

SECTION 2(12)

VIOLENCE AT WORK

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Introduction

Information and advice is available to staff in a Code of Practice (CoP) entitled "Violence/Abuse at Work Policy" The CoP is issued by the Personnel Section of Corporate Services. The link to the CoP is as follows: [DORIS Violence and Abuse](#)

All departments have contact with members of the public to some degree and on rare occasions these meetings can become difficult. Some members of the public may be disturbed, distressed or angry and in some circumstances may become hostile and resentful, for example if subjected to enforcement action.

The Health and Safety Executive's definition of work-related violence is:

'Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'

Violence includes not only physical attacks, but also verbal abuse, threatening behaviour and harassment so as to cause hurt or distress. As well as threats in the work place, employees working away from Council premises may also be at risk.

The Council is committed to reducing the risk of violence to its employees arising out of their work. The commitment extends to assisting managers to devise procedures to identify the risk, take action to control or prevent the risk of violence occurring and implement appropriate control measures to provide support and guidance for dealing with such incidents should they arise. The authority will support any employee who in the performance of Council duties is the victim of violence.

The Council is committed to creating a safe working environment. One in which any member of staff will feel able to report any incidents of violence/abuse and be confident that the issue will be appropriately addressed.

Step 1: Assess the Risk

Each Director has the responsibility to identify and assess the risk of violence and identify which staff are at risk. Places of work where staff feel threatened or vulnerable should be risk-assessed to ensure that all sensible precautions are being taken.

Staff who may be at risk from violence/abuse include:

- those giving a service e.g. social worker;
- those working in care e.g. home care staff, care assistants, day centre officers;
- those in education e.g. teachers, caretakers;
- those with an enforcement role e.g. planning officers, environmental health officers;
- those involved in cash transactions;
- those working alone e.g. rangers, green-keepers.

Step 2: Preventing Violence/Abuse at Work

Once the level of risk has been identified appropriate control measures can be implemented including:

- elimination of risk e.g. can the risk of violence be eliminated by not providing a specific service at a particular location;
- using safe systems of work e.g. use of "ALERT" and Forestcare lone workers system;
- training in violence identification and reduction techniques;

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- design of workplace and equipment in reception, meeting and interview rooms;
- staffing levels.

Security of Buildings

Wherever possible, steps should be taken to minimise any potential risk at the Council's sites. Managers responsible for premises which are fitted with panic alarms should frequently check that they are in working order and ensure that appropriate procedures to respond are in place. Closed circuit video surveillance can be used and have a deterrent effect.

Interview rooms should not be isolated and should have as much all-round visibility as possible. The furniture in interview rooms should be arranged so that the member of staff has an unobstructed exit. If only one exit is available, the member of staff should be nearest to it. Where fixed panic/attack alarms are fitted, these should be located in an accessible position for the member of staff when seated and staff hearing the alarm should know what action to take. Furniture and fittings should be selected to minimise the risk of these being used as weapons or missiles.

Managers responsible for reception areas to which the public have access should ensure that reception staff try to indicate to members of the public how long they are likely to have to wait and inform them if there is likely to be further delay. Procedures should be in place to aid reception staff to deal with members of the public with urgent problems.

Working alone away from Council premises

Employees should always use "ALERT" prior to undertaking a visit to a new person or property if there is cause for concern. Then, where possible, appropriate arrangements should be made, e.g. arranging for 2 employees to attend. In certain circumstances it may also be necessary to request police support.

It is very important that all employees whose duties take them away from Council premises should, wherever possible, leave clear details of the places they intend to visit showing expected arrival and departure times. A display board incorporating a logging in and out system could be used, as could the GroupWise diary system.

A mobile telephone or radio and an alarm should be available if risk assessment shows these to be a practical way of reducing risk for certain duties. Use of the lone worker monitoring system offered by Forestcare should also be encouraged as part of the risk assessment.

