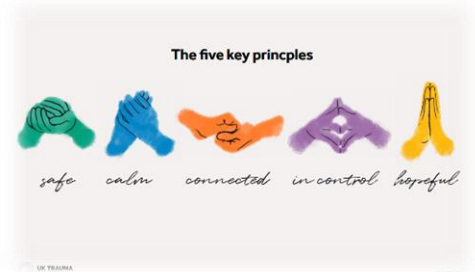


*The **Critical Incident Support Service** provides support in a Critical Incident, consultation and advice about bereavement as well as training.*

Welcome to the **Autumn newsletter** for the Critical Incident Support Service, we thought it would be good to update you on recent developments and also let you know about training and support that we offer.

The **Critical incident team** provide emotional support, practical advice and containment to promote the well-being of the school community in times of crises, and to empower everyone in building resilience. We use evidence-based approaches to offer a quick response in a compassionate and empathic manner, helping schools to recover using the five key principles of safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful (Hobfall et al, 2017). ([UK Trauma Council](#), Critical incidents in educational communities, 2023)



The **Critical Incident Team is embedded in Norfolk Educational Psychology Support Service**. The team is multi-disciplinary with contributions from colleagues across different parts of Children's Services. Most staff work in education with a representation from professions such as educational psychologists, specialist teachers, early years professionals, social workers and others. Members of the team join the Leads if in-setting support is needed and are an invaluable part of our service.

The team is led by Dr Bianca Finger Berry and Cherie Pointon, who share the role of Critical Incident Specialist Leads.



Dr Bianca Finger – Berry



Cherie Pointon

Depending on the circumstances, we can offer support and guidance over the phone/MS Teams or come into school to provide support, share resources, and template letters as well as signpost to other agencies and professionals.

The **Critical Incident Specialist Leads** also offer consultations in relation bereavement and recent trauma, providing research-based support and advice, as well as working closely with Norfolk independent and statutory services.

Our Padlet of resources and signposts has been updated and has a wealth of information that may be useful. It is regularly reviewed and developed so that it can be of value to staff in schools. We have also developed some scripts and social stories for children with SEND - please email for further information.



Quotes from schools and settings that we have supported 2024-2025:

In a very sensitive and time bound situation, the team were available, including in the evening; the team were empathetic but eminently practical and this supported us in supporting our community. The advice that we received was robust and clear and we felt well supported.

It was reassurance more than anything that what we had done was ok. The response was very quick, and staff appreciated the time given to just talk.

It helped to have reassurance and offers of support should further concerns arise and having a named contact.

Updated policies and procedures

As the new school year is starting, educational settings will want to review their policies and procedures.

You will probably have noticed that the new Red Book is now in portrait format, which might take a little while to get used to. This means that it is now much more accessible on phones and tablets. We strongly advise that you talk about your critical incident procedures, using the Red Book, in one of your first Governors Meetings and complete the section 'Critical incident management group' with names from your senior leadership team and identify your lead governor.

We have also updated our sample bereavement policy which you may wish to amend and adopt as one of your school policies. Schools are encouraged to devise and implement a bereavement policy so that a common understanding is developed and a consistent approach is taken within school. A bereavement policy will be most useful if it is a working document and used by all staff. The sample policy also contains a revised section on teaching about death and bereavement in line with the new RSE guidance which are to be implemented from September 2026. You can download the new policy from 'my schools'.

Training

Training on 'Managing critical incidents and bereavement in school communities' for senior leaders and an evening session for governors, and 'Supporting bereaved children in educational settings' for any member of staff is provided, to support staff develop their competence and confidence. You will find the latest courses [here](#). We encourage settings to attend training and prepare for Critical incidents (Red Book procedures).

Peer group supervision sessions for staff who are supporting / have supported pupils through bereavement will continue each half-term. Please email cs.criticalincidentservice@norfolk.gov.uk if you are interested in joining these.



Spotlight on Support Organisations

Each term we will be highlighting an organisation that may be of interest to you. This is not an endorsement of individual organisations – we are simply making you aware of their services.

Youth Led Grief Network

Winston's Wish is excited to be launching [Talk Grief](#) – the Youth Led Grief Network, a dedicated online space for grieving teenagers and young adults to find support, help others and say it how it is – the good, the bad and the ugly.

This space aims to support young people to cope with grief as well as feel seen and know that their feelings are valid.

Consultations for all settings - bereavement and recent trauma

As part of the Local First Inclusion Offer, we will provide regular consultations for staff requesting advice on how to best support a child who has experienced bereavement or recent trauma. They would usually be booked following a TAS (Team Around the School). Consent from parents/carers should be sought in advance and requests can be made by emailing cs.criticalincidentservice@norfolk.gov.uk with an outline of the issues. A brief record will be taken and shared with the school.



Please do get in touch with us if you would like to know more about any of the topics mentioned in this newsletter, or if you would like to have further information about the Critical Incident Service. **Email:** cs.criticalincidentservice@norfolk.gov.uk You can also find out more about our service and access resources (if you subscribe to our service) on our website: [EPSS Critical Incident](#)