Southwark Council

Policy on
Violence, Aggressive Behaviour and Harassment towards
Employees
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Southwark Council takes a serious view of any incident which results in violence or aggressive behaviour towards an employee. Such incidents are not regarded as acceptable, whatever the circumstances. No one should have to work in fear of violence, aggressive behaviour or harassment.

In order to protect employees and to deliver services in accordance with best practice in health and safety, it is committed to ensuring the following:

• that no employee is normally expected to put themselves at risk by challenging violent and aggressive behaviour or harassment;

• the risk of violence, aggressive behaviour and harassment to all its employees is assessed and that all reasonably practicable control measures are introduced;

• all employees are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities and the help available if an incident should occur;

• all violence and aggressive behaviour towards employees is taken seriously and the fear of violence expressed by employees given due regard;

• recognition is given that, personalised abuse, accusations and harassment conducted via new social media outlets, directed towards employees (resulting from their duties), may be hurtful, offensive and potentially incite violence and hatred towards them and is unacceptable to Southwark Council;

• full support will be given to staff who have suffered physical/verbal abuse or harassment. Such support will include the provision of legal advice and representation following incidents which the police will not prosecute;

• appropriate investigations are undertaken of all reported incidents of violence, aggressive behaviour or harassment and any appropriate action taken;

• that reporting of incidents of violence, aggressive behaviour or harassment is positively encouraged and not seen as an adverse reflection on the individual’s ability to perform their duties satisfactorily;

• that incidents will be monitored and the effectiveness of this policy and control measures evaluated;

• that suitable and sufficient training and information will be provided to all employees;

• to effect external assault insurance for employees assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, with a death or total disablement of 5 times annual earnings of the employee concerned

Definition
The definition of violence and aggression in respect of this policy is as follows:
'Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'

This includes all forms of harassment or bullying or victimisation which may be verbal abuse or threats (including those conveyed via social media), or actual damage to a person or their property, and may on the basis of, but are not restricted to, a protected characteristic or trade union membership.

1 Protected characteristics - under the Equality Act 2010 there are nine characteristics that are protected from discrimination; age, disability, gender reassignments, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex, sexual orientation