

COPPICE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Personal Safety for Staff Policy

Date	Review Date	Endorsed by	Approved by	Link Governors
March 2025	March 2028	FGB	Governing Body	Ike Sannie-Lamptey

Aspire, Believe & Achieve











Adopted LB Redbridge Model Policy

London Borough of Redbridge

HEALTH AND SAFETY

GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION SHEET

Date: September 2017

Issue: No. 1

Subject: Managing Personal Safety of Staff

Managers Checklist

Below is a checklist to assist managers in eliminating, controlling and minimising the impact of violence in the workplace.

- Set out the commitment of the London Borough of Redbridge to protect the personal safety and security of its employees.
- Ensure that the potential for violent or aggressive behaviour is recognised, the risks identified and safe working procedures adopted to reduce the risks so far as is reasonable practicable.
- Ensure that risk assessments covering personal safety are undertaken.
- Ensure every incident is investigated and take appropriate action to minimise further risk, regularly review risk assessments, work practices and safe working procedures.
- Provide employees (as part of induction and ongoing training) with information on the findings of risk assessments, safe working procedures and instructions on dealing with violence and aggression.
- Ensure you and your employees are familiar with the Boroughs procedures for reporting personal safety incidents.
- Ensure that all physical assaults and the more serious threats are also reported to the Police.
- Ensure that an employee who has experienced violence receives immediate and ongoing support through contact with the Boroughs Employee Assistance Provider where they can access appropriate counselling ☎0800 282 193 or where a period of sickness absence occurs through referral to Occupational Health ☎x83360

- Employee Assistance Provider (May 2014)

  https://www.livewell.optum.com/public/welcome.asp

  Username:- London.redbridge

Employees Duties

All workers are entitled to work in environments where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. Under health and safety law, the primary responsibility for this is down to the employer and their representatives (Managers).

Under the same law workers also have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Workers must co-operate with managers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

As a worker, if you have specific queries or concerns relating to health and safety in your workplace, talk to your employer, manager/supervisor or a health and safety representative.

In summary your duties are that you must;

- Co-operate with your line manager by following the safe working procedures in accordance with the information, instruction and training provided.
- Attend training as arranged for you by your line manager.
- Report any deficiencies in the safe working procedures.
- Report any accidents or incidents of violence or aggression to their line manager

The Health & Safety legal framework

Whilst there is no specific health & safety legislation dealing directly with managing violence in the workplace, there is a legal framework which requires employers (The London Borough Redbridge in this case) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst at work i.e. taking all reasonable actions to eliminate or minimise violence from occurring.

Within the same legal framework, employees have a legal duty to take reasonable care not to endanger themselves or anyone who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

There are five main pieces of health and safety law, which are relevant to violence at work. These are:

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act)

Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR)

Employers have a legal duty to assess the risks to employees and **must** make arrangements for the effective management of health and safety through adequate:

- planning;
- organisation;
- control;
- monitoring and review.

The risk assessments should, where appropriate, include elimination or control of the risk of employees exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence. Further information on risk assessment is given further on in this document.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
The Borough must inform the Health and Safety Executive of any accident at work to any employee resulting in death, major injury or incapacity for normal work for over seven days. This includes any act of non-consensual physical violence done to a person at work.

Further guidance on RIDDOR is given later in this document

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Employers must consult with employees in reasonable time on matters that may substantially affect their health and safety. Under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, one of the roles of Union Safety Representatives is to investigate incidents reportable under RIDDOR, where the interests of employees of the group or groups they represent are involved.

N.B. The above deals solely with health and safety legislation and not other relevant Acts and Regulations

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
Introduced a new offence, so that companies and organisations can be found guilty of corporate manslaughter as a result of serious management failures resulting in a gross breach of a duty of care, i.e. where serious failures in the management of health and safety result in a fatality.

Council Policies

- Corporate Health and Safety Policy

Definition of violence

The London Borough Redbridge has adopted the Health & Safety Executive's (H.S.E.) definition of violence:

'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'.

This can include the following:

- Personal/physical attacks upon the person, whether or not causing injury & including threatening behaviour.
- Verbal attacks with or without a weapon.
- Deliberate silence.
- Threats in writing addressed to or about a named employee.
- Gestures and/or foul and abusive language whether by personal confrontation, over the telephone or other communication devices such as e-mail.
- Harassment that makes a person feel threatened, humiliated or distressed.
- Damage to personal and/or corporate property, equipment etc.

