

CORPORATE PROCEDURE

DEALING WITH VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION AT WORK.

1 Aim of the procedure

The aims of this Corporate Procedure is ensure that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) complies with its legal obligations under relevant legislation, and to ensure the risk to the employees from violence and aggression at work is kept to the lowest level reasonably practical.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Corporate Directors

Corporate Directors shall be responsible for the overall implementation of this Corporate Procedure.

2.2 Heads of Service

Heads of Service shall be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this Corporate Procedure and will ensure the provision of the necessary resources to ensure a safe system of work, comply with the requirements of the policy and the regulations.

2.3 Governing Bodies of Schools Maintained by Education Authority

There is a shared overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare between the LEA, governing body and headteacher.

2.4 Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers

Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Corporate Procedure within their workplaces to comply with management guidance.

3 Risk Assessments

3.1 Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers are required to identify hazards through risk assessments and to ensure that risks are either eliminated or adequately controlled to the lowest level reasonably practicable. When it is not possible to devise arrangements for the work to be done safely, alternative

arrangements must be sought. For guidance on risk assessments view the Corporate Procedure [CP/05/01](#).

3.2 The significant findings of the risk assessment should then be used to develop safe systems of work. The safe systems of work should be tested and reviewed/revised as necessary.

3.3 Employees should also assess their method of working. Many employees undertake their duties as they have always done without thinking about whether they are putting themselves at unnecessary risk.

4 Incident Recording and Reporting Processes

4.1 Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers must ensure that they are aware of the correct methods of reporting and recording violent incidents.

4.2 Managers /Team Leaders/Headteachers should ensure that **all** employees are aware of the Accident/Incident recording and reporting procedures.

The following forms are to be used for recording violent incidents.

- Violent Incident Record Log (Hype link)
- Corporate Accident/Incident Report form [CF/09/01](#)

5 Violent Incidents

5.1 Violent incidents, for example being sworn at, are to be recorded on the Violent Incident Record Log (VIRL). The VIRL should be held by the Manager/Team Leader in a secure location for employees to record perceived violent incidents. Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers are responsible for providing information to their employees on its use. The employee has the responsibility to inform their Manager/ Team Leader/Headteacher of any violent incidents.

5.2 Violent incidents, whether verbal or physical, should also be reported on the Corporate Accident/Incident Report form. This needs to be signed by the Manager/Team Leader/Headteacher. The form should be completed and sent to the Corporate Health and Safety Section within one working day.

6 Training

6.1 Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers must ensure their employees receive Lone Working/Personal Safety Awareness training as part of induction procedures. The training needs of existing employees should also be assessed, and training provided to meet those needs.

6.2 It is essential that Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers must ensure that training in Lone Working and Personal Safety Awareness are given a top priority.

6.3 All Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers should ensure that their employees take full advantage of the training opportunities made available.

7 Guidance For Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers On Dealing With Violence And Aggression

The following notes are intended to enable Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers to prepare practical safe systems of work within the context of the Corporate Violence and Aggression Policy.

7.1 Planning to avoid Violence

Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers are responsible for protecting employees from foreseeable risks of assault by those they come into contact with in the course of their work. You should use these guidelines to undertake risk assessments of the workplace for which you are responsible.

7.2 Identifying the problem

To identify if there is a violence problem in the workplace Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers shall:

- I list the jobs where employees' contact with others could possibly place them at risk; for example, employees dealing with the public, cash handlers, employees working with service users/pupils with challenging behaviour;
- II analyse any existing records of violence in the work area to find out whether they are isolated incidents or a recurring problem,
 - monitor the incidents which take place to identify patterns of violence,
 - consult with employees and ensure they are trained/briefed and made aware of the contents of the risk assessment and control measures (existing and proposed).

7.3 Taking Action

In considering what action to take Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers will need to consider the following:

- security arrangements
- physical aspects of premises

- working practices / patterns
- employees training
- pooling information
- police contact

7.4 *Security of buildings*

- have self locking doors
- make sure there is a safe way out at all times
- external lighting should be adequate
- make employees working alone aware of risk and able to raise alarm
- ensure that there are suitable access controls i.e. visitors book/badges
- consider high level security fencing to restrict access to the site
- restrict the number of access points
- install surveillance systems

7.5 *Reception area*

- easy access – readily identifiable near to main entrance
- good lighting
- queuing systems which minimise waiting and stress
- trained, tolerant and assertive reception employees
- panic buttons and corresponding violence drills (if appropriate)

7.6 *Interview facilities*

Many of the points about reception areas apply, but interview rooms should also:

- not be isolated
- have vision panels in the door(s)
- have an easy escape route to nearby assistance
- should be fitted with a panic alarm, which should be tested on a weekly basis. Test results should be recorded, faults reported and repaired without

delay.

