

**Causeway Coast and Glens**

Borough Council

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, LONE WORKING AND  
PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY DIRECTIVE**

<b><u>CONTENTS:</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE:</u></b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	3
Lone Working	3
Work-related violence	3
Personal safety	3-4
<b>2. LEGISLATION</b>	4
<b>3. MANAGING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH LONE WORKING</b>	4
Stage 1 Risk Assessment	4-5
Stage 2 Control Measures	5
Stage 3 Supervision	5-6
Stage 4 Monitor and Review	6
Lone Working Procedure	6
<b>4. MANAGING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH WORKPLACE VIOLENCE</b>	6
Stage 1 Risk Assessment	6-7
Stage 2 Control Measures	8-10
Stage 3 Monitor and Review	10
<b>5. POLICY DIRECTIVE SUMMARY</b>	11
<b>6. EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY</b>	11
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
1 Personal Safety Guidelines	12-15
2 Lone Working Procedure	16-19
3 Lone Worker Registration Form	20
4 Reporting Violent and/or Aggressive Incidents, Guidance	21-22

## 1. Introduction

This Policy Directive, in the context of employee safety, will focus on the three specific issues, namely, lone working, workplace violence and personal safety. It will also provide guidance to managers and employees on how to manage each of them respectively.

It is the responsibility of senior managers, line managers and individual employees to identify which, (if not all) of the three issues highlighted, may be of concern in the work place; and to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken.

For the purposes of this policy directive the following definitions are applicable:

### Lone Working:

HSE defines a lone worker as someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision, lone workers include those who:

- work from a fixed base, such as one person working alone on a premises (e.g., Waste transfer station, Caravan park, Marina, Harbours);
- work separately from others on the same premises (e.g. caretakers, plant room operators, receptionists) or work outside normal hours;
- work away from a fixed base (e.g. field staff, planners, EHOs, Building Control, Enforcement officers);
- work at home (homeworkers); and
- mobile workers (e.g. some drivers).

This definition covers a wide range of circumstances with varying degrees and types of risk. Therefore, it is important for managers, with employees, to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

### Workplace Violence:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines workplace violence as, ***'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'***.

Council's grievance and disciplinary procedures apply, as appropriate, to incidents between employees, or where an employee is the aggressor against a non-employee. Workplace violence can be physical or non-physical; basic examples of each include:

#### Physical

Physical assault  
Pushing and shoving  
Damage to personal property  
Kicking, biting, punching, spitting, etc.  
Unwanted physical contact

#### Non-physical

Threats and threatening gestures  
Abusive phone calls, letters, e-mails  
Verbal abuse  
Bullying/harassment  
Insults, innuendo, ridicule, sarcasm

### Personal Safety

Personal Safety is defined as, ***'personal precautions taken to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the individual'***. Personal safety overlaps both lone working and workplace violence and, to some extent, also acts as a catchment for issues not

directly addressed by either. Personal safety guidance, which may be equally applied in a work context or non-work situations, is contained in **Appendix 1** for reference by managers and employees.

## 2. LEGISLATION

There is no specific health and safety legislation addressing lone working, workplace violence, or personal safety. However, the following legislation applies to all three issues:

### **The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978**

The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 places general duties on both employers and employees, which are applicable to lone working, work-related violence and personal safety.

The three primary examples being:

- a. It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees
- b. Employers must supply adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees
- c. Employees must take reasonable care for their own and others safety and must co-operate with employers so far as it is necessary to enable them to meet their own obligations.

### **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000**

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 require risk assessments to be undertaken. Any lone working, violence at work and/or personal safety issues must be taken into consideration when conducting such assessments and, where any significant concerns are identified, specific risk assessments should be undertaken and appropriate controls put in place. If there are five or more employees, under the regulations, the significant findings of a risk assessment must be recorded.

## 3. MANAGING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH LONE WORKING

Where an employer/line manager identifies lone workers, lone working practices, or lone working concerns, then they must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, their own personal safety and the safety of their employees. Therefore, managers should take into consideration the following three stages in the management of lone working risks.

### **STAGE 1: Risk Assessment**

Where work activities are likely to be undertaken by a lone worker then they must be risk assessed by the immediate line manager, in consultation with the employee. Where there are significant findings made, these must be recorded and relayed to the individuals concerned. Consideration should be given to:

- a. The remoteness or isolation of the workplace;
- b. The duration of the task(s);
- c. Equipment, machinery and tools (including those being used, worked on, and/or moved);

- d. The presence of any hazardous substances;
- e. Communication facilities, procedures and problems;
- f. The potential for violence and/or criminal activity;
- g. The nature of any possible injuries;
- h. Whether personal health and fitness is an issue;
- i. Access and egress;
- j. Emergency procedures (including evacuation routes out of normal working hours);
- k. Assessing if it is a "one person" job (taking into account all of the above, and any other relevant factors, e.g. can one person safely undertake the activity).

