

1. Haringey Council Procedure

- 1.1 This document is a Haringey Council Procedure. This procedure **outlines the Council's intentions regarding violence at work, in particular taking into account the requirements of The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act), The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations.**

The Council aims to promote a positive approach to health and safety concerns at work. Each employee, regardless of status, is responsible for strictly adhering to Council's procedures.

In carrying out its responsibility, the Council recognises that it will be necessary to bear in mind that there may be certain employees who may share characteristics which may render them more vulnerable than others and for whom special accounts may need to be taken when carrying out risk assessment and making safety provisions. This additional vulnerability may be because of their age, disability, gender including gender reassignment, or their ethnicity or because of their religion and belief or non-belief or because of their sexuality.

Nevertheless, Haringey Council does not accept that it is part of any employees duty to be subjected to verbal abuse, threats or physical assault and if or when such abuse is experienced, would provide such support as necessary for the employee to ensure that the effect of such abuse is minimised.

2. Scope of Procedure

- 2.1 Employees dealing directly with members of the public, service users, clients, pupils etc. may face aggressive or violent behaviour. They may suffer non-physical abuse, threats, or even physical assaults. Violent incidents include those leading to injuries. Even where there is no physical injury, employees can still suffer fear, anxiety and emotional stress as threats may indicate a risk of actual injury. **Malicious damage to an employee's property can also cause distress and fear of future physical attack.** People will have different perceptions about behaviour they find threatening or offensive, or which causes distress rather than simple annoyance.

- 2.2 Where an employee is the victim of verbal abuse, threats or physical assault by an employee against employee, disciplinary action may be taken against the offender(s). The victim may receive such personal support counselling and guidance as is necessary to minimise the effects of such abuse.

- 2.3 The Council in providing services to the community expects that members of the public will treat its employees with courtesy and respect, and equally expects employees to show courtesy and respect to members of the public.

It should be made clear to all clients, customers and service users of Council facilities and services that violent or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and that any assaults on Council employees will lead to a police investigation and possible criminal proceedings. It is important that this information can be easily understood by anyone whose first language is not English or who has any form of disability.

Employees are encouraged to report incidents of violent behaviour to which they have been subjected to their manager/supervisor and this includes head teachers who will discuss/investigate the incident and, where possible, take action to prevent a recurrence. The action taken or the action proposed should be on the incident form.

Violent incidents are reportable under incident/accident reporting procedure. Therefore, where an employee is absent for more than seven days, receives a fatal or major injury because of **a violent incident, the Council's Incident Reporting Procedure** must be followed.

2.3 This Haringey Council procedure should be made clear to all employees through appropriate training: -

- All staff will be made aware of the importance and necessity of reporting every violent incident.
- All staff will be made aware of the procedures and arrangements for reporting violent incidents related to their work.
- All staff should be clear that reporting an incident is their responsibilities within their service.
- All staff should be made aware that good reporting assists in identifying training needs, the need to change work practices and the effects of changes in work practices.

3. Key Terms and Summary Information

3.1 Key Terms

<i>Aggression</i>	Any form of behaviour that harms someone else either physically or psychologically against their wishes. This definition includes bullying and harassment. It also includes damage to property such as breaking windows or throwing of furniture.
<i>Violence</i>	An act where there is physical or actual harm.
<i>Verbal Abuse</i>	This should include any verbal abuse or unacceptable behaviour either face to face or by telephone or e-mail.
<i>Verbal Threats</i>	This should include any threat to the member of staff, persons, property, livelihood, or family.
<i>Spitting</i>	This should include any instance where the staff members spat at directly whether or not he or she is hit
<i>Physical Unarmed</i>	This includes any aggressive stance in which the member of staff feels threatened or undermined.
<i>Physical Armed</i>	This includes any item used as a weapon or missile.
<i>Others</i>	Any other type of verbal or physical abuse not covered above.

People will have different perceptions about behaviour they find threatening or offensive, or which causes distress rather than simple annoyance.

4. Responsibilities for Implementation

- 4.1 Health and safety regulations require all employees including lone workers, frontline staff, visitors, and contractors or where the workforce includes people with disabilities to be adequately protected. The Council will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the workforce have a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for them, particularly for those considered as high risk.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of Heads of Service and School Head Teachers to ensure the health and safety of all their employees, customers, and visitors. Other health and safety risks arising from work activity e.g. frontline staff or lone workers must be properly managed. This can be done by:

- Carrying out risk assessments of the workplace and for those that lone work in the organisation if the work they do could cause harm to them or might make them vulnerable to violence and aggression. A decision can be made as to whether the precautions in place comply with the law or whether additional precautions need to be implemented to prevent harm.
- Employees and managers to familiarise themselves with Lone Working Procedure.
- Directors, Heads of Service and Head Teachers shall ensure that front line and lone workers who are at high risk of attack are provided with lone working devices or any other measures they deem fit to discharge their duty safely.
- Co-operating with other employers sharing the same workplace.
- Discuss wellbeing and mental health with employees to ensure working arrangements **are satisfactory and issues of physical and verbal abuse are managed. 1:1's and My Conversation meetings** are an ideal opportunity to have these discussions.

