

Staffordshire County Council		HR Policy Handbook		
Reference Number HR118	Issue Issue 1	Approved By H&S Forum	Date April 2009	Review Date April 2011
Policy Title	Management of Violence and Aggression			

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This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your Departmental HR Manager.

Useful Contact Numbers

Police – 08453 302010 (non emergency) or 999 (emergency only)

Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Changes	Reasons for Alterations
1		Corporate Policy to replace Directorate guidance/policy.	Development of corporate policies.

Success Indicators

The following indicators will demonstrate the level of compliance with this policy and its procedures:

- a) Managers are aware of their responsibilities with regard to the effective management of work related violence.
- b) Unacceptable standards of behaviour and sanctions against unacceptable behaviour are communicated to staff, service users, pupils and members of the public. Where appropriate posters and leaflets are displayed.
- c) Managers are effectively risk assessing and managing the risks associated with work related violence.
- d) Managers share specific information with all relevant staff and external parties.
- e) Employees have received suitable information, instruction and where need established training.
- f) All work related violent incidents are reported by employees.
- g) Managers investigate all work related violent incidents and support staff post incident.
- h) Managers monitor and review local arrangements implemented to reduce the risk of work related violence.

1. Application

This policy applies to all working environments within the County Council where it is identified that there is a risk of aggressive or violent behaviour.

2. Introduction

Staffordshire County Council views acts of violence and aggression towards its employees or any other persons under its care as unacceptable. The council will therefore, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that employees are protected from risks to their health, safety and wellbeing posed by violence and aggression.

Work related violence is defined as:

Behaviour directed by a service user, pupil, their relatives or carers, members of the public, visitors or other person which produces damaging and hurtful effects, physically or emotionally in other people.

This includes:

- Assault/abuse causing actual physical injury or distress.
- Verbal or written aggression which offends the individual.

- Damage to property.
- Assault to others including members of an individual's family.
- Stalking.
- Animal attacks.
- Threat or fear of any of the above.

Where the alleged offender is a member of staff these incidents will be covered by the HR Discipline policy.

This policy does not cover personal safety when lone working.

3. Aims and Objectives

To outline the strategies to manage the risks of violence and aggression in the workplace and provide support for the persons involved.

4. The Arrangements for Applying the Policy

Managing violence and aggression starts at a strategic corporate level. Local control measures designed and implemented by individual teams and services should be guided by the approach taken by their directorate, which in turn should fit with the corporate approach.

4.1 Communication of Standards of Behaviour.

The council believes that all staff, services users their relatives or carers, members of the public, visitors etc have a duty to treat each other with dignity and respect and to behave in an acceptable and appropriate manner. In line with our commitment to equality, we strive to create an environment, free from harassment, where individuals are valued and cultural differences are understood and appreciated.

Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Offensive language, verbal aggression, swearing, unwanted or abusive remarks which makes staff feel unsafe
- Invasion of personal space
- Brandishing of objects or weapons
- Physical assaults
- Offensive gestures
- Threats or risk of serious injury to a member of staff, service users or visitors
- Near misses i.e. unsuccessful physical assaults
- Stalking
- Spitting at people
- Alcohol or drug fuelled abuse
- Unreasonable and/or abusive behaviour
- Any of the above linked to destruction of or damage to property

Unacceptable standards of behaviour and sanctions against unacceptable behaviour need to be communicated to staff, service users, pupils and members of the public. One way of achieving this is through posters and leaflets.

4.2 Risk Assessment

The council will adopt a risk based approach to the prevention of workplace violence and aggression, involving risk assessment, control measures, monitoring and review. High risk staff groups are identified and prioritised through this process. Where risk

assessments indicate that a significant risk of violence and aggression exists, actions should be taken to reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable. Measures which prevent the occurrence of violent incidents are preferable to those that reduce the severity of the violent incident.

Local managers are responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and the appropriate control measures implemented.

Managers and staff must work together to identify potential triggers for violence and aggression that may come from:

- the work environment,
- the job role,
- the actions of other people who work with you,
- the circumstances or individual factors of the service users with whom you normally expect to work with,
- the methods of communication or the way the service is delivered.

Guidance G01 Risk Reduction Measures details examples of risks and risk reduction measures. Appendix 1 details the causes of violence.

4.3 Partnerships and Integration of Resources

2.1 The council recognises that violence, crime and anti-social behaviour in the county has an effect on its employees at work. Strategies that work towards making Staffordshire a safer place for everyone are therefore relevant to this policy. The council will continue to work with other groups and agencies in partnership and with shared resources to fulfil the objectives of these strategies.

2.2 Good information is vital for ensuring the health and safety of persons exposed to the risk of violence. Managers should have access to relevant information including risk assessments, incident history and information relating to specific sites or persons. Communication and information sharing must be encouraged at all levels including external parties such as the police and NHS.

4.4 Domestic Violence in the Workplace

Staffordshire County Council recognises it has a duty to promote a safe and healthy working environment to provide support to any employee, male or female who is the victim of domestic abuse and to protect employees from the risk of violent attacks from partners, ex-partners or family members while they are at work. Refer to the HR policy Domestic Abuse for more information.

4.5 Training

Managers are responsible for identifying the training needs for staff as part of the ongoing risk assessment process. It is important that training records are monitored so that refresher training can be given when needed.

Training can prevent conflict situations from arising or escalating into violence. Such training should enable staff to recognise and leave situations that they consider unsafe. Assertiveness training (often part of customer care training) is invaluable to staff who work with individuals who use aggression to influence workers' decisions. Management of violence training needs to be directly relevant to the staff group. 'Break away' training is another example of training where a member of staff may need to actually break away from an assailant.