### **STAGE 2: Control Measures**

Measures must be designed and implemented to eliminate and/or minimise any significant risks identified, so far as is reasonably practicable. Such control measures will often comprise of a combination of approaches; therefore managers should give consideration to the following:

- a. Eliminating the need for lone working (doubling up, changing shift patterns, etc.);
- b. Authorisation systems for lone working/out of hours working (including monitoring and permit to work procedures, etc.);
- c. Pre-inspection of work places to ensure emergency provisions are in place (escape routes, fire extinguishers, first aid equipment, etc.);
- d. Communications procedures including booking in and out, call-back systems, alarm facilities, arrangements for periodic checks, and any equipment requirements such as radios, personal alerts, mobile phones, etc.;
- e. Medicals (where personal health and fitness may be an issue for lone workers);
- f. Safe systems of work (specific procedures and method statements);
- g. Information and training.

Where it is not possible to implement arrangements for a person to work alone in safety, then alternative arrangements may have to be introduced; for e.g. providing help or back up services.

### **STAGE 3: Supervision**

Although it may not possible to provide constant supervision to lone workers, it is still an employer's duty to ensure they are healthy and safe at work. Supervision can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary health and safety precautions are carried out.

Supervision of health and safety can often be carried out when checking the progress and quality of the work during periodic site visits and team meetings, combined with regular contacts in which health and safety issues are raised.

The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues. Employees new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents special risks, or dealing with new situations, may need to be accompanied at first, or until the manager is satisfied that they are suitably competent to work alone.

#### **Stage 4: Monitor and Review**

Any lone working practices and safe systems of work must be monitored and regularly reviewed by management to maintain their effectiveness. This should take the form of both informal monitoring, on a day-to-day basis, and formal, via safety inspections.

Risk assessments referring to workplace violence, lone working and personal safety must be reviewed at regular intervals (annually is the recommended minimum), and whenever there is any reason to suspect they are no longer valid.

Employees are responsible for adhering to this guidance and the outcomes of risk assessments; they should report any incidents or concerns, relating to their safety, to their respective line managers as soon as possible.

#### **Lone Working Procedure**

Council has developed a specific Lone Working Procedure which must be adhered to when staff are lone working and in managing the risks associated with lone working. This Procedure is outlined in **Appendix 2**.

### **4. MANAGING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION**

One of the primary risks associated with lone working is an increased susceptibility to work-related violence and aggression. Council recognises that it has a duty to protect the safety and well-being of all staff who deal with customers and members of the public in potentially difficult and/or confrontational situations. Therefore, all reasonable steps must be taken to: remove or reduce the likelihood, and affect, of violent or abusive behaviour towards any employee; demonstrate that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated; and take action, in so far as is reasonably practicable, to prevent any further reoccurrences.

Council expects its employees to comply with any safe system of work, or procedure, designed to protect them, or others, from the risk of violence or aggressive behaviour.

Where there may be the potential for employees to be exposed to workplace violence and/or aggression then (similarly with the lone working risk-management stages outlined above) the following three basic stages should be used to manage the risks.

#### **STAGE 1: Risk Assessment**

The primary aim of the risk assessment is to establish if employees are potentially at risk of work related violence and aggression. If this is the case, it would be important for managers to:

- 1) Decide who may be harmed and how.
- 2) Evaluate the risk and check the existing arrangements for staff; by asking yourself the following question, are the existing precautions adequate or should more be done with, for example:

- The level of training and information provided;
- The working or surrounding environment;
- The design of the job; and,
- The provision of emergency procedures and equipment.

The two most important information sources available to managers, as a foundation for carrying out this type of risk assessment, are:

**(i) Employee consultation;** i.e., discussions with relevant staff regarding perceived hazards from their lone working activities, and/or;

**(ii) Incident Reporting/Investigations** (template available on the staff portal)

Analysis of the results of either should identify whether there is a potential risk and what could be done to remove or reduce those risks.

### **(i) Employee Consultation**

In respect of undertaking workplace violence and aggression risk assessments, and, indeed, in any risk assessments for that matter, it is critically important to consider the views of employees. Effective communication between management and staff is essential in the context of risk management.

Each applicable service area should maintain a register of individuals known to present a potential risk due to violent or abusive behaviour towards the Council's employees. Managers should ensure that employees are aware of such individuals.

### **(ii) Incident Reporting/Investigations**

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NI) 1997 (RIDDOR) any incident of physical violence, or aggression, which results in a fatality, major injury, or an injury where the employee is off work for more than three days, should be reported to the HSENI.

Only physical injuries resulting from acts of violence, suffered by people who are at work, need to be reported to the HSENI. However, incidents may also need to be reported to the PSNI. It is usually best that the line manager seeks the views of the injured person where possible prior to reporting incidents to the Police. **Guidance on this is available in Appendix 4.**

All violent or aggressive incidents must be reported to Line Managers, and recorded and investigated in accordance with the Accident/Incident policy directives. Where applicable, the incident should also be noted in the premises Health and Safety file.

**Violent and aggressive behaviour will not to be tolerated by Council, and all incidents must be reported and investigated.**

### **Analysis**

All accident/incident data will be recorded on a suitable web based software system for data preservation and analysis. This is essential in confirming those at risk, identifying trends, and assists in predicting potential future developments. Incident reports will be discussed at the relevant directorate/Health and Safety Committee meetings. Existing control measures must then be assessed for effectiveness and further control measures identified and implemented if required.