Risk Assessment

Regulation 6 of the MHSWR require that the Borough shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and to the risks to the health and safety of other persons arising out of the work activities.

Line Managers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees under their control. Line Managers must ensure risk assessments are carried out by a competent person and identify potentially violent situations or persons within the workplace and take any reasonable actions/measures required to reduce or control the level of risk to employees.

Factors to be assessed where applicable;

All managers should be alert to the safety needs of their colleagues and work together with their employees to develop strategies to reduce or eliminate potential risks. Trade Union Safety Representatives can also provide valuable information on employees' perception of risk of violence at work

Commonly, the types of work where employees are most at risk are:

- activities involving contact with members of the public (e.g. hospitals, benefits offices, schools or work related to traffic or parking)
- work involving highly stressful and emotive circumstances, such as bereavement, e.g. in a hospital or care home
- work with people suffering from various mental impairments (including those caused by illness, injury and substance abuse)
- work involving the storage or handling of money or valuables.

The factors that cause people to become aggressive and/or violent are varied, but can be generalised as follows:

Frustration;

A wide range of situations may cause frustration. Most commonly, these are: insufficient or unclear information, lack of control over situations (e.g. tight time constraints), frustration resulting from reduced physical/mental abilities following injury or illness.

Extreme negative emotions;

The effect of extreme negative emotions may stimulate aggressive or violent behaviour, Insecurity, whether in personal perception or in job retention, may develop into aggressive or violent behaviour if not addressed.

External factors;

Away from the workplace, such as divorce or financial difficulties, may also affect staff attitudes and increase the potential for more aggressive behaviour.

Threatening behaviour;

Threatening behaviour may be seen as an aggressive act and may in turn create an aggressive response in the person being threatened. The threats do not necessarily have to be physical. Mental manipulation, bullying, harassment, and actual or emotional blackmail can have a similar effect.

Substance use and abuse

The effects of substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, etc.) are well known, as are their adverse effects on an individual's ability to react rationally. Even if the substance abuse is stopped, the changes in personality and moods may continue for long periods afterwards

Mental Illness/Injury

Aggressive and violent behaviour may result from a mental illness or a brain injury. In these situations, it may not be possible to rationalise with the affected people. Different and/or additional protective measures may need to be considered for the safety of staff and others.

Known Histories of Aggression/Violence

Another important indicator is the known history of people likely to demonstrate aggressive or violent behaviour, particularly of any mental illnesses or injuries. The risks are easier to identify if the potential perpetrators are familiar to the workers.
In healthcare situations this would include knowledge of any medications and their side effects if these could cause this type of behaviour. Being able to identify possible aggressive or violent residents and their "triggers" is an important control measure.

Known High-risk Situations

There are some work situations that are especially associated with a risk of aggression and violence. These include:

- home visits to clients living in known high-risk areas
- work involving the issuing of fines or the handling of money, e.g. banking fees
- workplaces where controlled drugs are kept within the premises.

These work situations will particularly need to be considered in the risk assessment.

Control Measures

In a lot of cases, identifying where aggressive or violent situations could occur will go a long way to controlling and even eliminating the risks. This will also assist in determining appropriate risk assessment control measures as follows;

Communication

Regular and clear information should be communicated to a central control point or a nominated person (buddy) providing information about what is going on, especially if there are any intended changes to work procedures or time delays i.e. in returning from a home visit.

Gathering of and acting upon available information is an important control measure, and may involve sharing information with other employers.

Vigilance

Being aware of what is going on around oneself is also very important. Mobile phones should be used discreetly when in public areas. Vigilance when placing valuables inside vehicles, even if they are placed out of sight, is a good idea.

Working in Pairs

In some situations, e.g. a home visit to a high-risk area, it may be appropriate for staff to work only in pairs. Maintain numbers of staff at the workplace to avoid a lone worker situation developing.

Work Environment

Changing the work environment can reduce the degree of risk resulting from aggressive or violent behaviour. Spacious, light, clean and comfortable surroundings may all have calming effects. Provide the public with more regular information about delays, and when they are due to be seen.

Escape Routes and Alarm Points

There should always be an escape route from a place of danger so "dead end" areas should be avoided. High-risk areas should be fitted with call alarm points (panic buttons) so assistance can be immediately requested if a situation gets out of hand.

