

INSTRUCTION 6

VIOLENCE AT WORK

References:

- A. Health & Safety at Work act 1974
- B. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- C. Lone working, Instruction 14 to this policy

Definition

6.1 The Council accepts that any actions by members of the public, which results in staff experiencing fear for their or their relatives personal safety, arising from them carrying out their official duties, constitutes Violence at Work (VAW).

6.2 The following non-exhaustive list illustrates some of the more common forms of Violence at Work.

- A threat to physically assault a member of staff.
- Actual physical assault of a member of staff.
- Threats directed towards the relatives of staff.
- Deliberate damage of Council property in the presence of staff.
- The possession of weapons and the unspoken threat which that implies (e.g. bringing a baseball bat into an interview).
- Behaviour or Language which could be construed as being intended to intimidate staff.

Statement of intent

6.3 The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure a safe system of work for its staff in the context of VAW. If a member of staff is injured in a VAW incident the Council will provide ongoing support including counselling, if required, and will consider financial support if this is appropriate.

Responsibilities

6.4 The Council's Safety Policy lists the general responsibilities of officers, but the following are the more specific responsibilities in the context of VAW:

The Service Manager (Health & Safety) will:

- Advise Leadership Team on the standards appropriate for the design and construction of interview rooms, counters and reception areas and ensure that agreed standards are implemented.
- Agree with the departments using these facilities, guidelines for the use of them, and carry out monitoring to ensure that these guidelines are being followed.
- Investigate high risk incidents of VAW, with relevant managers/supervisors and staff.
- Maintain the Customer Alert List (CAL)VAW-Register.

Managers/supervisors will:

- Carry out and regularly update risk assessments for all activities which bring their staff into face-to-face contact with members of the public.

- Devise such additional local procedures as are appropriate for the specific circumstances in which their staff find themselves and discuss and agree these with the Service Manager (Health and Safety).
- Inform their staff of the contents of this policy and supply them with up-to-date copies of all relevant guidelines and procedures.
- Ensure that the VAW guidelines and procedures are followed both by themselves and by their staff as laid down in Annex C.
- Ensure that staff have the necessary training required to undertake their work dealing with potentially aggressive customers.

Employees will:

- Make themselves familiar with, and follow all relevant VAW guidelines (Annex C) and any local procedures laid down for their safety.

6.5 All incidents must be reported promptly (General Reporting Form). ~~The Health & Safety Manager will investigate every incident, with relevant managers/supervisors and staff.~~

Training

6.6 It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that their staff receives the training appropriate to the degree of risk to which they are exposed.

Guardian Angel System

6.7 The Council operates a 24-hour “Guardian Angel System” for employees that undertake work tasks outside of normal office hours and where it has been identified that they may be at risk. They must use this system for their safety.

6.8 Ring 01284 763252 and give the operator the following details;

- Who you are;
- Your Department;
- Line Manager;
- Person to contact (if different to above);
- Your contact mobile telephone number;
- Where you are visiting (address);
- Your vehicle registration;
- Who you are visiting or what you will be doing;
- Duration of visit/stay.

6.9 At the end of your visit you must call in to report your visit is complete.

6.10 In the event of the person not calling in to say their visit is complete, the operator will take the following action;

- Ring you on your mobile telephone.

6.11 If there is no response they will then;

- Contact your line manager or the person listed, passing on the information you passed to them.

6.12 Further details regarding Lone Workers are found at instruction 14.

6.13 Skyguard lone working devices have been issued to some staff, these devices must be used as per the training (see Annex C for further details).