## Stage 2: Control Measures

The emphasis must be firmly on 'preventative measures', under each of the four main headings:

1. Job design
2. The workplace environment
3. Training
4. Post incident action and support.

### 1. Job design

Whilst operational needs and constraints will have a significant impact on job design, consideration should be given to whether there are procedural changes that can be introduced that may reduce the risk of work-related violence. Examples include:

- a. Eliminating lone working by doubling up;
- b. Interviews/meetings to be conducted at the council offices where possible;
- c. Staff to be accompanied by the police where it is felt necessary in violent or aggressive situations;
- d. Increasing staff levels at high-risk times;
- e. Altering shifts to avoid high-risk times;
- f. Eliminating or minimising the handling of cash, or other 'attractive' items;
- g. Allocating known 'difficult' customers to more experienced staff;
- h. Changing the way customers make enquiries or gain information;
- i. Systems for monitoring/communicating with personnel when away from the workplace (booking in and out boards, regular checks, telephone procedures, etc.);
- j. Designated Persons within departments to take responsibility for staff booking in and out;
- k. Contact board or visits list kept up to date. All appointments must be logged including start/departure time and projected finishing/return time;
- l. Staff to be well briefed about whom to contact for assistance where necessary.



## 2. The workplace environment

The environment in which meetings or contacts take place and the provision of information to the public can have a positive influence on attitudes and behaviour. This centres on the physical aspects of the workplace; examples include:

- a. Use of closed circuit television (CCTV);
- b. Controlled access;
- c. Improving lighting in appropriate areas;
- d. Removing potential weapons from the workplace;
- e. Provide panic buttons/alarms.

## 3. Staff Training

The Council will provide information, instruction and training (Maybo Conflict Management Training), as appropriate, to ensure that staff required to work on their own are competent. This is also to ensure that they are aware of any associated risks and how to reduce the occurrence and deal with violence and aggression at work. Induction training for new employees will include information on dealing with violent/aggressive behaviour.

Training in the prevention and management of workplace violence will be made available for all employees who come into direct contact with clients, public and visitors; as well as awareness training on reducing the risk of a violent incident; coping with a violent incident; and to be aware of the likely aftermath of a violent incident, in terms of their own reactions and reactions of others. Training will also focus on raising awareness of personal safety and how to deal with work-related violence. Staff should also be made familiar with this policy directive and risk assessment findings.

## 4. Post incident action and support

Where a physical assault has taken place, the injured party becomes the priority and the primary concern must be an appropriate level of intervention, for e.g. first aid. However, in all cases, support for the employee may still be necessary; therefore, consideration should be given to the following:

- a. **First line debriefing:** Carried out as soon as practicable after the incident, normally by the immediate line manager, or equivalent, with all or some of the following aims:
  - To provide relevant individuals with the opportunity to talk through their experience;
  - To establish details of the incident;
  - To assess the effectiveness of existing policies, procedures, etc.;
  - To identify individuals who may need further support;
  - To re-establish a safe working environment as soon as possible.

- b. Available support:** All employees involved in any such incidents should be advised of how to avail of the Council's Employee Counselling/Welfare service. Line Managers uncertain as to whether individuals may need further support, should contact an Employee Occupational Counsellor for advice and guidance.
- c. Professional debriefing and/or critical incident stress debriefing (CISD):** Can only be provided by appropriately trained personnel, such as the Employee Counsellor, and can be arranged via Human Resources. Interventions aimed at preventing long term psychological issues must be provided as soon as practicable after the incident to be effective.
- d. Time off work:** Should be considered, with the duration based on the seriousness of the incident and on the impact on the individual. GP's may make recommendations, but remember that individuals may also need time to see solicitors, insurers, etc.
- e. Legal assistance:** In serious cases legal help/advice may be appropriate.
- f. General support:** Ensure the workplace is sensitive to what has occurred, and that other employees act in support of the victim.
- g. Feedback:** Ensure the individual is kept apprised of any relevant developments, particularly with regard to actions initiated to prevent recurrence.

### **Record your findings**

Managers should keep a record of all documentation pertaining to the aforementioned three stages, particularly the significant findings of the risk assessments.

### **Stage 3: Monitor and Review**

Work-related violence procedures and safe systems of work must be subject to regular monitoring and reviewing to ensure effectiveness. This should take the form of both informal monitoring on a day-to-day basis; and, more formally, via safety inspections/checks.

The training and responsibilities of individuals will be monitored by the Council through its management and appraisal processes.

Risk assessments must be reviewed at regular intervals and whenever there is any reason to suspect they are no longer valid.

Employees are responsible for adhering to procedures and should report any incidents or concerns relating to the safety and effectiveness of procedures, and general working arrangements, to their respective line managers as soon as is practicable.

## 5. POLICY DIRECTIVE SUMMARY

The topics addressed in this document are varied and potentially complex, for example: risks to 'lone workers' can equally apply to pairs of workers; work-related violence can take many forms; and personal safety is influenced by a variety of factors. It is difficult to provide general advice that will address every scenario/eventuality. Therefore, it is essential that line managers carry out individual risk assessments and implement control measures, as required, and that lone workers have an awareness of their own personal safety and employ basic precautions.

