

# DISABILITY POSITIVE

## ZERO TOLERANCE TO ABUSE OR AGGRESSION POLICY

### Revision History

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## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

**Disability Positive** (hereinafter referred to as the “**Company**”) provides a wide range of support services within Company premises, the customer’s own home and other community settings. There is a possibility that in the course of their duties some staff may encounter incidents of actual or threatened abuse and / or aggressive behaviour within a range of contexts.

The Zero Tolerance Policy has been drawn up to help managers reduce the potential risk of actual or threatened verbal or physical abuse and aggression to staff, and to provide a positive, proactive and managed approach which supports staff exposed to abuse and aggression.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Employee Handbook, Health & Safety, Lone Working** and **Safeguarding policies**.

## 2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure a professional and consistent approach to managing the Company’s zero tolerance to abuse and to reduce the risks to staff members who find themselves exposed to incidences of abuse or aggression
- make it clear to all staff / service users that the Company has a Zero Tolerance Policy and that acts of abuse and aggression will not be tolerated.
- detail the behaviours which are unacceptable and the sanctions in the face of such behaviours.
- make staff aware of the potential for abuse and aggression in the workplace.
- identify procedures whereby clients who are extreme or persistent in their unacceptable behaviour can, as a last resort, be excluded from the Company’s premises or have the Company’s support services withdrawn.
- state the criteria for the withdrawal of support services and police intervention.
- promote a culture of timely reporting of incidents of abuse and aggression of any type, and to ensure mandatory reporting to the Health and Safety Executive, as appropriate.
- support the training and educational needs of staff in the safe management of incidences of abuse and aggression without encouraging /expecting staff to resort to restraint techniques.
- seek to differentiate between, deliberate acts of abuse and aggression, and the associated behaviours of people as a result of their impairment or mere frustration at a situation.
- support and assist staff who have been affected by incidences of abuse and aggression.
- ensure that individual staff members are provided with the relevant safety equipment appropriate for their role.

### 3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff within the Company (*meaning permanent, fixed term, and temporary staff, any third-party representatives or sub-contractors, agency workers, interns and agents engaged with the Company in the UK or overseas*). Trustees and Volunteers would not normally be expected to work alone and so should be outside the scope of this policy.

### 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **All Staff**

All Staff are responsible for: -

- having a legal duty to take care of their own safety and the safety of others while at work.
- ensuring that they are aware of and have all the relevant information concerning this policy and all relevant procedures and any safe systems of work that have been implemented to reduce risks.
- ensuring that incidences of abuse and aggressive behaviours and/or near misses directed towards staff are reported in accordance with Company Policy.

#### **Management**

Managers are responsible for: -

- ensuring that staff receive the necessary support following incidents of abuse and aggression, in consultation with Occupational Health if necessary.
- ensuring incidents are fully investigated, that action plans are developed as necessary and that action plans are implemented and evaluated.
- reporting incidents in which member(s) of staff, or any other person(s) suffer death or major injury as a result of abuse or aggression, or where staff members have been absent from work as a result of abuse or aggression for more than three days to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Infectious Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).
- inform the Local Authority, as appropriate, where the incident, abuse or aggression involved a service user or a member of Local Authority staff.
- explaining to a service user that his / her behaviour is unacceptable and explain the expected standards that must be observed in the future, give an informal warning if appropriate and ensure that what has occurred is documented on the client's record.
- ensuring that an Incident / Near Miss Report Form (Appendix 1) is completed by the staff member and witness statements obtained as soon as possible.
- Where a Risk Assessment indicates a high risk of abuse or aggression, managers are responsible for implementing appropriate security measures in order to reduce the risk – see the guidelines section of the **Lone Working policy**.

## 5 UNACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

The following are examples of behaviours that are not acceptable: -

- Excessive noise, e.g. loud or intrusive conversation or shouting
- Threatening or abusive language involving excessive swearing or offensive remarks
- Derogatory racial or sexual remarks
- Malicious allegations relating to members of staff, clients or visitors
- Offensive sexual gestures or behaviours
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Willful damage to the Company property.
- Theft
- Threats or threatening behaviour
- Abuse

## 6 PREVENTING ABUSE

The prevention of abuse is the responsibility of all the Company staff. The use of interpersonal skills are of paramount importance in defusing potentially abusive/aggressive situations.

