

Management of Violence and Aggression towards Employees Policy (LCS-HS-26)

Everyone who works for the Council is encouraged to read this policy and consider how they can contribute to achieving its aims.

Introduction

Gateshead Council's activities involve contact with a wide range of people facing challenging circumstances. Incidents of violence and aggression can occur from numerous sources both internal and external and can arise for a variety of reasons.

For the purposes of this policy Violence at Work is defined by the HSE as: "Any incident, in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public (including, clients and pupils etc.) in circumstances relating to their work".

Policy statement

<p>The Council recognises that violence, aggression, intimidation, assault, and abuse are unacceptable and is committed to managing and providing a safe and secure working environment.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all its employees.</p> <p>To achieve this the Council has the following key objectives:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• as a minimum, to comply with requirements of relevant legislation;• to identify hazards, assess risks and manage those risks;• to ensure that employees (and others, as appropriate) are adequately informed of the identified risks and, where appropriate, receive information, instruction, training and supervision;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to support all employees who are subjected to this type of behaviour. Where appropriate, this may include prosecuting perpetrators of violence / aggression towards Council employees and provide victims of violence or aggression with counselling support;• to monitor and review the effectiveness of the safety management systems and arrangements then where appropriate, implement improvements.
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Councillor Martin Gannon
Leader of the Council

Sheena Ramsey
Chief Executive

Responsibilities

Councillors have overall responsibility for considering the Council's 'Management of Violence and Aggression to Employees Policy'.

The Chief Executive has responsibility for ensuring that the Council's 'Management of Violence and Aggression to Employees Policy' is implemented effectively by Strategic Directors.

Corporate Management Team (CMT) shall: provide strategic direction by endorsing and enabling implementation of 'Management of Violence and Aggression towards Employees Policy.'

Strategic Directors together with their Group Management Teams are responsible for establishing their own arrangements for: the safety of all Council employees by ensuring that arrangements are in place to implement, monitor and review this policy and make effective arrangements to minimise the risk of violence at work.

All Employees (and volunteers) are responsible for their own safety and for following the Council's guidance and systems for the management of Violence and Aggression.

Corporate Health and Safety Team
To assist the Council, the health and safety officers will provide competent advice and make recommendations to CMT on the development of the health and safety procedures to be used in conjunction with this policy.

Employee Consultation
Employees or their representatives will be consulted on the arrangements to control significant risks and to comply with the relevant legislation. This will be done informally by managers and supervisors in the workplace and formally through the Council's joint consultative arrangements, where health and safety will be a standing item on agendas or where appropriate, through health and safety committees or forums.

Requirements

The Council will ensure:

- Early recognition and assessment of the risk to employees and others affected by the council's undertaking when violence or aggression could be reasonably foreseeable
- Where significant risks are identified, suitable control measures are put in place to remove or reduce those risks and establish effective communication and monitoring thereof
- It incorporates the process and assessment results into management activities i.e. supervision, 1:1s, appraisals, competencies, performance management, team meeting agendas and other procedures/management systems
- That all violence & aggression incidents are reported and investigated as appropriate, to improve safety and prevent recurrences
- Effective communication between management and their staff are maintained to raise awareness of violence and aggression risks
- Individual responsibility is encouraged at all levels to recognise and inform management of hazards and risks associated with violence and aggression
- Warning markers of individuals known to present a potential risk due to violent or abusive behaviour towards the council's employees will be maintained
- Where appropriate the person(s) responsible for the violent or abusive behaviour are informed that this behaviour is not acceptable and that they have been put on the Councils Corporate Warning Alert System (CWAS)
- Employees who may be at risk of violence & aggression at work will have direct, or indirect access to the CWAS through their line manager, especially those lone working and interfacing with service users and the public
- The CWAS will include a procedure to inform those on the list of the reasons for inclusion and to provide an appeals process
- It reviews all acts of violence and aggression towards employees and where appropriate refer to the police

- Employees, service users and the public are made aware that intimidation and violence against employees is unacceptable and that the Council is determined to continually address the issue
- Employees are aware of the support systems available including counselling, legal advice etc. where appropriate for employees affected by incidents of violence and aggression.

Training

- Training in personal safety will be made available to all employees that encounter clients, public and visitors, where a risk assessment identifies a significant risk of violence/aggression.
- More in depth details on the level of information, instruction and training provided is given in the 'Management of Violence and Aggression towards Employees – Policy supporting guidance' (LCS-HS-79).

Support and Counselling

- This policy covers the promotion of a positive supportive framework by the Council to assist staff and managers who have been affected by incidents of violence and aggression to cope with the effects of such incidents.
- When supporting victims of violence or aggression managers and employees should consider support options that are available within the council where appropriate: such as counselling via the Occupational Health Service. Further information can be found in 'Employee Counselling Service' LCS-HS-87'

Monitoring and review

- Monitoring the policy and its implementation will be undertaken within individual groups
 - The operation of this policy will be kept under review and such changes will be made to the policy as deemed appropriate following necessary consultation with the trade unions.
- This policy has immediate effect. The policy will be reviewed 3 yearly unless there is change to legislation or best practice.