

# Policy for Managing Violence and Aggression towards Staff

(including environmental hazards and staff caution list  
procedures)

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## **SECTION 1: Violence, aggression and environmental hazards policy**

### **Policy statement on violence, aggression and environmental hazards at work**

1. Chesterfield Borough Council is committed to providing a safe and secure work environment for all its employees, and will take all reasonably practicable measures to prevent, or reduce the risk of such exposure to violence, aggression and environmental hazards when delivering services to the community. The authority also recognises that exposure to violence, aggression, (or threat of violence) or harm due to the environment, is not an acceptable part of employee's duties.
2. This policy also covers the threat of harm from the working environment and provides the opportunity for staff to report their concerns on unsafe working environments through the staff caution list process e.g. threat due to needles.

### **Scope**

- 2.1 This policy covers all persons engaged on council business and includes all employees, elected Members, voluntary workers and students on work attachment/experience and contractors. This policy should be read in conjunction with the council's policy and procedure on the management of unreasonable complaints or customers.

### **Introduction**

- 3.1 The council recognises that any form of violence involving employees is unacceptable and is committed to taking action to control this threat.
- 3.2 The council accepts responsibility to reduce the risks to employees by introducing safety measures, training and publicising procedures on how to deal with violence at work. When an employee has suffered a violent incident at work, support through counselling and advice will be made available.
- 3.3 In certain circumstances the council retains the right to withdraw its services from any person or property where it is considered that there is a continued threat to any of its employees.
- 3.4 Employees will not be expected to interview or visit someone alone who, on a previous occasion, has displayed some form of violence towards them.

## Data protection principles

- the information should be accessible to those with a need to access it
- the information should be kept accurate
- the information should not be kept longer than is necessary
- the data subject should be made aware of their individual rights and why we are processing their personal data (with the exception where this would exasperate the situation)

## Examples of forms of abuse, threats and violence

- 4.1 Work-related violence can be defined as any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of the course of their employment. This meaning is based on the Health and Safety Executive's definition.
- 4.2 Violence and aggression mean different things to different people. How individuals define violence can affect how these incidents are reported. The following definitions may be used to describe aggression to which staff may be exposed:-
- Verbal abuse:** Threatening or obscene language to the person, face to face or over the telephone
  - Hate abuse:** Harassment or abuse to the individual, verbally or physically that is motivated by age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief or sexual orientation
  - Threat:** verbal or written, to the person or to the property, or both – may include threat using animal violence
  - Property damage or theft:** of the property of the member of staff, including cars
  - Physical abuse:** attempted assault, with or without a weapon, which does not result in actual physical harm to the member of staff
  - Physical assault:** with or without a weapon, resulting in actual physical harm to the member of staff at the level of bruising, cuts, lacerations, hair pulling or more serious injury – may include deliberate animal attack
  - Sexual abuse:** sexual harassment or other forms of inappropriate sexual behaviour, which does not result in actual physical harm to the member of staff
  - Sexual assault:** sexual assault resulting in actual physical harm to the member of staff at the level of bruising, cuts, lacerations or more serious injury

- ix. **Other:** any form of physical or psychological assault or abuse, threats, harassment or unpleasant behaviour not contained in the above, which the member of staff considers to have been sufficiently serious to warrant concern.

## **Zero tolerance of violence**

- 5.1 No individual should have to or feel they have to accept or tolerate any of the above forms of violence.
- 5.2 Although there are many forms of violence, employees should report **all** incidents whether physical, verbal or other as under reporting leads to problems when attempting to monitor or evaluate the policy and procedures. This also distorts statistics and leads people to assume either the policy is working or incidents of violence are less than first expected.
- 5.3 Under reporting occurs when employees regard unacceptable/aggressive behaviour, or environmental hazards as 'part of the job', a regular occurrence or dealt with effectively at the time. Such perceptions highlight the effect individual attitudes can have on a reporting process.

## **Responsibilities of managers**

- 6.1 The council has a clear duty under health and safety legislation to provide a safe place and safe systems of work for all its employees. It also has duties towards non-employees to ensure that council activities do not cause detriment to their health and safety.
- 6.2 All managers have a responsibility to implement this policy and to make sure their staff are aware of it and understand it.
- 6.3 Managers must treat any report of work-related violence; threats, abuse or environmental hazard reported seriously and respond to them promptly.
- 6.4 Following a notified incident, managers must consider whether the individual or property identified should be referred to be considered for inclusion onto the Staff Caution List.
- 6.5 Record details of the incident on the SHE system and give all employees involved in the incident full support during the whole process. Managers should also respond and consider seriously any suggestions made by staff about how to improve violence prevention and management, and give feedback to staff about their suggestions, including whether it will be taken forward and if not, why not.