"ALERT"

"ALERT" is a corporate database containing information regarding potentially violent persons and hazardous addresses. It contains details of aggressive and violent incidences that have been directed towards members of our staff whilst undertaking the normal course of their duties. It is a simple to use and easy to access and can provide members of staff with valuable information prior to undertaking a visit to an unfamiliar property or before meeting a member of the public for the first time.

The information that is provided enables the member of staff to make an informed assessment of the risk and implement appropriate control measures, for example, meeting with a complainant within the office rather than in their home, or ensuring that 2 members of staff undertake the visit.

Simply by using the "**check Alert**" search screen to return background information that may be relevant and will indicate whether the system holds any details of the particular person or

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property. Refer to the following Intranet link for full and detailed guidance on the "ALERT" system: <https://doris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/page/%E2%80%8Bbracknell-alert>

Forestcare lone worker monitoring

This system gives lone workers access to an automated response should they be in danger.

When the lone worker commences their visit, they will dial into the Forestcare system via their mobile phone. They are prompted with easy step-by-step instructions to advise Forestcare of the details of their visit including whom they are visiting, duration and location of the visit.

The member of staff carries on with their duties as normal with reassurance that help can be summoned at any time by pressing the designated panic button on their mobile phone.

The member of staff notifies the system when they have finished their duties and are in a safe environment. If the worker does not do this within a specified time, the monitoring system automatically notifies the back-up team and replays the worker's last known activity details. Help is then summoned.

The service is accessible 24 hours per day, 365 days a year. Further information regarding the lone worker monitoring system can be sought directly from Forestcare.

Public Notice

A poster is available which should be displayed in prominent positions in public areas e.g. adjacent to reception desks and entrances of Council occupied buildings. This notice is designed to act as a deterrent in preventing incidents as it will send a clear message that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated and that information about an individual may be shared between Council departments. It is also envisaged that where a situation shows signs of escalating the notice could be brought to the attention of those persons involved to assist in preventing this from happening. The notice essentially outlines the Council's commitment towards protecting our staff and not accepting intolerable behaviour from those that use our services. The Notice is available from the Health & Safety Team.

Step 3: Action in Case of Violence/Abuse

Physical restraint to repel violence is only acceptable in law if it entails the use of "reasonable force" i.e. that which is sufficient to stop the attacker or to prevent injury to either party. It must not be greater. If the choice is between hitting the attacker or running away, the latter course should always be taken, provided that the risk is not increased.

All violence in any form must be taken seriously. The steps for a line manager to take following violence to a member of staff are as follows:

- Organise assistance for the member of staff, first-aid, contacting a relative/friend, accompanied transport to home and so on - and call the Police if necessary.
- Visit the place where the assault took place as soon as possible after notification and ascertain as many facts as possible. Take statements from the employee and witnesses and ensure that the Violent/Abusive Incident Report (VIR) form (see Appendix 1) is completed as accurately as possible and follow the reporting procedures for "ALERT". Any incident must also be recorded on the Council's Online Incident Report Form (IRF): <https://doris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/page/report-accident-incident>.
- Where a specified major injury or over 3-day injury is the result then, in addition to completing the necessary internal accident report form IRF, in accordance with the

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Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995, the form F2508 should be sent to the Health and Safety Executive.

- If necessary, remedial changes to departmental working arrangements as a result of the assault should be made to reduce the chance of a recurrence.

Step 4: Training

All staff who may become involved in violent/abusive situations related to their work will require information and/or training in the prevention of violence and how to recognise and scale down aggression before it becomes serious.

Offensive Weapons

The use of offensive weapons such as guns, knives etc as a threat may also need to be considered. Offensive weapons are defined as 'any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person, or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him'.

As a general rule, the Police should be called to deal with any incidents believed to involve a weapon. There may be exceptional circumstances where staff may decide that immediate action is required before the Police arrive. Wherever possible, the person suspected should not be confronted in front of others. Preferably 2 or more members should be present and attempts to obtain the weapon should not be made.

Following any incident involving an offensive weapon, it is important to remember to complete the appropriate documentation, such as VIR forms, the debriefing, counselling and support processes.

