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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lancaster City Council has a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. This duty includes protecting employees' physical and mental wellbeing from violence at work.

This document links to the Council's Health and Safety at Work Policy and aims to advise and support managers whose employees may be exposed to violence and aggression in the workplace. It is known that some services within the authority have local policies and working processes that are relevant to their working environment on this matter.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work 1992 regulations, impose duties and obligations on employers to manage the risks associated to their workplace and their activities. These duties also extend to the protection of staff regarding conflict, violence and aggression related incidents at work. Lancaster City Council does not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression or violence of any kind, whether by an employee, manager, third party or a member of the public.

2.0 GENERAL STATEMENT

Lancaster City Council believes its employees have the right to work in a safe environment and will not tolerate behaviour which is abusive, offensive, threatening or violent.

Lancaster City Council is committed to providing a quality service to all our customers and residents. In return, we expect everyone who comes into contact with our staff to treat them with respect.

3.0 ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Company meets its statutory obligations and that effective arrangements for the management of health and safety are put in place.

Chief Officers

The Chief Officers have executive responsibility to manage Health and Safety including compliance with Health and Safety at Work Act, etc. 1974 and other relevant legislation, best practice guidance and Company policies to meet legal and organisational requirements.

Where justified in the interest of the safety of Officers, Chief Officers are to approve Staff Warning Register requests are without delay.

In the most serious cases, Chief Officers will support and help facilitate legal enforcement where such incident is deemed significant enough to warrant such course of action.

The Health and Safety Team

The Health and Safety Team have overall responsibility for providing advice and assistance the implementation of this policy. This team is responsible for:
- Monitoring of all violence related incidents that have been reported via the online reporting system (My Compliance)
- Reporting incidents, including violence related incidents, to the HSE that meet the requirements of RIDDOR reporting regulations.
- Ensuring that following an investigation, relevant risk assessments and any local procedures are reviewed and any remedial action required to improve the effectiveness of control measures are implemented and documented within the risk assessments.
- Advise the Senior Leadership Team of such reports and of any corrective actions required.
- Collate suitable data for health and safety performance reports for senior management.
- Where identified some cases may be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer for further action to be taken.

Line Managers

- Remaining alert to the possibility of violence and aggression occurring to themselves and their employees wherever they may work and not knowingly putting them and others at risk.
- Ensuring all employees are aware of their health and safety responsibilities and that they need to take reasonable steps not to place themselves, or others, at risk of harm. Employees are also expected to co-operate fully with any corporate or local procedures that are introduced to help protect their safety.
- Identifying the possibilities of violence and aggression at work, assessing the level of foreseeable risk and implementing controls that either eliminates or reduces the level of risk. This could be a specific violence at work risk assessment, or assessing the risk of violence and aggression as part of an overall task or working process (e.g. those working alone, pubic spaces, working away from the office; working with vulnerable adults, children or other members of the public).
- Implementing systems to ensure managers offer the appropriate level of supervision to employees who may face violence and aggression in the workplace, so they can work in reasonable safety.
- Making the best use of known information regarding individuals, groups, areas or environments, for example, as part of work activity/task planning. Where appropriate, also share authorised information which will help others to work safely. This may include sharing information across services and external agencies.
- Regularly testing and reviewing working procedures, risk assessments, risk controls and emergency plans, especially when tasks/circumstances change, or following an incident being reported. For example, simple questions may be; do employees follow the lone working procedure? did the emergency response plan work? who was helping who? what effect would staff holidays and sickness have? do the police arrive quickly when requested?
- Reviewing violence and aggression incident information and other related data, so it can be used as part of future work planning, or risk assessment, or working process reviews, as well as identifying potential hot spots.
- Ensure all threats of, or actual incidents of, violence and aggression towards employees are formally reported and recorded. Depending on the severity of the incident, this could be a simple log or record, or reported via the Council's online accident incident reporting software (My Compliance), especially where injuries and/or absence occurs. Some incidents will also need to be reported to the Police and usually the victim would do this, unless they are incapacitated. It is important for a manager to support

this reporting activity. In some instances, the Police may have already been called to the incident scene.

- Following any violence and aggression incident, it is very important that those involved are offered suitable, on-going support as soon as is reasonably possible. This could be
  - allowing for time out, a debrief, first aid, counselling, agreed absence from work, alternative duties or work patterns, in order for them to come to terms with what has happened. Each incident will need to be treated differently, as individuals will cope with this type of incident differently, so their support needs are likely to vary.
- Managers should ensure that all incident logs, records and online violence incident reports are completed accurately and in good time, ensuring that all of the facts are recorded, avoiding subjective opinion or hearsay.
- All violence and aggression incidents need to be investigated and appropriate actions taken to reduce the risk of future events. The level of investigation and actions required will vary, depending on the severity of the incident.
- Where the police are involved and are carrying out their own investigation, it may be difficult for management to carry out follow up investigations. However, this does not prevent managers from offering on-going support to those involved.
- Ensure that adequate training, instruction and information has been given to employees to enable them to deal with potentially aggressive and violent incidents while in work and when out and about. The Learning and Development team can assist managers with these training needs.
- Where Managers deem it necessary, they must complete a Staff Warning Register Request Form and send to their respective Chief Officer for approval.