The complexities and variations inherent in lone working and personal safety, in general, can make it difficult to determine the most appropriate course of action. However, as a general guide managers and employees should remember the acronym '**SAFER**':

- S** : Step Back – do not rush in without regard to your safety and that of others
- A** : Assess threat – identify potential dangers
- F** : Find Help – inform colleagues, seek help from others
- E** : Evaluate options – i.e. deal with the situation, get assistance, move to place of safety
- R** : Respond – using the most appropriate option, re-evaluate situation continually.  
(Source: Maybo 2015 – Leaders in Conflict Management Training)

These steps will form the foundation of the Maybo conflict management training that will be delivered to all identified employees.

## 6. EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY DIRECTIVE

The content and application of this policy directive will be reviewed annually by the Council's Health and Safety Unit, Senior Management Team and Health and Safety Committee.

A review may be required for a number of reasons, including:

- New legislation being published or existing legislation being updated.
- New guidance being published or existing guidance being updated.
- Research, monitoring or auditing suggests that a review may be required.
- Incident investigation suggests that a review may be required.

## Appendix 1

### PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

Being in control and avoiding risky situations are the best forms of defence. Whilst no policy or procedure can guarantee the safety of every individual in every situation, there are numerous sensible precautions that can be taken to increase levels of personal safety, some of which are listed below. These precautions can be applied both at work and out of work; they also apply in the case of lone working and can be used as controls in any associated risk assessments.

Never assume that 'it won't happen to you'. Trust your instincts - if you feel intimidated or uneasy then act on it immediately. Your primary aim should be to get away to a place of safety if you feel threatened.

#### 1 Interacting with Customers and the Public

Employees interacting with customers and the public should consider the following:

- Look confident - but not arrogant: Confident people are less likely to be attacked.
- Smile and make frequent eye contact: A pleasant attitude makes a difference.
- Be honest: Give reliable information, admit uncertainties, delays, etc., when they exist and don't hesitate to apologise if a mistake has been made.
- Be consistent and fair: All customers should be treated equally and fairly.
- Be efficient: Avoid keeping people waiting, if unavoidable keep them informed. Ensure that all customers are kept advised on how their individual issues are being addressed.
- Avoid giving out personal information - be wary of people asking personal questions.
- Establish a rapport with them.

#### 2 Dealing with Aggressive People

Employees who find persons with whom they are dealing becoming aggressive should consider the following:

- Stay, or at least appear calm - breathe slowly.
- Be aware of your posture - try and appear relaxed, avoid folding arms, hands on hips, pointing, or other body language that could be interpreted as aggressive.
- Avoid prolonged eye contact - do not try to 'out stare' them
- Keep your distance - avoid any physical contact.
- Speak slowly, avoid long sentences, and keep your tone calm but confident.
- Listen! The main problem may well be due to poor communication.
- Negotiate where possible. Consider suggesting going to see a colleague if applicable.
- Where applicable/practicable try to change the subject.
- Call your supervisor/line manager if situation is deteriorating.
- Report the incident if warranted.

#### 3 Dealing with Abusive Phone Calls

When a phone call becomes abusive employees should:

- Advise the caller that it is Council policy not to prolong calls if abuse continues.
- Ask caller for name and telephone number and arrange to call back at an agreed time.
- Report incident if warranted

#### **4 Meeting and Interviewing**

Employees who are required to meet or interview should:

- Avoid meeting people alone where possible.
- Keep waiting times to a minimum, if there is a delay, keep the visitor informed.
- Make sure that someone knows who and where you are meeting/interviewing and the expected duration of the meeting/interview make visitor aware that this information has been passed on.
- Try and select a room that is visible to others, i.e. with windows, glass panels, and that is well lit. If you cannot be seen in the room devise a checking system with a colleague.
- If you accompany a visitor to a room walk level with him/her, go in front when walking upstairs, and behind when walking downstairs.
- Avoid standing while the person is seated during the interview/meeting - it gives an impression of crowding or superiority.
- Avoid sitting directly opposite or at a higher level, which can be seen as confrontational.
- Site your chair nearest the door, do not 'corner' yourself - if possible use a room with two doors.
- Should staff feel the need to exit a room if a visitor becomes aggressive, they should provide a realistic excuse/reason delivered in a calm manner so as not to alert the aggressor and for the individual to leave the room safely.
- Use of Code words (sentences, words or names to be given to fellow members of staff to alert them to a potential escalating situation). These code words should be agreed with fellow members of staff prior to meeting.
- Make sure the person is returned to a public area following the meeting/interview.

