



# ABUSE AND VIOLENCE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES POLICY

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<b>Executive Summary:</b>
<p>Our policy on Abuse and Violence towards employees recognises the challenges faced by colleagues by a small number of tenants. It outlines the processes involved that will reduce the risk and support colleagues in the event of an incident. We do not tolerate abuse or violence towards employees. With community partners and the Police, we aim to take appropriate legal action against perpetrators, whilst providing care and support to those affected.</p>

<b>Policy Grouping/Directorate(s)</b>	Resources	
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<b>Notes:</b>		

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) colleagues, especially those in front line services, may be subjected to the threats of abuse or violence.
- 1.2 In certain situations colleagues may face abusive and potentially violent situations and RBH recognises that employees should not have to work in that type of environment.
- 1.3 RBH does not tolerate verbal, physical abuse or threats of any nature towards its employees or contractors. This type of behaviour is deemed completely unacceptable and in these circumstances RBH will not hesitate to take action to protect its employees. This policy aims to help tackle this behaviour, deal with it appropriately and ensure employees feel supported.

## **2 Context**

### **2.1 Abuse**

Any incident, either verbal or physical in which a person is maltreated, threatened, insulted or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

#### **Violence**

The unlawful exercise of physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

This can also be defined as 'a violation of an individual's human rights and civil rights by another person or persons' in the workplace'. This can be extended to 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

- 2.2 RBH's working definition of abuse or violence to colleagues includes but is not limited to:

#### **Physical Attack**

Threats of physical attack or abuse, whether directed at a colleague, contractor or representative of the society. This might include attacks that are sexually or racially motivated.

#### **Verbal Abuse**

When a colleague, contractor or representative of the society feels an unacceptable threat has been made against their person, including sexual or racial abuse.

#### **Animal Attack**

Where an animal is used as a threat or tool of violence

#### **Attack Against Property**

As a means of intimidating a colleague.

#### **Threats**

Against the individual or against relatives or connected persons.

- 2.3 RBH is aware of and concerned that some incidents of abuse or violence go unreported. One of the main reasons for this is that many colleagues perceive and accept that handling aggressive behavior is part and parcel of the job. RBH will not tolerate abuse and/or violence

to colleagues and adopts a zero-tolerance approach, requiring the reporting of all such incidents. RBH will always support their colleagues, contractors, or representatives by taking the appropriate action/s whenever there is evidence that they have been subjected to threats of or actual abuse or violence whilst carrying out their employment on behalf of the society. Where appropriate Wellbeing Champions offering peer support can be contacted through People Team. Further independent advice and support through Medi Cash, details available on Connect, or via the People Team.

- 2.4 Besides internal investigations, RBH will involve the Police and other appropriate authorities when necessary.
- 2.5 In the information that follows the term violence will be used as defined above.
- 2.6 Recognising that such incidents can have a significant negative effect on the health, safety and welfare of employees, contractors or representatives, RBH will not hesitate to take appropriate legal action against perpetrators of abuse or violence.
- 2.7 All information gathered, stored or recorded by RBH that relates to an identifiable person is subject to Data Protection Legislation. Any information communicated by an employee of RBH in breach of Data Protection Legislation will be considered a serious breach of discipline which may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal.

### 3 Aims & Objectives

- 3.1 This section should be a short summary of the key parts of the policy

The aims of the policy are:

- a) Managers and supervisors will take responsibility for managing their teams in an effective way to ensure compliance with this policy and appropriate health and safety policies and procedures.
- b) Employees will be responsible for ensuring that they follow the guidance and advice which is outlined in health and safety procedures.

- 3.2 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

**Responsibility** - Managers and supervisors will take responsibility for managing their teams in an effective way to ensure compliance with this policy and appropriate health and safety policies and procedures. Employees will be responsible for ensuring that they follow the guidance and advice which is outlined in health and safety procedures.

**Equity** - All RBH policies and procedures are developed in a fair and unbiased way in compliance with legislative requirements and HSE guidance to ensure best practice.

**Democracy** – The approach to this policy has been developed in partnership with colleagues through assessment on risk and experience.

**Collaboration** – Working together in every aspect of work within RBH and where necessary involving suppliers and other authorities in achieving the best outcomes.

## **4 Policy Statement**

4.1 RBH is responsible for the provision of a safe and healthy working environment for its employees. RBH recognises that it has a moral and legal obligation to strive to eliminate the danger posed by threats of abuse and violence at work.