- 6.6 Line managers should ensure that suitable risk assessments are carried out for all work activities where there is a risk of violence or abuse. Risk assessments should consider people who may be especially vulnerable such as young people and expectant or nursing mothers.
- 6.7 Suitable and sufficient control measures should be put in place to eliminate the risk of work related violence. Where this is not reasonably practicable, then control measures should reduce the risk of such issues to a tolerable level.
- 6.8 Ensure that all employees are provided with clear instructions in respect of reporting incidents and threats of violence and aggression and environmental hazards in accordance with this policy.
- 6.9 Support employees involved in incidents of violence and aggression by providing appropriate post-incident support and debriefing to employees. Where appropriate, and in consultation with the employee concerned, make an offer of referral to the counselling service.

## **Responsibility of Employees**

- 7.1 All employees have personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that they comply with this and relevant council policies. The following actions undertaken by staff may help prevent work-related violence and aggression.
- 7.2 Accept and understand their responsibilities for reducing the risks of violence, and to co-operate and comply with any instruction given by managers which is provided for reasons of health and safety e.g. wearing and using PPE devices (Skyguard or other)
- 7.3 Employees have a responsibility to behave in a way that does not incite or increase the likelihood of violence. Any staff member found to be encouraging or inciting violence may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 7.4 Employees will offer good customer service and be aware of customer needs. They will conduct work in a manner which is safe for themselves, their colleagues and members of the public.
- 7.5 Recognise the potential for work-related violence and take action to resolve it early on. Staff should take positive action and, for example, contact a manager if they think a customer or member of the public might cause problems.
- 7.6 Where identified through risk assessment, attend any training and subsequent refresher training provided for the risks associated with violence and aggression.
- 7.7 Bring to their managers attention and/or trade union representative if they become aware of a work situation where there is a risk of violence or

environmental hazard which has not been adequately addressed. Employees should suggest any additional measures which might help to prevent and manage incidents of work-related violence.

- 7.8 Employees should not accept instances of work-related violence directed towards themselves or others. Staff should report any instances of violence, threats or abuse to their line manager, whether physical, verbal or other and environmental hazards that cause concern e.g. needles. Details about when it happened, who was involved and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident should also be provided. All incidents should be reported and recorded on the SHE system and flagged for referral to be considered for inclusion on the staff caution list.
- 7.9 Staff should be supportive of colleagues who are victims or have witnessed work-related violence.
- 7.10 Suggest additional measures to managers which might help to prevent and manage incidents of work-related violence and threat of environmental hazard.

## **Risk Assessments**

- 8.1 Risk assessments will be carried out on all job posts/work activities where employees interact with members of the public, and that they take account of the risk of violence and aggression to employees, environmental hazards and ensure suitable control measures are implemented to remove or reduce the significant risks that are identified.
- 8.2 Incidents of violence and aggression and environmental hazards within the workplace will be monitored and risk assessments will be revised where necessary.
- 8.3 All employees identified through the risk assessment process, will receive suitable and sufficient training at appropriate intervals in skills that can be used to minimise risks to their personal health, safety and wellbeing.
- 8.4 If employees believe a risk factor has not been addressed by the assessment or if they have suggestions on further prevention measures, they should discuss these with their line manager. The contents of the risks assessment will be communicated to all staff and appropriate training will be given.

## **Actions following an incident**

- 9.1 Response arrangements will vary depending on the nature of the incident and the service areas involved. Appropriate responses may include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - Explaining to the perpetrator that their behavior is not acceptable and to try and defuse the situation and resolve the problem wherever possible.



