



Donoughmore GAA CRITICAL PLAN

February 2024

What do we mean by the term ‘critical incident?’

The Executive of *Donoughmore GAA Club* recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the Club”. Critical incidents may involve one or more members, or visitors to our Club. Types of incidents might include:

- *The death of a member of the Club through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death*
- *A serious accident involving a Club member(s)*
- *An accident involving members of the Club including incidents outside our Club facilities*
- *An accident/tragedy in the wider community*
- *Serious damage to the Club building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.*
- *The disappearance of a member of the Club*
- *An intrusion into the Club resulting in serious damage or injury*

Aim

The Club will establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT). The aim of the CIMT is to help the Club Executive, and members to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to the members. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the members will be limited. It should enable us to effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the Club

The Club will put systems in place to help to build resilience in members, thus preparing us to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the Club.

Physical safety

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Risks are managed as set out in our Safety Statement
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Alarms – fire and security are services at regular intervals and are maintained in proper working order.
- Front gates closed at night

Psychological safety

The Executive of *Donoughmore GAA Club* aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of members, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the Club and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

- Social, Personal and Health is integrated into the workings of the Club through the work of our Healthy Club Committee. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision along with our alcohol and drug abuse policies.
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures form part of the Club approach to psychological safety.
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Members are informed in the area of suicide awareness.
- The Club has developed links with a range of external agencies Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)
- *Members* are informed about how to access support for themselves.

A CIMT will be established in line with best practice. The members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one Club year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team will have a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Decision to implement Plan

Any suspected critical incident should be brought to the notice of the Club Chairperson, who in consultation with the Senior Officers, will decide if the CIMP is to be implemented

- **Team leader:** (Alternative Team Leader also appointed in the event that the Team Leader is directly involved in the Critical Incident or unavailable)

Role

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the other Officers, Executive Committee
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison -

Role

- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

Club Members liaison –

Role

- Leads briefing meetings for Members/Players within our facilities on the facts as known, gives Members/Players an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day.
- Arrange meeting to update the Club membership if deemed necessary by the CIMT.
- Establish a Critical Incident File and update that file as necessary.

Player and Children liaison – (Club Children's Officer)

Role

- At children level, co-ordinate information from managers, trainers and parents about members they are concerned about
- Alerts other officers to vulnerable members (appropriately)
- Provides materials for members (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains player contact records.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room if necessary.

Community/agency liaison – (2 Team Members)

Role

- Maintains and keeps up to date the Critical Incident Plan with a lists of contact numbers of - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral

- Be alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- In conjunction with the CIMT, coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates CIMT members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent liaison – (2 Team Members)

Role

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if necessary
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage ‘questions and answers’
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the Club’s system and ready for adaptation
- Be available for collective meetings with parents
- Update Critical Incident file with a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison –

Role

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. members being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the Team Leader and CIMT before any statements or press releases are issued
- Will draw up a press statement, for media briefings and interviews (as agreed by Club CIMT).
- Any use of Club Social Media as a means of communication must first be approved and content approved by CIMT.

Administrator -

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the Clubs system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used,

material used etc. Details of all contacts and communications will be entered in the Critical Incident File

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The Executive of *Donoughmore GAA Club* have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Club Officers shall bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that members do so also, e.g. the term 'suicide' will not be used. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Key point – Keep the Family and those directly impacted informed and at the centre of all decisions.

Putting the Critical Plan in Place

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

The Critical Incident Team members will meet to discuss and draw up the policy. The Club's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents will be presented to the Executive Committee. Each member of the critical incident team will have a personal copy of the plan.

Name the team leader to review the plan, (at least twice a year or after an incident). Keep the plan up to date regarding personnel. They must keep the plan up to date regarding personnel. Keep the contact list on their phone in case it becomes necessary to activate the plan. They must send a copy of the plan to Executive Committee after each major amendment.

Checklist for putting the critical incident response plan

Have key roles been clearly identified and tasks clearly outlined
Are personnel suitable
Has contact been made to external agencies
Is the contact list appropriate and complete?

Are materials such as press releases, letters readily available, for adaption to suit the particular circumstances?

Are telephone numbers on contact lists up-to-date

Has a date been set for a review of the plan?

Where will the plan be kept and are people aware of this?