If such alarms are not available in every room for example in a healthcare setting, people with known aggressive or violent tendencies should be allocated rooms where the alarms are present. This is particularly the case if the service being offered requires staff to tend to such people in privacy.

Security

If money and/or controlled drugs are held on the premises, then security is also important. This may include:

- protective screen barriers
- intruder alarms
- CCTV.
- Coded security locks on doors to keep the public out of staff areas
- Wider counters and raised floors on the staff side of the counter to give staff more protection

Removing Potential Weapons

In units specially designed to deal with individuals with severe problems, items that may be used as potential missiles must be removed or moved to a more secure location.

Removing potential missiles may affect other areas of health and safety and, if so, any associated risk assessments will need to be reviewed and revised. For example, portable fire extinguishers may be used as missiles or weapons and may need to be removed from normal locations in corridors, etc. The fire risk assessment should address this situation — other measures may be necessary to ensure acceptable fire safety standards are maintained.

Information & training

Information and training is not a substitute for eliminating/minimising the risks and is only part of the recommended control measures.

Information

The HSE provides guidance and toolkits to assist with identifying personal safety solutions and remedies, see the links below:

Training

Employees should be provided with adequate information, instruction and training to recognise potentially aggressive or violent situations. Recognising the signs and dealing with the causes at an early point will usually prevent a situation getting worse.

Specific training for work for identifying and assessing potentially violent behaviour should include recognition of early indicators so that staff can implement preventive actions before situations get out of control.

These indicators can be classified as:

- behavioural
- known histories (see risk assessment)
- known high-risk situations (see risk assessment)

Behavioural Indicators of Potential Aggression

Most communication is visual rather than verbal so changes in body language and behaviour are good indicators of how an individual is generally feeling. The eyes are particularly good indicators of mood.

In most cases there is a defined progression of behavioural changes from initial agitation through to increasingly aggressive behaviour (disruptive and destructive) and, finally, to violent acts. There is a progressive loss of behavioural control.

Agitation Indicators;

Indicators of agitation include:

- increased body tension
- reduced concentration/increased distraction
- spontaneous emotions such as crying or laughing
- excitability
- fiddling with objects
- rocking, pacing and other repetitive movements

At this stage it is unusual for other people to be affected or involved.

Indicators of Aggression;

Aggressive indicators include:

- verbal abuse (shouting, screaming)
- banging objects
- breaking things
- ripping and tearing things
- slamming doors
- annoying other people
- throwing things at inanimate objects
- overturning furniture

As these changes occur there is an increasing effect on any other people who may be present. Initially the behaviour is disruptive but will become increasingly destructive, often with inanimate objects being targeted first.

Indicators of Violence;

Violent indicators include:

- cutting
- scratching
- self-harm (head-banging, self-mutilation, etc.)
- kicking
- hitting/striking
- use of missiles against other people (throwing things) or use of anything as a weapon

If a situation has progressed to this stage there is a real possibility of actual bodily harm, which may result in serious injury or the death of any person present.

London Borough of Redbridge reporting procedures

Personal Safety of Staff Incident Report Form

The Personal Safety of Staff Incident Report Form' is amalgamated within the Boroughs accident and incident report form and **must** always be completed in the following situations:

- Physical Assault – Major Injury.
- Physical Assault – Minor Injury.
- Physical Assault – Damage to Property
- Verbal Abuse
- Anti-Social/Spiteful Behaviour
- Threatening Behaviour

NB if the incident involves harassment by another member of staff please refer to the LBR 'bullying and harassment policy'.

Reporting to the Police

The following types of incident must ALSO be reported to the Police:

1. Any actual physical assault.
2. Any face to face incident where an attack is threatened and there is an ability to carry out the threat at that time.
3. Any separate more serious offence of making a threat to kill or damage property where the person does not need to be in a position to carry out the threat immediately.

Where the above occurs, line management must ensure that the police are notified of the incident, whether by the person assaulted or their line manager. However the police will not investigate the incident unless requested to do so by the victim.

Further information and references

On-line resources

http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/index.htm
http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/preventing-workplace-harassment.pdf

Publications & Case Studies

Violence at Work (*A guide for employers*) (IND (G) 69 L - HSE Books).
http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/hslcasestudies/solihull.htm
http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/hslcasestudies/westlothian.htm

Training Providers and additional information

http://www.maybo.co.uk/
http://www.conflictmanagement.org/icm/Default.asp
http://www.suzylamplugh.org/