

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK POLICY STATEMENT

Under the provisions of the Health And Safety At Work Act 1974 Section 2(3) the Council has a duty to prepare a written statement of its general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of its employees and the organisational arrangements for carrying out the policy. The statement and end revision must be brought to the attention of employees.

East Grinstead Town Council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all its employees, and to provide such information, training and supervision they need for the purpose. The Council also accepts its responsibility for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by its activities.

The Council will, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure that health, safety and welfare are always taken into account when any changes are envisaged in services to the general public, methods of work, premises, etc. or whenever consideration is being given to the purchase of new equipment, plant, vehicles, etc.

The Council reminds its employees of their own duties under Section 7 of the Health And Safety At Work Act to take care of their own safety and that of other persons and to co-operate with the Council so as to enable it to carry out its own responsibilities successfully.

A copy of this statement will be issued to all employees.

The Council will undertake its obligation to review, add to, or modify the safety policy in accordance with legislation and bring to the notice of its employees any such changes as it affects the work place.

Organisation

The responsibility for implementing the Council Health & Safety Policy and ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation is as follows:

- (1) Town Clerk - ultimately responsible for compliance with statutory requirements and the Council's Health & Safety Policy. Responsible for obtaining the necessary financial approval to enable a safety programme to be implemented and maintained. In practice the RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) is responsible for preparing biannual reports to the council on the effectiveness of health and safety management and the identification of new risks.

- (2) Heads of Service and supervisory staff are responsible for ensuring that statutory requirements and the Council's Health & Safety Policy are fully implemented in respect of the activity under their control, ensuring that safe systems of work are implemented, the instruction of staff in safe systems of work, provision and maintenance of suitable equipment for safe working and the maintenance of safe working environment and systems.
- (3) The Council engaged the services of South East Employers in September 2010 to undertake a health and safety review of East Grinstead Town Council. The objective was to ensure that health and safety systems and procedures within the council were adequate and that health and safety was being managed effectively.

Arrangements

Employer

- (1) To institute and maintain safe working systems throughout the Council.
- (2) To take all necessary measures to establish the causes of accidents and impairments to health occurring throughout the Council and to institute all practicable remedial measures to prevent recurrence.
- (3) To provide all reasonable facilities to mitigate the effects of accidents and impairments to health when they do occur.
- (4) To ensure that no process, plant, or machinery, is introduced in the Council unless it has conformed with any statutory testing or examination requirement and it has been established, so far as is practicable, the safety or health of employees will not be impaired.
- (5) To disseminate information on safe working relating to specific areas of work and on general safety and health matters relating to all employees.
- (6) To provide proper and adequate training facilities in order to ensure that all employees are fully instructed in the safe working methods applicable to their jobs.
- (7) To ensure that all requirements of legislation relating to Council activities are fully complied with in regard to safety and health.
- (8) To improve progressively upon the levels of safety and health performance by the adoption of newly developed safety and health measures and codes of practice.

- (e) Ensure that tools and equipment are properly maintained and used in accordance with the manufactures, suppliers or installers instructions and report any defects to the Town Clerk or supervisor.
- (f) Ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, all substances used in connection with any work process are stored and handled in accordance with the manufacturers, suppliers or installers instructions and report any defects to the Town Clerk or supervisor.
- (g) Report any incident, injury or dangerous occurrences, whether or not personal injury occurs and ensure that an entry is made in the Council's Accident Book.
- (h) Familiarise themselves with the fire drill, position of the fire fighting appliances and alarms and the evacuation procedures laid down by the Council.
- (i) Familiarise themselves with the location of the first aid box and appointed persons.
- (j) Ensure that fire exits and fire fighting equipment are not obstructed or misused in any way.
- (k) An employee who notices a health and safety problem which they are not able to put right must immediately notify the Town Clerk or RFO.

Emergencies

In the event of an accident all staff have the following responsibilities:

- (a) To ensure that first aid is rendered immediately and, if in doubt about the gravity of the injury, to immediately call the ambulance. The incident should be reported to the Town Clerk or RFO at the earliest opportunity.
- (b) Stop process causing injury and leave undisturbed pending an investigation. Work must not continue without the authority of the Town Council.
- (c) Report the circumstances of the accident fully in the Accident Book, which must be returned to the office without undue delay.

Further Information

- (a) All playground equipment is checked on a monthly basis.
- (b) All caretaking staff, the outside services foreman and two office staff are first aid appointed persons. There are three first aid boxes and two first aid travel packs provided.

- (c) No electrical equipment can be plugged into the electrical system, without proof of testing.
- (d) All electrical equipment is subject to an annual portable appliance test.
- (e) Fire extinguishers are subject to an annual test and the fire alarm is tested quarterly. An internal test of the fire alarm is undertaken on a weekly basis.
- (f) All lone workers are required to let a member of staff know when they start work, where they are working and when they finish work. Mobile phones should be switched on at all times during lone work in order that they can raise the alarm in the event of an accident.
- (g) Where possible, any product that has a classification should not be used.
- (h) The person with responsibility for Health and Safety must be notified when any new product is purchased in order to update the records.

PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDANCE – DEALING WITH DIFFICULT AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Introduction

1. This guidance supplements the Health and Safety Policy of East Grinstead Town Council (Section 9.13 of the Staff Handbook). It defines violence at work and sets out the Council's procedures for dealing with violence or aggression that all employees may face in the course of their work.

Definition

2. The term violence covers a wide range of incidents not all of which involve injury. The definition by the Health and Safety Executive 1997 is:

"Any incident in which a member of staff is verbally abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work".

3. This definition includes bullying, harassment, threatening behaviour and behaviour intended to humiliate. However, bullying or harassment involving another member of staff or a Councillor should be reported under the Dignity of Work policy.

Managing Violence and Aggression

4. The Town Council manages personal safety at work in the following way:
 - A risk assessment of the potential for violence and aggression in the Town Council Offices has been undertaken and placed on the Risk Register;
 - Training in how to manage violence and aggression should it arise at work is provided for all staff at appropriate intervals;
 - Staff must report to their manager any dangers they identify or any concerns that they may have about potential violent situations or the environment in which they work and Managers must address these. If these are not addressed staff must inform the Town Clerk;
 - Staff have access to an Employee Assistance Programme should they be affected by a violent or aggressive incident .

Procedure

5. A guiding principle for all employees to help them manage a potentially violent or aggressive situation is do not put yourself or your colleagues at risk – the

equipment/money is insured and can be replaced – YOU cannot!

6. If you are faced with a potentially violent situation you should:

- Try to be calm, confident and objective;
- Not be domineering;
- Be non-critical;
- Not react to the customer's emotions;
- Listen and talk, taking the time to deal with the customer's questions in jargon free language;
- Take care not to appear threatening by voice projection, gesture or behaviour;
- Use soft relaxed tones;
- Avoid being drawn into a heated debate. If the situation appears to be getting out of control you should consider withdrawing and summoning help;
- Ask questions to gain control and clarify matters – do not assume;
- Let the individual suggest solutions;
- Try not to touch the person who is arguing with you as this could constitute an assault in law or trigger a violent reaction;
- Consider non-verbal behaviour and be aware of others' perceptions of your body language;
- Communicate at a safe distance and stand sideways to reduce your size as a target and to allow extra mobility if it becomes necessary to retreat;
- Maintain eye contact without staring and use open and fluid hand movements;
- Show concern and understanding and;
- Acknowledge the feelings of the person with whom you are communicating.

7. If you are faced with a potentially violent or aggressive incident in Reception the following safe system of work must be followed:

- The door between Reception and the General Office must be open during the opening hours of Reception except during the Receptionist's lunch hour when the door to the General Office is closed and secured to bar entry. Two members of staff will always be on duty during lunch hour when Reception will be manned in response to the buzzer.

An employee who is subjected to a threat should summon the assistance of a colleague immediately there is evidence of impending violence.

- Whilst awaiting the arrival of assistance, the employee should create and maintain physical distance between her/himself and the aggressor, while attempting to calm the situation. If you are seated, stand up as this will put you on the same level as the aggressor and will give you confidence.
- When an employee is working in Reception and is subjected to a threat, they must move themselves to the General Office, close the intervening door behind them and follow the above procedures. If the aggressor becomes physical, the employee must move to a safe point and raise the alarm.

8. Where an employee is working away from the office they must inform their manager or supervisor in the office of their exact movements and when they expect to finish. Any change of plans must be communicated to their manager or supervisor. Members of the Outside Services Team are required to phone in on the hour and report to the Foreman.
9. Telephone calls – if an employee is subjected to verbal abuse on the telephone the employee must explain to the aggressor they will terminate the call if they do not stop the verbal abuse. If such a situation occurs, please notify your Line Manager.

