

MANAGING VIOLENCE & AGGRESSION AT WORK POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ARK is opposed to violence and aggression in any form. ARK will establish and promote practices that seek to minimise the potential risks of violence and aggression towards employees.

ARK aims to:

- Put in place safe systems of work to minimise the risk to employees of violence and aggression at work.
- Ensure, as far as possible, that there is a safe and secure working environment for employees.
- Ensure that incidents of violence and aggression are reported in order that areas of risk are identified and addressed.
- Achieve a level of understanding and awareness of the effects of violence and aggression on staff to ensure employees are appropriately supported.

1.2 ARK recognises the difficulties in managing aggression at work. This policy aims to put in place steps to identify and minimise risks to support its employees, monitor incidents control the risk so far as is reasonably practicable. In order to achieve these aims appropriate risk assessments must be developed and implemented.

1.3 The nature of the services ARK provides place particular groups of employees at potential risk of aggressive or violent incidents from a variety of sources including:

- Tenants
- Service Users
- Friends and family of service users
- Other employees
- Domestic violence in the workplace
- Contractors
- Other members of the public

1.4 The range and diversity of services offered by ARK raises specific concerns relevant to the provision of particular services. This policy will therefore provide a framework of principles to be applied across ARK...

1.5 ARK is committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and well being of its employees. It is the responsibility of all employees to comply with the measures taken to achieve that, including this policy, and this is also supported by ARK's [Dignity at Work Policy – HR16](#).

- 1.6 The first course of action, after ensuring the safety of all parties concerned, will be to fully investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident and decide on appropriate actions to take and precautions to take to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of any future incidents occurring. ARK's Incident Reporting Policy, and its parts, has more information on the reporting procedure.
- 1.7 The Managing Violence & Aggression at Work Procedure (Part Two of this policy) provides guidance and information on precautions which may be considered during the risk assessment process and should a violent or aggressive incident occur, the type of action to be taken solely depend on the circumstances of each incident.

This policy has the following parts and sections:

Part 1	Policy
Part 2	Procedures
Section 1	- Introduction
Section 2	- Scope of Policy
Section 3	- Legislation
Section 4	- Definition
Section 5	- Reporting
Section 6	- Roles, Responsibilities and Duties
Section 7	- Learning & Development
Section 8	- Employee Support
Section 9	- Returning to Work
Section 10	- Police Involvement
Section 11	- Procedures
Section 12	- Implementation and Review

- 1.8 This policy complies with Scottish Housing Regulator Standards of Governance and Financial Management 5.3 and 5.4

2.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

- 2.1 The policy applies to all ARK employees, board members and to all people using and/or visiting the workplace e.g. visitors, relief employees, agency staff, contractors, service users, etc. as applicable.
- 2.2 This policy covers incidents of aggressive or violent behaviour perpetrated by a member of the public and service users or their families. Incidents of violence and aggression by or between employees will also be covered by ARK's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

3.0 LEGISLATION

The management of violence and aggression at work does not have specific legislation. However, ARK recognises that the Health & Safety at Work Act makes reference to:

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The legislation which will apply is the general duty of care which falls under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The general duty placed on employers by this Act includes the health, safety and welfare of all employees.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

These Regulations require the employer to make a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the significant risks to the health and safety of their employees and third parties arising from work tasks and locations. The risk assessment process includes the elimination of hazards and, where this is not reasonably practicable, the identification and implementation of control measures.

With regard to violence and aggression at work, the risk assessments should include any foreseeable situation where there is a significant risk of encountering aggression whilst at work.

4.0 DEFINITION

4.1 The definition that ARK is choosing for this policy is from the publication 'Preventing Workplace Harassment & Violence' (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/preventing-workplace-harassment.pdf>)

The European agreement defines harassment and violence as unacceptable behaviour by one or more individuals that can take many different forms, some of which may be more easily identifiable than others. Harassment occurs when someone is repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and/or humiliated in circumstances relating to work. Violence occurs when one or more worker or manager is assaulted in circumstances relating to work. Both may be carried out by one or more manager, worker, service user or member of the public with the purpose or effect of violating a manager's or worker's dignity, affecting his/her health and/or creating a hostile work environment.