The Council also provides access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which is available to all employees free of charge. Managers should make their staff aware of this service as part of the Council's wellbeing strategy. Staff who experience verbal or physical abuse in the workplace are able to utilise this service to discuss any issues that may be affecting them.

5. Specialist Advice

- 5.1 Where specialist advice is required, the Corporate Health and Safety Team should be approached. If for any reason external advice is needed, the Corporate Health and Safety Team would sort professional advice externally from competent persons. This will be in accordance with **The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act). The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations** and **The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations**.
- 5.2 Any issues of concern should be reported first to team managers.

6. Other documents you may need to consider

- 6.1 [Lone Working Regulation HSE](#)

7. Action to Take

7.1 Risk assessment

7.1.1 The potential for and the extent of violence to Council employees must be considered as part of the risk assessment process for all Council work processes and functions.

Depending on the work activity and jobs carried out by a service, the nature and extent of violence will vary. Work settings may also create potential for violence to occur, so it may be necessary to carry out a survey among staff to find out where potential problems may lie. If a survey is to be undertaken, the team will need to obtain information from people at all levels within the service, and should discuss with employees representatives, such as safety and trade union representatives, what data should be collected and how best this can be done.

Information gathering of this kind should help focus attention on areas where potential for violence is greatest, so that resources are directed to where they are most needed. As part of the information gathering exercise, it may be worthwhile liaising with colleagues in other services who have dealings with the same clients. Sharing information in this way can assist in identifying potentially violent/aggressive clients.

Where violence is recognised as a potential hazard to an individual or group of Council employees, then the risk should be evaluated by checking the existing arrangements and deciding if the control measures already in place are adequate or if more should be done.

7.1.2 Factors that can be influenced Includes: -

- a) The level and type of training and information provided.
- b) The environment in which the work takes place.
- c) The design of the job, work practices and patterns.

These factors should be considered alongside any information gathered from the affected groups of employees and should be reviewed in the light of any reported incidents. This will ensure that any required changes or amendments will be incorporated into work practices immediately and be communicated to all relevant personnel within the Service.

7.2 Control measures to be considered are: -

7.2.1 Physical aspects

- Easily identifiable and accessible reception areas which allow staff to receive visitors and thus help reduce unauthorised visitors wandering around a building.
- Providing a counter between staff and public.
- Providing wider counters and raised floors on staff side.
- Prominently displayed information posters or notices stating Council Procedure.
- Installing controlled entry systems.
- Limiting the number of entrances to premises.
- locks on doors.

- Use of identity cards by staff.
- Installing CCTV and/or panic alarm systems.
- Layout of interview rooms that afford employees a quick means of escape in the event a violent incident.
- Provision of security staff.
- Provision of alarms in reception areas and interview rooms.

7.2.2 Organisational aspects

- Planning work schedules and staffing to reduce the potential for uncontrolled situations i.e. two staff members attending a volatile client
- Identifying training needs such as confrontation and de-escalation skills
- Lone working and personal safety awareness training
- Provision of support to staff who have experienced violent and aggressive behaviour - debriefs by managers, employee assistance programme, counselling.

7.3 Work Practices and Patterns

7.3.1 Particular activities or jobs within a service can attract the potential for violence. Some staff may need to visit people in their homes. This may involve travelling to known challenging areas, or areas with higher antisocial behaviour or evening visits. The person may be anxious or aggressive and could act violently or in a threatening manner. Sometimes specific activities can be altered so that they are carried out in ways that can lessen those risks. Where activities or jobs cannot be altered or adapted, specific control measures may be appropriate to help reduce risks.

7.3.2 Examples of these are: -

- Staff to work in teams with trainees under supervision.
- To deploy security personnel.
- Staff to leave an itinerary of visits with a responsible person.
- Staff to report periodically to base or to a responsible person.
- Staff to work in groups to complete specific tasks.
- Staff to work in pairs in known areas where violent incidents occurs and if the manager and risk assessment identify the area as high risk.
- Supervisor or manager in conjunction with the staff member to conduct interviews with known/suspected violent customers/clients.
- Checking client/customer records before a visit/interview to see whether the person or even someone in the household is known to be potentially violent.
- Incorporate Council Violence Procedure into contact documents, service agreements etc.
- Recording as appropriate the presence of animals in the house and ensuring that they are secured prior to visit.
- Written procedures for the use and maintenance of panic buttons at receptions and interview rooms.
- Carrying a personal alarm designed for lone workers.
- Carrying a mobile phone.

- Staff to know how to call for help immediately when in difficulty especially the Police on 999.

