



Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Management of Violence and Aggression by members of the Public Policy

N.B. Staff should be discouraged from printing this document. This is to avoid the risk of out of date printed versions of the document. The Intranet should be referred to for the current version of the document.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that all NHS staff are amongst those most likely to face violence and abuse during the course of their employment. Staff have reported circa 5000 incidents of violence and aggression at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) since 1 Jan 2019.

Incidents may involve patients, visitors etc acting against staff; incidents may include an abusive phone call, an aggressive verbal outburst, being grabbed or scratched, being punched, being assaulted with a weapon or simply feeling threatened, vulnerable or at risk by someone's actions.

Irrespective of the actions, the affects in human terms of violence and aggression against staff can be significant. Some victims suffer physical and/ or psychological pain, confidence can be seriously affected while stress levels rise and morale/ well-being declines.

The NHS has a legal obligation to identify the risk of violence and aggression and develop appropriate prevention strategies to deter, reduce and where they occur, appropriately respond to and manage all incidents.

In addition to the impact of the staff member, incidents and their results may have a significant impact to service delivery and the care required for patients – leading to challenges to management in meeting their obligations to patient care largely due to retention and recruitment of staff, therefore ineffective costs to the organisation.

2018 saw the introduction of the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018¹. The 2018 Act makes provision for increased sentencing powers for offences of common assault and battery committed against an emergency worker acting in the exercise of functions as such a worker. All employees of ABUHB are classed as "Emergency Workers".

The All Wales Anti-Violence Collaborative launched the Obligatory Responses to Violence in Healthcare (ORV²) was launched in November 2018. This collaboration includes NHS Wales, Welsh Ambulance Service

¹ [Assaults on Emergency Workers \(Offences\) Act 2018](#)

² [AVC/ ORV webpage](#)

Trust (WAST), the 4 Welsh Police Forces and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The purpose of formalising the collaboration was to provide a joint and focussed approach to reducing violence and aggression in the Healthcare settings, incidents being appropriately investigated and processed by the Police and appropriate justice brought to offenders.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

A clear message to all staff wherever they work within our environment is that abuse (physical and/ or verbal) is not to be tolerated (by the individual or the organisation) and that suitable control measures will be present to provide the required care and protection to staff and Service users.

ABUHB will seek to reduce incidents of violence and aggression against staff through collaborative work with localised Multi-Agency Services Hubs, the Obligatory Responses to Violence in Healthcare network (ORV), Anti-Violence Collaborative (AVC) etc.

Incidents that occur will be robustly dealt with the aim of reducing future incidents and provide support to take appropriate actions against aggressors. Examples of actions are the use of internal sanctions (patient undertakings), management of risk assessments, well-being/ occupational health support and positive action from external agencies (Gwent Police, CPS, WAST, Local Authorities etc). Positive action may include criminal prosecution, restorative justice, civil action, a variety of restrictions/ orders (compensation, community behavioural order etc) imposed.

Should a patient, relative or visitor) escalate in inappropriate behaviour, it is essential to balance the Human Rights of the person against the contents of this Policy, in order to maintain the safety and dignity of all within the ABUHB environment. In extremis, it may be justified to remove care or administer a physical removal from ABUHB premises – this may include a patient and/ or relatives/ visitors³.

3. AIMS/ PURPOSE

³ Any such actions are to take in consideration the [Human Rights Act 1998](#)

This document aims to provide:

- Appropriate support to staff and management in the event of an incident in order to improve/ restore the well-being of the victim.
- Clear direction and support to management regarding their responsibilities towards violence and aggression incidents.
- Practicable measures to reduce violence and aggression incidents within the ABUHB environment.
- A safe working environment to all staff in order they can provide a first class care provision to all patients.

4. OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the aims, ABUHB management are to:

- Ensure all incidents are reported via Datix and the Police where appropriate.
- Provide immediate and enduring support to any staff member involved in a violent and/ or aggressive incident.
- Engage at the earliest opportunity with the Violence and Aggression/ Security Team.
- Maintain effective communication (including updates to Datix and Police where appropriate).
- Provide effective education to all staff.
- Conduct timely (including dynamic) and fit for purpose risk assessment management.
- Conduct periodical and dynamic prevention planning.
- Implement local control strategies commensurate with the risk.
- Effectively provide and manage learning from incidents.

5. SCOPE

This document relates to all staff members (irrespective of work location), students, contractors, volunteers, those on honorary contracts and those working for other employers/organisations on behalf of ABUHB that fall victim to an incident involving violence and/ or aggression.