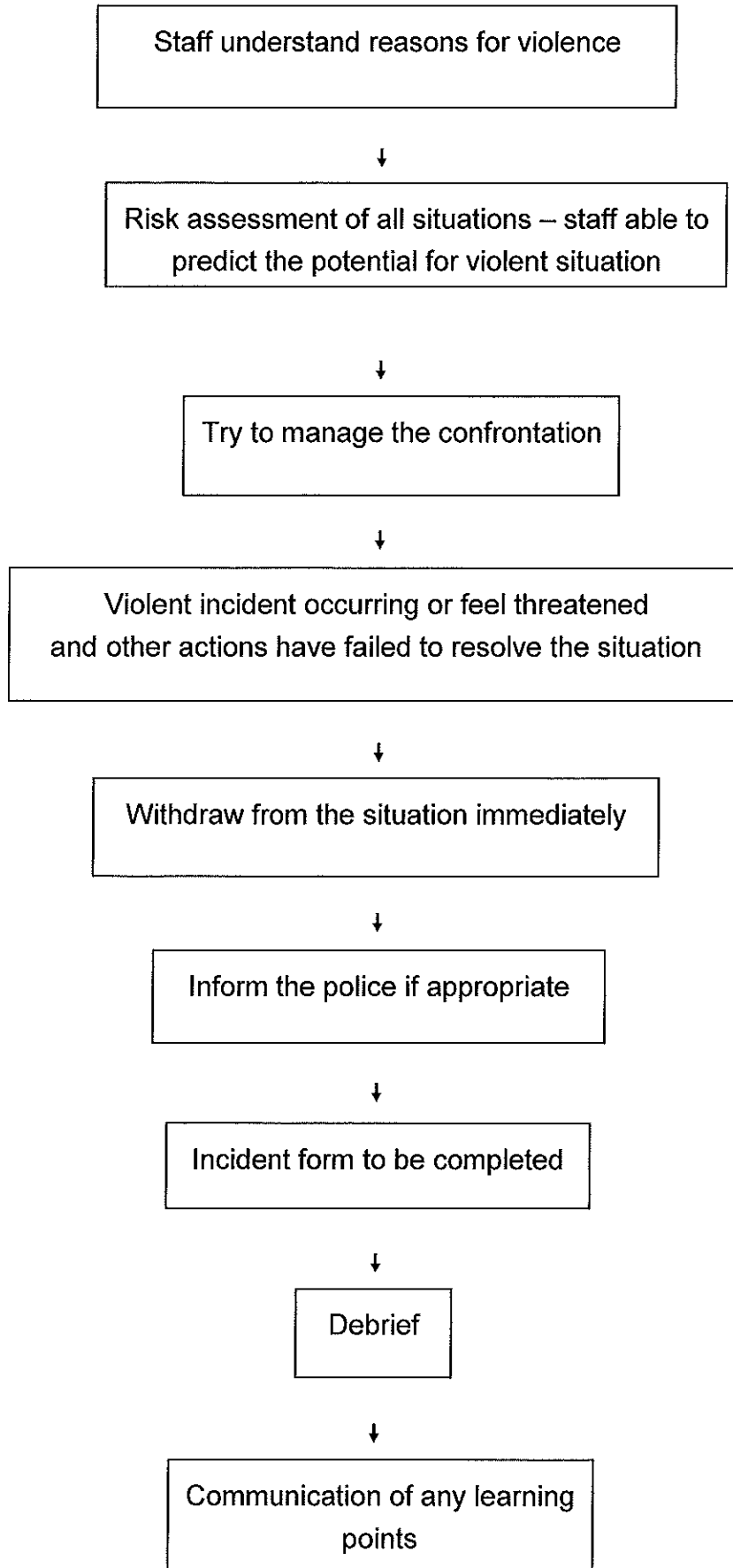
Incident Reporting

10. All incidents must be reported to the Town Clerk within 24 hours and recorded in the Incident Book which is held by the Responsible Finance Officer. In recording incidents you should use your discretion to distinguish between the types of offensive language some people may use as part of their every day vocabulary.
11. If a physical injury has occurred it must be recorded in the accident book in the General Office within 24 hours.
12. In the event of any death, major injury, dangerous occurrence, admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or 3 days absence from work, the Health and Safety Executive must be informed immediately by the line manager and a Report of Injury or Dangerous Occurrence Form (Form F2508 from the HSE website) completed and sent to them within 10 days.
13. The Town Council is committed to protecting staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceeding against those who carry out the assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the organisation through out the process.

Debriefing

14. Following an incident, a debrief meeting will be held with your manager who will then consider the facts and, in consultation with the Town Clerk, take all necessary steps to redress risks and prevent an occurrence. The purpose of the debrief will be to establish what happened, what further action or support was required and what lessons could be learnt. Any changes to procedures or guidance as a result of the debrief will be communicated to all relevant staff.

MANAGEMENT OF A VIOLENT OR AGGRESSIVE SITUATION



**EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL
VIOLENCE AT WORK – INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

ABOUT YOU	ABOUT THE INCIDENT	
Name: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> Job Title <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Date: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> Time: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> Place: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Verbal Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Threatening Behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Distress <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Assault <input type="checkbox"/> Disability/Sexual/ Racial Harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/>
Describe What Happened (give as much detail as you can)		

<u>Assailant (if known)</u> Name: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> Age: <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Witness</u> Name <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Address <input style="width: 95%; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Address <input style="width: 95%; height: 30px;" type="text"/>

Apparent Motive:	
Your Signature	Date

I have reviewed the relevant risk assessment and taken appropriate action	Responsible Finance Officer Signature	Date:
	Town Clerk Signature	Date:

