



## Violence at Work Policy

Revision No.	Revision Date	Revisions Made	Revision Approval Date
1	Nov 2020	<p>Updated format / layout / sections (scope, principles, roles etc) to bring in-line with current Trust policies.</p> <p>Updated content in line with up to date HSE guidance and HR resources (HR HUB).</p>	

<b>Policy Title and Summary</b>	Violence at Work
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<b>Next Review Date</b>	August 2023
<b>Reviewed By</b>	S Carty
<b>Date and Responsibility of next update/review</b>	The Violence at Work Policy will be monitored and reviewed every 3 years
<b>Trade Union Consultation</b>	TBC
<b>Ratification Date</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020
<b>Audience</b>	All employees
<b>Related Documents</b>	Bullying and Harassment Policy Code of Conduct Disciplinary Policy Grievance Policy Health and Safety Policy RIDDOR Policy Lone Working Policy
<b>Legal Framework</b>	The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (a) and The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b) Data Protection Act 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU)
<b>Glossary</b>	<p>Workplace violence - any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.</p> <p>This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ verbal abuse - shouting, swearing or insults, sexual harassment or other unwanted advances/behaviour, and racial abuse;</li> <li>➤ threats and intimidation;</li> <li>➤ physical violence - physical attacks including a slap, kicking, spitting or shoving as well as more extreme violence.</li> </ul> <p>HSE – The Health and Safety Executive is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety.</p>

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## **Introduction**

The Laurus Trust is committed to providing a safe working environment safe in which all employees can work without fear of work-related violence, including verbal abuse.

Valuing employee safety and managing it effectively can help to create a positive environment for employees. The Trust recognises that it has a legal and moral responsibility to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence.

In supporting these aims, the Trust will not tolerate any instances of work-related violence towards our employees and will take all reasonable steps to reduce risks from violence to employees and others who may be affected. The Trust believes that all employees have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect and is committed to providing full support to any employee, who suffers violence in the course of, or arising out of, their official duties.

## **Scope**

1. This policy applies to all Laurus Trust staff including fixed term and casual staff, and volunteers.
2. The policy covers all forms of work-related violence which can include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks.
3. The policy covers violence in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace.
4. The policy covers violence by employees, students, parents/carers, suppliers, vendors or visitors.

## **Principles**

1. This Laurus Trust recognises that on occasion, an employee may be subject to work-related violence, including verbal abuse, in the course of their employment. This may include incidents of violence involving one employee against another.
2. The Trust will eliminate work-related violence where possible. Where this is not reasonably practicable it will undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of violence. Identified risks will be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable through safe systems of work, suitable equipment, and information and training.
3. All employees are encouraged to report any incidents of workplace violence, including verbal abuse.
4. All incidents of verbal abuse or physical violence will be treated seriously and responded to appropriately.
5. Where serious threats are made to an employee in the course of their employment, the Trust will take appropriate and supportive action to prevent any recurrence. This may include sending a formal letter to the person concerned warning them of the sanctions that could be taken against them.
6. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Help managers and staff recognise the potential for work-related violence and understand the steps which can be taken to help prevent it;
  - Explain the approach to dealing with incidents of work-related violence;
  - Clarify the expectations of all staff with regards to their treatment of others;
  - Signpost links to other supporting information.
7. Violence in the workplace can negatively impact employees' well-being and professional performance. If not appropriately tackled this behaviour can have serious consequences, for the individual themselves and their colleagues who may be witness to events.
  8. Effects on the organisation can include a loss of morale, poor work performance, and increased turnover of staff, sickness absence, legal claims and damage to the Laurus Trust's reputation.

## **Roles**

### **Employee**

1. All employees have a responsibility to be aware of the Trust's policy and comply with it.
2. You can do much to discourage violence in the workplace by offering good customer service, whether to external or internal customers, and by being aware of customer needs.
3. You should recognise the potential for work-related violence and take action early on, for example, by contacting a manager if you think that an individual may cause problems.
4. You should not accept instances of work-related violence directed towards you or others. You should report any instances of violence, threats or abuse to a manager, including any details about when it happened, who was involved and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident.
5. You should be supportive of colleagues who are victims of or witnessed workplace violence.
6. You should act in a way that does not incite or increase the likelihood of violence and be aware that any employee found to have instigated an act of workplace violence may face disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **Line Managers**

7. In addition, all those who act in a line management role are responsible for:
  - Ensuring that you understand what constitutes workplace violence and the need to take action to stop it;
  - Implementing and communicating this policy and ensuring that your teams have an awareness of it and know the standards of behaviour expected of them;
  - Treating any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse seriously and responding to them promptly;
  - Recording details of the incident where appropriate;

- Setting a positive example by reporting all incidents of violence and abuse and not tolerating abusive behaviour from employees, customers and members of the public;
- Responding to and, where possible, resolving incidents, ideally before they escalate;
- Monitoring incidences of violence and abuse and initiating appropriate action if more measures are needed;
- If an investigation is needed, work with the police and offer any assistance needed to help in their enquiries;
- Be responsive and supportive to any employee who is a victim of or a witness to workplace violence and provide clear advice on the procedure to be followed and sources of support which might be available, maintain confidentiality and take appropriate action to address the issues.

### **Human Resources**

8. The HR team are responsible for:

- Providing advice and guidance to line managers and employees on the application of the Policy;
- Ensuring consistency in application across the Laurus Trust;
- Undertaking reviews and amendments of the policy, where necessary.

### **Risk Assessments**

1. The Laurus Trust must undertake Risk Assessments before a particular work activity is carried out, and then review as necessary.
2. Managers must ensure that Risk Assessments are carried out which include issues surrounding violence at work.
3. They should be carried out using an agreed format and in conjunction with employees and appointed Trade Union Safety Representatives, where appropriate.
4. Any findings from the Assessments must be conveyed back to the workforce and Trade Union Health & Safety Representatives, and precautions and preventative measures must be introduced to reduce any outstanding risks.
5. The Risk Assessments must be reviewed at regular intervals, where new working practices dictate that a review is necessary, or where significant incidents have taken place, for example following any reportable accidents/incidents.
6. When carrying out a Risk Assessment it should be noted that the physical and social environment in which employees work and where services are provided can have a significant impact on behaviour and the creation of a safe working environment.

### **Safe Working Methods**

7. Following the completion of Risk Assessments, safe working methods must be formulated which detail measures which can be taken, or are provided, to reduce the risk of work-related violence.

8. These safe working methods must be made available to all relevant employees and the information contained within them conveyed at the induction stage and continually thereafter through activities such as training or team meetings.
9. The safe working methods should be reviewed after significant incidents have taken place, at regular intervals, or where new working practices dictate that a review is necessary.

## **Preventative Measures**

### **Work environment**

1. Attention should be given to issues which could have the potential to increase the likelihood of workplace violence, such as:
  - The design of waiting areas. Reception areas should have good easy access, good lighting, an inviting atmosphere and be staffed at all times wherever possible;
  - Interview rooms. Potentially violent people should be interviewed in a room close to where colleagues are working and if trouble is anticipated, two employees should conduct the interview. Seating should be arranged so that employees have a clear escape path;
  - Adequacy of space and privacy.
2. Working practices should also be considered, for example:
  - Maintaining an efficient reception and appointment system and robust signing in and out procedures;
  - The provision of accurate and up to date information which is shared amongst employees.

### **Interaction and contact**

3. Consideration should be given to employee's interaction with others and any situations which could cause employees to feel threatened or vulnerable.
4. Managers should ensure that employees have an awareness of how their actions may influence or contribute to how a potentially violent situation evolves and the procedures and safe working practices they should follow.
5. Consideration should be given to any situations which could increase the risk of a potentially violent situation, for example employees that:
  - Carry out home visits;
  - Work alone or in isolated parts of the building;
  - Handle cash;
  - Have direct contact with members of the public;
  - Work outside or in open spaces;
  - Work with students with challenging behaviour;
  - Work outside of 'standard' working hours.

## **Training**

6. Appropriate employee and manager training is vital in the prevention of work-related violence. Managers must assess the risks to their employees and analyse their training needs in accordance with their roles to ensure that it is appropriate to the degree of risk an individual employee may face.
7. Training should provide employees with the theory behind violence at work so that they can understand why it occurs and how any individual could be a potential aggressor given a certain set of circumstances. It is also important that employees have an awareness of methods of prevention and know how their actions may contribute to, or exacerbate a violent situation.
8. Any employees who are identified through the Risk Assessment process as being at significant risk from violence must receive appropriate training at induction and continually thereafter, where it is deemed necessary.
9. Employees who deal with students who are difficult or are challenging must receive appropriate training and information to allow them to understand the individuals they are teaching. This will help them cope with and manage this behaviour, which may be persistent and threatening, and help them to develop a clear understanding of what behaviour is acceptable.
10. Managers will receive training in the Risk Assessment process as part of the development of their core skills, together with other issues that may affect the health, safety or welfare of employees.
11. All such training will be recorded on an employee's training/personal file. Managers must assess the efficacy of this training and monitor the level of incidents to establish if further training is required.