- written and tested procedures for responding to incidents where the alarm is raised.
- a risk assessment should be carried out prior to interview giving consideration to the nature of the interview and the known history of the interviewee. Further controls may need to be considered e.g. two employees in attendance.

7.7 Exterior

Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers should ensure that: -

- landscaping doesn't act as a screen
- avoid availability of missiles – for example loose paving, pebbles
- graffiti is removed promptly
- employees do not engage in confrontation

8 Working Practices and Patterns

Visits away from the workplace:

As a Manager/Team Leader/Headteacher you should ensure that the principles of the Lone Working Policy and Corporate Procedure ([CP/07/01](#)) are adhered to

8.1 Visits:

Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers shall ensure that: -

- the Potentially Violent Persons Register or equivalent which their team or Directorate hold, is checked:
- review whether first time meetings could take place in an appropriate safe venue;
- if there is any doubt about employee's safety, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment shall be undertaken.

8.2 For unplanned visits:

Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers shall ensure that: -

- the employee informs you where the visit will take place and approximate expected return time;
- arrangements will be made for the employee to telephone in at prearranged

times if their movements are going to be unknown, and are potentially hazardous (e.g. isolated locations, or in enforcement situations). Take appropriate action if the employee does not return or does not telephone in as arranged.

8.3 *For visits to clients with a known history or another high risk visit:*

- Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers should ensure that lone employees must never visit clients who are known to be violent. If it is suspected that violence is likely to occur during a visit then where possible the meeting should be arranged at an appropriate safe venue. Where this is not possible employees should go with a colleague and/or the Police.
- If employees are to be accompanied by the Police, their respective roles should be clear, i.e. the employees will complete the task and the Police are there to keep the peace. It is possible that consideration will have to be given to the effects of arriving with a Police Officer. Remember that if there is a high risk of violence and there is no alternative to a home visit, then that risk is reduced if you involve the Police.
- Visits to be attended by two or more employees need to be planned beforehand in regard to their respective roles.

8.4 *Deployment of employees*

Customers or clients may become antagonised due to differences between themselves and Authority employees such as ethnic origin, age, or gender. If Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers identify that an employee is more vulnerable, they should not expect them to deal with the situation without extra support.

8.5 *Working out of office hours*

Employees should only work outside normal hours where it is essential. In such cases, you should ensure that the employee has made safe travelling arrangements. Issue radios, mobile phones or consider setting up an on-call rota to operate a telephone check-in base. Consideration should also be given to subscribing to the Corporate Guardian Angel scheme. Contact your Directorate Personnel Officer for further information.

8.6 *Night employees*

Employees working at night should be extremely vigilant and consider calling for assistance before investigating disturbances. Whenever possible, those working at night should work in pairs, and ensure a robust lone working system is in force. An option would be to utilise the lone working software system

“Guardian Angel” for employees who work out of office hours or at weekends, where other alternatives are not practicable.

8.7 *Employee training*

Where activities or jobs cannot be altered or adapted consider ways in which confrontational situations can be defused and thus avoid violence. This may include the following:

- induction training should include violence awareness relevant to the workplace/activities
- training for Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers in managing violence
- training in Violence Awareness – avoidance techniques. Defusing skills.
- training in developing individuals’ interpersonal skills
- training in breakaway, and physical restraint techniques where appropriate
- involving other Authority professionals
- after-incident support and care

8.8 *Police links*

It is useful to develop and maintain links with the local police.

9 Strategies to Cope with Violence:

9.1 *Calling the Police/emergency measures*

In cases of severe disturbance, assault or potential violence, you should call the Police. If you need immediate help dial 999 rather than using local links

Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers may have to make a judgement whether to close buildings for a time if a serious incident occurs whilst they seek help and advice.

9.2 *Support for the victims*

Management support for victims of violence is vital and employees are reassured to know that they will receive understanding, sympathetic and sensitive treatment. Such support might include talking about the incident, time off work, legal advice and support on return to work. The Occupational Health Unit will be able to assist with the support of victims.

9.3 *Procedure for dealing with physical assaults on employees*

The Manager/Team Leader/Headteacher shall meet with the employee as soon

as possible after the incident to make sure the following steps are taken:

- ensure the victim receives first aid treatment and arrange medical attention if they have been injured or are in shock;
- talk through the incident with the employee as soon as possible (obtain any information sensitively without being judgmental);
- remind the employee that violence counselling is available and notify Trade Union if they wish;
- submit the Corporate Accident/Incident form ([CF/09/01](#)) to the COHSS (within one working day), along with a statement if appropriate;
- conduct a debrief of the incident with all relevant employees;
- find out if reported whether the Police intend to take action or not;

10 Advice for Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers and employees to consider following a violent incident

Employee's return to work

Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers should be aware that even though an employee returns to work officially certified fit they might still experience some longer-term effects. This is especially true if the employee returns to a similar situation in which the violent incident occurred.

The Occupational Health Unit will be able to assist with the support of victims.