

Deafblind Scotland vision – “A society in which deafblind people have the permanent support and recognition necessary to be equal citizens”



Deafblind Scotland Policy on Restraint & Assertive Guiding

What do we mean by Restraint?

For the purposes of this policy, restraint involves action/s taken to hold back, or prevent individuals from harming themselves or others. Deafblind Scotland's policy on Restraint is based on the unique role of the Staff. In operational terms Deafblind Scotland staff group including guide/communicators **do not employ Restraint**. To understand this we need to be clear about the role and purpose of the Staff to a deafblind service user.

Role of the Guide/communicator

Guide/communicators support deafblind people to maintain their independence by providing **communication, information and mobility support**. The role is largely based on the Interpreter for the Deaf model, in that the guide/communicator enables deafblind people to access as much information as possible in daily life. In settings such as: the home, the community, medical environments and in residential homes.

Policy Statement

Deafblind Scotland exists to support deafblind people maintain their independence. In so doing, on the rare occasions when staff are faced with challenging situations, including those where there is the potential for aggression or physical violence, it is the policy of Deafblind Scotland that staff do not engage in physical intervention beyond that of **Assertive Guiding**. **Assertive Guiding** is the use of normal support for a specific purpose: i.e. to remove the deafblind person or a staff from danger, conflict, or difficult situation. The deafblind person would be guided to a safe area where risk to themselves or others is minimised. This is done gently with touch and no “grip” or force is used.

In addition, Deafblind Scotland's Policy on *Responding to Challenging Behaviour* and *Policy on Risk Assessment* emphasise good practice activities and actions that minimise the need to employ even the very limited physical intervention of Assertive Guiding. Staff are often lone workers and have a responsibility to ensure their own safety and if necessary leave the perceived threatening situation.

The following courses of action would be operational in the unusual event of a service-user becoming aggressive:

- Continue to reassure the deafblind individual whilst remaining safe, until situation is resolved
- Assertive guiding
- Contacting the line manager for support/guidance

- Leaving the scene whilst doing one's best to secure the immediate environment and the deafblind person. This will only be an option when the staff perceive that they are at risk of actual physical violence.
- Contacting the police in extreme circumstances

Aftermath/Resolution

After any incident of assertive guiding, the situation and course of action taken should be fully recorded. The risk assessment and individual's care plan may require some changes. This would follow discussions between the staff member, line manager, and, where reasonable, the deafblind person themselves. In particularly challenging situations, the deafblind person's care manager will be informed and their guidance sought.

The above Policy on Restraint and assertive guiding complements Deafblind Scotland's Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Risk Assessment and Lone Working Practices policies.