ABUHB accepts its responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974⁴, to manage the risks from work related violence to its employees and to protect the health and safety of patients, staff and visitors.

Appropriate consideration must be given to patients who are not able to take responsibility for their actions because of either their illness or disability.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following highlights the key role and their responsibilities. More detail of each role is contained at **Annex A**.

Chief Executive

The responsibility for the organisational arrangements for Health and Safety and therefore the management of violence and aggression rests with the Chief Executive.

Violence and Aggression Champion

The supervisory role of Violence and Aggression Champion is bestowed to the Executive Director of Therapies and Health Science. A key component to this responsibility is to Chair the ABUHB Violence and Aggression Group.

Head of Corporate Health and Safety

This appointment is responsible for directly supporting the Violence and Aggression Champion in delivering the Policy.

Violence and Aggression/ Security Team Manager

This dedicated full time role reports directly to the Head of Health and Safety, leads the Violence and Aggression Team and is the organisational point of contact for all matters regarding violence and aggression.

⁴ [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)

Violence and Aggression/ Security Team

The Team report directly to the Violence and Aggression/ Security Team Manager. They provide support to all staff involved in all reported incidents involving violence/ aggression and direction and guidance to management teams regarding reducing risk in the workplace.

Health and Safety Committee

This Committee is chaired by the Executive Director of Therapies and Health Science; attended by general or senior managers from each Division and appropriate ABUHB departments; the Committee delivers over-arching responsibilities for the co-ordination of health and safety matters within ABUHB, including issues surrounding security, personal safety, lone worker and violence and aggression.

The Committee will advise and assure the Board and the Accountable Officer on whether effective arrangements are in place to monitor and review implementation of the policies and documentation regarding violence and aggression; and to act as focus for joint participation in the prevention of incidents and occupational ill health.

Violence and Aggression Group

The Group is chaired by the Executive Director of Therapies and Health Science; attended by general or senior managers from each Division and appropriate ABUHB departments; additionally representatives from Gwent Police. The Group will advise and assure the Chief Executive, the Board, the Accountable Officer and the Health and Safety Committee on effective arrangements in place to monitor and review implementation of all relevant policies and procedures.

Divisional Directors/ Corporate Department Heads

To ensure this policy and associated procedures are read, understood and applied by all staff members within their responsibility.

ABUHB Staff

All employees (including volunteers, Bank, Agency and locum staff) have a statutory duty of care, both for their own personal safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. It is incumbent upon all staff to read, understand and apply the principles within this Policy.

Occupational Health/ Employee Well-being Service

Both services are an intrinsic part of the Policy and their provision utterly essential to staff involved in incidents regarding violence and aggression.

Line Managers

Primary support to the staff members involved in an incident is the responsibility of the Line Manager. Additionally, support is available from:

- Violence and Aggression Team
- Occupational Health
- Staff Group/ Trade Union Representatives
- Employee Well-Being Service

Security

Where deployed, the Security Team is to support the daily work within the Health Board to tackle violence and aggression against staff.

Facilities and Estates

When planning and/ or refurbishing properties, including the design stage of new buildings, will consult the relevant specialists at the earliest stage and throughout the process to encompass all control measures to protect staff.

7. DEFINITIONS

Violence, Aggression or Harassment

“Any incidents where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health. This can incorporate

some behaviours identified in harassment and bullying, for example verbal violence".⁵

Violent, Unacceptable and Aggressive Acts

The following list is not exhaustive:

- Physical contact in the form of hitting, kicking, punching, scratching, biting, slapping, pinching, spitting (see footnote)⁶, head-butting and strangulation.
- Sexual assault.
- Use of weapons.
- Wilful damage to property – smashing windows, objects.
- Non-verbal aggression – waving fingers, fists, invasion of body space, stalking.
- Derogatory remarks regarding: Age; Disability; Gender (including Gender Re-assignment); Race; Ethnicity; Nationality; Religion (including belief and non-Belief) and Sexual Orientation.

8. INCIDENT SUPPORT

Incident Reporting

All incidents of violence (including verbal abuse) must be escalated to department management and reported on Datix, additionally when appropriate, reported to the Police.

All wards/departments must have processes/ procedures in place to ensure a timely and accurate reporting process. This will enhance the analysis of all reported violence and aggression incidents to identify avenues for reduction.

Of the utmost importance is that all victims of violence and aggression are made known to the Violence and Aggression Team through effective reporting mechanisms. This will ensure the appropriate level of support is provided.

