

Bridgend County Borough Council

Incident and Near Miss Reporting Procedure

(Excluding Health and Safety)

1. Introduction

This procedure describes the process for the reporting and investigation of **all** types of incidents and near misses (**other than those relating to Health and Safety**) within the Council, which could, if they had come to fruition, have impacted on the Council's ability to achieve its corporate objectives. This procedure applies equally to incidents involving employees, Members, contractors, visitors and members of the public who are affected by the work of the Council. This includes but is not limited to the management of finance, service failures, communications and public profile, information technology breaches and so on.

2. Statement of intent

Incident and near miss reporting is a key element of good risk management. When something goes wrong, an investigation should take place to identify how and why this happened. This should lead to a change in practice to ensure, where possible, that it does not happen again. In this way, lessons can be learnt to reduce the risk of the Council failing to achieve its objectives.

In order to enable learning to take place, the Council seeks to promote an open and fair organisational culture and to encourage the reporting of incidents when things have gone wrong. This means that disciplinary action will be considered only where there is evidence of willful negligence, acts of a malicious nature or gross/repeated misconduct. Should disciplinary action be appropriate, the investigation would then be managed in accordance with Council's policy and procedures.

3. Links with Financial Procedure Rules and Risk Management Policy

This procedure supports Chief Officers in the successful execution of their duties contained in Section 26 of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. Section 26 says that "Chief Officers shall be responsible for the identification, classification and control of all risks falling within their areas of responsibility". It also says that they should undertake regular reviews of risks within their Directorate. The Incident and Near Miss Reporting procedure will assist them to identify and record what happens and this will feed into their review and assessment of risk. The method by which risks are reviewed is contained in the Council's Risk Management Policy.

4. Definitions

Incident – any event or circumstance that led to harm to the Council or other occurrence that could impact on the Council's ability to achieve its objectives.

Example: A deadline for the application of a grant is missed and a transport improvement scheme cannot proceed.

Example: The Council becomes dependent on an outsourced contractor which suddenly ceases trading, leaving the Council unable to deliver certain functions.

Example: A pipe bursts in Civic Offices over a weekend which is not discovered until Monday morning. Extensive damage happens leaving certain areas unable to be occupied. Alternative workspace has to be found at short notice.

Example: The Council experiences a cyber-attack and key tasks such as the payment of benefits cannot be completed on time.

Near-miss – an incident that did not lead to harm, but could have done.

Example: A misprint on a ballot paper is discovered just before an election and replacements have to be printed at the last moment.

Example: A care home experiences financial difficulties and the Council steps in to protect the welfare of vulnerable people.

Example: Torrential rain is experienced and a school narrowly avoids being flooded.

Example: Vital data is lost but can be recovered from a backup.

5. Reporting an incident

It is essential that an Incident Report Form is completed for **all** incidents and near misses (**other than those relating to Health and Safety**) as soon as possible before the memory fades. This form, which is found at **Appendix 1** is available via the Intranet (under R for Risk Management) and can be submitted electronically or as a hard copy. All the information required on the form should be provided. The person experiencing or witnessing the incident must complete Part 1 immediately after the occurrence and then forward this to their Line Manager who will complete Part 2.

Part 2 includes an assessment of the incident or near miss. The responsible Line Manager records what investigation has been carried out and action taken to prevent a recurrence. To make sure this assessment is objective it should be scored using the measurements for likelihood and impact contained in **Appendix 2**. The score for likelihood is multiplied by the score for impact to reach an overall score for the incident or near miss.

The score will place it somewhere within the prioritisation matrix shown in Table 3 of **Appendix 2**. If in the opinion of the Line Manager the incident falls into the **red zone**, which is a score of 15 and above, the Line Manager, following consultation with the Head of Service or member of staff at an appropriate level, will verbally report the incident to a Corporate Director. Following the verbal report a high priority email containing the Incident Report Form or a full description of the incident will be sent to the Corporate Director, with a copy being sent to the Insurance and Risk Officer. The

Corporate Director will then have responsibility to determine the appropriate response and action.

If the score is less than 15, it will fall into either the **amber zone** or **green zone**. In these circumstances the completed Incident Report Form should be forwarded to the Head of Service, or if the Line Manager does not report to a Head of Service, straight to the Corporate Director. It should be copied to the Insurance and Risk Officer.