The European agreement recognises that harassment and violence can:

- *Be physical, psychological, and/or sexual;*
- *Be one off incidents or more systematic patterns of behaviour;*
- *Be amongst colleagues, between superiors and subordinates or by third parties such as clients, customers, patients, pupils, etc;*
- *Range from minor cases of disrespect to more serious acts, including criminal offences, which require the intervention of public authorities.*

4.2 Violence and aggression towards service users is addressed in more detail in the Care & Support Policy CS03 – Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

5.0 REPORTING

5.1 The purpose of recording and reporting is to identify areas of risk at work,

patterns of incidents and to develop appropriate responses to address unacceptable behaviour of a violent or aggressive nature.

5.2 As soon as is practical the employee should be encouraged to initiate recording and reporting procedures by:

- Reporting the incident to your ARK manager .
- Report the incident to an ARK area manager if your manager is unavailable.
- Completing an Incident Reporting form.

5.3 Reporting of an incident should take place as soon as possible or practical.

5.4 The timing of the completion of the incident reporting form must be considered to ensure factual and accurate information is recorded. The optimum time for the completion of the incident reporting form is between 24 and 36 hours after the incident.

6.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

6.1 Directors and ARK Managers

Directors and ARK Managers shall endeavour to ensure that:

- they are made aware of any incidents involving violence or aggression and that these are investigated and appropriate action taken;
- all establishments have copies of the written procedures in respect of Managing Violence & Aggression at Work and that these are made known to all employees;
- all work practices and arrangements are made with reference to ARK's Health & Safety policy requirements, HR policies and procedures, and Care & Support policies and procedures where these overlap with this policy;
- there are suitable arrangements to provide information, instruction, training and supervision in all aspects of this section of the safety manual to employees.

6.2 ARK Managers

ARK managers are responsible for the implementation and operation of this policy in respect of all premises within their remit. ARK managers should endeavour to ensure that:

- they are made aware of any incidents involving violence and aggression and that these are investigated and appropriate action taken;
- they follow Health and Safety and HR procedures, if any employee reports they have been subject to a violent or aggressive incident or they notice any situation which may be linked to violence or aggression at work, including bullying and harassment;
- all employees they manage are informed of the detail of this section of the

Health and Safety manual;

- all employees comply with the requirements of this section of the manual;
- any breaches of this policy are handled in accordance with HR policies and procedures;
- all necessary risk assessments are completed and available for relevant employees to view;
- any procedures developed for the ease of implementing this policy are followed;
- all incidents are recorded using [ARK's incident reporting forms and remedial action plans](#) are completed for serious incident of violence and aggression involving service to staff or others.

6.3 Employees

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are complying with the health and safety procedures and requirements appropriate to their job. To achieve this all employees must:

- advise their manager if they have been subjected to violence or aggression at work;
- advise their manager if they notice someone else being subject to violence or aggression at work;
- attend any training courses or briefing sessions arranged for them;
- conduct themselves in an appropriate manner to avoid being, or interpreted as being aggressive or harassing. Further details can be found in ARK's Dignity & Respect at Work Policy – HR16.
- follow any procedures developed after remedial actions to avoid or reduce the risk from violence and aggression at work.

7.0 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

7.1 ARK will ensure all employees who are considered to be at risk of violence and aggression at work have appropriate training and support.

7.2 The focus of training for relevant employees will be on the development of skills, knowledge and practice that supports employees to assess situations and respond in ways designed to minimise the risks of violent or aggressive behaviour occurring.

7.3 ARK's induction for new employees will include awareness training on the potential risks associated with violence and aggression in the workplace.

7.4 ARK managers provide information to staff to access the [employee assistance programme](#)

8.0 EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

8.1 It is vital that the impact on employees of any violent or aggressive behaviour is understood and supported. ARK recognises that employees who are victims of

violent or aggressive behaviour may suffer from distress as well as physical injury following any incidence of violent or aggressive behaviour.