#### **5 Visiting People at Home or at Other Premises**

Staff whose job involves visiting homes or other premises should consider the following:

- Is it necessary to go to them? Can they not visit you on Council premises?
- Where possible make an appointment - confirm by letter/telephone
- Where possible check the persons history prior to the appointment
- Assess whether two people should go instead of one, or whether police support may be required (either physically or at least via notification)
- Record the appointment, including details of person being visited and likely duration of visit, schedule plus, etc., ensuring others know where this is kept
- Follow any relevant procedures for monitoring movements outside the office (white board listing, charged mobile phones with emergency phone numbers programmed in, phone checks, personal alarms, etc.)
- Do not take unnecessary bags, cases, etc.
- Conduct visit/appointment during normal working hours if possible
- If driving find a safe place to park (facing out of a cul-de-sac, near a light after dark, etc.) close to where you are visiting
- Ensure you have your staff ID and, if necessary, your appointment letter
- Have a panic alarm concealed but ready to use if a situation develops
- Assess the situation as you approach. If in doubt – get out.
- Check the name of the person and introduce yourself properly, clearly indicating where you're from and the nature of the visit/appointment. If person you are supposed to meet is not available then do not enter – arrange to call back.
- Do not enter if met with aggression at front door, or if person appears to be under the influence of drink, drugs or appears unstable.
- On entering the premises, ask if anyone else is within the building, to ascertain if more caution is needed.
- Try and conduct meeting at entrance or front of building/front room - always be aware of nearest escape route. Try and check how the door locks if you enter.

- Stay alert. Leave if there is a change of mood towards aggression or any sort of threat is sensed - trust your intuition. Do not respond to aggression with aggression – leave.
- Should staff feel the need to exit a room if the person they are visiting becomes aggressive, they should provide a plausible excuse (a realistic excuse/reason delivered in a calm manner so as not to alert the aggressor and for the individual to leave the room safely.
- If another person enters the room re-assess the situation. If you are uncomfortable then politely terminate the visit the visit and leave.
- Where possible avoid going from premises to somewhere else with a stranger. If unavoidable inform the office and/or a colleague of the changes, including details of the new destination, duration, etc.

## **6 When Driving**

The following considerations (in association with the driving at work policy statement and drivers' handbook) should be taken by all employees when driving either Council or private vehicles at work or out of working hours.

- Keep your vehicle serviced and check tyres (including the spare), oil, petrol, etc.
- Carry a torch, and consider carrying some warm, waterproof and/or high visibility clothing in the boot
- Have enough fuel to complete your journey
- Consider joining a national breakdown organisation
- Consider communications - ideally have a fully charged mobile phone, if not, some change and/or a phone card along with a list of emergency numbers.
- Plan your route in advance, have the necessary maps if applicable
- Keep doors locked and windows/sunroofs closed as far as possible - especially when in slow traffic, approaching traffic lights, junctions, etc.
- Keep bags, briefcases, mobile phones and other valuables out of sight.
- Keep all equipment/documentation relating to your occupation out of sight.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers, and avoid taking customers/other new contacts.
- If you see an incident, or someone tries to flag you down, don't stop without first thinking of your own safety.
- If approached when stopped, stay in your vehicle, keep the doors locked and start engine running and only open the window enough to talk through.
- If you think you are being followed try to alert other drivers by flashing your lights and sounding your horn, remain in, or drive to, the nearest built up area, and look for the nearest police station.
- When parking, select a spot, so far as is reasonably practicable, that will allow easy egress and is in a busy, well-lit place. Park as close to where you are visiting as possible. If parking in daylight consider what it will be like after dark.
- Always lock your car, even if only in a garage forecourt paying for petrol, and secure any valuables in the boot. Leave no 'attractive' items on display.
- Approach your car with your keys to hand so as to avoid being distracted.
- Always quickly check the inside of your car before opening the door.
- Do not approach your car if you think it has been tampered with, go to a public place and call the police.

## **7 When on Foot**

When a pedestrian the following personal safety measures should be observed:

- Always be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Ensure, as far as possible that you know where you are going - avoid taking shortcuts in unfamiliar areas
- Assign to your mobile phone the local PSNI station telephone number for a quicker response in the event of an incident or the 999 emergency number.
- Try and avoid walking alone at night.

- Keep to busy, well lit, streets as far as possible. Avoid alleys, parks etc.
- Walk on the right hand footpath facing oncoming traffic.
- Conceal 'attractive' items such as mobile phones, jewellery.
- Avoid wearing radios/stereos, they reduce awareness and are attractive items.
- Don't carry excessive cash - carry wallets/purses securely (inside pockets, etc.)
- Consider your clothing - does it stand out? Can you run in it (high heels, etc.)?
- Be wary of stationary vehicles with the engines running and people sat in them.
- Trust your instincts and avoid crowds or groups, which may feel threatening.
- Try and wait in a public well-lit area.
- Should you feel threatened or at risk, contact a designated colleague to assist.

## **8 When Using Public Transport**

- Avoid using buses and trains on your own at night where possible.
- Where you do have to wait for a bus at night stand in a well-lit place, preferably near other people, and, once on the bus, sit near the driver.
- If alone on a train at night move and sit near other people, avoid empty compartments and compartments that have no access to corridors or other parts of the train, and if uncomfortable either gets off at the next stop or switch carriages.
- When getting off a bus or train late at night, or in an unfamiliar area, try and attach yourself to groups of people and walk purposefully towards your destination or get someone to meet you.

## **9 When Using Taxis**

The following precautions should be observed when using taxis:

- Use a reputable/recommended taxi company, or hail a licensed cab.
- When possible book by phone- consider getting drivers name/ vehicle details.
- Confirm it is your taxi (Driver knows your name/destination).
- Do not get into a cab you haven't asked for.
- If possible share a cab with a friend - it's both safer and cheaper.
- Always sit in the back.
- Have the fare ready before you reach the destination.
- If going home have your door key ready so that you can enter immediately.
- Ask the taxi driver to watch and ensure you enter your destination safely.

