

Violence at Work Policy

1. Introduction

The impact of a violent incident on physical and mental health can be long lasting and may not be obvious. Staff may require support and care from their manager to help them recover and in some cases may need counselling.

Whilst this policy is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff from members of the public, it also covers staff verbal or physical violence against colleagues, service users or anyone affiliated with the organisation.

Breach of any aspect of this policy by a staff member may result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including summary dismissal.

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by law.

2. Policy Aims

The organisation considers the risk of work-related violence a serious matter and will take all reasonable steps to reduce risks from violence to staff and others who may be affected.

The organisation will eliminate risk of exposure to work-related violence where possible. Where this is not reasonably practicable or foreseeable, it will undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of violence. Identified risks will be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable through safe systems of work, suitable equipment and information and training. Staff must make proper use of any equipment and systems of work provided for their safety.

Any incidents of violence at work must be reported immediately and will be investigated, those affected will be provided with appropriate support.

The organisation will ensure adequate consultation takes place with all staff, including managers, supervisors, human resources, staff representatives and trade union safety representatives (if a trade union is recognised) on the content, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy.

3. Responsibilities

Staff Responsibilities

- Follow safe systems of work which have been developed for their safety
- Report any incidences of violence, including verbal abuse, which have occurred as part of their work to their line manager immediately
- Participate in any investigation following an incident
- Avoid putting themselves at risk from violent attack
- Inform their manager of any concerns they have relating to violence at work
- Treat all colleagues, service users and anyone affiliated with the organisation with dignity and respect at all times

Manager Responsibilities

- Determine if violence in the workplace is a problem by seeking staff views
- Review job descriptions to identify tasks which may involve risk from violence
- Identify staff who may be vulnerable
- Identify service users who pose the highest risk of violence and determine whether the relationship should continue
- Identify all those who may be affected by work-related violence
- Take steps to eliminate work-related violence and, where elimination is not possible, evaluate the risk of work-related violence, considering existing arrangements
- Ensure significant findings of the risk assessment are recorded
- Identify additional arrangements to reduce the risk of work-related violence to as low a level as is reasonably practicable, which could include changing the workplace design, providing information and training and changing working procedures
- Ensure all staff are consulted on arrangements for reducing work-related violence
- Set up reporting arrangements for formally reporting, classifying and recording all incidents, including verbal abuse and threats
- Report incidents to the enforcing authority when required to do so under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- Report incidents to the police where necessary
- Ensure all incidents are investigated and identified action is taken, where appropriate
- Ensure support, which may include counselling, special leave and advice on legal action, is provided to anyone who has experienced violence at work
- Ensure arrangements are in place for reducing violence are monitored and reviewed for their effectiveness

Organisation Responsibilities

To ensure fair, equal, reasonable and consistent treatment of all staff regarding any aspect of the implementation of this policy.

To ensure all those with line management responsibility are reasonably trained in the practical application of this policy.

To regularly review and update this policy in line with legislation and best practice.

4. Sexual Harassment

The organisation will take all reasonably practical steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace through training and educating staff and volunteers on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The organisation will protect staff and volunteers from being subjected to any inappropriate or lewd behaviour by colleagues and third parties including contractors, visitors and service users. Anyone who is subject to such harassment should inform their line manager or another appropriate manager as soon as possible who will treat the matter seriously and confidentially and will carry out a fair and full investigation. Staff subjected to any such behaviours will be offered support such as counselling and temporary or permanent alterations to their working arrangements.

5. Notes

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related violence as "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to [their] work". This includes verbal abuse and threats in addition to physical abuse.

Arrangements to reduce the risk of violence at work include:

- Physical measures such as alarm systems, video cameras, security doors, improved lighting and physical barriers
- Providing information to staff on the people they are likely to come into contact with and likely sources of aggression
- Providing training to enable staff to avoid aggression by identifying early signs
- Designing work practices to avoid lone working and potentially violent situations
- Reducing the need to carry money, valuable items and medical or other supplies

Where loneworking is unavoidable, staff should report to their line manager on a regular basis.

Staff who have contact with members of the public may be at risk from violence. Those who are particularly vulnerable are those who handle money, work alone, work night shifts or whose work takes them out of the everyday workplace. Violent behaviour has various causes, including frustration, anger, misunderstanding, stress, communication problems, conflict with authority and theft/robbery.

During a conflict tensions and inhibitions can be released, increasing the likelihood of verbal or physical abuse. The way staff react to this could determine whether or not a situation becomes inflamed.

6. Data Protection Act 2018

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.