



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

VIOLENCE AT WORK POLICY

Adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 5th September 2016

Bognor Regis Town Council Violence at Work Policy

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's policy and procedures to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence. The Council and its Management support this policy and will not tolerate any instances of work-related violence, including verbal abuse, to staff. No member of staff will be blamed for an instance of work-related violence caused by a customer or member of the public. All employees have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect.

This policy applies to all staff including:-

- i. Staff working at the Town Hall
- ii. Staff representing the Council at other Council locations i.e. Allotment site
- iii. Staff working at Town Council events
- iv. The Town Force team when working in the wider community.

DEFINITION OF WORK-RELATED VIOLENCE

We define work-related violence as:

Any incident, in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment.

This is based on the Health and Safety Executive's definition.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AND MANAGERS

These relate to all members of staff, whether working in Council premises or in the wider community:-

Managers

All managers have a responsibility to implement this policy and to make sure their staff are aware of it and understand it. Managers should also:

- Treat any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse seriously and respond to them promptly.
- Record details of the incident where appropriate and give all employees involved in the incident full support during the whole process. You 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.

- Set a positive example by reporting all incidents of violence and abuse and not tolerating abusive behaviour from anyone. Make sure you also offer good customer service and follow specific policies.
- Respond to and, where possible, resolve incidents, ideally before they escalate.
- Monitor incidences of violence and abuse and initiate appropriate action if more measures are needed. Review and amend this policy and the risk assessment as necessary.
- Where possible, direct staff to appropriate support and advice after an incident has occurred. Encourage other staff members to support their colleagues, including those that might have witnessed the incident. If victims are particularly traumatised by the event, provide support where possible, such as time off work or changes to their tasks.
- If an investigation is needed, work with the Police and offer any assistance needed to help in their enquiries. Managers have a responsibility to act in a way that does not incite or increase the likelihood of violence. They also have a responsibility to respond to any reports of violence. Any manager found to be encouraging or inciting violence or not resolving potentially violent or abusive situations may be subject to disciplinary action.

Staff

All staff have personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that they comply with this policy.

There are a number of things that staff can do to help prevent work-related violence:

- Be aware of the Council's policy and comply with it
- Offer good customer service and be aware of customer needs.
- 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 an individual may cause problems.
- Don't accept instances of work-related violence directed towards you or others. Staff should report any instances of violence, threats or abuse, including any details about when it happened, who was involved and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident. Serious incidents should be reported in the incident book kept in the Town Council's offices but minor incidents and incidents of verbal abuse should be reported to managers as they occur.
- Be supportive of colleagues who are victims or witnessed work-related violence.
- Suggest additional measures to managers which might help to prevent and manage work-related violence.

Staff have a responsibility to act 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.

Staff and managers should also work with trade unions, where relevant, in preventing, addressing, reporting and responding to incidents or work-related violence.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

The risk assessments for work-related violence are kept in the Assistant Clerk's office in the Health and Safety folder.

The risk assessments were conducted by the line-managers and are reviewed every year, unless an increase in the number of incidents suggests the assessment should be reviewed more frequently.

The risks were assessed by the completion of the *Staff Consultation – Violence at Work* forms. If staff believe a risk factor has not been covered by the assessment or have ideas on further prevention measures, they should discuss these with the Clerk. The contents of the risk assessment will be communicated to all staff and appropriate training will be given.

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

There are a number of measures in place following the risk assessment that staff should be aware of. These fall under the areas of work environment, working practices and training.

Work environment

Proximity card readers are now installed at doors to all offices. This removes the ability for members of the public to access the offices and was highlighted as a concern at the most recent consultation.

Training

The following training should be provided:

- How to deal with difficult conversations and confrontation.

SPECIFIC AND RELEVANT POLICIES

There are other company policies that are relevant to the prevention and management of work-related violence. These include:

- Officer Code of Conduct

ACTIONS FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT

If a staff member is being abused, threatened or attacked, they should approach their line-manager or a colleague for help. Managers should respond to the situation

by talking to the perpetrator, explaining that their behaviour is not acceptable. They should try to resolve the problem and, if that is not possible, call for assistance.

Medical assistance should be provided immediately where required.

The Police should be informed of a serious incident involving physical attack or serious cases of threatening or verbal abuse. Police should also be informed of persistent cases of violence, threats and abuse.

All incidents should be recorded in the incident book and less serious incidents reported to managers.

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.

REVIEW DATES

This policy should be reviewed yearly when all other policies are reviewed, or if regular or serious incidents arise that suggest it needs to be revisited.

REPORTING AND RECORDING SYSTEMS

Staff have a responsibility to report incidences of work-related violence, including threats and verbal abuse, to managers. All incidents, including physical attacks, serious or persistent threats and verbal abuse, must be recorded in the incident book in the Clerk's office. This asks for details of when the incident occurred, who was involved, descriptions of the perpetrator and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident.

Any incidents resulting in major injury to staff or that cause staff to be off work for three days or more must be reported under the RIDDOR Regulations 1995. Any incident which results in a member of the public being taken directly to hospital from the premises must also be reported. Managers should contact the HSE Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 9923 to report the incident.

Less serious incidents should still be reported to managers as they occur and managers should make a note of these. If managers notice an increase in reports, several reports within a short period or reports about the same perpetrator, managers should record the details, ask staff for more information and take action. The action may include contacting the Police about a persistent offender, reviewing the risk assessment and considering further prevention measures, or increased vigilance by managers or staff to prevent a more serious incident occurring.