- Approaching a manager or a colleague for support.
  - Removing themselves from the situation by walking away.
  - Activating any available alarm system such as 'Skyguard'.
- 9.2 In the event of an incident of violence and aggression, employees should implement the appropriate response arrangements for the particular service area as identified in the service area risk assessments.
- 9.3 The police should be notified immediately where there is an incident involving a physical attack or for serious cases of threatening or verbal abuse. The police should also be informed of persistent cases of violence, threats and abuse.
- 9.4 Where an employee has been involved in a distressing incident, managers must ensure that they are given time to recover and the appropriate support. This may involve referral to occupational health, counselling, physiotherapy or other specialist support. The employee should also be offered a stress risk assessment and the manager should follow the procedure in the managing stress policy. Medical assistance should be provided immediately where required.
- 9.5 Any CCTV recordings of serious incidents should be retained for the purpose of police investigations in accordance with CCTV policies and procedures
- 9.6 Managers will respond and thoroughly investigate all incidents, threats of, or actual violence at work, and take any remedial action that may be necessary to reduce the risk of further violence and aggression, including reporting on SHE system, notifying union safety reps where appropriate and referring to the staff caution list.
- 9.7 Any incident of physical assault will be reported to the appropriate member of CMT.
- 9.8 Staff members will be encouraged to provide support to any victims or witnesses of violence, threats or abuse through appropriate training, and managers should provide support, including, where needed, allowing time off work for individuals to recover. If the incident warranted police involvement the individual should be given time off with pay to deal with any investigations necessary.

## **SECTION 2: Staff caution list**

### **Staff Caution List**

10.1 In order to protect employees from violence, aggression and threat of harm caused by environmental hazards, the council keeps a register of recent incidents. This information is classed as sensitive information and must therefore be processed fairly and lawfully.

10.2 When considering referral to the staff caution list, employees and managers should be aware of the categories of risk identified (see below) and refer under the appropriate risk code (see appendix A). The categories for inclusion on the staff caution list are:

- Verbal abuse experienced – the customer, tenant, resident or visitor to the property has been verbally abusive to staff either in the office, over the phone or at a property
- Physical abuse experienced – actual physical harm
- Person with potential to express unacceptable behaviour or threat of physical harm
- Person with known expression of physical harm towards others
- Contagious medical condition present
- Risk of harm from needles/sharps
- Risk from uncontrolled dog or other pet at the property
- Person who is vulnerable e.g. those susceptible to influence by others with the intent to cause harm e.g. 'cuckooing'
- Risk of harm from others who live at or visit the property
- Advice received from other reputable source e.g. ECINS

10.3 The purpose of the staff caution list is to provide relevant employees with appropriate warning where there is a significant concern regarding potentially violent individuals or hazardous environments. This information should be used to implement suitable precautions to ensure the safety of staff meeting known potentially violent persons or visiting certain locations.

10.4 The register is ONLY for potentially violent persons/unsafe environments identified using the methods detailed above. It shall NOT include difficult customers.

10.5 Managers must ensure that they have processes in place to ensure that the information held on the central staff caution list is available to their staff

10.6 It is not recommended that the information from the central staff caution list is

copied to other ICT systems, transferred by email or other file transfer methods or is printed unless suitable safeguards are in place to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability for the information

## **Incident reports process**

- 11.1 To ensure a streamlined process and avoid duplication, following a notified incident under one of the categories at paragraph 10.2 above, and having decided a referral is appropriate, the individual's manager will immediately complete an incident report on the SHE system. (See Appendix 4) The manager will consider an immediate referral to the staff caution list.
- 11.2 Entries shall only be included where it has been assessed and agreed that the incident warrants inclusion to minimise future risks and protect the safety of future visiting staff, Elected Members and contractors.
- 11.3 Only formally reported incidents, using the process identified, shall be considered for inclusion on the register.
- 11.4 Managers must enter details of the incident on the SHE system and where asked to give details of the incident they must state they wish for the incident to be referred for inclusion in the staff caution list. (Follow the process at Appendix 4) The health and safety manager will then 'action' this to the Nominated Officer who will consider the incident and decide if inclusion against specified risks is appropriate using the risk assessment at Appendix 2.
- 11.5 If the Nominated Officer decides the individual or property should be entered on the staff caution list based on the specified criteria, the list will be updated and the relevant system administrators will be notified within 48 hours to ensure staff safety is maintained. If the nominated officer decides **not** to include the individual or property on the staff caution list the decision will be notified to the relevant manager.
- 11.6 To ensure staff safety once a risk has been identified, a note will be entered on the relevant services systems that a pending SCL entry has been made. Once a decision has been communicated back to the service areas this note will be removed.
- 11.7 The Nominated Officer will decide whether the individual (data subject) entered onto the register should be informed of this under the Data Protection Act using the risk assessment process included in Appendix 2.

