



POLICY: AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES

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Copies of this Policy may be made available in alternative formats on request.

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POLICY: AGGRESSION, HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES

All reference to 'we', 'our' or 'us' in this Policy should be read as meaning Sandbourne Housing Association.

1. Purpose and aim of the Policy

- 1.1 Our employees may be subject to violence or aggression by people with whom they come into contact in the course of their work. This Policy sets out our approach to the avoidance of violence, harassment and aggressive behaviour towards our employees and the arrangements in place for dealing with incidents should they occur.
- 1.2 Individuals should be safe at work and should not be exposed to undue or unreasonable risk. Employees should also be able to work safely, free from threat, actual injury, acts of aggression, harassment or violence. We aim to minimise, manage and control such risks and such actions.
- 1.3 This Policy applies to all individuals without exception.

2. Definition of violence

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy, the term 'violence' means:

'Any incident in which a person is verbally abused, threatened or assaulted by a resident, visitor(s), contractors, or others in circumstances relating to his/her employment'.

- 2.2 Violence need not cause physical harm but for example may include incidents which:
 - 2.2.1 Cause major injury
 - 2.2.2 Require medical assistance
 - 2.2.3 Requires first aid only
 - 2.2.4 Involve a threat, even if no physical injury results
 - 2.2.5 Involve verbal abuse
 - 2.2.6 Involve nonverbal abuse (for example stalking, emails, texts, written communication which includes posting on social media platforms)
 - 2.2.7 Involve other threatening behaviour.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 We will pursue a zero-tolerance policy towards violence, harassment or aggressive behaviour directed against individuals.

3.2 Chief Executive

3.2.1 The Chief Executive will ensure that:

- 3.2.1.1 all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that employees work in a safe working environment
- 3.2.1.2 employees receive appropriate training in dealing with violence, harassment and aggression at work
- 3.2.1.3 risk assessments are carried out and safe systems of work are devised and implemented
- 3.2.1.4 all reported incidents are correctly recorded in an Incident Recording system and reported to the next Board meeting
- 3.2.1.5 appropriate support is offered to employees' who are experiencing violence, harassment and aggression at work
- 3.2.1.6 employees are provided with general guidance and information on equipment, administrative procedures and the support available
- 3.2.1.7 appropriate action will be taken against residents if they, their visitors, or someone else they encourage to cause of the incident (including enforcing the terms of the Tenancy Agreement and/or taking out an Injunction)
- 3.2.1.8 appropriate action will be taken against contractors, agents or others if they are the cause of the incident.

3.3 Employees

3.3.1 Employees should work to minimise the risk of aggression and violence at all times.

3.3.2 Employees must ensure that they:

- 3.3.2.1 comply with safe systems at work
- 3.3.2.2 report any incidents verbally to the Chief Executive or their line manager immediately, or as quickly as practicable, after the incident has taken place
- 3.3.2.3 report every incident to the Chief Executive or their line manager in writing and enter full details of the incident in our Incident Recording system on the central area.

4. Training

- 4.1 Training will be given to all employees who are considered to be potentially at risk. The line manager will be trained to know how to recognise problems associated with violent, harassment and aggressive incidents and how to manage them.
- 4.2 Training employees can help to achieve:
 - 4.2.1 a reduction in the number of incidents
 - 4.2.2 a reduction in the seriousness of incidents
 - 4.2.3 a reduction in the physical and psychological effects of incidents
 - 4.2.4 an improved response to incidents
 - 4.2.5 an improvement in staff morale.

5. Recording and reporting

- 5.1 Employees should report every incident of violence, harassment and aggressive behaviour to their line manager as quickly as possible and must also record the incident on our Incident Recording system within two working days. This will allow investigation and remedial action to start quickly.
- 5.2 Detailed information about an incident must be provided.
- 5.3 The main aim of reporting is to identify means to support the employee and prevent similar incidents occurring in the future, for example by identifying a need for:
 - 5.3.1 changes to existing working practices or procedures
 - 5.3.2 new working practices or procedures
 - 5.3.3 additional or revised training requirements.
- 5.4 Such records would also be used to identify trends, assist the review process and inform risk assessments.

6. Investigation of incidents

- 6.1 Every incident will be reviewed. Significant incidents of violence may require detailed investigation to establish the cause and any action required to prevent or mitigate the chance of a recurrence. Investigations which focus on 'who was to blame' are insufficient and unhelpful. The focus must be on what went wrong and how to reduce risks in the future. Consideration should be given to inform the police of the incident as per 7.2

7. Post incident support

- 7.1 Discussion will take place with the employee concerned as soon as possible after an incident has been reported. This process of 'debriefing' will establish the details of what happened and provide emotional support to the employee. Separating 'technical' and 'emotional' briefings may help to ensure that people can contribute to the factual investigation of an incident. The employee's line manager will be involved in the factual debriefing to emphasise that we take all incidents seriously.
- 7.2 In serious cases, the matter will be reported to the police and employees may need to be given access to a specialist stress counsellor.

8. Monitoring and review

- 8.1 We will monitor the effect of approaches to controlling violence, harassment and aggressive behaviour to find out how successful they have been. It will then be possible to identify strategies that are not working, or which have unforeseen consequences, and modify or replace them.
- 8.2 Active monitoring will help to ensure that systems are working without waiting until something goes wrong.

9. Equality impact assessment/Protected characteristics (as at 7 August 2022 or later amendments/additions)

- 9.1 Neutral.

10. Consultation arrangements

- 10.1 Our employees will be consulted on significant changes to this Policy and any reasonable suggestions will be taken into account before the Policy is approved by the Board.