## **10 Monitor and Review**

Employees should regularly review their individual procedures and activities, to assess any potential personal safety implications, and to consider possible precautions. Where significant changes occur, such as a change in procedure, a new task, a new area, etc, employees should be more vigilant.

- Do you set 'patterns' that make you an easy target i.e. always walk home by the same route at the same time past a poorly lit alleyway?
- Do you do your shopping at the same time/place every week?
- Do you check visitors ID before letting them in?
- Have you considered getting your friend and family to phone prior to calling at your home? This allows you to be more aware or guarded towards unannounced visitors.
- Would you be aware if you were being followed or watched?
- Have you considered installing an alarm, security lights and timer switched for lights?
- Considered how you would react to different scenarios (fight, flight or co-operate)?

## **LONE WORKING PROCEDURE**

Council is committed to the health and safety of all their staff and hence expect all employees, when lone working, to adhere to the following safe working procedures which have been developed in line with the Lone Working and Personal Safety Guidance.

### **1. Responsibility**

The personal safety of all employees is a responsibility shared by the employer, line managers and by individual employees.

**The Employer** must ensure that proper systems are in place for the personal safety of their employees.

**Line Managers:** Before an employee can work alone, their line manager should ensure that employees are given adequate information, instruction and training. It is the responsibility of line managers to assess when an employee reaches an adequate competence level so that they can work without close supervision and / or become a designated lone worker. The line manager must ensure that the procedures contained in the policy are properly operated.

**Employees** should be aware of the potential for risks to their health and safety to arise from work related violence and aggression. They should also advise line managers and colleagues of any risks/incidents/issues that they may have encountered, identified, or experienced.

All staff must adhere to instructions contained in the Workplace Violence, Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy Directive and any associated documentation. Also, employees must complete a *Lone Worker Details Registration Form* (Appendix 3) which must be stored at an accessible location.

It is important that employees highlight unsafe conditions to their line manager and complete an amended registration form if their details change (e.g. new mobile phone number).

### **2. Safe Working Procedure**

#### **General**

All employees should be made aware of the Policy Directive, and receive appropriate training in lone working/personal safety.

Employees undertaking duties where they may be exposed to a significant risk(s) should have access to adequate first aid facilities, carry an identity card, a basic first aid kit in their vehicle (if they are mobile workers), a list of staff contact phone numbers, personal alarm/panic alarm, and a mobile phone.

Employees should use mobile telephones to alert the office if they are in trouble. All mobiles must have an answering machine facility.

Where contact is difficult or impossible using mobile communications, employees should resort to landline telephones in order to prevent an alarm being raised unnecessarily.

Communication black-spots, within the Borough, should also be mapped and made known to management and employees accordingly.



### **3. Office Hours (09:00-17:00)**

Employees should NOT undertake visits to locations which are unknown or considered to present a risk to their health & safety alone.

When there is a need to visit such a location a risk assessment must be carried out and there should be consultation with line managers so that appropriate decisions can be made.

An electronic diary shall be maintained by each employee shared with their line and office manager. Details of appointments/visits to include time leaving the office, exact address of location(s) to visit, expected time of arrival back to office.

Employees who will NOT be coming directly to the office in the morning should record details in the central diary, on the previous day, or contact the office by 10am, that day, to enter /amend details.

Each day, full details of premises or areas that the employee intends to visit must be recorded in the individual officer's electronic diary.

Employees who will NOT be returning to office in afternoon must contact the office by 5pm to confirm that they are safe and when they finished work, or are likely to finish work.