Supervision/Personal Performance Review

Staff Supervision/Personal Performance Reviews should address issues relating to the risk and fear of violence in connection with individual employees' work. It should

also include a regular check on the staff member's awareness of this policy and where applicable the related policies on Lone Working and Restrictive Physical Intervention.

4.6 What to do if a violent incident takes place

If a member of staff is involved in a violent incident they must, if at all possible, remove themselves from the situation. If there is a risk of injury to the service user or others, assistance should be sought from colleagues.

4.6.1 The right to use reasonable force

Employees' have a right, established in law, to use reasonable force to defend themselves. This policy respects that right.

4.6.2 The use of restrictive physical intervention

In some settings the use of restrictive physical intervention is authorised as a technique in those situations where it is necessary for the protection of any member of staff, service user or any other person who may be present. Restrictive physical intervention can be used where a risk assessment identifies the need for intervention. In these situations, staff will be provided with the appropriate level of information, instruction and where appropriate training (refer to policy on Restrictive Physical Intervention).

Restrictive physical intervention must only be used as a last resort where the risk of physical injury is imminent or to avoid further injury (staff authorised to use this technique must refer to policy on Restrictive Physical Intervention).

Employees should clearly understand their civil rights and this is covered by restrictive physical intervention training and information detailed in the Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy.

4.7 Incident Reporting and Investigation

Incident reporting is an essential element of preventing violence and aggression. Incident reporting provides documentary evidence for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of control measures
- Identifying and modifying those control measures in need of improvement or replacement
- Supporting the provision of appropriate resources and training
- Supporting further action such as court orders.
- Reporting to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- The evaluation of trends.

A member of staff who has been the subject of violent/abusive behaviour must report the incident to the senior member of staff on duty as soon as is practicable. Staff must report all incidents of violence, even if they are of a minor nature.

The senior member of staff will report the incident using the Violence and Aggression Report Form see appendix 3. The completed form must be sent to the Strategic Health and Safety Service within:-

- 3 days of the incident for RIDDOR reportable incidents; or
- 10 days of the incident for minor i.e. non-RIDDOR reportable incident.

If a violent incident is reportable, the Strategic Health and Safety Service will notify the HSE.

If an injury resulted from the violent incident the accident book must also be completed.

As it is not practical to record every incidence of minor verbal aggression using the Violence and Aggression Report Form, line managers must put in place a system for recording brief details of any incidents of perceived minor verbal aggression reported by their staff. The record should show date and time of incident, name of employee involved, name of aggressor and a brief indication of what was said. This summary record should be kept on site or with the line manager and will be audited by the senior manager and information may be requested by the Strategic Health and Safety Service at suitable intervals.

All incidents must be investigated thoroughly by the appropriate line manager. Incident investigations should be carried out as soon as possible after the event. Further information on carrying out investigations can be found in HR policy on Accidents.

Information from the investigation should be used when carrying out a post incident risk assessment.

The responsible line manager needs to make a decision as to whether the incident is sufficiently serious to require onward report to their senior manager.

4.8 Post Incident Management and Remedial Measures

Even with effective risk management strategies in place, incidents of violence, aggression and abuse at work may still occur. It is therefore an essential part of managing violence and aggression at work that appropriate procedures are in place following an incident. Appendix 2 gives guidelines on post incident management.

4.9 Police Involvement

Incidents involving the safety of staff encompass a very wide range of issues and by their nature are unpredictable. Accordingly the role of the police can and must vary to respond to those incidents.

Essentially the role of the police encompasses 3 major areas: -

- (a) The senior member of staff on duty at the time the incident is taking place may make a judgement that the issue is now beyond the ability of the staff to deal with and that assistance from the police is required. In those circumstances the senior member of staff should make a decision to dial 999 and seek urgent police help. In doing so the senior member of staff needs to be aware that the police will take charge of the whole incident upon their arrival.
- (b) Following an incident the police can be asked, at the request of staff, to investigate an actual criminal act. It is a matter for individual staff to decide whether they wish to make such an approach to the police and in taking that decision staff need to be aware of the inability of certain service users to understand their own actions and therefore to be held responsible in law for their actions.
- (c) Staff have a civil right to report an incident to the police and management will inform staff of that civil right. In some cases it would be appropriate to simply report the matter to the police without requesting that they investigate but simply so that they can issue a crime reference number to the member of staff so that they can, if they wish, proceed with a claim to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA).

The above cannot fully encompass the complexity and variety of violent incidents which may arise. However, both senior managers and trade unions are available to advise at any time.

4.10 Prosecution and Legal Assistance

- (a) If the police decide to prosecute and the member of staff involved, or any witnesses are required to give evidence in court, then paid leave of absence will be granted.
- (b) Whether or not the police prosecute, an employee may themselves pursue the matter by taking private legal action against the assailant.
- (c) The County Council has Personal Accident (Assault) cover for employees sustaining bodily injury by assault as a result of which death or disablement occurs independently of any other cause within 24 months of sustaining such injury. The injury must have occurred when the employee was engaged in official duties in connection with the County Council's business. This includes journeys directly connected with the duties and direct travel between private residence and place of duty.
- (d) The employee may seek legal advice from their trade union / professional association who may decide to provide the necessary finance to enable private proceedings to go ahead.

4.11 Monitoring and Review

Managers must monitor and review the local arrangements in place as part of the Health and Safety Evaluation Checklist and Self Audit Tool.

5. Key Accountabilities

Policy Makers and Planners

Are responsible for:-

- Making sure that they are aware of this policy and G?? Lone Working and Violence and Aggression Risk Reduction Measures which supports this policy;
- Establishing arrangements to identify, evaluate and manage the risk associated with work related violence;
- Identifying high risk staff groups and ensuring that suitable assessment and monitoring arrangements are in place; and
- Ensuring the policy is implemented in their areas of responsibility and that safe practice is regularly monitored and promoted.

Implementers (line managers/supervisors)

Are responsible for:

- Making sure that they are aware of this policy and G?? Lone Working and Violence and Aggression Risk Reduction Measures which supports this policy;
- Communicating the standards of behaviour expected from staff, service users, pupils their relatives and carers and members of the public.
- Co-ordinating the completion of suitable risk assessments for work related violence, identifying potential triggers for violence and aggression and ensuring that suitable control measures are put into practice and their effectiveness is regularly monitored.
- Establishing local procedures to implement the guidance into working practices;

- Ensuring that all employees receive suitable communication to make them aware of relevant policies, guidance, local procedures/risk assessments and their individual responsibilities.
- Assessing training needs for employees.
- Reporting and investigating incidents and supporting staff who have experienced a violent incident.

6. Legislative Framework

1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
2. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
3. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences. Regulations (RIDDOR).

7. Further Advice and Information

This policy document is for general guidance only. If you need any further advice on how to apply this policy please contact the Strategic Health and Safety Service.

Further background information on this topic is available on the following Websites:

www.hse.gov.uk

www.cica.gov.uk

8. Related Factsheets

HR117 Lone Working

HR119 Restrictive Physical Intervention

HR128 Domestic Abuse

HR 41 Staff Counselling

HR 94 Management of Stress in the Workplace

HR11 Discipline

9. Standard Documents

Appendix 1 Causes of violence

Appendix 2 Post Incident Management

Appendix 3 Guidance G01 Risk Reduction Measures

HSF 9 Violence and Aggression Report Form

HSF 10 Staff Care Feedback Form

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your Departmental HR Manager.

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Causes of Violence

It is widely recognised that some forms of mental illness, physical or learning disabilities or emotional disorders can precipitate violent conduct. Similarly, persons abusing alcohol or drugs often display aggressive behaviour. These are very obvious causes but there are other, perhaps less apparent, reasons why violence occurs and indeed in some situations, staff may, unknowingly, through lack of awareness, contribute to the incident. The following list of possible causal factors, while not in any way exhaustive, should be borne in mind:

- The service user's insecurity and reaction to enforcement action.
- Frustration and anxiety resulting, perhaps, from a feeling of being out of control.
- Personal frustrations.
- Bereavement.
- The use of aggression as a conditioned, learned response to refusal of demands.
- Peer group pressure, scapegoating of individuals.
- Testing out of staff.
- Misleading information.
- Receiving important news.
- Presence of onlookers.
- Inability to communicate effectively.

Some violent episodes may, as indicated above, be caused by or contributed to unwittingly by staff themselves; for example:

- Inappropriate physical posturing, challenging, rough handling.
- An apparent need to dominate, to exercise authority, to win. As one writer observed, "Frequently they hasten into confrontations in which neither staff nor service users feel they can back down without significant loss of face".
- Fear of service user or poor relationships with them.
- The effects of stress, lack of relief, extensive hours resulting in reduced levels of toleration.
- Inconsistency in the imposition of controls, rules.
- Increased openness in dealing with service users thus facing them with unpleasant truths more often.
- Understaffing, inexperience and lack of support.
- Failure to pass on information to colleagues regarding violent or potentially violent service users.
- Acting in a patronising or pompous way.

Such listing of possible causes does not however, mean that the source of violent episodes can always be defined. Some incidents may have many complex, contributory causal factors. Alternatively, some may have simple origins and here, greater understanding of possible causes could perhaps facilitate prevention.

Signs of Potentially Violent Behaviour

The following list is not exhaustive but merely indicative of signs and signals to be alert to:

Appendix 1

- Restless behaviour involving pushing, noisiness and jostling, and general body language;
- Deliberately provocative conduct (name calling, hiding property etc);
- Attention seeking conduct;
- Sudden change in tone, volume or speech pattern;
- Over-sensitive reaction to correction or instruction;
- Threatening conduct, verbal abuse. Threats should be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.
- Previous history of violent conduct;
- Service user under the influence of alcohol, drugs or solvents.
- A noticeable behavioural change in a service user.
- A feeling of heightened tension.

All of the above, individually or in combination, can be indicators of potential aggression and, since most violent acts result from a build up and progression of factors, alertness to such signs and signals can enable earlier intervention and prevention.

Staff should note the following:

- Potentially difficult situations can often be anticipated and teams should endeavour to arrange or secure adequate staff/resources to deal with possible incidents.
- Staff should not overreact, question, or attempt to interview an intoxicated person. To do so could provoke violence. Calmness and reassurance is required.
- Service users who wish to talk should be listened to patiently

Post Incident Management

Support to Staff

Support for those who have experienced a violent/abusive incident is important and should aim to minimise any ongoing distress. Staff must receive full support and this will include the following:

- The immediate needs of the person(s) subject to violence and aggression e.g. first aid, medical treatment etc. are the priority.
- Following any episode of violence/abuse, there must be a full debriefing for all staff directly involved. This process of debriefing has two functions: to establish the details of what happened and to provide emotional support. The intention is to create a supportive system for staff to facilitate learning from the experience and to enhance the development of good practice in dealing with violent episodes. Such objective debriefing is to be standard practice and should normally be in two stages.

Stage 1

- (a) Managers should be involved in the factual debriefing to emphasise that incidents of violence are taken seriously. Managers should talk through the matter with those involved as soon as possible after the incident.
- (b) Emotional debriefing provides a supportive setting to allow people to cope more effectively. Such debriefing can include practical, informal support from colleagues as well as more formal systems of debriefing.
- (c) There must be no presumption of failure because violence has occurred. With the benefit of hindsight, staff sometimes feel a sense of failure when they have been involved in such an incident. They should be reassured that this is a normal reaction.
- (d) The staff counselling service will be available to offer counselling and support to all employees who have been involved in incidents of violence at work. However, should an employee choose to make their own counselling arrangements, they will be supported in doing so and in both cases, where necessary, allowed compassionate leave.
- (e) Those involved may need time off work following an incident and this should be offered. Staff should not be automatically sent home if they are likely to see the support they would receive from colleagues as more beneficial. However, if a member of staff requests to go home, they will be asked if they would like someone to accompany them. At the same time, it may be necessary to arrange for a friend or relative to spend some time with them. If the person does not wish to leave work, ask them if they wish to be relieved of certain duties for a while.
- (f) It is usually better for a member of staff to return to work as soon as possible, although they should not risk aggravating an injury. They should consult their doctor with regard to their fitness to return to work.
- (g) Staff must be informed of the legal options available to them in the case of an incident.
- (h) Staff should be asked to complete the Staff Care Feedback form (appendix 4) and return the completed form to the Strategic Health and Safety Service.

Appendix 2

- (i) The Senior Officer must also ensure that all relevant staff are fully briefed about the incident.
- (j) The Strategic Health and Safety Service is available to give advice to managers following a violent incident.

Stage 2

The second stage of the debriefing should involve the wider staff group. At an appropriate time, the Manager will call a meeting of the staff on duty to discuss the implications of the incident as a practice/learning issue. Violence/abuse will, in such circumstances, be viewed as a practice matter and not as a negative reflection on staff members' abilities. Discussing what has happened enables all to learn about the handling of future incidents and is often a helpful way of resolving personal feelings about the incident. The meeting will enable staff to discuss incidents together, participate in the planning of how to handle future visits/contact and benefit from having the support of colleagues.

Staffordshire County Council		Health and Safety Guidance	
Reference Number	G01	Links to Policy: HR117 & HR118	Date April 2009
Guidance Title	Lone Working and Violence and Aggression Risk Reduction Measures		
	To be Reviewed April 2011		

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- G** Code of conduct

4. Appendices

Version	Date Approved	Changes	Reason for Alterations
1		Original	

1. Application

This guidance applies to all working environments within the County Council where lone working applies and/or there is a risk of aggressive or violent behaviour.

2. Introduction

This guidance gives examples of the risks and risk reduction measures that should be considered when carrying out a risk assessment for work activities involving lone working or where there is a risk of violence and aggression.

3. Guidance

A. The Workplace

Public Access

Some areas of Council buildings and grounds need to be open to the public. However, uncontrolled access to all areas may expose staff to unnecessary risk. During a risk assessment managers should give consideration to the working

Appendix 3

environment to determine whether this presents any risks by its design or layout and how these risks could be resolved by;

- Careful positioning of entrances
- Good lighting of entrances and other access routes and thoroughfares
- Relocation of work activities which do not need to be in public areas
- Escape Routes

Reception Areas

Managers must ensure that the procedure for dealing with visitors is adequately communicated to staff and followed at all times. It is important that a proper routine is maintained to avoid possible confusion and delays leading to frustration and aggravation. Reception staff should be provided with adequate information and training on how to undertake their job safely. Training may include public contact skills and how to handle potentially difficult situations with the public. New and inexperienced staff should be given support and adequate supervision.

Reception area design should avoid “frustration triggers” such as poor hygiene and loud music.

Effort should be made to design reception areas to be light, clean, airy, cheerfully decorated, have a comfortable room temperature and not be subject to excessive noise. Comfortable chairs should be provided for visitors to sit on and attention should be paid to the need for soft toys for children to play with and reading material supplied for visitors.

If money is handled, managers should consider the most appropriate place for this to be carried out

Pictures which are firmly fixed to walls and plants in fixed containers are less easy to use as weapons.

The potential for violence can be reduced by;

- Receiving all customers courteously and treating them professionally and with dignity;
- Ensuring that any people kept waiting are informed of any delays, reasons for the delays and how long they can be expected to wait; and
- Avoid loud music and provide people who are waiting with something to do such as something to read.
- Objects that could easily be used as a weapon, e.g. scissors should never be accessible.

If there is a significant risk of violence and aggression, it may be appropriate to provide;

- Screens or security glass at reception desks. But remember that screens and other obstacles may impair communication and make the situation worse. In many instances, wider desks or counters are a less provocative way of distancing staff from potentially violent people.
- Equipment such as panic buttons to enable staff to call for urgent assistance. Panic buttons must be appropriately sited and connected to offices whose occupants can respond quickly and effectively. The procedures to be adopted when the alarm sounds must be documented and staff must know what to do should they hear the alarm.

Where offices have the facility for visitors to attend meetings with staff the reception should be able to access information efficiently and quickly so that visitors can be dealt with promptly. Where delays are inevitable, visitors should be kept informed.

Appendix 3

Members of the public must not be allowed to leave the reception area and enter the main offices unless escorted.