Employees

Employees are responsible for co-operating with Managers to enable them to provide a safe working environment and ensure legal compliance, namely by:

- Undertaking and completing any required identified conflict training package(s), and thereafter as required or as part of the refresher training process.
- Work in accordance with the risk assessment and adhere to the control measures in place.
- Where employees have been assaulted and or feel at threat the Police are to be contacted immediately where safe to do.
- Are to retreat to a place of safely where there is a significant risk present
- Cooperating by communicating any potentially violent situations to the Line Manager or trade union safety representative.
- Report any incidents of violence or threatening behaviour to your Line Manager. In many cases, incidents of assault may occur away from the Council's premises, and it is important that these are reported to your Line Manager, however trivial the incident may seem.
- Report any concerns, to their Line Manager.
- Appropriately wear and use the People safe device where issued
- Report any event of workplace conflict on My Compliance.

Health and Safety Representatives / Trade Union Representatives

Health and Safety / Trade Union Representatives have certain responsibilities and duties and are able to audit and complete inspections where required.

A health and safety representative is a fellow worker who represents other union members to look after the health and safety at work of people they work with.

Health and Safety Representatives have the right to:

- Take an active part in workplace risk assessments.

- Investigate potential hazards and 'dangerous occurrences' and examine the accident data.
- Investigate members' complaints.
- Carry out inspections of the workplace in work time, at least every three months.
- Be consulted on new working practices and new technology.
- Receive safety information from their employer (such as inspectors' reports, hygiene surveys and risk assessments).

4.0 DEFINITIONS

The Health and Safety Executive defines violence at work as:

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

As examples this means:

- Threatening behaviour - including, intimidation, bullying, ostracism, mobbing stalking, harassment. The inappropriate use of social media and or telecommunication (Cyber-bullying) and threats with weapons or dogs.

- Verbal abuse – The use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress, including shouting, swearing or insults, racial, or sexualised intent.

- Physical violence – "The intentional application of force to another person, without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury or personal emotional discomfort." Including, hair pulling, slapping, punching, nipping, biting, kicking, spitting, hitting, butting, stamping or sexualised abuse. It may also include the more extreme forms of violence, using weapons (not just restricted to wooden/metal bars, chairs, sharp implements or bladed items), chemicals, setting off a dog or threat to do so and firearms.

For Lancaster City Council the above definitions apply to all employees at all levels, although it is understood that some employees may be at a higher risk of violence and aggression than others. The nature of violent and aggressive behavior experienced by employees falls into two broad categories, behavioural or intentional (malicious), due to the work they do, or the services they provide to the public.

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

All risks must be suitably assessed and recorded on sufficient risk assessment. The risk assessment should be undertaken by the Line Manager for the service and communicated to the employee.

Considerations during in assessments need to include:

Types of Violence and 'potential' risk situations

Most incidents of assault which occur at work are those inflicted by service users and members of the public on Council employees. There are a few areas in which employees may potentially be exposed to violence:

- Whilst working in the customer service contact centre.
- Whilst working in a customer service role at any of our premises or at any planned and organised event.
- Whilst working alone or away from a workplace.
- Whilst handling money or valuables.
- Whilst providing repairs or maintenance services to district residents in their own home.
- Whilst carrying out inspections or enforcement duties.
- Whilst working with individuals who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Whilst working with individuals with mental health problems.
- Whilst undertaking location independent working (LIW)

Working Alone in any Establishments

Document Reference	SG40	**Version Number**	1.0
Policy Owner	Health and Safety Manager	**Last Review Date**	February 2025
Date First Issued	February 2025	**Next Review Date**	February 2027

- Where possible, lock entry doors but ensure that there is still safe access and exits in the event of an emergency.
- Unexpected callers must always have their credentials checked before being permitted to enter the establishment.
- There should be suitable means to summon help in the event of an emergency whether by phone, TEAMS or Peoplesafe.

Note – further information can be located within the Lone Working Policy

Handling Money or Valuables

- Special arrangements should be made for handling and carrying money. Refer to the departmental arrangements.
- In situations where cash is taken to a bank the routes and times should be varied wherever possible.
- Cash must not be left on view. Surplus throughout the day should be stored away in a safe place.
- Arrange the work area so that there are easy escape routes if required.
- In situations where safety feels threatened, help should be sought immediately.
- There should be a suitable means to summon help in the event of an emergency

Whilst providing Services to Service Users in or near to their own home

- Ensure a dynamic risk assessment has been undertaken.
- Check previous history including reports of violence/behavioural issues.
- Report any abusive violent behaviour immediately to your line manager who should review the plan/risk assessment.

6.0 REPORTING

For any 'situations' that made any employee feel uncomfortable in any way or where any conflict situation caused service disruption, please report on MY Compliance Management - Incidents (my-compliance.co.uk)

Note
The RIDDOR regulations 2012 require that acts of non-consensual verbal or physical violence which result in specified injuries, and/or an absence from work for more than seven calendar days, need to be reported to the HSE. Such reports will be made by the Health and Safety team.

7.0 INFORMATION AND TRAINING

These documents and others can be found on the Health and Safety Intranet page Health and Safety - Policies and Guidance

- Health and Safety at Work Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Guide to Personal Safety for Councillors
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Corporate Lone Worker (Peoplesafe) Monitoring System

Training

Training, instruction and information will be given to employees identified as being 'at risk' to enable them to deal with potentially aggressive and violent incidents while in work and when out and about. The Learning and Development team can assist managers with these training needs.

Document Reference	SG40	**Version Number**	1.0
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8.0 MONITORING & REVIEW

Monthly statistical analysis will be provided to the Senior Leadership Team in a monthly overview report.

RIDDOR will be a regular agenda item for health and safety meetings.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or after any such incident deemed to be severe which require an earlier review.

Document Reference	SG40	**Version Number**	1.0
Policy Owner	Health and Safety Manager	**Last Review Date**	February 2025
Date First Issued	February 2025	**Next Review Date**	February 2027