## **Review process**

- 12.1 The Nominated Officer will ensure that the staff caution list is maintained and a review undertaken at 6 monthly intervals to ensure that the list complies with Data Protection legislation using the review form at Appendix 3. This review will include the manager who made the referral to provide latest information on risks to the service.
- 12.2 Where staff are made aware of changes to the tenant or property that may affect the entry on the register, this new information should be sent to the

Nominated Officer immediately.

## Appendix 1

### Categories of incident and risk code for inclusion in staff caution list

Code	Description	Recommended staff action	Inclusion period
CBC1	Verbal abuse experienced – <i>the customer, tenant, resident or visitor to the property has been verbally abusive to staff either in the office, over the phone or at a property</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise caution during personal contact]terminate conversation if verbal abuse experienced by phone (give warning first)</li> <li>• Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	6 months
CBC2	Physical abuse experienced – actual physical harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager risk assessment before visit</li> <li>• Joint visits to property during daytime only consider police support</li> <li>• Inform manager when leaving for and returning from property</li> <li>• Report any concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year
CBC3	Person with potential to express unacceptable behaviour or threat of physical harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint visits to property during daytime only</li> <li>• Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year
CBC4	Person with known expression of physical harm towards others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint visits to property during daytime only</li> <li>• Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year
CBC5	Contagious medical condition present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential personal contact only.</li> <li>• Advise if medical risk expires</li> <li>• Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year
CBC6	Risk of harm from needles/sharps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise extreme caution when visiting premises or during personal contact</li> <li>• Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year

CBC7	Risk from uncontrolled dog or other pet at the property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request animal is secured before entering the property</li> <li>Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year
CBC8	Person who is vulnerable e.g. those susceptible to influence by others with the intent to cause harm e.g. 'cuckooing'; those where risk of compromise or personal embarrassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manager risk assessment before visit</li> <li>Joint visits to property</li> <li>Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year
CBC9	Risk of harm from others who live at or visit the property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint visits to property</li> <li>Report concerns to manager</li> </ul>	1 year
CBC10	Advice received from other reputable source e.g. ECINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take advice from source</li> </ul>	1 year

### Severity of incident

- 1 Officer felt uneasy due to the intimidating manner of the person  
Presence of a dog used in an intimidating manner  
Prevailing environment felt intimidating
- 2 Non-contact aggressive gestures e.g. striking the table or wall (frustration)  
Use of intimidating language (may involve foul language directed at the officer)
- 3 Officer prevented from leaving due to PVP barring the way  
Behaviour intended was regarded as a credible threat  
Verbal threat of harm/violence to officer, family, property  
Specified/unspecified weapon/dog  
Irrational & or uncontrolled behaviour  
Suggestive/offensive or otherwise unwelcome behaviour, verbal or physical
- 4 Weapons found at location inappropriately stored/without licence
- 5 Actual physical violence towards officer/family, or property damage  
PVP brandishing weapons  
Violence to others in presence of an officer  
Animal attack

## Appendix 2

### Risk assessment of potentially violent persons/potentially environmental hazards (PVP's/PEH's)

This form should be used for assessing and reviewing incidents involving violence, threats, abuse and premises reported as being hazardous through the SHE system, and from information provided by external sources to determine whether entries should be made on the staff caution list

<b>Incident report number:</b>	<b>Date of incident:</b>
<b>Source of information:</b>	
<b>Name/s of PVP or hazardous location:</b>	
<b>Type of threat:</b>	
<b>Persons at risk:</b>	
<b>Person making referral + service area</b>	

**Incident assessment** (severity of PVP action/PEH x Likelihood of recurrence)

#### **Severity of PVP action/PEH (score 1-5)**

**NB.** This is NOT a severity of possible injury assessment.

- 1 Officer felt uneasy due to the intimidating manner of the person  
Presence of a dog used in an intimidating manner  
Prevailing environment felt intimidating
- 2 Non-contact aggressive gestures e.g. striking the table or wall (frustration)  
Use of intimidating language (may involve foul language directed at the officer)
- 3 Officer prevented from leaving due to PVP barring the way  
Behaviour intended was regarded as a credible threat  
Verbal threat of harm/violence to officer, family, property

- Specified/unspecified weapon/dog
- Irrational & or uncontrolled behaviour
- Suggestive/offensive or otherwise unwelcome behaviour, verbal or physical
- 4 Weapons found at location inappropriately stored/without licence
- 5 Actual physical violence towards officer/family, or property damage
- PVP brandishing weapons
- Violence to others in presence of an officer
- Animal attack

**Likelihood of recurrence of incident (score 1-5)**

Nb. This is a consideration of the possibility of the PVP initiating another incident which could cause harm or the remaining PHL remaining such.