Offices are advised to display the County Council poster outlining the Policy on Violence and Aggression on Council premises.

Interview Rooms

Interview rooms should be made welcoming to put service users/visitors at ease and should be carefully laid out and used to ensure that the risk of violence against staff is minimised whilst maintaining the need for privacy. Managers should consider the following;

- Rooms to be used for interviews/meetings should be in a busy (not isolated) area of the building and they should have a vision panel in the door (or some other way of observing the room from outside).
- Furniture and fittings should be selected which are difficult to use as weapons.
- The ease with which staff can escape. Where rooms are fitted with an escape route, staff should sit next to this. NB Where there is no escape route staff should try to ensure that when interviewing they do not stand or sit in a situation which leaves them vulnerable in the event of an attack. In this respect, it is important that the interview rooms are arranged so that, if at all possible, interviews are conducted with a desk or table between the interviewer and the service user. Also, staff should sit between the service user and the door to maintain a clear escape route if required.
- The need for easy communication between staff, while retaining privacy.
- The use of CCTV and/or possibly recording facilities in certain interview rooms.

Where it is deemed necessary interview/meeting rooms in offices should be fitted with a readily accessible panic button or panic strip for use in emergencies.

Correspondingly, each office manager will ensure there is a clearly laid down and agreed procedure of response. The room in which an alarm bell is situated must always be staffed when the interview room is in use.

Intruders

Members of staff who encounter potential intruders on their work premises should;

- Approach the person without blocking their exit route. Members of staff should ensure that the person can freely leave the premises at any time and on no account should they prevent the person from leaving the premises
- Establish quickly and politely who the person is by asking the person to produce proof of identity.
- The person should not be approached by an individual member of staff if the area is remote (corridor, storeroom, etc.). In this instance, members of staff should either wait until the person is within a more conspicuous area (other members of staff present) or approach the person in pairs.
- If a member of staff does not feel confident enough to question a potential intruder they shall inform the premises manager, or the deputy immediately of the person's presence. They would then take the appropriate action as identified above or any other that is deemed necessary (call the police, etc).
- If the potential intruder has been identified as a genuine visitor, they should be escorted to the main reception area and the person to be seen notified.

Appendix 3 Building Access

Where staff are key holders a risk assessment must consider the information required by the staff member to carry out this activity in as safe a manner as possible. Staff must have knowledge of the premises layout, alarm systems, locking and unlocking procedures and any emergency procedures.

Where keyholders are called out "out-of-hours" a risk assessment and written safe working procedure must be in place identifying and hazards and outlining any required control measures (e.g. two people may need to be present)

B. Travel and Transport

Consideration should be given to how the staff will travel to and from appointments or between locations during working time where this may present a risk to them.

Use of public transport

- Where possible staff should wait for transport at a busy stop or station that is well lit.
- Advise staff to sit near the driver of the vehicle or in an aisle seat.
- Staff should make themselves familiar with the emergency alarm on the vehicle and sit near it.
- Travelling staff should avoid empty upper decks on buses or empty train compartments.
- If threatened by other passenger/s staff must always inform the driver or guard and report incidents to managers.

Use of vehicles

- Items such as bags, cases CDs or other equipment should never be left visible in a car.
- Staff should be advised to hold the vehicle keys in their hand when leaving premises in order to avoid looking for them outside which could compromise personal safety.
- The inside and outside of the vehicle should be checked for possible intruders before entering.
- Once inside the vehicle all doors should be locked especially when travelling at slow speed and when stopped at traffic lights.
- Staff should always try to park as close as possible to the location being visited.
- At night, parking should be in a well lit area and facing the direction in which they are leaving.
- When driving, especially after dark drivers must not stop even for people who may appear to be in distress or requiring help. Stop as soon as is practicable and safe to do so and contact the emergency services as appropriate.
- If staff are being followed or if in doubt as to whether they are being followed, they are advised to drive to the nearest police station or manned and lit building such as a petrol station to request assistance.
- Using the car horn to attract attention can summon help if needed.
- In the event of a breakdown, where it is safe to do so staff should remain in the vehicle, put on the hazard lights and call for assistance. (on motorways police and driving authorities advise leaving the vehicle and standing a short distance away, if drivers feel threatened in any way and cannot do this advice is to sit in the passenger side of the vehicle)

Appendix 3

Travelling by foot

- Where staff may travel on foot, planning a route beforehand to avoid going through underpasses or taking short cuts through areas which may be less safe is advised (e.g. parks especially after dark.)
- Staff should walk briskly if possible and physically able to do so and do not stop in areas that are unknown, for example to look at a map or ask for directions. Instead they should go to a 'safe' place such as a petrol station or shop and ask for directions.
- If staff think they are being followed, they must trust their instincts, crossing the street and heading for a busy area may provide more reassurance of safety.
- Minimise potential street crime by not using mobile phones overtly in any area. If it is necessary to use a phone or respond to a call/text message this should be done in a safe place such as a shop.
- Staff should always remain alert to people around them and stay in the centre of the footpath facing oncoming traffic
- Carry the minimum amount of luggage and if possible bags should be held under the arm with the clasp close to the body.
- Awareness of the surroundings is essential and making sure you can see and hear if someone is behind and shouting to you is important.
- If someone attempts to steal belongings or County Council property staff should relinquish the property immediately without challenge.
- Keeping house keys and mobile phone separate from handbags should be considered.
- Wearing sensible low heeled footwear with non-slip soles should be considered.
- Where possible avoid overtly displaying valuables.
- Use cash point machines in well lit, busy areas.
- Carrying a torch for use in an emergency may be advised for some staff.