In the event of an incident being reported to them by a Line Manager within their area of responsibility, Heads of Service are required to check the score allocated. If it is in the **green zone** between 1 and 9 they are responsible for the response. If it is in the **amber zone** between 10 and 12 they must report the matter to their Directorate Management Team. If they think that the score is in the **red zone** between 15 and 25 they will immediately notify their Corporate Director. The completed Incident Report Form should be copied to the Insurance and Risk Officer. The Head of Service will ensure that an investigation has been carried out and that action has been or is being taken. They must satisfy themselves as to the adequacy of the plan of action and keep this under review so that they can be sure that actions are being followed up.

On receipt of a finalised Incident Report Form, the Insurance and Risk Officer will add the incident to a database. The information on the database will assist with the assessment of corporate risk as required by the Corporate Risk Management policy.

When an incident occurs all evidence should be protected and secured in case of the need for further investigation.

Any incident involving an employee occurring outside the Council premises, where the person involved was engaged in activities directly related to their duties must be treated in the same way as any other incident.

6. Roles

A flowchart of the responsibilities for reporting and investigating incidents and near misses is provided in **Appendix 3**. The details of each of the roles are provided below.

All employees

All employees have a responsibility to report incidents to their Line Manager and to contribute to any subsequent investigation. They report the incident or near miss by completing the form at Part 1 of **Appendix 1**.

Line Managers

In the event of an incident occurring which involves an employee or other person within their team and/or area of responsibility, Line Managers are required to ensure that the incident is reported to their Head of Service, or if they do not report to one, to their Corporate Director. To do this they must use the form at Part 2 of **Appendix 1**. They must conduct an appropriate investigation, see what lessons should be learnt, score the incident and prepare a plan of action.

If in the opinion of the Line Manager the incident falls into the **red zone**, which is a score of 15 and above, the Line Manager, following consultation with the Head of Service or member of staff at an appropriate level, will verbally report the incident to a Corporate Director. Following the verbal report a high priority email containing the Incident Report Form or a full description of the incident will be sent to the Corporate Director, copied to the Insurance and Risk Officer.

Heads of Service

In the event of an incident being reported to them by a Line Manager within their area of responsibility, Heads of Service are required to check the score allocated. If the score is between 1 and 9, the **green zone**, they are responsible for the response. If the score is between 10 and 12, the **amber zone**, they must report the matter to their Directorate Management Team. If they think that the score is between 15 and 25, the **red zone**, they will immediately notify their Corporate Director. The Head of Service will ensure that an investigation has been carried out and that action is taken. This will include making sure that there has been a proper investigation and satisfying themselves as to the adequacy of any plan of action and keeping this under review so that they can be sure that actions are being followed up.

Directorate Management Team

Where the incident or near miss scores 10, or above, the **amber zone**, the Head of Service will bring it to the attention of the Directorate Management Team. The Directorate Management Team will satisfy themselves as to the score allocated and report any scores of 15 and over, the **red zone**, to the Corporate Management Board. They will review the investigation and ensure that the action plan is satisfactory and is being followed up. They will record and review the management of the incident and the associated risk(s). The Directorate Management Team will ensure that the necessary lessons are learnt from the incident and that any necessary training is completed. They will make sure that that any risk reduction measures continue to be effective. The actions taken will be recorded using the form at Part 3 of **Appendix 1**.

The Corporate Management Board

The Corporate Management Board needs to know about, and be satisfied with, the response to incidents and near misses which have a score of 15 and above. These are situated in the **red zone**.

If it is immediately obvious to a Line Manager, following consultation with their Head of Service that the score is 15 and above the Corporate Director should have already received immediate notification. If it is initially thought that the risk score is 12 or less, but it is subsequently increased by the Directorate Management Team then the Corporate Management Board will have been informed. The relevant Corporate Director will be responsible for making sure that approved corrective action plans are produced and implemented and that these are fully documented and monitored in order to ensure their completion.

The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for risk management within Bridgend County Borough Council and will ensure that all incidents are dealt with according to the Council's policy and procedures.

