Critical Incident Policy 2026

Introduction
Hesketh Bank Community Centre (HBCC) seeks to provide a safe and healthy environment in which all centre users, employees and volunteers are treated with consideration, respect and dignity. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, service users, Trustees, stakeholders and business partners.

Definition of a critical incident
An incident becomes a critical incident when it creates a serious disruption arising with little or no warning. This may arise on a scale beyond the coping capacity of HBCC rendering it unable to operate under normal circumstances and requires assistance from the emergency services.

Examples of critical incidents that impact on the centre can include but is not limited to:

- Death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden traumatic illness
- Child protection incident (individual or collective)
- Lower attendance or closure of setting due to specific events, for e.g. Outbreak of epidemic / pandemic
- Major fire
- Building collapse
- Natural disaster (for e.g. flooding)
- Terrorism
- Missing/ lost person including abduction
- Intense media interest from incidents
- Environmental factors (for e.g. Loss of heating, sanitation problems, water)
- Flooding

Preventative and precautionary measures
HBCC will be unable to plan for every eventuality however, there are several preventative and precautionary measures that must be understood and practiced by all staff to help minimise the risk, these are as follows:

- All employees/volunteer and centre hirers to be aware and well-practiced with regards to our emergency evacuation procedures
- Employees/volunteers and centre hirers to be aware of and follow procedures for dealing with emergencies.
- Employees/volunteers, centre hirers and users must be aware of the centres security procedures this includes recording all visitors to the centre, checking identification (where required).
- All centre hirers must keep a record of their clients in attendance and any emergency contact arrangements.
- Centre hirers must have a thorough understanding of each of their clients medical and health needs.

- Employees/volunteers and centre hirers will follow procedures for dealing with any violence and aggression in the centre.
- Employees/volunteers and centre hirers must be aware and adhere to internal safeguarding procedures.
- Employees/volunteers and centre hirers must respect and comply with laws and procedures concerning confidentiality, sensitivity and privacy (GDPR).

Definition of a major incident:

- An accident or incident leading to serious injury or death
- A potential risk of serious illness
- Where normal functionality of the centre is disrupted
- A situation where the local/national authorities or press and media may become involved

Major incidents can include (but are not limited to):

- Death or significant injury of any person
- An epidemic / pandemic
- A violent incident towards any person within the centre
- A missing and or lost person
- A hostage situation
- A transport accident resulting in a serious injury or fatality
- A community disaster
- Acts of terrorism, religious extremism and or radicalisation
- Major fire
- Incident involving an intruder believed to be armed on the setting premises
- Floods or inclement weather
- Abduction
- Settings environmental factors including; loss of power, lighting, heating, water, plumbing issues

Where a critical incident has taken place, members of staff must prioritise the following:

- Save life
- Minimise injury
- Safeguard other children and adults
- Provide consistency and continuity to the remaining centre users

Management of critical incidents needs to be in a **timely fashion**. The actions below should be undertaken **AFTER** contact has been made with the emergency services as further guidance may be given by them, especially if the incident has resulted in a person's death or serious injury.

Immediate action:

- Appropriate action must be taken in response to the level of threat posed.
- If it is safe to do so, and within your capabilities, administer first aid to those that require it
- Contact relevant emergency services and give as much information as possible in order to ensure help arrives as soon as possible. This would require all staff knowing the location/ address for the premises.
- Consider staff and centre users may have witnessed a traumatic event so may be showing signs of shock if not immediately after the incident, then at some stage, and require support with this.

- At the first opportunity record the incident and include; all persons involved, date and time of the incident and any actions taken. Provide a chronology of events and record any further updates as they arise.
- If able to open an individual telephone line to act as an incident line, whilst controlling the escape of inappropriate or inaccurate information.
- Contact families of centre users and employees involved in the incident.

In order to carry out this responsibility in an appropriate way the centre must:

• Designate a member of staff to liaise with external parties / other professionals.
• Ensure the designated person has relevant information and consent to share it.
• Provide centre users with contact numbers for external agencies.
• Check that centre users and employees/volunteers have immediate support.
• Where you are unable to make immediate contact with families liaise with the emergency services so they can make contact with them.

Medium term action:

- The Trust and employees/volunteers to meet in order to review the incident, review plans in place, clarify tasks to be carried out, assign roles and responsibilities and create an action plan if required
- Liaise with external agencies who have had involvement with the critical incident
- Advise centre users and employees/volunteers about disclosures to the media.

Ensure all staff and centre users are reminded of their responsibilities regarding Data Protection and confidentiality. Information about the incident and names of those involved in the incident **SHOULD NOT** be released or confirmed to the media or other callers, without seeking further advice.

- Provide a confidential space for those affected and arrange partnership meetings
- Identify children, adults and staff who are most likely to need support from support agencies
- Where children may require support from support agencies, parental consent should be sought from the person who has parental responsibility or legal guardianship for the child
- Ensure actions taken by the setting will not result in any further upset of centre users and staff in the setting
- Ensure staffing ratios are appropriate to cope, post incident.

Some children and adults may need additional support due to distress caused by the incident, where this is the case ratios may need to be exceeded, these people may include:

• People who have witnessed an injury/death or violence associated with the incident
• Siblings
• People with pre-existing emotional/behavioural difficulties
• Those people with SEND
• Children, parents or staff with cultural or language difficulties
• People who have previously suffered bereavement and/or loss

Where a decision is made to close the centre following an incident, all centre users should be informed of the procedure in place for leaving the premises in a safe manner, assistance should be offered to arrange collection of those affected by a responsible person.

Where children cannot be collected immediately, alternative arrangements must be made for these children and parents informed of these arrangements.

- A staff meeting should take place to identify procedures of how centre users and staff should be supported
- Ensure all staff are alert to identifying any physical and emotional change in centre users that could give cause for concern, this also applies to colleagues, parents and centre hirers.

Long term action:

- Ensure arrangements are in place to support those who have been hurt or bereaved
- Makes plans to attend funerals if appropriate
- Brief staff on how best to support centre users in returning to the centre

Useful contact details:

- Centre Manager 07784 942127
- Emergency services – 999
- Police (non-emergency) - 101 non-emergency
- Health Security Agency - 0300 303 0234
- Public Health – 01695 577177
- RIDDOR - 0300 790 6787
- Environment Agency Flood line - 0845 988 1188
- Prevent call 999
- WLBC – 01695 577177
- Anti-Terrorist Hotline - 0800 789 321
- Report Extremist material online - www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 01772 536694 or LADO.Admin@lancashire.gov.uk

Safeguarding
If we are concerned about welfare and wellbeing then we are under a duty to consider what, if any, action should be taken.

Depending on the circumstances, action that we take can includes us sharing information with appropriate external agencies such as the police, local authorities or under the 'Prevent' initiative, which is part of the UK Government's anti-terrorism strategy.

Internally, the sensitive personal information that may be disclosed in relation to welfare and wellbeing issues and is only ever shared with our safeguarding lead and deputies. This information is subject to the requirements of GDPR and as detailed in the HBCC GDPR Policy.

Training

The Trustees of HBCC will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision, and instruction, to enable all concerned to deal more effectively with the requirements of protecting data.
The trustees will also arrange training to all staff and volunteers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

If you need any further information, advice or guidance relation to this policy, please contact The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, unless circumstances arise which require the policy to be reviewed earlier.

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees of HBCC.

Policy dated: 01/10/2026

Policy review date: 30/09/2027