Incident response

Line Managers are to familiarise themselves and action (where applicable) the procedures contained at **Annex B**. The Violence and

⁵ All Wales Violence and Aggression Training and Information Scheme

⁶ Spitting and/ or coughing with intent of spreading a disease i.e. COVID-19 is considered an assault

Aggression Team is available to all victims involved in incidents for support; and their line management for support, advice and guidance.

Not all incidents will require Police engagement, but all incidents are to be reported on DATIX. The Team work a victim-centric approach, but are also available to provide appropriate support to Ward management to help reduce repeated incidents. The Team is able to access a multi-agency support network, where warranted.

Where support is required, the Team will engage and support as much as is required by the victim. The support will remain until the appropriate moment of withdrawal with updates provided periodically between initial engagement and withdrawal.



Support is available via the following:

- Violence and Aggression Team⁷
- Occupational Health⁸
- Staff Group/ Trade Union representatives
- Employee Well-Being⁹

Linked to this policy are a number of guidance documents to assist management teams with incidents involving violence and aggression (see footnote 7) – including the Internal Sanctions policy.

Risk Assessment

ABUHB has a duty to assess all risks to the health and safety of its employees. It is therefore necessary for each department (staff and management) to record all identifiable risks in relation to the work place, to allow consideration for mitigations to be implemented. The responsibility of the risk assessment lies firmly with the relevant management team, consultative support is available from the Violence and Aggression Team¹⁰.

Assessments are to include a reactive and proactive approach and action plan taking into account environmental and organisational factors as well as individual patient circumstances. A member of the Violence and Aggression Team is able to assist all assessors.

Education

The responsibility for training needs of ABUHB belongs to the Violence and Aggression/ Security Team Manager.

A condition of employment for all employees is their requirement to undertake statutory and Mandatory training, enforced by the All Wales Violence and Aggression Training and Information Scheme - delivered on a risk based programme.

Appropriate training will be delivered as follows:

- Module A – Induction and Awareness Training
- Module B – Theory of Personal Safety and De-escalation

⁷ [V&A Team webpage](#)

⁸ [Occupational Health webpage](#)

⁹ [Employee Well-Being webpage](#)

¹⁰ [Risk assessment templates can be found here](#)

- Module C – Breakaway
- Module D – Restrictive Physical Intervention

Training will be delivered by an appropriately qualified person. Reasonable adjustment will be made for any disabled member of staff who requires it, to ensure equality of access and outcomes. All training will take account of relevant 'protected characteristics' in relation to the design and delivery of the training.

This policy will be brought to the attention of all new staff at local induction – this is a requirement of the Line Manager.

Audit Monitoring

Internal monitoring is achieved by the following:

- Ensuring that the Violence and Aggression Action Plan status is considered annually by the Violence and Aggression Group.
- Ensuring that each Quality and Patient Safety Group considers trends and information relating to the violence and aggression incidents within their area.
- Ensuring that all incidents/accidents are investigated and actions are fed back to the reporting individual/ victim and Line Manager.
- Compiling records and statistics of staff violence and aggression training.
- Checking performance against policies, procedures, and safe systems of work to ensure that safe working conditions and practices exist.
- Working with collaborative partners to ensure that all processes are being carried out correctly; therefore ensuring the victim receives the maximum support to achieve their desired outcome.
- Undertaking an annual review. This will include an overview of any trends that relate to the 'protected characteristics' covered within the Equality Act (2010) and an exploration of 'staff experience' in relation to support provided following an incident with appropriate action for improvement identified.

External Monitoring

The Anti-Violence Collaborative and Welsh Government mandate a 6 monthly and annual report from ABUHB providing the external monitoring of performance.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be uploaded to ABUHB's intranet site; contained within the Health and Safety department webpage¹¹.

All staff are responsible for reading and understanding the contents of this document; applying the procedures where appropriate.

All staff will be alerted to the issue, reissue and review of versions of this policy.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

ABUHB is committed to ensuring that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the way it provides patient/client care, services to the public and the way it treats its staff reflects their individual needs and does not discriminate against individuals or groups.

In line with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) this Policy has been screened for equality and human rights impacts and no negative effects have been identified.

Should a member of staff or any other person require access to this in another language or accessible format (such as braille or large print) they can do so by contacting the Violence and Aggression/ Security Team Manager. ABUHB will ensure equitable access to all policies and procedures.

Further guidance is available within the Equality Act 2010¹²

11. HUMAN RIGHTS

To reiterate the importance of the contents within the "Policy Statement"; the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) incorporated in the European Convention of Human Rights ("the Convention") into UK Law. The Convention sets out rights covering a number of matters and refers

¹¹ [Policies/ Guidance Documents \(V&A\)](#)

¹² [Equality Act 2010](#)

to them as “Articles”. **All public authorities must comply with the HRA.** For further guidance, when appropriate, refer to the Human Rights Act 1998¹³.