Further Information

IND (G)69 (Rev) is a free leaflet entitled "Violence at Work – A Guide for Employers" it is available from HSE Publications or via the following link:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf>

**Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Violent/Abusive Incident Form (Vir)
And
Notification for Inclusion on "Alert"**

SECTION A

To be completed by staff member and Manager as soon as possible following an incident.

Details of perpetrator (if known)

Name:

Male

Female

Address:

Date of birth:

Description:

Was the perpetrator:

Member of public: Contractor: Staff:

Client: Tenant:

Person assaulted or threatened in incident or occurrence

Name:

Male

Female

Address:

Date of birth:

Employee Other

Department: _____ Post title: _____

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Details of incident / occurrence

Location of incident:

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Were the Police notified: Yes No

Crime number:

Type of incident / occurrence

Physical assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Verbal threats of a serious nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other verbal abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual harassment <input type="checkbox"/>
Racial harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling of being at risk <input type="checkbox"/>
Violent behaviour resulting in damage to property	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Violent behaviour resulting damage to self	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Do you know of any influences that may have caused the incident e.g. alcohol, medical condition? If yes, please detail:

Description of incident / occurrence

Please keep your report of the incident factual and objective. Describe the incident fully using a separate piece of paper if necessary.

Witness information (if applicable)

Name:

Address:

Describe the incident fully using a separate piece of paper if necessary.

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Injury information

Did the incident result in an injury? Yes: No:

Describe the nature of injury:

Was medical treatment or first aid sought? Yes: No:
If yes, from whom:

Has counselling been offered? Yes: No:

Remember to complete the incident report form and if appropriate an F2508. For further information see: <https://schools.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/incident-reporting-july-2018.pdf>

Action taken to prevent reoccurrence

Please detail all action taken:

Manager:
Signature:
Date:

Employee:
Signature:
Date:

SECTION B

To be completed by Manager and include notification for inclusion on "ALERT" and imposition of exclusion sanction where appropriate.

Inclusion on "ALERT"

Should the perpetrator be included on "ALERT"? Yes
No

If yes, please indicate which criteria they fulfil for inclusion:

Physical assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal threats of a serious nature	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other verbal abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual harassment:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Racial harassment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling of being at risk:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent behaviour resulting in damage to property:	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Violent behaviour resulting damage to self	<input type="checkbox"/>		

If No, please detail the reasons for not including on "ALERT":

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Recommendation for exclusion sanction

Should the perpetrator be subject to an exclusion sanction? Yes: No:

Type of sanction requested:

Exclusion from all Council premises:

Exclusion from (name of premises):

Visit (name of premises) by pre-arranged appointment only:

If No, please detail the reasons:

Safety recommendation

Never visit alone:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only interview in office:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Only visit with care worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only visit with Police	<input type="checkbox"/>
Only visit in daylight:	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Recommendation for exemption under section 29 of the Data Protection Act 1998

Application of the exemption means that the individual will NOT be notified that they have been included on "ALERT". This exemption can only be used for the purposes of the prevention and detection of crime i.e. if to inform the individual is likely to significantly prejudice the prevention of crime because it will result in further violence/abuse to staff of a potentially criminal nature.

Should the perpetrator be notified of their inclusion? Yes: No:

Manager authorisation

Signature:	Post title:
Name:	Department:
Date:	

SECTION C

Following completion of Sections A and B by the staff member and Manager, one form must be forwarded as detailed below.

When the form is passed to the Head of Service / Director for completion, one copy of the form should also be retained on the personnel file at this point.

Please note that it is also necessary to pass a completed copy of the form to the Policy Development Unit if it is believed to be a racially motivated incident.

In all circumstances it is vital that this information is processed as quickly as possible.

Head of Service / Director: (ensure notification to individual where appropriate)

Signature:

Post title:

Name:

Department:

Date:

“ALERT online form filled in:

(input to “ALERT”)

Signature:

Department:

Name:

Date:

Health & Safety Adviser:
Corporate Services Department

(monitoring purposes only)

Signature:

Date:

Name:
