

# **Major Incident: Psychological Support Response**

# Psychological Support Response

- **Learning has been taken from other major incidents, for example the Manchester Arena attack and Grenfell.** This is in line with NHS England's standard guidance on responding to the stress caused by major incidents.
- The Psychological response to this incident will be divided into immediate and medium to longer term support based on the evidence available and best practice guidelines regarding how to respond to potentially traumatising major incidents – **phase 1, 2 and 3 of Cheshire and Merseyside Psychological Support Plan Following a Major Incident plan).**
- A phased based intervention strategy which **prioritises prevention** throughout, will not only maximise our community's inherent resilience but will also minimise the potential adverse effects of more intensive interventions.
- Our role as members of the Psychological Care Co-ordination Group is to ensure psychological and Trauma support offer is pulled together to provide a coordinated response and effective messaging:
  - ❖ For those directly affected Immediately after the Major Incident
  - ❖ It will also consider support for the wider public that witnessed the event.
  - ❖ support for staff involved.

# Cheshire and Merseyside Psychological Support Plan Following a Major Incident

The aim of this plan is to provide a cohesive and coordinated response for psychological support in the event of a declared major incident.

The plan outlines the response from the NHS providers of mental health services and local authorities within Cheshire and Merseyside, whose collective actions will enhance existing processes and has been developed in conjunction with:

- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Liverpool University Hospitals Foundation Trust
- Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Local Authorities
- NHS England
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

This plan is not intended to replace the psychological support arrangements in place for responders that are provided by their employers, as per their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

# Psychological Support Activation

- Cheshire and Merseyside Recovery Cell activated the 'Psychological Support Plan Following a Major Incident' during the 11:00hrs meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 following the Major Incident Declaration by the Police in Sefton on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024.
- The 'Psychological Care Coordination group' was established and met at 14:30hrs on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 with a subsequent meeting at 09:00hrs on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 to coordinate the multi-agency system response, led by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.
- The group is supported by series of sub-groups focusing on children, adults and resources.
- We have formed a clinical reference group to act as source of expertise and guidance on clinical decision -making.

# Phase 1 Immediate Response 0-28 Days

- As part of **Phase 1** immediate response to incident on 29 July 2024, the Psychological care co-ordination group has drafted a bespoke pathway of psychological support offer for the following cohorts who are affected by incident on 29 July 2024:
- **Cohort 1** – Psychological Support Offer to Children and Parents Directly Involved. This offer is for the children who were present at the incident and their parents/guardians. This support will be provided by Victim Support, Alder Hey, Mental Health Matters and Mersey Care.
- **Cohort 2** - Psychological Support Offer to Adults Directly Involved (Victims) and Witnesses Identified by Police. This offer is for the adults who were present at the incident. This support will be provided by Police, Victim Support, Mental Health Matters and Mersey Care.
- **Cohort 3** - Psychological Support Offer to Adults Affected by the Southport Major Incident. This offer is for the adults who have been affected by the incident in Southport (public). This support will be provided by Mental Health Matters and Mersey Care, LSCFT and GM.

# Phase 1 Response 0-28 Days – cohort 1

- Direct support for children and families is underway – Bespoke pathway developed offering a multi-agency co-ordinated approach for additional wrap around support based on identified needs, following Identification of those impacted.
- Police Family Liaison Officers and Single point of contact officers have been deployed.
- National Victim Support referrals made and Family Homicide Case Worker case-workers allocated.
- Bereavement and psychological wrap around support in place for families bereaved – through the Alder Hey Alder centre and Snowdrop service.
- Alder Hey and Merseycare Specialist clinical psychology support expertise to facilitate a needs led approach.
- This does not replace current service provision, for example: access to urgent care via the Crisis Lines and access to services via referral continues to be available across our services.