As already indicated, single solutions used in isolation e.g. panic buttons may not provide total protection against violence. A preventative strategy whereby several methods, such as those discussed previously, are incorporated together to develop a more effective long-term solution should be introduced.

7.4 Incident/Accident Reporting

7.4.1 Haringey Council have formal system for reporting and recording incidents and this is to: -

- a) Devise appropriate preventative strategies and control measures; and
- b) Monitor whether these strategies are effective.

Good reporting and recording systems are essential for identifying places and work activities where violence can be a problem.

7.5 Death, Major Injury and incidents causing more than 7 consecutive day absence

7.5.1 Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, incidents resulting in Death, or Major Injury or absence from work for more than 7 consecutive days as a result of physical violence at work must be reported on the Council Incident Report Form.

7.5.2 Other Violent Incidents

All other violent incidents which do not result in death, major injury or more than 7 consecutive days absence must also be reported e.g. non-physical abuse, threats, physical assault etc on the Council Incident Report Form.

Violent incidents should be discussed in detail with the employee(s) concerned and where possible action taken to prevent a recurrence. The action taken or proposed must be recorded. It is essential that all conclusions and actions taken by management following an incident are formally reported back to the employee involved.

When the [Council Incident Report Form](#) is completed as a result of a violent incident then a copy of the report form must be sent to the Corporate Health and Safety Team.

For a variety of reasons some employees may be reluctant to report incidents of aggressive behaviour, which make them feel threatened or worried. They may for instance feel that accepting abuse is part of the job. Services will need a record of all incidents to build up a complete picture of the problem. Employees must be encouraged by Services to report all incidents promptly and fully.

Where appropriate, services may develop their own recording formats for violent incidents to detail all relevant information particular to their activities. This is of relevance where the activities may include instances of violence between client / client, pupil / pupil, client / other etc. Where this is the case then a Council incident

form must also be filled in where there is an act of violence and aggression toward a Council employee.

7.6 Training

- 7.6.1 Training should be provided for all levels of staff who may face violence in their work. **As a “blanket” training package is unlikely to be successful, the content of training** courses should be geared towards groups of staff, the risks they face and their particular needs. Each Service should identify their specific needs with regard to training through their own risk assessment process. No one training package will provide all the required knowledge and skills for each staff member and it is likely that some Council staff will require to be provided with range of training courses to deal with different situations foreseeable in their work activities e.g. advice on when physical restraint is appropriate, acceptable methods of restraint and legal considerations and sensitivity to service users who may have disabilities or whose first language is not English.

All Council employees should receive basic training either through their own training sections or an external provider to ensure that the following information is formally presented to each employee: -

- familiarisation with the Council's and service procedures.
- causes of violent and aggressive behaviour within their job areas.
- warning and danger signs when appropriate.
- communication/inter-personal skills which could help defuse situation.
- techniques for preventing and avoiding violence, calming aggressive people which is more appropriate for front line staff exposed to violence and aggression e.g. Civil Enforcement Officers, Social Workers, Site Managers etc.
- assertiveness training, Breakaway, (Management of Actual or Potential Aggression) techniques. The MAPA, or Promoting Safe & Therapeutic Service- as identified by the procedure and risk assessment.
- service risk assessments and available control measures.
- importance of formally reporting every incident.

Further specific training for Council staff related to their work activities should be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the service risk assessments. Details of the appropriate courses and their providers should be recorded in the risk assessment document.

8. The reporting of incidents

- 8.1 All Incident/Accident Reporting Forms completed by an employee or responsible person should be sent to Corporate Health and Safety Team, a record of the form should also be kept by the team where the incident/accident is being reported.

- 8.2 Following a serious incident, the Head of Service may decide to organise a Persons of Concern Panel, to agree on the actions that may be taken against the assailant. The Persons of Concern Panel is covered on Persons of Concern Procedure.
- 8.3 Records of training certificates should also be kept by the employees and where possible with the manager or if at schools, with school business managers.
- 8.4 Other documents relating to the incident/Accident e.g. [Incident/Accident investigating form](#), Witness statements taken during incident should be kept secured.
- 8.5 If for any reason the incident is reported to Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Corporate Health and Safety Team will carry out this reporting.

9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 Incident/Accident reporting forms should be monitored by Head of Services, Managers and School Head Teachers to evaluate the trends of recurrence of incidence in their service areas.
- 9.2 This Violence at Work Procedure should be reviewed at least every 26 months by Corporate Health and Safety Team.

10. Approval of the Procedure

- 10.1 This safety procedure was reviewed by the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board and approved by the Council's Head of Organisational Resilience on 16th February 2021. Any required variations from this safety procedure should be brought to the attention of the Council's Head of Organisational Resilience.

Approved by (print name): Andrew Meek, Head of Organisational Resilience

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AMeek', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Date: 16.02.2021