

Title of Policy:	Dealing with Violence and Aggression
Section:	Operations

Purpose

This policy provides essential advice and guidance to employees on how to deal with incidents of violence or aggression in the workplace.

Statement

The Company is committed to providing a safe environment for all, and the very best standards of care. It will not tolerate violence, aggression or any other form of inappropriate behaviour either towards its staff or its Clients. As with all aspects of health and safety, risk assessment will help establish control measures as an effective means of identifying and reducing the potential for harm. Where instances of violence or aggression suggest a change in working practices or procedures, then these will be implemented without delay, so as to minimise or eliminate any future occurrences.

Procedure and Guidance

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of work-related violence is “Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. This can include verbal abuse as well as physical attacks”.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour, however they are perpetrated, include:

- Offensive or abusive language, verbal abuse and swearing which prevents staff from doing their job or makes them feel unsafe.
- Loud and intrusive conversation.
- Unwanted or abusive remarks.
- Negative, malicious or stereotypical comments.
- Invasion of personal space.
- Brandishing of objects or weapons.
- Near misses i.e., unsuccessful physical assaults.
- Threats or risks of serious injury to a member of staff.
- Bullying, victimization or intimidation.
- Stalking.
- Spitting.
- Alcohol or drug fuelled abuse.
- Unreasonable behaviour and non-cooperation.
- Any of the above which is linked to destruction of or damage to property.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Company is responsible for the development, implementation and review of this policy, which has the clear aim of ensuring a safe, professional and a caring environment for all. Most of the Company's staff work in the community, usually alone, and as such are more vulnerable than most to the possibility of violence and/or aggression, e.g., from Clients. Staff must ensure that all instances are recorded, investigated as to the possible cause, and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

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Risk Assessment

The Company's employees provide a valuable, well respected and much appreciated service in the community. As such, the potential to be on the receiving end of violent, aggressive or inappropriate behaviour ought to be relatively low.

However, there is little doubt that risks are clearly evident, with research showing that homecare workers are likely to suffer potential:

- a) Verbal abuse from Clients
- b) Verbal abuse from family members
- c) Occasional physical abuse from Clients

The most common abusive situations, the research found, were unfair criticism of the Carer, verbal abuse, and some Clients making prejudicial remarks. Witnessing neglect of the Client was more common than verbal or physical abuse of the Client by a family member. Unlike Carers working in residential environments, alongside colleagues who can provide support, the Company's Carers, who are often working 1:1 with an elderly Client, for example, rarely receive:

- a) Training in professional therapy
- b) Training in managing the emotional demands of their work
- c) Regular close supervision of their work in a way that would mitigate the emotional demands often made upon them

Abuse and violence are seen as risk factors for depression in Carers, and in order to reduce the potential for harm, and the possible harmful effects upon the Carer's emotional wellbeing, the Company will assess all Clients in relation to their potential for perpetrating abuse, aggressive or inappropriate behaviour, with clear review of any previous occurrences (see below), and the likelihood of recurrence. This may involve discussions, at the time of assessment, with the Client's family and/or friends, particularly if the Client has problems with communication.

Further avenues which might lead to a more accurate assessment of the potential for harm, abuse or inappropriate behaviour include:

- a) Assessment of the Client's physical and mental health, current medication and any substance use and misuse.
- b) Any trigger factors which may lead to adverse behavioural issues.

Risk assessments will be kept under review and updated when necessary, particularly if the Client's behaviour changes, or has become of real concern.

Where Specific risk factors are evident, and measures have been identified which are targeted at preventing, reducing or eliminating such risks, then these will be recorded in the Client's Plan of Care. In addition, the Company will "red flag" the situation, so that the Carer's are not caught unaware.

Previous occurrences

If there are instances previously of inappropriate behaviour, the Company (through the Assessor) will try to establish how previous incidents were managed; which interventions were successful and which were not; how long each episode of violence or abusive behaviour lasted; if medication was used to resolve the situation; if the police were involved; and what sanctions, if any, were applied.

Where available, The Company will take note of any advanced directives undertaken by the Client.

In some cases, the Company may insist that the Carer is accompanied at all time, on Client visits, or, in extreme cases, may refuse the invitation to provide care services. The Company's employees are encouraged to seek advice/assistance if they are unsure about a situation or to report any problems/concerns via their Supervisor or Manager.

Dealing with abuse or violent conduct

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Carers are required to:

- a) Deal with all incidents of verbal abuse by reminding the Client of the need to adopt reasonable behaviours at all times.
- b) Inform abusive Clients that every incident is reported and repeat offences may result in care services being withheld, possibly on a permanent basis.
- c) Ensure their own safety by **leaving the premises immediately** if violent conduct occurs or is threatened. **The safety of the Carer is paramount.**
- d) Report all instances via the Company's incident reporting procedure.

In all cases of violent conduct the Carer must immediately contact the Senior Manager who will consider:

- a) What action needs to be taken in respect of the Client; and
- b) What support needs to be given to the Carer.

In some cases, such as physical assault, the police will need to be contacted.

Every incident will be investigated in order to establish;

- i) If the incident could have been avoided;
- ii) If so how?
- iii) What changes, if any, need to be made in respect of the Client's care regime;
- iv) Whether care services can, under the circumstances, continue.

Where possible, the Carer should establish what has triggered the adverse behaviour and what, in the Client's view, could or should have been done which might have avoided the incident entirely. Where a sensible avoidance strategy is available, then this will be entered into the Client's Plan Of Care.

KLOE References for this Policy	Regulation directly linked to this Policy	Regulation(s) relevant to this Policy
Effective Safe	Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment	

This policy has been reviewed by

Print Name:

Signature: