

Newcastle West End Foodbank

Managing Violence and Aggression Policy

Version No.: 1.0

Effective From: 11 February 2020

Review Date: 21 February 2023

Signature:	Signed by:	Position:	Date:
	Rev D Coad	Chairman	16 February 2021

1 Introduction

The Newcastle West End Foodbank (WEFB) is responsible for and committed to providing a safe non-violent/non-threatening environment for all its employees, volunteers, clients and visitors; and will take all reasonable steps to secure the health and safety of staff and volunteers who may be exposed to the risk of aggression, violence or abuse whilst delivering the services of WEFB or being involved in events organized by WEFB.

2 Scope

This Policy has been drawn up to give staff and volunteers support and advice, and deals specifically with violence to them from clients, clients' relatives and visitors. It provides clear guidance to managers of their responsibilities in managing violence at work.

This Policy details the WEFB's commitment to ensuring that measures are in place to reduce the risk and that there are appropriate procedures in place to enable staff and volunteers to deal appropriately with violent situations should they arise.

Users may find it helpful to read this policy in conjunction with the Lone Worker policy.

This Policy does not apply to issues of violence between members of staff. These should be dealt with according to the Equality and Diversity Policy or the WEFB's Disciplinary Policy as appropriate.

3 Aims and Objectives

The WEFB Trustees will not tolerate any aggression or threats of violence, or actual violence whether verbal, cyber-bullying or physical from clients and other members of the public. We recognise that a small minority of clients present themselves with mental health vulnerabilities and we will respect that clients may need to be warned about their behaviour. However, everybody has a right to feel safe at all times.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for fulfilling all Health and Safety duties as an employer, including all statute health and safety law requirements.

4.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility to the Board for ensuring that appropriate and effective health and safety management systems are in place including for the prevention and management of violence and aggression. The CEO should establish local procedural guidelines, these should draw upon closely related policies, e.g. Lone Workers Policy, ensuring that risk assessments are in place to protect at-risk employees and volunteers. Risk Assessments should be reviewed if they are no longer considered valid, typically this may result from changes in working practice, staffing, organisational moves/layout changes or other arrangements; post incident and any additional assessments are to be reviewed on an annual basis.

4.3 All Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers have a duty of care to take reasonable care to ensure the safety of themselves, their colleagues, clients and the public at all times. Therefore, all members of staff and all volunteers are expected to comply with the WEFB's policies and procedures, which are provided for their protection.

All staff and volunteers should also be proactive in helping to reduce the risk of violence occurring in their workplace.

5 Definitions of violence at work

- **Physical Violence** - “The intentional application of a force without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury, personal discomfort or loss.”
- **Assault** - “An assault is committed when a person intentionally or recklessly causes another to apprehend the immediate infliction of unlawful force.”
- **Battery** - “A battery is committed when a person intentionally and recklessly applies unlawful force to another.”
- **Serious Assault** - “Any assault where the resulting injury causes skin or bone to break, loss of consciousness, internal injury or where any stitching or surgery is necessary.”
- **Non-Physical Violence** - “The use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress and/or constituting harassment.”

6 Arrangements to Prevent Violence and Aggression

The WEFB requires suitable assessment to be made of the risk to employees' and volunteers' health and safety whilst carrying out work on behalf of WEFB. Risk Assessors are required to consult with staff and volunteers to ensure that all situations are identified where they are likely to be exposed to violence, evaluate the level of risk involved and identify measures to control the risks. The risk assessment must systematically identify where violence may occur and clearly specify effective

control measures/safe working procedures to avoid or reduce the level of risk including the development of action plans where appropriate, e.g. lone workers, those working in the community or handling large amounts of cash. The risk assessment will identify the necessary precautions required to safeguard people at risk in their workplace.

7 Incident Handling

If a client becomes loud, aggressive, intolerant, disrespectful, abusive towards a volunteer, staff member or a visitor a staff member or the lead volunteer should ask the client to calm down and remind them that their behaviour will not be tolerated. If the client's behaviour does not improve the staff member/lead volunteer has the authority to ask the client to leave the building immediately and to inform them that they forfeit their right to a food parcel that day. If the client has been threatening or attempted physical violence the police should be asked to attend and the foodbank CEO or Logistics Manager should be contacted.

After such an incident volunteers and staff should be extra vigilant when leaving the building.

7.1 Police Support

In the event of the police being required to attend any incident the CEO/local staff member should call them (using 999 service). However, there may be urgent situations relating to personal safety where the police should be called as an emergency directly from where the incident is taking place.

Should restraint be required this should be applied with caution, in the presence of and under the guidance of other staff members or volunteers, taking into consideration the client's medical condition or mental health state, if known. It is good practice for all staff at risk of violence or aggression to be trained and up to date in the applied techniques of self-defence, control and restraint, to avoid injury to any party.

7.2 Incident Evaluation

After an incident has occurred the CEO and other appropriate staff members and/or Trustees, should evaluate the event and, if necessary, modify existing procedures and control measures, ensuring that all are made aware of any changes.

Depending on the severity of the incident the CEO may choose to impose a banning order on the client for a period of time. Efforts should be taken to communicate that decision to the client in writing either directly, or via their referral agency if contact details are unknown. The client should be advised that if this happens again they may be refused access from the charity's services for life.

7.3 Treatment and Support Following an Incident

Any injuries sustained which are assessed as minor, may be treated by a First Aider. Where an employee or volunteer has sustained a more serious physical injury they

should be taken to the Accident and Emergency department/Minor Injuries Unit as soon as possible.

It is the CEO's responsibility to ensure that support and counselling are provided (if required) for the member of staff or volunteer involved. All staff/volunteers involved in a violent or aggressive incident should be offered counselling at the time of the incident. If further counselling is required this can be arranged as deemed necessary following consultation with the Trustees.

Following a violent incident, the CEO should make arrangements to enable the employee/volunteer to take "time out" from the WEFB if required. If after this time normal duties cannot be resumed, suitable alternative duties should be offered. This may be away from their normal duties or work location.

Absence resulting from violence or aggression sustained at work that requires counselling treatment will be regarded as sickness absence. If the employee concerned is unable to return permanently to their original duties it may be necessary to re-deploy them.

All employees must be given the opportunity to discuss their concerns in confidence with the CEO. They should also be encouraged to discuss the incident with their immediate colleagues to help the team consider effective and alternative ways of handling the situation in the future.

8 Legal Action Following Violence at Work

All violent or verbal incidents must be reported to the CEO at the time they occur, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Should the Police be involved in an incident, and subsequently indicate that they are charging the assailant through the Common Assault Act, proceedings will be taken through the Crown Prosecution Service. WEFB personnel will assist and co-operate with the Police as and when required.

Where the Police have indicated that they will not be charging an assailant, the CEO should discuss the incident with the Board of Trustees and they may judge that a Private Prosecution or civil claim might be submitted on behalf of the employee/volunteer, if they agree to this. If so, the CEO will take legal advice from the WEFB's solicitors to determine whether a Private Prosecution or civil claim is likely to be successful. Where a Civil Claim is to be pursued the CEO in consultation with and the WEFB's solicitors will determine what action will be taken and who will pursue the case.

The costs of any civil action will be incurred by the WEFB. Every employee/volunteer has a right to pursue his or her own legal action, however if the WEFB after due consideration has decided that legal action would not be instigated, WEFB will not be responsible for any costs incurred.

9 Training

There is a range of violence and aggression related training options available for staff and volunteers who are in regular contact with clients, visitors and the public, e.g. Mental Health First Aid, Conflict Resolution, Breakaway and Physical Intervention Training. Appropriate training will be considered as part of the Risk Assessments carried out under para 6.

10 Equality and Diversity

WEFB is committed to ensuring that it treats its employees and volunteers fairly equitably and reasonably and that it does not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of their ethnic origin, physical or mental abilities, gender, age, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. This policy has been appropriately assessed.

11 Monitoring Compliance

WEFB will maintain effective monitoring systems to ensure implementation of this policy, including the following:

Standard / Process / Issue	Monitoring & Audit			
	Method	By	Reported to	Frequency
Potential Risks	Risk assessments	Operational Manager	C.E.O.	Planning one-off event. On change of location and/or service provision
Incident Handling	Incident Evaluation Report, including recommendations	C.E.O.	Board of Trustees	As and when incident occurs
Training Needs	Training Needs Assessment	C.E.O.	Board of Trustees	On recruitment of new staff/volunteers
Training	Check Training Records for completeness, highlighting missed training and/or poor record keeping	Admin	C.E.O.	6 monthly

12 Amendments Table

Version	Effective From	Date of Review	Changes made
1.0	11 February 2020	11 February 2021	
1.0	17 February 2021	21 February 2023	No changes made