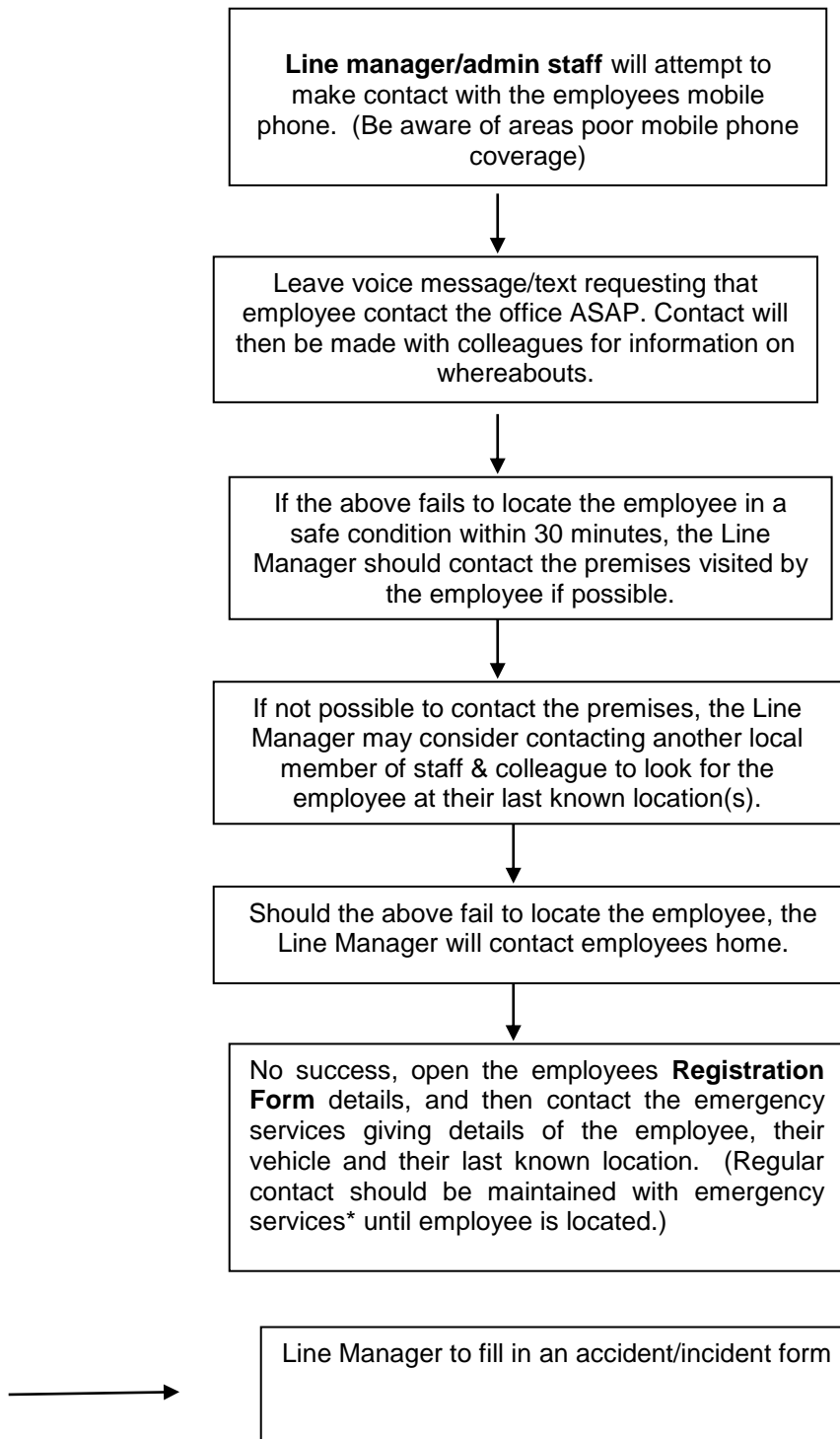
### **4. Follow up Procedure**

In the event of a deviation from the safe working procedure above, for example, if an employee fails to contact, or appear at their place of work, when expected, then the procedure below will be followed. An accident/incident form should also be completed.

### Follow up Procedure

If an emergency has been declared the following procedure will be initiated:

#### Office Hours



*\*During all of the above steps there should be continuous attempts to establish contact with the employee, and a log of all steps taken should be kept.*

## **5. Out of office hours (17:00-09:00)**

Employees should **NOT** undertake out of hours visits on their own to locations which are unknown or considered to present a risk to their health & safety.

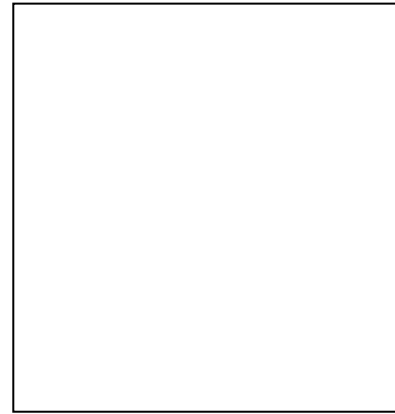
When there is a need to visit such a location a risk assessment must be carried out and there should be consultation with the line manager so appropriate decisions can be made.

If an employee is concerned about a particular visit/appointment, they should be accompanied by a colleague. This can also help if the issue is difficult, or if the appointee is liable to make an allegation against the employee.

All employees working outside office hours must make arrangements with their line manager to provide a point of contact in relation to duties out of office hours (i.e. a phone call or text message to line manager or appointed person). In the absence of the line manager, the employee must be assigned a designated point of contact in relation to duties out of office hours. They must inform the designated person of the exact details of the location, who they'll be meeting and their expected time of return. If the person does not return by the expected time attempts must be made to contact them. If this is not possible, it might be appropriate to contact the emergency services.

## **6. Review**

This procedure will be reviewed annually, or sooner, in the event of changes to the systems, activities, procedures, or personnel.



**Appendix 3  
EMERGENCY/ LONE WORKER  
REGISTRATION FORM**

Please circle as appropriate:  NEW  UPDATE

**ESSENTIAL**

<b>Date Form Completed</b>			
<b>SURNAME:</b>			
<b>FORENAME:</b>			
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>			
<b>TEAM:</b>			
<b>BASE OFFICE:</b>			
<b>HOME TEL :</b>		<b>ALTERNATIVE TEL :</b>	
<b>CONTACT NAME :</b>		<b>CONTACT NAME :</b>	
<b>OFFICE TEL :</b>		<b>WORKS MOBILE TEL :</b>	
<b>OTHER MOBILE TEL :</b>		<b>PAGER :</b>	
<b>HOME ADDRESS:</b>			
<b>CAR MAKE:</b>		<b>CAR MODEL:</b>	
<b>CAR COLOUR:</b>		<b>REGISTRATION:</b>	
<b>EMPLOYEE DESCRIPTION (OPTIONAL)</b>			
<b>HEIGHT</b>		<b>WEIGHT</b>	
<b>HAIR</b>		<b>EYES</b>	
<b>FRAME</b>			
<b>LINE MANAGER</b>		<b>TEL:</b>	