RBH will;

- a) Endeavour to minimise the risk to employees by providing a safe and healthy working environment. Particular attention will be paid to lone workers and reception areas and interviewing facilities.
- b) Provide training facilities for employees who may have to face the threat of abuse and violence at work.
- c) If requested or deemed appropriate, provide legal advice and support to victims of abuse or violence at work.
- d) Not tolerate verbal, physical, sexual or racial harassment or abuse of its employees. RBH will not tolerate actual or threatened assaults upon employees or their property by tenants or other members of the public either during or outside working hours, which occur as a result of their employment with RBH.
- e) Investigate all incidents of abuse or violence at work. Report, record and take any remedial, or legal action that may be necessary against those responsible.
- f) Provide welfare counselling facilities for the victims of incidents or threats of abuse and violence at work.

### **4.2 General Responsibilities in this Policy**

4.2.1 Employees should take all appropriate and reasonable measures to ensure that they are working safely and maintaining personal safety whilst carrying out their duties. This is especially important when an employee is alone or lone working out in the neighborhood's or visiting customers in their homes. This policy should be read in conjunction with the 'Lone Working Policy'

This can be found on RBH Connect.

4.2.2 Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees check and understand customer records in advance of home visits to check if there has been any history of aggression or abuse and if necessary, arrange to speak to the customer in an office environment or undertake visits with another colleague.

4.2.3 Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of their individual responsibility to read and understand all relevant risk assessments that are in place within their service areas relating to lone working and visiting customers at home before undertaking such duties. Where a risk to health and safety is identified in a risk assessment, then managers have a duty of care to ensure employees are following all control measures identified to reduce the risks to their employees' health and safety.

4.2.4 It must be noted that all RBH employees have a duty of care to ensure their own safety and to conduct their undertakings in such a way as not to expose themselves to unnecessary risks to health and safety. Or others to unnecessary risks to health and safety.

### 4.3 **Sharing of Information**

4.3.1 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) does not prevent the sharing of data subject information, including special personal information, with third parties as long as it has been lawfully gathered, retained, and processed in line with current GDPR.

4.3.2 Partners– e.g., contractors who may have considerable contact with an individual whose details are noted on the Vulnerable Indicators Database - should be made aware of their existence on the database. Any such disclosure should be made on a strict case-by-case basis after full consideration of the data subject's rights. Reference should be made to the Information management Framework and the Data Protection Officer for RBH if there is any concern about disclosing information.

### 4.4 **Training of Colleagues**

All employees will receive training in the use and application of this policy.

### 4.5 **Vulnerable Indicators Procedure (Potentially Violent Persons) – Requesting a vulnerable indicator against an individual**

4.5.1 All employees who encounter a situation which gives rise to concern for their own safety or that of a colleague, contractor or any other person working in an official capacity on behalf of RBH must report the situation and request a Potentially Violent Indicator is added to the system. Should the allegations later be found to be unsubstantiated any such indicator should immediately be removed.

4.5.2 To report anyone who has been identified as posing a potential risk to RBH employees, contractors, visitors etc, and require a Risk Marker (formerly known as XYZ) assigned to their customer account, you will need to complete this form: [Neighbourhood Reporting Form - Flags | MyRBH](#)

The information on the completed forms will immediately open a CRM case which the Neighbourhood Team will respond to. All Risk Markers are reviewed annually and if there have been no further incidents, we will consider whether it is appropriate for the marker to be retained.

It is therefore very important that if you encounter any issues with customers, that you report them through this process, even if there is already a risk marker in place.

4.5.3 In addition to reporting the concern to Neighbourhoods via the reporting procedure you must inform your line manager and a violent incident/near miss form (available on Connect) must be completed in the event of violence /physical injury. A copy of the form must be sent to the Health & Safety Team ([RBH.HealthandSafety@rbh.org.uk](mailto:RBH.HealthandSafety@rbh.org.uk)).

4.5.4 Reports made to Neighbourhoods and Health & Safety via the Risk indicator information from approved third party form (link to be attached), of any new customers that third parties deem may be a risk to RBH Employees. Neighbourhood Team will update the Risk Indicators where necessary.

## **5 Monitoring**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through consideration of the number of abusive or violent incidents reported and the outcome of those incidents. The information will be reported to the RBH Health and Safety Committee on a regular basis.

## **6 Review**

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

## **7 Links with Other RBH Documents**

- 7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:
  - Health and Safety Framework
  - Lone Worker Policy
  - Team Specific Risk Assessments
  - Health & Safety Procedures
  - Safe Systems of Work

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing Limited is a charitable community benefit society.  
FCA register number 31452R.

Registered Office: Unique Enterprise Centre, Belfield Road, Rochdale, OL16 2UP

Registered as a provider of social housing. RSH register number: 4607