- 1 Very unlikely – one incident, very extenuating circumstances, very out of character
- 2 Unlikely – one report; officer did NOT view action as a threat of harm
- 3 Possible – one report; officer DID view action as a real threat
- 4 Likely – one incident recorded causing mental or physical harm to officer/family/property
- 5 Very likely – multiple incidents recorded causing mental or physical harm to officer/family/property

**Risk assessment score (severity of PVP action/PEH x likelihood of recurrence)**

12 Severity of PVP action/PEH (S) =

13 Likelihood of re-occurrence (L) =

14 Risk assessment score = (S) x (L) =

**Score to warrant inclusion on the staff caution list**

Must score a severity of 3 or more or overall risk score of 5+

**Informing the PVP they have been added to the list**

This must be assessed on a case by case basis. The PVP should always be informed unless it can be demonstrated that there is a substantial chance the informing the individual will, in itself, be likely to evoke a violent reaction from the individual.

**Decision**

PVP/PEH to be included on the register: YES/NO

\*\*PVP to be informed of inclusion on the register YES/NO

**\*\*rationale for this decision:**

Signature..... Name.....

Position..... Date.....



### Appendix 3

Risk assessment review of PVP's/ PEH (to be completed by Nominated Officer and original referring manager)

**Review 1**

Date.....

Removal from register? YES/NO

Remain on register and review? YES/NO

Until.....

Rationale for this decision:

Signature.....Name.....

Position.....Date.....

Signature.....Name.....

Position.....Date.....

## Appendix 4

Completing a notification of violent incident/ environmental hazard on SHE system

1. Log on to SHE system and create a new incident. The details below will display:

### ▼ What Happened

**Incident Details**

Type in what happened here.

**Incident Severity**

**Was the Incident work related**

**Near Miss?**

If near miss and no lost time please remember to complete the date returned to work as the same date of incident occurring

**Lost Time Accident?**

**Reportable?**

**Type of Dangerous Occurrence**

**Create RIDDOR Record After Saving This Record**

2. Enter full details of the incident in the 'incident details' box above. You need to specify what happened, or in the case of an environmental hazard, what the circumstances were. State full details of the incident and why a referral to the staff caution list is needed. To support this and enable a considered decision to be made you must insert the risk code. E.g. CBC1 and state the severity of the incident and give details e.g. level 5 'actual physical violence' (see Appendix 1 for full details)
3. Select from the drop down box the severity of the incident e.g. act of possible anti-social behaviour, hazard-no injury, fatality, minor injury (whichever is appropriate)
4. Complete all the remaining boxes up to 'Create RIDDOR record' as appropriate.

<b>Type of Incident</b>	<input type="text" value="Violence &amp; Aggression"/>
<b>Incident Sub Type</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Other Type of Incident</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Was the incident violent or abusive?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Type of Assault</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Assailant Status</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Please Rate the level of Trauma experienced by Employee</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Has the employee been offered counselling</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Have the Police been Notified</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Was a Weapon Used</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Was the Assault racially motivated</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Has the employee been assaulted before</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Did the incident involve a young person?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. When you come to the next group of boxes complete as follows
6. Type of incident – select from the drop down box the relevant type e.g. violence and aggression, anti-social behaviour, other
7. The select the appropriate incident sub type e.g. animal, physical attack, verbal abuse
8. If not covered by the above categories type the relevant detail in the 'other type of incident' box beneath
9. Tick the box for violent and abusive as this will create the alert to send to staff caution list referral
10. Choose the type of assault from the drop down menu e.g. intimidation, physical, property damage, racial, self-harm, sexual, threat, verbal.
11. Choose the assailant status from the drop down box as appropriate
12. Rate the level of trauma as appropriate e.g. Level 1, 2 or 3. (This will have a bearing on the risk assessment process)
13. Complete the remaining boxes above.

