

Violence & Aggression at Work Policy

Policy Date	June 2021
Review Date <i>when under review, this policy should continue to be used</i>	June 2024
This policy is non-contractual	
Version <i>This policy may be amended prior to the review date to comply with any new, relevant legislation or organisational change that affects how this policy is used</i>	1
Related Policies/Procedures	Equality Policy Complaints Procedure Violence and Aggression Procedure Incident Reporting Procedure & System Health and Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines the Council's approach for managing the risk of violence and aggression towards staff from members of the public. It also provides guidance to employees and managers on the action to take following any reported act(s) of violence and/or aggression.
- 1.2 The Council has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place specific requirements on employers to assess the risks to their employees, and to take appropriate measures to prevent or reduce the risks. These legal duties include protecting employees from exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence at work both physical attacks and verbal abuse.
- 1.3 The Council understands that sometimes, due to individual circumstances, our customers won't always be polite and calm when they call or visit the council. The council supports your right to politely end an abusive call or to ask a visitor to leave the councils premises.
- 1.4 This policy applies to **all** incidents of work-related abuse, aggression and violence.
- 1.5 The council is committed to supporting any employee who suffers violence or aggression during, or arising out of, their work duties and views such acts of violence or aggression to be unacceptable.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the council regardless of gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, age, trade union membership or public interest disclosure status. It also applies to part time and fixed term employees.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy the Health and Safety Executive defines work-related violence as: *"any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work"*
- 3.2 This includes:
 - physical attack - whether visible injury occurs or not
 - animal attack - when an animal is used as a threat
 - verbal abuse - when an employee **feels** threatened or intimidated and the abuse is personally directed. This also includes cyber-aggression through

texts, email
messages or social networking sites

- attack or damage to property or belongings of the employee or the Council
- any work-related incident involving an employee, or their family, which happens away from the workplace

3.3 Employees should report incidents involving race, gender or gender identity, religion or belief, disability, sexuality and age in line with the requirements of the Council's Equality Policy.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Line Managers will:

- Identify groups of employees within their area of responsibility who are most at risk from violence
- Review the working practices, procedures and working environment of each of these groups, undertake risk assessments in consultation with employees affected with the aim of identifying specific problems and devising safer systems of work wherever possible
- Ensure suitable training arrangements are in place so that employees identified as being particularly at risk of violence receive the necessary training
- Make employees aware of potentially violent customers or service users and put any measures put in place to protect them.
- Treat any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse seriously and respond to them promptly.
- Record details of the incident where appropriate
- Give all employees involved in an incident full support during the whole process.
- Set a positive example by reporting all incidents of violence and abuse
- Respond to and, where possible, resolve incidents, before they escalate.
- Monitor incidences of violence and abuse and take appropriate action
- Direct staff to appropriate support and advice after an incident has occurred.
- Work with the police where needed to assist with their enquiries.

4.2 Employees will:

- Comply with the requirements of this policy
- Comply with any advice and instruction given from their line manager or through training
- Ensure that they report to their manager and via the incident reporting system any incidents relevant to this policy, whether physical injury has resulted or not. If reporting the incident to the manager is not appropriate then reporting should be to the Health and Safety Team.

5. Legal Advice and Assistance

- 5.1 The Council will give appropriate support, through Legal Services, in cases involving an offence or assault. This may involve general legal advice to the employee, liaison with the police, advice as to how to obtain legal assistance to proceed with a private prosecution or civil claim, and in certain circumstances institute proceedings in the name of the Council.
- 5.2 The Legal team will provide general advice to employees on Court procedures. They can also arrange injunctions and other legal action against service users if appropriate.

6. Sickness Payments

- 6.1 Injury as a result of an assault at work will be treated as an industrial injury, and occupational sick pay will be paid. It's therefore important that abuse, aggression and violence incidents are reported to your manager. You can obtain more information from the HR Team.

7. Counselling and Support

- 7.1 The welfare of employees is of paramount importance. An employee who suffers violence must be treated sympathetically, and their immediate needs attended to **before** the more formal process of recording and reporting the incident.
- 7.2 Employees may choose to use the Council's Employee Assistance Programme for counselling, information available on Skoop <http://intranet/basic-page/employee-assistance-programme-0>

8. Training

- 8.1 Managers are responsible for identifying their employees' training needs, including the requirement for 'Conflict Management' type training. Any employees requiring further or refresher training should contact their line manager and the Health and Safety team.

9. Related Information

- 9.1 Please refer to the Council's complaints procedure which is located on each Council's website at <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/complaints> or <https://www.havant.gov.uk/complaints>.