

# Managing critical incidents in out-of-home care (OOHC) non-government organisations (NGOs)

**What do i need to consider?** Critical incidents are an expected reality in OOHC. Systems need to be in place to mitigate the risk of these incidents occurring and to guide responses to critical incidents to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. Below is a collection of resources and information points to assist your organisation in thinking about the response to and management of critical incidents before they occur. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but a tool to assist your organisation to begin to think about what needs to be considered in the management of critical incidents.

## Before a critical incident occurs:

What preventative strategies and processes does your organisation have in place?

Is your organisation a child safe organisation?

Does your organisation have clear and accessible policies and procedures that all levels of staff are familiar with in relation to:

- staff recruitment and management
- codes of conduct
- risk management plans
- complaints management and active processes to gain feedback from service users
- responsibilities under Charter of Victims Rights and the Code of Practice.
- responsibilities in relation to reportable conduct
- responsibilities in relation to responding to a child death.

## Responding to a critical incident:

Does your organisation know who to report to?  
What are your responsibilities after reporting?

Are all levels of staff aware of how and when to make a report to:

- Helpline
- Police: it may be necessary to contact police prior to the Helpline when an immediate risk of harm is present.
- Office of the NSW Ombudsman
- Office of the Children's Guardian
- Coroners Office

Responsibilities and actions following making a report in relation to:

- reportable conduct
- exchanging information
- working with JIRT
- accessing resources and support from Victims Services
- working with FACS and the Coroners Office
- incident and process review.

## Resources and training

**Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG):**  
[www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

**Office of the NSW Ombudsman (Ombudsman):**  
[www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)

**Coroners Office** provides some support services when there is a death of a child in care:  
[www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au)

**Victims Services:**  
[www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au)

**FACS website** contains guidance about information exchange under Section 16A of the *Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.  
[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

**FACS website** contains guidance about how to make an e-report: [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

**FACS website** also contains information, links and resources in relation to the out-of-home care transition. [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

**AbSec** provide information, resources and training to Aboriginal OOHC NGOs in relation to a wide variety of issues including reportable conduct.  
[www.absec.org.au](http://www.absec.org.au)

**Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA):** [www.acwa.asn.au](http://www.acwa.asn.au)

**NGO Learning Centre** website provides accessible training and resources for NGO employees who work with children, young people, families and communities in NSW. Their website also contains podcasts and recordings from the Managing Critical Incident forum:  
[ngolearning.com.au](http://ngolearning.com.au)

**Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse** conducts a comprehensive research program into topics relevant to its work. The program studies prevention, reporting and responding to allegations of child sexual abuse as well as support and redress. [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)