Use of Taxis

- Wherever possible a taxi should be booked in advance from a reputable company.
- If no taxi has been booked staff should go to the office of a reputable taxi company or go to a recognised rank to hail a cab.
- Advise never to use an unlicensed mini cab.
- Safety organisations advise that passengers should sit in the back behind the driver's seat and have a mobile phone readily accessible
- Staff must not give out personal information to the driver.

Cycling

- When cycling avoid unlit areas and quiet roads
- Secure bicycle near premises in a well lit area if possible.
- Always hold the bicycle lock keys handy when leaving the premises in order to avoid looking for them outside which could compromise personal safety.
- Fit and use front and rear lights on all bicycles when dark
- Avoid making repairs to bicycles in isolated areas – where possible push the bike to the nearest safe place e.g. petrol station; guarded car park to make repairs.
- If someone attempts to steal a bicycle staff should relinquish it immediately without challenge.

C. Knowledge of the job/location or service user

When carrying out work alone it is important that staff have been made aware of all information about the job to be done, the location and (if necessary) and the service user(s) involved. Staff should have read and understood any guidelines and procedures which are in place aimed at controlling the risks to health and safety.

General points of note:

- The risk assessment for any job may need to consider specific issues such as potential for violence or where lone working may not be carried out because of physical hazards.
- Managers must identify these jobs and implement safe working procedures before the activity takes place. Examples of this may include; work at height; the use of certain chemicals; the use of machinery or vehicles; carrying money or valuables and confined space working.
- Consideration may need to be given to doubling-up for some jobs, lone workers must be encouraged to regularly self assess the situation they are in and the risks to which they are exposed
- Staff must be trained to carry out the tasks required and must be competent to use any materials or equipment required.
- Staff should let colleagues and managers know where they are during the working day. The use of work diaries and information boards to show the location staff during the day can be a useful tool.
- Where tasks are identified as requiring more than one person to complete them staff must be made aware of this via the risk assessment process. For example, managers may define that working at height must be carried out when two or more staff are present and not by a lone worker or access to the home of a named service user may require 2 or more staff to be present.
- Where regulations, codes of practice or guidelines are in place which prohibit working alone employees must be made aware e.g. Confined space working or carrying out specific work in the community and ensure that the appropriate guidelines or codes of practice are followed.

Knowledge of the service user/client(s)

- Where a service user, job or location has a history of incidents, sharing experiences and concerns between employees within an organisation and between other relevant organisations is essential. These should be formally recorded and shared via the appropriate communication channels.
- This information must be made available to staff or other agencies likely to have contact with the service user. Staff must check the information system as a matter of course, making sure the information is accurate, updated and removed as necessary.
- Training should be made available, where necessary, in the use of conflict resolution or defusing techniques. This training may include being aware of non-verbal communication; how to behave in a non-confrontational way; the importance of good customer care; being polite and listening to clients.
- When visiting the homes of service users, complainants or persons being investigated, any historical information about the service user or their circumstances which may be relevant to the staff member must be communicated.
- Any hazards present in the location being visited must be recorded and passed onto the staff member e.g. dogs on the premises.

Appendix 3

- Any known hazards relating to the client or their family e.g. any previous history of violence or aggression or behaviour triggers, must be recorded and assessed prior to the visit.
- Where staff see or hear something which makes them feel threatened they should leave the premises as soon as possible.

The location

- Staff should have knowledge of the location where they will be working, for example the location of accessible car parking or public transport.
- Staff should be in possession of full address details, telephone numbers and alternative contacts to minimise the likelihood of getting lost.
- Where staff must report to a security point prior to starting work (e.g. for security checks) they must always do so even when visits are to regular and familiar places.

Working alone within a premises outside office hours

From time to time staff may need to carry out their work outside of normal office hours such as weekends and evenings. Precautions must be taken to ensure that health and safety continues to be protected;

- Where work is not scheduled or routine e.g. evening or weekend clinic/service premises managers or caretaking staff must be informed.
- Written procedures may be required in certain premises requiring regular contacts.
- Staff working at weekends or very late at night must ensure that all windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorised access.

D. Working Practices and Patterns

General

Working methods should be regularly reviewed and risk assessments carried out to determine the levels of risk and the precautions that should be taken.

- Managers who set staffing levels need to ensure there are always enough suitably trained staff to cope with any foreseeable risks.
- Staff should be made aware that they need not hesitate to withdraw from a situation which is causing them discomfort or harm and call for help.

Home or Site Visits

- When staff are visiting or seeing service users away from the base all staff must be aware of this through diary or other systems.
- When staff are to meet a service user who is either unknown to themselves or the service for the first time, the following action should be taken;
 - Arrange an initial meeting at the office base if appropriate.
 - If the person is already a council service user and known by the service check the relevant information system and refer to the service user file prior to carrying out a home visit.
 - Where a risk of violence is identified appropriate staffing levels must be considered (this can include representatives of other agencies).
 - Details of visits and expected return times must be available at the office base in line with local procedures.
- Staff must be alert to situations where service users are becoming confrontational or aggressive and should remove themselves from any closed, locked room or building.

Appendix 3

- Portable alarms should be available on request.
- Mobile phones should be available on request for staff use when visiting at night or outside office hours, or when circumstances require it.
- Where it is established that wearing identifiable clothing could present a risk, staff should not wear the identifiable clothing or ensure that the clothing is not obvious.
- Managers and staff should be sensitive to situations where it is known that service users may be prejudiced to staff's age, ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation. Case discussion will enable management to consider the appropriateness for an employee to handle a case.

