



# Plan for the worst, hope for the best

Once Covid restrictions were lifted, the Department for Education put out emergency planning guidance in April to help settings prepare for and deal with emergencies. The government guidance is non-statutory and authors suggest each nursery in England must do its own assessments, comply with its own legal responsibilities and seek legal advice.

Scotland and Wales have their own advice and guidance. Ready Scotland aims to make businesses more resilient to emergencies with tips on the steps you can take to prepare your business for the unexpected. Find out how to be prepared for and respond to emergencies. The Wales Resilience forum improves emergency planning and preparedness for nurseries in Wales.



## Why have a plan?

Disasters do and can happen. A working plan helps to:

- Reduce the amount of disruption to children's early education and continuity of care
- Keep business risks and potential costs in case of an emergency to a minimum
- Enable you to support your workforce during and after any emergency situation.



You can't plan for all events but think about realistic scenarios for your setting then keep it as generic as possible. For example, if you are close to a river, lake or the sea, consider the possibility of flooding; for some settings, this would be extremely unlikely. Having a plan will allow staff to respond more quickly and efficiently should the worst happen.



## What incidents should you consider?

Firstly think about likely incidents including but not exclusively:

- Public health incidents such as significant infectious diseases
- Severe weather including extreme heat, extreme cold, flooding, storms
- Serious injury of a child or member of staff
- Abduction or threat of abduction of a child
- Significant damage to property such as a fire or explosion
- Criminal activity such as an ongoing local incident or bomb threat
- The effects of a disaster in the local community.



This is for your nursery setting, after school club or any external trips, events or performances.

## Next Steps

Consider roles and responsibilities for your staff team for each scenario. What advice should you seek ahead of this actually happening and what measures could you put in place to reduce the severity? What steps should you take for each type of incident?

Think about how to continue caring for and educating your children once you have the situation under control.

It's important to consider how you will communicate with your staff and families during this stressful time and who will do what. How will you support their wellbeing? Pay special attention to children and staff members who are vulnerable or have additional needs.



## Who do you involve?

As a minimum, try to involve:

- Your senior team and wider staff
- Your parents and carers
- Your insurance providers, legal advisers, business advisers
- Anyone connected to your setting – for example if you are located in a school, hospital or gym.

## What does the process look like?

Although preparing for emergencies should be an ongoing process, in your initial planning stages you should carry out:

- Risk assessments for each aspect and plans for how you should react, both immediately and in the aftermath of an incident
- A training audit – do you have any needs that should be addressed urgently?
- Exercises – this means you imagine a scenario and talk through how you would deal with it
- Reviews – how did you perform? What gaps do you have?
- Actions to remedy any obvious gaps in how you would act in an emergency.



## Further resources

NDNA has a 'Critical incident' template policy which you can adapt for your setting. Also refer to our templates for 'Adverse weather', 'Infection control' and 'Nursery operational plan'. <https://bit.ly/3bq8hfu>

Your Local Authority may have specific templates already in place for your area.

Ready Scotland: <https://bit.ly/3B2s3rK>

DfE guidance: <https://bit.ly/3zklkXP>

Wales Resilience: <https://bit.ly/3v5ZSnZ>