**ONCE COMPLETED THIS FORM WILL REMAIN STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

IF ANY CHANGES OCCUR, THE EMPLOYEE MUST INFORM THE LINE MANAGER TO ENSURE THE REGISTRATION FORM IS KEPT UP TO DATE. THIS FORM SHOULD BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY

**INFORMATION NOT TO BE DIVULGED EXCEPT DURING A LONE WORKER/EMERGENCY ALERT AND ONLY TO AUTHORISED PERSONNEL/EMERGENCY SERVICES**

#### **Appendix 4 Reporting Violent and Aggressive Incidents – Guidance**

Good reporting and recording systems are essential for identifying places and work activities where violence can be a problem. In order to address the problem of workplace violence it is imperative that all employees are instructed and encouraged to report all instances where they are assaulted, threatened, or feel threatened and that formal reports are filed in accordance with internal procedures. This will allow the management to:

- i. Devise appropriate preventative strategies and control measures; and,
- ii. Monitor whether these strategies are effective.

#### **Definitions**

The following definitions have been listed to make clear the range of actions and behaviours that constitute violence to staff to ensure that accurate reporting of all incidents takes place. The attack definitions listed below make clear the types of acts or behaviours that should be reported in every instance:-

<b>Physical Abuse</b>	An act where there is physical or actual harm through being struck
<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	Any verbal abuse or unacceptable behaviour either face to face or by telephone.
<b>Verbal Threats</b>	Any threat to the member of staffs person, property livelihood or family
<b>Spitting</b>	Any instance where the staff member is spat at directly, whether or not if they have been physically assaulted
<b>Physical Posturing</b>	Any aggressive stance in which the member of staff feels threatened or undermined
<b>Physical Armed</b>	Any item used as a weapon or missile
<b>Other</b>	Any other type of verbal or physical abuse not covered above.

#### **Reporting/Recording Incidents**

The primary reason for recording incidents involving employees is to ensure that management are fully informed of the circumstances of all incidents and that immediate action can be taken to prevent, as far as possible, a recurrence. The reporting process also allows the management to demonstrate support for the injured person and to record details to allow them to fulfil their legal responsibilities under RIDDOR (NI) 1997 (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)

If there is an incident, connected with work, involving an act of physical violence and your employee, or a self-employed person, working on your premises, suffers a major injury (e.g. a fracture, admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours, or an over-three-day injury) you must report it to the appropriate enforcing authority within ten days on an NI2508 form (major injuries should be telephoned in to the appropriate authority immediately followed by the submission of the NI2508 form).

An over-3-day injury is one which is not "major" but results in the injured person being away from work or unable to do their full range of their normal duties for more than three days. A record must be kept of any reportable injuries. This must include the date and method of reporting; the date, time and place of the event, personal details of those involved and a brief description of the nature of the event.

Further details and information on accident/incident reporting, and investigating can be obtained from the internal Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy Directives.

### **Responsible Person**

The responsible person, who should sign and date the accident/incident form, should be the manager or supervisor.

The person signing the form should be fully aware of their responsibilities to ensure that appropriate action is taken immediately to prevent any recurrence of the incident.

If required managers should also offer assistance to the employee in reporting the incident to the Police, and ensure, where appropriate, in terms of RIDDOR, that notification is forwarded to the Health and Safety Executive (NI).

### **Reporting incidents to the Police**

All employees have the right to report any incident in which they have been involved to the Police. They are entitled to expect the positive support and backing of their management should they wish to exercise this right. All managers and supervisors should therefore clearly understand their responsibility to assist in reporting the matter, if requested to do so on behalf of the employee affected.

To assist in this process all employees should be instructed to record details of incidents and alleged assailants as soon as possible after the event. Line managers will also be responsible for ensuring that an internal accident/incident form has been completed.

### **Summary**

In order to address the root causes of violence to employees it is vital that all information relating to the frequency, type, location and work activity of the affected employees is being accurately recorded. This will provide the information required by management to firstly take immediate steps to support their employees and take remedial action to prevent recurrence and secondly to fulfil their legal responsibilities to ensure that reportable incidents are being reported and recorded as appropriate.

Both management and employees have a role to play in this process;-

### **Employer's responsibilities**

- Ensure that the internal accident/incident report form is readily available for employees to record all instances of work related violence (see definitions above)
- Ensure that immediate steps are taken, following an incident, to provide support to the employee and to take steps to prevent any recurrence.
- Ensure that all control measures devised following an incident, and subsequent investigation, are fully implemented
- Ensure that all incidents where appropriate are reported to the relevant authorities (see guidance above)
- Provide appropriate feedback to their employee of all actions taken and any proposed further action to prevent recurrence of the circumstances.

### **Employees' responsibilities**

- Ensure that following all incidents they complete as soon as possible after the event the report form.
- Co-operate with their employer in the development and implementation of required control measures
- Co-operate with the reporting of all incidents to external authorities as appropriate