12. REVIEW

The Policy will be reviewed within three years of implementation or as the organisation, legislation, codes of practice and/ or official guidance changes; dictated by the Head of Health and Safety in collaboration with the Violence and Aggression champion.

13. REFERENCES

[Violence and Aggression/ Security Incident Support Team webpage](#)

[Assaults on Emergency Workers \(offences\) Act 2018](#)

[NHS Wales Anti Violence Collaborative/ Obligatory Responses to Violence in Healthcare](#)

[Human Rights Act 1998](#)

[Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)

All Wales V&A Training and Information Scheme – not yet released

[Occupational Health webpage](#)

[Employee Well-Being webpage](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

Health and Care Standards Wales

The following Standards for Health Services in Wales are applicable to this policy:

Health Promotion, Protection, and Improvement
Managing Risk and Health and Safety
Information Governance and Communications Technology
Dignified Care
People’s Rights

¹³ [Human Rights Act 1998](#)

Communicating Effectively
Listening and learning from feedback
Workforce

14. APPENDICIES:

- A. Roles and Responsibilities**
- B. Incident Support protocol**

Appendix A - Management of Violence and Aggression by a member of the Public Policy dated 5 July 2021

Roles and Responsibilities – further detail

Violence and Aggression Champion

- Executive Lead and Independent Member Lead in delivering their violence and aggression responsibilities.
- Ensuring the ABUHB Management of Violence and Aggression in the Healthcare Environment Policy is implemented.
- The Policy being reviewed every 3 years or when deemed appropriate by the Head of Health and Safety via the Violence and Aggression Group.
- ABUHB Violence and Aggression/ Security Team being appropriately resourced to facilitate the Policy and support to all persons involved in violence and aggression incidents.
- Ensuring that there is an appropriate Occupational Health service and staff have access to appropriate psychological intervention.
- Ensuring that annual performance appraisal of all managers includes a measure of their effectiveness at managing violence & aggression incidents as appropriate
- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient security guarding arrangements are in place to protect staff and patients as far as reasonably practical from violence and aggression events.

Head of Health and Safety

- Develop a communication strategy and action plan to ensure delivery of obligations of ABUHB arising from the All Wales Violence & Aggression Communication Strategy and Action Plan.
- Monitoring of performance with regard to violence and aggression.
- Co-ordinating a full range of internally developed and nationally accredited training programmes to meet mandatory and statutory requirements.
- Ensuring a systematic approach to the identification of risks and appropriate control measures.
- Maintaining a development of strategic planning to reduce violence and aggression through the Health and Safety Priority Improvement Plan.
- Ensuring that statistical information is available on violence and aggression performance throughout the Health Board and interpret such information in order to evolve action plans in co-

ordination with Executive Directors and Clinical Boards to improve or maintain standards.

- Providing feedback to the All Wales Head of Health and Safety Group on behalf of ABUHB.
- Ensuring that the Board and the Health and Safety Committee are informed, as required, on violence and aggression matters affecting employees and/or the public.

Head of Corporate Health and Safety

- Develop a communication strategy and action plan to ensure delivery of obligations of ABUHB arising from the All Wales Violence & Aggression Communication Strategy and Action Plan.
- Monitoring of performance with regard to violence and aggression.
- Co-ordinating a full range of internally developed and nationally accredited training programmes to meet mandatory and statutory requirements.
- Ensuring a systematic approach to the identification of risks and appropriate control measures.
- Maintaining a development of strategic planning to reduce violence and aggression through the Health and Safety Priority Improvement Plan.
- Ensuring that statistical information is available on violence and aggression performance throughout the Health Board and interpret such information in order to evolve action plans in co-ordination with Executive Directors and Clinical Boards to improve or maintain standards.
- Providing feedback to the All Wales Head of Health and Safety Group on behalf of ABUHB.
- Ensuring that the Board and the Health and Safety Committee are informed, as required, on violence and aggression matters affecting employees and/or the public.

Violence and Aggression/ Security Team Manager

- Ensuring that specialist advice in relation to victim and incident support and Personal Safety hazards is available. Assisting the management of violence and aggression through the preparation of relevant policies and procedures.
- Assist the Head of Health and Safety to develop the strategic planning to reduce violence and aggression through the Health and Safety Priority Improvement Plan.

- Assist with co-ordinating and undertaking a full range of internally developed and nationally accredited training programmes to meet mandatory and statutory requirement.

Appendix B - Management of Violence and Aggression by a member of the Public Policy