5 Key Principles during any crisis situation or critical incident.

1. Promote a sense of safety
2. Promote a sense of calm
3. Promote a sense of self-efficacy and collective efficacy (i.e. the capacity to deal with the situation)
4. Promote connectedness
5. Promote hope

Donoughmore GAA

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Contact details
Team leader:		
Alternative Team leader:		
Garda liaison :		
Club Member liaison :		
Player and Children Liaison:		
Community liaison :		
Media liaison :		
Administrator :		
Parent Liaison:		

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	All CIMT
Who, what, when, where?	All CIMT
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team Lead
Contact external agencies	Team Lead
Hold CIMT meeting	Team Lead
Agree schedule for the day	CIMT
Inform members	Club Member Liaison
Compile a list of vulnerable members	Player and Children liaison
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Media Liaison
Hold end of day staff briefing	Team Lead

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	Team Lead
Meet Members	Club Member Liaison
Arrange support for members, & parents	Club Member Liaison

Visit the injured	Team Lead / 1 other
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Lead / 1 other
Make decisions about Club closure	CIMT

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor members for signs of continuing distress	Player and Children Liaison
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Team Lead & Player and Children Liaison
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	CIMT
Review response to incident and amend plan	CIMT

Useful GAA contacts /Critical Incident Team

Contact	Contact Person	Contact Details
Club Chairperson/CIT	Tommy Golden	085 8430377
Club Secretary/CIT	Gillian Golden	086 8066016
Club Children's Officer/CIT	Michael Twomey	087 2420802
Club PRO/CIT	Trish Robb	087 6329430
Club Health & Wellbeing Officer/CIT	Bernie Honohan	087 2215267
CIT	Patsy Foley	087 6798810
CIT	Donie Forde	086 0111305
CIT	Denis Guiry	086 8098639
County Health & Wellbeing Chairperson	Eoghan O Connor	087 6895421
County Children's Officer	Ruairí ó Catháin	085 1100828
Donoughmore Health & Wellbeing Chairperson	Bernie Honohan	087 2215267
National Children's Officer (Croke Park)	Gearoid O Maoilmhichil	01 8363222
Community & Health Manager (Croke Park)	Colin Regan	01 8658600

Useful service contacts in your area

Contact	Contact Person	Contact Details
Accident & Emergency		999 or 112 021 4546400
Irish Hospice Foundation Bereavement Support line		1800 807 077
Children & Family Services (Tusla)	Barry Murray	021 4923503
Community First Responder		999 or 112
GP/Family Doctor	Tower Medical Centre South Doc	021 4385348 0818 355 999
Gardaí	Macroom	026 20590
Mental Health Services Officer for Suicide Prevention	Helena Cogan Martin Ryan	021 4858596 087 2995913 021 4659707 087 3287094
Fire Brigade		999 or 112
Clergy	Fr. Jerry O' Riordan	021 7337023
School Principal	Con McDonnell Stuake Christine O Shea Firmount	021 7337248 021 7337344
Childline		1800 666 666
Pieta		1800 247 247
Samaritans	Majella Canty	021 4271323 116 123
Barnardo's		01 453 0355

Guidelines for dealing with the media following a critical incident

Following a critical incident in which people have died, press interest in survivors and bereaved families can be intense. There are rules and standards the press should follow. All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) is charged with enforcing the 'Editors' Code of Practice'.

Individuals are under no obligation to speak to the media. If someone doesn't want to speak to them - tell them.

When speaking with the media the following are some helpful tips;

- always make a note of the journalist's name and contact phone number at the outset
- consider consulting with Family involved if they would like to appoint somebody as a spokesperson for family - this might be a relative or friend, or a solicitor
- don't do anything in a hurry, whatever the journalist says about deadlines
- ask what they want to talk to you about in advance
- ask them to write down the questions they want to ask you in advance
- give yourself time to think about what you want to say
- write down your answers
- ask the journalist to ring you back at a specified time
- ask if you can see what they wish to quote from you before it goes to press - they may not do this, but it will alert them to your concerns about what they are going to publish
- never say anything 'off the record' unless both you and the journalist have a shared understanding of what this means
- remember that a journalist is entitled to report anything you say, so don't mistake them for counsellors or friends
- bring the conversation to a close if you are uncomfortable

Sometimes journalists will ask for photographs of the person who has passed away, and their family, and of you. You may wish to provide these, but remember that you are under no obligation to do so. If you do, ensure that you have a copy and ask for the photographs and any other personal items that you pass on to be returned. And remember always to check with Family involved if it is ok to do so.

Announcement to the media

This can be used as a template by clubs to be emailed, faxed or given to the media. It may help to decrease the number of media calls and callers to the club.

In some instances it is not appropriate to provide names or information that might identify individuals.

This announcement will need to be changed based upon confidentiality issues, the wishes of the affected family and the nature of the incident.

My name is _____ and I am the _____ of _____ GAA club. We learned this morning of the death of (Name). This is a terrible tragedy for _____ family, our club and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with (Name) family and friends.

(Name of person) was a member of (Name) club and will be greatly missed by all who knew him/her. We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our club have implemented our Critical Incident Response Plan.

The club has been open to members, to support them and to offer them advice and guidance. We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.

Chairperson

Key point – Keep the Family and those directly impacted informed and at the centre of all decisions.

