Accident or Injury beyond first aid:

All staff in our homes are first aid trained and will act in line with the training received. Consent is received upon admission of children for the administration of first aid.

Consent is held within the children's records for use of emergency services where required, this could otherwise be known as delegated authority.

Where first aid is not sufficient or there is any doubt, the home will access one of the following:

- 111
- GP
- Minor Injuries Clinic
- Accident & Emergency

If there is sufficient cause for concern in relation to health, injury or harm, an ambulance would be called via 999.

A member of staff would always accompany a child to hospital or another avenue of support and continue to care and support the child for the duration of their stay if required.

Significant emotional or psychological distress:

Not all illness, harm or injury is visible, and the nature of our children's difficulties may mean that they are unable to indicate or tell staff what is wrong.

Often, they indicate this through a change in behaviour, for example a normally placid child may become aggressive or self-harm, to try to show the pain. They may be off their food or sleep more or less than usual. It is therefore important that we rule out any medical explanation before we explore the psychological.

Where a child does not respond to de-escalation or behaviour management techniques, or potentially restrictive physical intervention, and showing signs of perceived psychological distress for prolonged periods of time, it is important we seek further support, usually this would be through one of the following:

- Specialist Nurses
- School Nurse
- GP
- Any registered specialist health services



Where these are not accessible or it is not safe to transport a child, we may request an ambulance. In the event of the child presenting with any aggression the protocol is often to send Police support. This is always a last resort and a decision made by on-call managers when the risk of injury or harm is significant.

The placing authority and family (if appropriate) will be informed of any action taken as soon as is reasonably practical.

3. Requirement for Fire Services:

This protocol is designed to provide a framework for ensuring best practice for the use of Fire and Rescue Services at our homes, its aim is to standardise our approach to dealing with incidents which arise within our establishments and to provide guidance as to what is expected of staff and Fire Services.

In the event of Fire, the staff would raise the alarm, begin evacuation procedures, and contact the fire service through 999. The following situations are the most common ones in children's homes where Fire and Rescue Services might be requested:

Fire:

- The Fire and Rescue Service will be called in the event of any fire requiring evacuation.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to make the call.
- No one will access the building until Fire and Rescue Service ascertain it is safe to do so.
- Any incidents of fire will be reported to relevant parties as soon as is practical.
- All children are inducted into our fire procedure, and some (if required) will have personal evacuation plans in place; staffing is high enough to facilitate evacuation 24/7.
- In the event of significant fire damage, the manager will implement the Business Continuity Plan in order to continue to provide safe care.

4. Notifications and Categories of Response:

It is recognised that caring for and managing children with difficult or challenging behaviour can be a feature of residential care work. Residential staff will generally manage problematic situations except where they are so severe that immediate Police involvement is essential in order to avoid physical assault or damage. The Protocol identifies four categories.

- Serious Incidents.
- Not serious Incidents.
- Liaison.
- Internal Incidents.

4.1 Serious Incidents

Incidents of violence / injury / harm / fire requiring an immediate police or emergency services response where children or staff are:



- At risk of immediate serious physical harm
- Where there is a risk of substantial damage to property, or
- Risk of significant disorder with the home

In such situations the manager of the home or on-call manager should contact the police or emergency services using the 999 system. If the manager has not been consulted / informed prior to contacting the Police, s/he should be notified without delay.

If any emergency services are called to the home, the Registered Manager must be notified. If a serious offence is committed, the manager must be notified.

It will also be necessary to notify the social worker and the Regulatory Authority (See ['Notifiable Events Policy'](#))

4.2 Not Serious Incidents:

This is an incident where no immediate Police or emergency services response is required for example where assaults or damage has occurred and there is no risk of recurrence / significant harm to people, or incidents of theft. These incidents should be reported to the home's manager who then has the responsibility of identifying the appropriate course of action.

It is important to avoid any unnecessary reporting of incidents to the Police or emergency services. Should the manager decide, and / or the victim wishes that formal Police involvement is necessary, where possible this should be through the Local Police Officer (LPO), during a liaison meeting. When a situation involving a child is to be discussed, the child's Social Worker should be informed, and they may wish to join the discussion.

If the discussion needs to be held sooner the manager should arrange for a member of the Local Police Officer to visit the home as soon as possible. If there is a specific officer who frequently liaises with the home and this officer is unavailable the manager should contact the Police Control Room to request a delay or scheduled response visit by another Local Police Officer.

In certain circumstances preservation of evidence may be an issue and residential staff will need to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to retain articles relevant to any criminal allegation or police investigation. A referral to the Youth Crime Prevention Panel for the area should be considered for those cases considered not serious or internal - via the social worker

4.3 Liaison:

Police involvement should be on a risk assessment basis. If there is no risk, then the involvement will be with managers or at a low level of involvement.

The primary police involvement in children's homes should be through a member of the Local Police Office, meeting staff on a regular basis. Whilst some officers may already



perform this duty it must be emphasised that a good working relationship is the most effective way to respond to children with difficulties, and it is in this area that consideration should be given for joint agency training.

A regular liaison meeting between a member of the Police and manager would provide for discussion of non-serious incidents within the home to identify the appropriate method of resolution, including:

- Internal action by staff with no police involvement.
- Formal Police investigation primarily by the Local Police Officer and any resulting action.

This liaison meeting will also provide an opportunity to share more general views and cooperation and develop a better understanding of each agency's responsibilities and practices.

It is not the intention of this policy to restrict the options available to residential staff and local Police but to emphasise the importance of flexibility in determining the most suitable option for dealing with children and young persons. Additional advice and support could be sought from the child's social worker.

4.4 Internal Incidents:

It is anticipated that relatively minor incidents will be addressed by using routine internal policies and procedures.

5. Recording:

Staff need to consider the nature and seriousness of the incident before deciding whether to involve the Police immediately, at a later stage, or whether to involve them at all, but all matters should be entered in an incident log. It is crucial that communication between children's home staff and the Police regarding an incident is clear and factual.

The following records must be completed:

- An Incident Report
- The Daily Log
- Daily Records
- Police Log

End.