- 8.2 The employee concerned should be invited to a supportive meeting (sometimes referred to as a de-briefing meeting) with their manager as soon as possible. In some circumstances, this will be prior to returning to their next shift, however, it may also be the case that the employee returns to the shift where the incident occurred, if this is the safe to do so and the meeting will take place at the end of the shift or at later time. Further details about this meeting can be found in the Procedure accompanying this Policy.
- 8.3 The purpose of the meeting will be to support the employee and offer access to ARK's Employee Assistance Programme and other relevant supports.
- 8.4 Where absence from work is believed to arise from a violent or aggressive incident that occurred at work, this absence will be reviewed and a decision made as to whether this will be treated as special leave rather than sickness absence.
- 8.5 All incidents should be recorded in accordance with ARK's Incident Reporting procedure which includes identifying and implementing actions to take to aid prevention of future occurrences.
- 8.6 The procedures and guidance accompanying this policy should be referred to when conducting risk assessments, implementing workplace precautions and actions to take following an aggressive incident.

9.0 RETURNING TO WORK

- 9.1 Where an employee has been absent from work following an incident of violence or aggression at work, ARK will ensure appropriate support is offered to the employee.
- 9.2 The employee's ARK manager, in consultation with Human Resources, will complete an extra duty of care risk assessment and implement the following as appropriate:
 - If a referral to Occupational Health is required and if this should be prior to returning to work;
 - If the employee should have a phased return to work;
 - If the employee should return to work on reduced hours initially;
 - If the employee can carry out all their duties or if adjustments are required;
 - If retraining or additional training is required;
 - Any other evidence based support measures that are identified and agreed as appropriate.
- 9.3 An investigation into the circumstances of the incident will take place to identify any risk factors and implement remedial actions to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence.

9.4 The employee's line manager will ensure appropriate support is put in place for the employee for an agreed specified period of time.

10.0 POLICE INVOLVEMENT

10.1 Consideration should be given to calling the Police if the aggression includes a physical assault or damage to personal belongings or property.

10.2 This decision should normally be made by an ARK manager following consultation with the relevant employee, although this is without prejudice to the right to all employees to contact the Police themselves should they so wish.

10.3 The employee should be aware that the action taken by the police will be at their discretion subject to the outcome of any investigation. A decision to report the incident to the police should be considered in accordance with the nature and severity of the incident.

10.4 ARK supports any employee's decision to report incidents to the police, however, it should be noted that any action taken by the police will be final and the employee may not be satisfied with the outcome.

10.5 It may be that ARK would wish to report an incident to the police even if the employee does not wish to do so. ARK will try to get the consent of the employee but if in the interests of health and safety ARK will report incidents to the police without the employees consent.

11.0 PROCEDURES

11.1 Detailed procedures to support this policy at accompanied at Part 2 Procedures and Guidance.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

12.1 This policy and guidance will be implemented in accordance with ARK's Health and Safety Policy which details the responsibilities of the organisation, managers and employees. The Health and Safety Manual provides additional information and guidance on responsibilities.

12.2 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this policy, and the procedures that support it, are followed by all Board Members and members of staff.

12.3 The Chief Executive will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every three years and that any amendments required are submitted to the Board of Management for approval.

12.4 The Senior Leadership Team will monitor trends in reported incidences of violence and aggression to employees and will ensure appropriate remedial actions are identified and implemented.

12.5 Breaches of this policy will be viewed seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedures and if considered gross misconduct, may result in dismissal.

Approved by SLT:

February 2017

Approved by the Board of Management:

March 2017

Next review due by:

February 2020

Complies with: Scottish Housing Regulator Standards of Governance and Financial Management 5.3 and 5.4

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Policies

[HR16 Dignity & Respect at Work](#)
[HR04 Equality and Diversity](#)

[CS03 Protection of Adults at Risk](#)
[CS17 Behaviour of Concern](#)

[G03 Staff Code of Conduct](#)

[HS01 Health and Safety](#)
[HS03 Risk Assessment](#)
[HS12 Lone Working](#)
[HS20 Stress at Work](#)
[HS21 Extra Duty of Care](#)

Procedures

[CS17 Behaviour of Concern](#)
[HS11 Managing Violence and Aggression at Work, Part 2 Guidance](#)

Briefing Sheet

HS11 – [Managing Violence and Aggression at Work](#)