## **Exchange of Information**

12. Managers must make their employees aware of potentially violent situations and also be conscious of other people, such as other colleagues and services that may have contact or involvement with an individual.
13. Relevant information must be made available to appropriate employees and colleagues regarding the background of individuals on a "need to know" basis, so that preventative and protective measures can be put into place.
14. Discretion must be used regarding the sharing of personal information. Managers must protect against unauthorised access and disclosure of personal data when preventing and dealing with violence at work, for example, during risk assessments and incident investigations.



## **Dealing with a violent incident**

### **Dealing with a potentially violent or violent incident**

1. It isn't always possible to predict violence and, in some cases, events escalate quickly.
2. Treat all threats of violence seriously. If you feel threatened, consider trying to diffuse the situation, for example:
  - Avoid arguing;
  - Do not swear or raise your voice;
  - If there has been a delay or complaint, explain what has happened and try to offer a solution;
  - Get support or advice from a manager if necessary;
  - Managers should respond to the situation by talking to the perpetrator and attempting to resolve the problem, explaining that their behaviour is not acceptable.

### **Physical Intervention**

3. When dealing with individuals who become aggressive, physical contact and intervention should be avoided, but may be required to be used as a last resort.
4. Employees should only use the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result.
5. It is important that employees understand the legal position to this area, to minimise the potential for legal action and/or for claims being made that unreasonable force was used.
6. Physical intervention is only lawful if it involves the use of reasonable force, which is considered to be the least force that is necessary in self-defence, or to restrain a person who is doing, or is about to do, physical harm to themselves, another person or property.
7. Physical intervention should only be considered when preventative/less invasive measures are judged to be ineffective or when the potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force.
8. If any physical intervention is used by an employee, this must be reported immediately to a manager and a full, signed record made of the extent of it, its impact and any follow-up required.

### **Actions following an incident**

9. Medical assistance should be provided immediately where required.
10. If appropriate, notify the police as soon as possible. Police should also be informed of persistent cases of violence, threats and abuse. Where available, CCTV footage of incidents should be kept in case the police need them.
11. Secure premises and evidence in cases of a serious incident.
12. Avoid leaving a member of staff who has been a victim of violence or has witnessed violence alone following the incident as this can be when they are most vulnerable. Be sensitive to the way different people react to incidents as some may want time alone in a safe place.

13. Ensure victims of violence or those that have witnessed violence are aware of the support available to them.

### **Reporting and recording systems**

14. If possible, you should keep witnesses present or take their names and addresses so they can be contacted later.
15. Staff have a responsibility to report incidences of work-related violence, including threats and verbal abuse, to managers.
16. All incidents, including physical attacks, serious or persistent threats and verbal abuse, must be recorded by completing a Trust Accident Report Form. Serious incidents should also be reported directly to the Estates Director and Head of School so that appropriate action can be taken, for example:
  - Any incidents resulting in major injury to staff or that cause staff to be off work for three days or more must be reported under the RIDDOR Regulations 1995;
  - Any incident which results in a member of the public being taken directly to hospital from the premises must also be reported;
  - The incident should be reported to the HSE Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 9923.
17. Less serious incidents should still be reported to managers as they occur and managers should make a note of these.
18. If managers notice an increase in reports, several reports within a short period or reports about the same perpetrator, managers should record the details, ask staff for more information and take action.
19. The action may include contacting the police about a persistent offender, reviewing the risk assessment and considering further prevention measures, or increased vigilance by managers or staff to prevent a more serious incident occurring.

### **Support**

1. Providing support to the person affected by an incident and their colleagues could help to reduce the risk of longer-term, stress-related illness. This applies to incidents of verbal abuse as well as physical violence.
2. The Trust is committed to providing full support, including aftercare, to employees who have suffered or witnessed violence in the course of their duties. Support will include:
  - Line management support/debrief to ensure the incident is discussed, recorded appropriately and consideration is given to further action;
  - Counselling services, a Trust counsellor and a free 24-hour employee assistance line can be accessed via the [HR HUB](#). Further information can be obtained from the HR Team on [hr@laurustrust.co.uk](mailto:hr@laurustrust.co.uk).