During a home visit

- Ensure that staff have as much information on the client and the client's home environment prior to the visit so that risks can be assessed.
- Ensure that staff carry an ID badge and are prepared to identify themselves.
- If staff feel that there is a risk of harm on arriving they should not to enter the house and arrange for an alternative appointment.
- Staff should try to ensure that when they enter a premises/home for the first time that they make themselves familiar with the door lock on the exit door.
- Wherever practical staff must avoid being in a situation where the service user/relative is between them and the exit.

Procedures for dealing with animals

- If there is a known problem with animals at a particular address or location, the occupants should be contacted and requested to remove or secure the animals before arrival.
- If staff are confronted by an aggressive animal on a first visit to an address they should not put themselves at risk.
- If a request to remove or secure the animal has provoked a negative reaction all possible efforts should be made to ensure the situation is managed and deescalated.
- Should hostility become evident alternative arrangements should be made to carry out the visit such as using a nearby office location.
- Any instances of staff being injured by a dangerous animal should be recorded by the Line Manager in the same way as other violent incidents.
- Internal information systems should be flagged to record the incident against the premises.

Escorting patients/service users

- Where there are known risks or identified potential risks about a service user location or type of work consideration should be given to the most appropriate mode of transport based on a risk assessment.
- It may not be appropriate for a lone worker to drive, unless in an emergency and alternative arrangements may need to be made.

Cash handling

The County Council has general systems for safeguarding employees dealing with cash and ensuring the security of cash.

By virtue of their work, some staff are required to handle cash and therefore specific guidelines and advice must be available and communicated to staff on how this may be done safely.

Appendix 3

- If any member of staff is threatened with violence while carrying money, they must never put themselves at risk.
- Sensible precautions will minimise the risk of theft or robbery;
 - Avoid setting patterns which others can discern. Ensure routes, parking and timing are varied as much as possible.
 - Provide means for keeping cash out of sight. If staff must handle change, provide them with a separate, small float.
 - Ensure confidentiality. Members of staff should never discuss that they carry or collect cash.
 - Staff must be informed that their safety is more important than money and if threatened they should hand over the cash.

Threats to personal or county council property

If violence is directed solely at property, staff are not expected to put themselves at risk to protect it. Consideration should be given as to whether it is appropriate to call the Police when property is targeted.

Interviews/Telephones

Where staff are being subject to verbal abuse from a service user that offends them, either face to face or by telephone, they should inform the person that they will withdraw from the interview/telephone conversation immediately. Should this fail to have the desired effect, then staff should withdraw and inform their Manager accordingly. If necessary, subsequent calls from that service user can then be diverted to another member of staff.

Malicious calls

Staff may receive malicious or nuisance telephone calls. In the majority of cases these calls only happen once, however, there are occasions when these calls become repetitive and are sometimes directed at one particular member of staff. If such calls occur the following procedures should be followed;

- Remain calm. Try not to encourage the caller with an emotional response.
- Do not enter into any conversation; simply place the handset down and terminate the call.
- If the calls are silent don't attempt to coax the caller into speaking; just replace the handset gently if no-one speaks.
- Don't ever give out any details about yourself, your family or other employee unless you are absolutely sure you know and trust the caller.
- If a caller requests details about another member of staff they should be asked for their contact details so that they can be passed on to the member of staff concerned who will get in touch with them.
- Where members of staff identify that they are experiencing repeated malicious telephone calls they must inform their line manager who shall;
 - Report the malicious calls to the Police and obtain a crime number. Making malicious calls is a criminal offence.
 - Contact the BT Specialist Bureau on freephone 0800 661 441. Specially trained investigators will work with staff using their knowledge and experience to tackle the problem. In extreme cases they can also work with the Police to trace calls.
 - Make a record of the situation in accordance with the procedures laid down locally.

Appendix 3

E. Offensive Weapons

“An offensive weapon means any article made or adapted for causing injury, or intended to cause injury.”

It is important to remember that incidents involving offensive weapons are rare. Events of this nature can occur following a change in circumstances for the service users, for example, a change in their care provision, financial circumstances, health, family situation, environment or where enforcement action is being taken.

There are two main areas of risk;

1. Staff discovering offensive weapons in premises they are visiting or working in
2. Offensive weapons being used to threaten or intimidate staff

Staff discovering offensive weapons in premises they are visiting or working in must;

- Not move or handle offensive weapons under any circumstances even if it is suspected or they are informed that it is a replica.
- Not challenge the owner or occupant of the premises about the offensive weapon.
- Inform any accompanying staff or agencies about the presence and location of the offensive weapon.
- Inform their line manager immediately or when safe to do so.
- Leave the premises if they feel threatened.

Managers on receipt of information about offensive weapons must;

- Liaise with the police to obtain additional information about the offensive weapon and the appropriate action to be taken.
- Using the information obtained from the police to decide whether to approach the owner/family about the safety of the offensive weapon or leave this to be addressed by the police.
- Record information about the offensive weapon on the appropriate information system (e.g. the SCH CISS Flare systems).
- Initiate an individual risk assessment for the service user/ review and amend risk assessments as appropriate.
- Contact the Health and Safety Team if further advice and assistance is needed

F. Equipment used to protect lone workers

There are many types of electronic devices and other equipment that can be used to protect lone workers. Equipment can include;

- Mobile Phones
- Personal Alarms
- Lone Worker Protection Systems
- Torches

It is important that if these lone worker protection systems are considered that managers consult with their health and safety team to ensure the process and systems required to support them are in place. All equipment provided should be regularly cleaned and checked to ensure it is working (e.g. are batteries charged?)

