



Violence & Aggression Policy

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POLICY SUMMARY

This policy sets out EPIC's approach to the avoidance of violence and aggression in the workplace and details the arrangements in place for dealing with incidents should they occur.

EPIC has a zero tolerance towards violence and aggression in the workplace. Individuals should feel safe at work and not be exposed to undue or unreasonable risk. Employees should also be able to work safely, free from threats, actual injury, acts of aggression, harassment, or violence. We aim to minimise, manage, and control such risks and such actions.

1. APPLICABILITY

The Policy applies to all EPIC employees without exception as a perpetrator or a victim.

2. INTRODUCTION

Employers have a legal duty to protect their employees and anyone else potentially affected by their undertaking from work-related health and safety risks. This includes protecting people from non-consensual acts of violence and aggression or threats that arise from, or in connection to, work. Recognising the shared responsibility to assist employees during challenging times is essential to being a good employer.

Violence can impact an organisation negatively, making recruiting and retaining staff difficult, lowering morale and undermining the organisation's public image. Violence can cause distress and pain to individuals.

People may have different responses to aggression and threats, with some suffering more anxiety than others. Establishing a compassionate and efficient workplace policy to address the repercussions of violence and aggression, EPIC aims to create a more supportive and secure work environment for all staff members.

3. CONTEXT

This policy is limited to incidences of violence, aggression and threats arising out of, or in connection to, work.

EPIC recognises that other forms of non-work-related violence and aggression falling outside of this definition, including domestic or gender-based violence and abuse, sexual abuse and other unwanted behaviours could occur on EPIC premises or impact members of the EPIC team. These issues fall outside of the remit of this policy. Where the perpetrators of such acts are members of the EPIC team then these will be addressed under the EPIC's Bullying and Harassment Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy.

EPIC can provide support and advice for colleagues who are experiencing violence or aggression, harassment, or other unwanted behaviour. This includes support through the Employee Assistance Programme, the provision of counselling services and other advice and guidance to support people experiencing these issues.

4. STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy uses the Health & Safety Executive definition of violence; which is 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted by a resident, visitor(s), contractors, or others in circumstances relating to his/her employment'.

Violence need not cause physical harm but for example may include incidents which:

- Cause major injury;
- Require medical assistance;
- Requires first aid only;
- Involve a threat, even if no physical injury results;
- Involve verbal abuse;
- Involve nonverbal abuse (for example stalking, emails, texts, written communication which includes posting on social media platforms); and/or
- Involve other threatening behaviour.

EPIC takes a zero-tolerance approach toward violence and will manage its activities in such a way as to minimise the risk of employees and anyone else potentially affected being subjected to work-related violence, abuse or threatening behaviour.

Risk assessments will be produced for all work activities in which there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of violence, and suitable control measures will be implemented in consultation with relevant staff.

Any incident involving threatening behaviour, verbal abuse or physical violence should be reported to the Head of Business Support Services or the line manager as soon as is practicable after the incident using the incident reporting form on Microsoft Teams. In some circumstances where the individual is not able to make the report, support will be given by the line manager.

Anyone acting in a physically violent way may be subject to possible criminal investigation depending on the type of incident and any injury caused.

Any member of staff acting in a threatening or physically abusive manner may be dealt with by their line manager in accordance with EPIC's disciplinary procedures.

Contractors who initiate work-related violence will be asked to leave the site and banned from future EPIC contract work. The incident will be reported through the incident reporting form on Microsoft Teams and to the contract manager.

5. RECORDING AND REPORTING

Employees should report every incident of violence, harassment, and aggressive behaviour to their line manager or Head of Business Support Services as quickly as possible and must also record the incident on our incident reporting form on Microsoft Teams within two working days. This will allow investigation and remedial action to start quickly. Detailed information about an incident must be provided.

The main aim of reporting is to identify means to support the employee and prevent similar incidents occurring in the future, for example by identifying a need for:

- changes to existing working practices or procedures;
- new working practices or procedures; and/or
- additional or revised training requirements.

Such records would also be used to identify trends, assist the review of processes, inform risk assessments and assist with effective tenancy management.

6. INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENTS

Every incident will be reviewed. Significant incidents of violence may require detailed investigation to establish the cause and any action required to prevent or mitigate the chance of a recurrence. Investigations which focus on 'who was to blame' are insufficient and unhelpful. The focus must be on what went wrong and how to reduce risks in the future. Consideration should be given to informing the police of the incident.

7. POST-INCIDENT SUPPORT

Discussion will take place with the employee concerned as soon as possible after an incident has been reported. This process of 'debriefing' will establish the details of what happened and provide emotional support to the employee. Separating 'technical' and 'emotional' briefings may help to ensure that people can contribute to the factual investigation of an incident. The employee's line manager will be involved in the factual debriefing to emphasise that we take all incidents seriously.

In serious cases, the matter will be reported to the police and employees may need to be given access to a specialist counsellor.

EPIC operates an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) where confidential help and support can be obtained 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Employees have access to this without the need for a referral and will be guided to this where it is felt an employee may benefit. EPIC also has trained Mental Health First Aiders who can be called upon confidentially by anyone impacted by violence and aggression in the workplace.

EPIC will provide support for staff affected by violence caused either at work or at home. This may include counselling which our Occupational Health Service provider can provide guidance on.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders across EPIC are detailed below.

The Chief Executive has overall day-to-day responsibility for health and safety matters at EPIC. The Chief Executive delegates responsibility for undertaking aspects of these duties, in addition to any other responsibilities under the health, safety and wellbeing policy, through line management and identified roles as described below:

The Head of Business Support Services will ensure that:

- all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that employees work in a safe working environment;
- employees receive appropriate training in dealing with violence and aggression at work;
- risk assessments are carried out and safe systems of work are devised and implemented with monitoring to ensure effectiveness;
- suitable and sufficient control measures are put in place to eliminate the risk of work-related violence and aggression;
- all reported incidents are correctly recorded and reported on a regular basis to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee;
- appropriate support is offered to employees who are experiencing violence and aggression at work;
- employees are provided with general guidance and information on equipment, administrative procedures and support available; and

- appropriate action will be taken against contractors, agents, or others if they are the cause of the incident.

The Housing Manager will ensure appropriate action will be taken against residents if they, their visitors, or someone else they encourage to cause the incident (including enforcing the terms of the Tenancy Agreement).

Employees should:

- ensure this policy is read and understood to ensure procedure is followed at all times;
- report any incidents of work-related violence, that they either witness or experience, via the incident reporting procedure as soon as is practicable after the incident has taken place;
- not do anything which purposefully inflames a potentially violent or aggressive situation;
- work to minimise the risk of aggression and violence at all times; and
- report any incidents verbally to the Head of Business Support Services or their line manager immediately, or as quickly as practicable, after the incident has taken place.

9. TRAINING

This policy forms part of the standard induction for all new employees, including agency workers, contractors, and Board members and will be read within the induction period. Further training and refresher training will also take place on an annual basis, and ad hoc at EPIC's discretion.

Training employees can help to achieve:

- a reduction in the number of incidents;
- a reduction in the seriousness of incidents;
- a reduction in the physical and psychological effects of incidents;
- an improved response to incidents; and
- an improvement in staff morale.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

We are committed to ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity for all. We are opposed to discrimination on any grounds, including race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any unjustifiable criteria. We are committed to developing a culture that values people from all sections of society and the contribution which each individual can make. We will ensure our approach to accessing properties is considerate of people's individual needs. We also adhere to the Equality Act 2010.

EPIC Housing recognises that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances and will strive to ensure no person or groups of persons is treated with injustice due to their personal circumstances. EH will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation and will make sure the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998) will be adhered to.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed on this policy and a copy of this is available on request. The EIA results show that there is no evidence of potentially unlawful discrimination through this policy, subject to continuing monitoring and review.

11. MONITORING / REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed, as a minimum, every 3 years. A review may be conducted earlier if there are significant changes to either legislation or EPIC's operating practices.

12.ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Grievance procedure
- Disciplinary procedure

Version Control

Date of Review	Reviewer	Version Number	Changes	Date of Next Review	Approved By
October 2023	HoBSS	1.0	New Policy	October 2026	Exec Team