The Insurance and Risk Officer

The Insurance and Risk officer will maintain a database of the incidents and near misses. This data base will be used in the assessment of corporate risk as required by the Corporate Risk Management policy. A report will be provided on an annual basis to the Audit Committee summarising the incidents and near misses recorded and the action taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee will consider a report of incidents and near misses on an annual basis and ensure that it is satisfied with the action taken to prevent reoccurrence.

Appendix 1

Incident report form

Please complete and submit this form to your Line Manager.

Use this form for all incidents and near misses (**other than those relating to Health and Safety**). Any employee with knowledge of the incident may fill in the form.

PART 1 – to be completed by the person(s) experiencing or witnessing the incident within 24 hours of the event and passed to their Line Manager.

Name:		Job Title:	
Date:	Time:	Location:	
Description of incident or near miss			
Cause (including any contributory factors):			
Impact of incident or near miss:			
Immediate action taken to prevent recurrence, if any:			
Signature (or name if electronic):			Date:

Part 2 – To be completed by the Line Manager and sent to Head of Service with a copy to the Insurance and Risk Officer.

Name		Job Title	
Date:	Team:	Service:	
Do you agree that the contents of the Part 1 form are correct? If not why not?			
What, investigation and action has been undertaken or is required to prevent recurrence?			
Are there any lessons to be learnt from this incident?			
Scoring - Likelihood x Impact = Score			
Signature (or name if electronic):			Date:

Part 3 – To be used by the Directorate Management Team when a report is made to them concerning an incident (other than those relating to Health and Safety).

Date received:		
Head of Service:		
Has the risk been eliminated?	Is further action required?	
If further action required, please describe:		
Signature (or name if electronic):		Date:

Appendix 2

The response to the incident or near miss is governed by its score. Consequently it is important that the scoring mechanism is applied correctly.

Once an incident or near miss has been identified that threatens the achievement of the Council's objectives, the next step is to assess it in terms of what was the likelihood of the incident or near miss happening and what was or could have been the impact to the Council.

The Council has agreed criteria for assessing the levels of likelihood and impact. These are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below. The incident or near miss has already taken place, so the likelihood score has to be assessed with the benefit of hindsight. The impact of a near miss should be assessed as if it had happened.

When both the likelihood and impact have been considered, multiply the likelihood by the impact to get the overall score. This should be mapped on to the matrix in Table 3. The colours of the matrix are a traffic light system that denotes the response to the event. High scores to be notified to Corporate Management Board are the **red zone**, the **amber zone** are the scores that stay with the Directorate Management Team and low scores are in the **green zone** which are under the control of the Head of Service.

Table 1: Description and definitions of the likelihood of the incident or near miss occurring

Score	Description
5	It was highly likely to happen - More than an 80% chance
4	It was likely to happen – A 60% to 79% chance
3	It may or may not have happened – A 40% to 59% chance
2	It was unlikely to happen – A 20% to 39% chance
1	It was highly unlikely to happen – Less than a 20% chance

Table 2: Description and definitions of the impact of the incident or potential impact of a near miss

Impact	Example Detail Description
5	Long term loss of service capability Long term negative perception of council Litigation is certain and impossible to defend Significant corporate budget realignment Breaches of law punishable by imprisonment
4	Medium term loss of service capability Adverse UK wide publicity Litigation almost certain and difficult to defend Some corporate budget realignment Breaches of law punishable by fines
3	Short term loss of service capability Adverse Wales wide publicity Litigation to be expected Budget adjusted across service areas Breaches of major statutory duty
2	Short term disruption to service capability Adverse local publicity High potential for complaint, litigation possible Financial implications contained within the Directorate Breaches of statutory regulations/standards
1	No significant disruption to service capability Unlikely to cause any adverse publicity Unlikely to cause complaint or litigation Financial implications contained within service area Breaches of local procedures or standards.

Now that the score has been calculated, you can plot it against the matrix in Table 3. This shows you how the response should be managed. The **red** zone is managed by the Corporate Management Board, the **amber** zone by the Directorate Management Team and the **green** zone by the Head of service.

Table 3: Incident and Near Miss Prioritisation and Response Matrix

	Impact				
Likelihood	5	10	15	20	25
	4	8	12	16	20
	3	6	9	12	15
	2	4	6	8	10
	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3

Incident reporting flowchart