When assessing the situation, observation of the individual can help in predicting aggression. Signs to look for include tensed muscles; facial expression; fingers or eyelids twitching; pacing about; sweating; increased rate of breathing; tone of voice; and the use of insults, obscenities or threats.

After assessing the threat of abuse/aggression which staff may only have a few seconds to do, the following should be considered to deescalate the situation:

- Adopt a calm approach
- Avoid eyeball to eyeball confrontation
- Remain alert and contact your manager as soon as reasonably possible, or the police (if necessary)
- Speak calmly but always remain balanced and ready to move
- Speak clearly and slowly and do not stop because the other person does not answer
- Try to identify the source of concern and offer to help if possible
- Try to distract the person from the immediate cause of concern by changing the course of the conversation
- Display understanding and kindness
- Do not argue
- Do not give orders, or make threats
- Do not disagree if it is not necessary
- Try to show affinity with the other person's position
- If alone, gradually move towards an escape route and avoid being trapped in a corner
- Maintain an adequate distance and avoid over crowding
- Where weapons are involved ask for the weapon to be placed in a neutral location rather than ask for the weapon to be given to you

## 7 TELEPHONE CONTACT

If any caller becomes abusive the member of staff taking the call should inform the caller that the Company has a Zero Tolerance to Abuse Policy which states that we are able to ask the person to refrain from speaking in such a way that could be interpreted as abusive –e.g. loud voice, abusive language, aggressive tone, derogatory comments, threatening remarks etc.

Advise the caller that should they continue to be abusive or aggressive a record of the incident will be taken and the call will be ended.

## 8 ACTION FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE OR AGGRESSION REPORTING

- An incident / near miss report form must be completed. (Appendix 1)
- Witness statements must be obtained as soon as possible, before the end of their working day, wherever possible. Staff may need support in writing their statement.
- All abusive / aggressive incidents that are reported will be monitored by the Operations Manager and Head of Business Development and Operations. The frequency and cause of such incidents if known, will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer, quarterly.
- Where the staff member(s) involved is (are) unable to complete a report form, the line manager/duty manager at the time of the incident must complete the documentation.
- Victims of assault, whether staff, clients or visitors should be escorted to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department for medical examination.
- The clinician undertaking the examination must complete the relevant section of the Incident / Near Miss Report Form, where possible.
- Other staff involved should be offered a quiet area in which to relax and recover if requested.
- If it is considered that staff should be sent home, it should be established that there is support available within the person's home, if considered necessary. Transport home should be offered and organised for staff if required.

## APPENDIX 1

### Abuse or Aggression to Staff Incident/Near-Miss Report Form <Name>



Staff should complete this form as fully as possible in order for the risk of abuse/aggression (i.e physical abuse, aggression, verbal abuse, or racial abuse, intentional damage to personal property) to be managed more effectively and reduced in the future.

LOCATION OF INCIDENT	DATE AND TIME
DETAILS OF INCIDENT	
<p>Please describe the incident in as much detail as possible. including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• events leading up to it</li> <li>• what work was being carried out the time,</li> <li>• what happened as it escalated,</li> <li>• were there any contributing factors,</li> <li>• whether a weapon was involved,</li> <li>• who else was present</li> <li>• what the outcome was.</li> </ul>	
TYPE OF ABUSE	

<b>DETAILS OF THE OFFENDER (IF KNOWN)</b>	
<b>Client I.D (if relevant):</b> <b>Name:</b> <b>Address:</b> <b>Age:</b>	
<b>Is the offender known to be involved in previous incidents?</b> <span style="float: right;">Yes / No</span>	
<b>If Yes, Give brief details:</b>	
<b>DETAILS OF ANY WITNESSES</b>	
<b>Name:</b> <b>Address:</b> <b>Contact No.:</b>	
<b>Name:</b> <b>Address:</b> <b>Contact No.:</b>	
<b>PREVENTATIVE MEASURES</b>	
<b>Had any measures been taken to try and prevent an incident of this type occurring or if no measures were taken beforehand, in your view could action now be taken?</b>	

**Signed**  
 (Staff member): \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form to your manager within 48 hours after the incident/near miss**

Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Tel: 0845 300 99 23

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>