# Phase 1 Response 0-28 Days - Resources

- The main intervention during phase 1 has been to ensure key messaging regarding psychoeducation and psychosocial support.
- Key messages include - ***it is normal to have some very distressing symptoms following an incident of this type. These symptoms are part of a normal reaction and part of a natural process of making sense of events after something difficult has happened.***
- Psychoeducational leaflets have been shared by Mersey Care for the universal support offer available for everyone, alongside guidance for staff and managers affected by the incident.
- Group members have supported communications on council/ organisation website including resources and how to access support for anyone affected by the incident - <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/tragic-incident-in-southport-2907-updates-and-support/support/> under psychological support.

# Phase 1 Response 0-28 Days – community support

- Signposting offer to a range of existing services available in Sefton, including
- **Helpline support - Victim Care Merseyside** - Freephone 0808 175 3080 on weekdays between 8am and 6pm or request support online at any time at [www.victimcaremerseyside.org](http://www.victimcaremerseyside.org).
- A range of Community services (see appendix 2 and 3) including, Mersey Care Life Rooms Pathways Advisors are available to support with advice and signposting within Southport community.
- Mersey Care are working with Mental Health Matters (Sefton IAPT) to develop a coordinated approach to support and a protocol to provide mutual aid for therapy interventions should the increase in demand rise. This will also review prioritisation of access.
- Active monitoring established for people approaching services where information and psychological support is given so that people can be contacted in the next 4 weeks to offer further support and if required, psychological intervention, at the right time in line with guidance.



# Phase 1 Response 0-28 Days – workforce support

- Local hospitals who received patients following the major incident have been contacted by Mersey Care to offer advice and support, alongside providing psychoeducational resources. Reflective practice and supervision to staff and managers involved in the incident will be coordinated where needed.
- The offer of support from Mersey Care for wider teams across NHS, Social Care, voluntary sector and Emergency Services has been scoped to provide provision if required to these services for psychological first aid at this time.
- GP practices directed to access **NHS Practitioner Health** for additional support and have been provided with advice and resources so that they can effectively support people accessing their GP practices via bulletin.

# Phase 2 and 3 Response 28+ Days

- The main intervention during phase 2 is provision of assessment, ongoing monitoring and, if required, treatment (e.g. for PTSD).
- A proactive communications strategy outlining further psychological intervention for people affected by the incident who require this, both public and staff, will be developed and deployed.
- As part of the active monitoring, services will contact those people who initially accessed services during phase 1 to see if support is still required in the form of therapeutic interventions and enable people to access the right service.
- Proactive support to be offered in local communities through face-to-face contact at venues / local community groups outlining therapy interventions available and signposting to enable access to services – see appendices.
- Ongoing support for teams directly affected, for example, children's teams (school nurses, health visitors and teachers) will be planned.
- Services will continue to coordinate psychological support and intervention, and monitor impact.

# Phase 2 and 3 Response 28+ Days

- Capacity and capability to offer psychological intervention and ongoing support is being scoped within the sub groups that report into the 'Psychological Care Coordination Group', to ensure coordination of care and pathways are streamlined to offer timely and effective intervention to people affected.
- Wider engagement and co-production with the community, education, GP practices, CVS and faith groups for ongoing support, as well as with NHS Trusts who can provide specialist mental health support and advice will be coordinated across the system as part of the longer term planning. Particularly around trigger events associated with the incident (e.g. anniversaries, trail, religious festivals and news events).
- Working in partnership with all other groups to ensure *any programmes developed as part of the wider humanitarian and community resilience response compliment the psychological care support offer. This will ensure a joined-up approach to rebuilding the emotional health and wellbeing of the Southport community including support for children in schools.*
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# Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Victim care Merseyside
- [www.victimcaremerseyside.org](http://www.victimcaremerseyside.org).
- Appendix 2 – summary of local support available for those affected by the incident [Sefton Council website](#)
- Appendix 3 – NHS Trauma Leaflet
- [nhs\\_trauma\\_leaflet.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428227/nhs_trauma_leaflet.pdf)