

BELPER TOWN COUNCIL

VIOLENCE/ABUSE OF STAFF POLICY

Purpose of this policy

The Council will not tolerate any instances of work-related violence, including verbal abuse, to our staff.

All employees have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect.

Definitions

We will 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.

Employee includes staff, Councillors and volunteers.

Responsibilities of staff and managers

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. 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.
- Set a positive example by reporting all incidents of violence and abuse and not tolerating abusive behavior from customers and members of the public.

- 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.
- 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, including specific policies on aspects such as the sale of alcohol or excluding customers.
- 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 a customer or member of the public might cause problems.
- Don't accept instances of work-related violence directed towards themselves 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 manager's office 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.

Risk assessments

The risk assessments for work-related violence are kept in the manager's office in the health and safety folder.

The risk assessments are conducted by the senior manager 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 talking to staff, reviewing the incident book and considering the work environment and job design. 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 their manager. The contents of the risk assessment will be communicated to all staff and appropriate training will be given.

Actions following an incident

If a staff member is being abused, threatened or attacked, they should approach their manager or a colleague for help. Managers should respond to the situation by talking to the perpetrator, explaining that their behaviour is not acceptable.

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.

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 Council 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 or other local businesses 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.