G. Code of conduct

Staff in any type of work situation where local bye-laws, guidance, regulations or codes of practice are in place governing their code of conduct must abide by them at all times. Where necessary these should be displayed in a prominent place.

HSF 9 Violence and Aggression Report Form

Staffordshire County Council
Violence & Aggression Report Form

Directorate
Business Unit
Establishment

C&LL	<input type="text"/>	SC&H	<input type="text"/>	DSD	<input type="text"/>	Strategic Centre	<input type="text"/>
						DfES Number	<input type="text"/>

Names of person(s) subject to violent / aggressive behaviour

Name	Personnel No.	Status	Details of Injury	First aid treatment

Has this incident resulted in any member of staff being absent from work for more than 3 days?

Yes No If Yes

Who	How long
-----	----------

(If yes please contact the Health and Safety team as soon as possible).

Date of Incident:	<input type="text"/>	Time of Incident:	<input type="text"/> am/pm
Reported to:	<input type="text"/>	Reported by:	<input type="text"/>
Date reported:	<input type="text"/>	Time reported:	<input type="text"/> am/pm

Location (room)

If incident occurred away from the normal place of work/base please state the address and exact location.

Name of Assailant

Status of Assailant

Employee of SCC	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service User	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of Public	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)	<input type="text"/>
Student / Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Was an offensive weapon used?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes describe the weapon:	<input type="text"/>
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Witness details: (statements should be obtained from witnesses and attached to this form).

Name	Personnel No.	Status	Address if non employee

HSF 9 Violence and Aggression Report Form

Description of events leading up to the incident

Details of incident

What happened after the incident

State what action has been taken or planned to reduce the risk of a similar incident:

Follow up action checklist

Were the police informed?	Yes	No
Family / Carers of service users informed?	Yes	No
Referred in relation to child protection / vulnerable adult?	Yes	No
CSCI / other relevant agency informed?	Yes	No
In the opinion of those involved was this incident motivated by discrimination?	Yes	No
If Yes report the incident using the discriminatory incident form available on the Intranet at www.intra.staffordshire.gov.uk/equality		
What motivated the incident?		
Racism	Religion	Disability
Gender	Domestic Abuse	Other
		Sexuality

The affected parties and other members of staff have been made aware of the following:

The support of staff counselling service	Yes	No
Their civil rights	Yes	No
Their rights to medical attention	Yes	No
Their right to time out following the incident	Yes	No
A crime number may be obtained from the police	Yes	No
Health and Safety policies are accessible to staff	Yes	No
Staff care feedback forms available to staff	Yes	No
Appropriate checks / treatments provided to service users	Yes	No

Restricted physical intervention technique used? Yes No

Tick most relevant.

Standing Seated Escorting Floor
 Breakaway/Release Hair Pull Stabilisation Other

HSF 9 Violence and Aggression Report Form

 Stabilisation

Non physical management of violence and aggression technique used? **Yes** **No**

Tick most relevant.

Calming Strategies Redirection Evasive Action Other

Prior to the incident was there an Individual Risk Assessment / Behaviour Management Plan in place? Yes No

Does the Individual Risk Assessment / Behaviour Management Plan require reviewing? Yes No

If YES; date reviewed _____

Which member of staff made the decision to use physical intervention?		
Why was the decision made?		
Was the incident discussed with the Service User?	Yes	No
Outcome		
Was the service users medical / behavioural / special needs education needs a contributing factor to the incident? YES / NO		
Details		

What roles did individuals take during the incident		
Who	Did What	How Long

Details of the manager completing this form

Print Name <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Job Title <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Signature <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Date <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

For Health and Safety Team use only

Date received	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	HSE RIDDOR Reportable Telephone investigation	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	HSE Report Number	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Date reported to HSE	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Date of site visit	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	H&S Advisers Name	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Site visit required	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>			Incident Type	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

Additional comments by H&S Adviser

Send or email the completed form to the Strategic Health and Safety Service within 3 days of the incident for RIDDOR reportable incidents, or 10 days for all other incidents.

ACT OR THREATENED ACT OF VIOLENCE - STAFF CARE FEEDBACK

The council is committed to providing persons subject to incidents of violence and aggression with all the help and support possible. It is county council practice to make you aware of your right to medical attention, to make available a copy of the safety of staff policies and arrange a debriefing.

The council provides a confidential staff counselling service. The counsellors can be contacted on a direct line telephone number 01785 277400/401. Information regarding the staff counselling service is available at your place of work and on the intranet.

In attempting to monitor the effectiveness of the safety of staff policies and quality of support provided to persons subject to incidents of violence and aggression, it would be helpful if you could complete the detachable section and return to the Strategic Health and Safety Service.

I hope you continue to feel supported and recover from this incident.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Name: _____ Date of Incident: _____

Establishment/Workplace _____

Following the incident:

	Yes	No
1. Were you made aware of the availability of the Staff Counselling Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Informed of your Civil Rights?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Advised of your right to medical attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Did you receive medical attention if required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are you aware of/have access to the safety of staff policies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Advised of your rights to time out/off to recover?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Was the incident investigated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Did a debriefing take place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Please comment on any further action you feel could have been taken.		

(a) Following the incident:

(b) To better prepare you for any possible incidents in the future:

Thank you for your assistance in completing this form. Please return to the Strategic Health and Safety Service.