



Edenbridge Town Council

Town Clerk: Caroline Leet



Work-Related Violence Policy

Adopted: 4 July 2022

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out our Edenbridge Town Council's policy and procedures to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence. Management supports this policy, and we will not tolerate any instances of work-related violence, including verbal abuse, to our staff. No member of staff will be blamed for an instance of work-related violence caused by a resident, member of the public or Councillor. All employees have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect. This policy applies to all staff working for the Town Council.

Definition of work-related violence

We will define work-related violence as: any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment. This is based on the *Health and Safety Executive's* definition.

Responsibilities of staff, managers and Councillors

These relate to all members of staff and other personnel who work or volunteer for the Town Council. The Council will work to provide a safe workplace for employees, councilors, volunteers and for visitors. Each employee, and everyone with whom we come into contact in our work, deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect.

Managers and Councillors

All managers and councillors have a responsibility to implement this policy and to make sure their staff are aware of it and understand it. They have a responsibility to act in a way that does not incite or increase the likelihood of violence. They also have a responsibility to respond to any reports of violence. Any manager found to be encouraging or inciting violence or not resolving potentially violent or abusive situations may be subject to disciplinary action. Managers/councillors should also:

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Office hours: Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm **Tel:** (01732) 865368

Email: townclerk@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk **Web:** www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk

- Treat any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse seriously and respond to them promptly.
- Record details of the incident where appropriate and give all employees involved in the incident full support during the whole process. You should also respond and consider seriously any suggestions made by staff about how to improve violence prevention and management, and give feedback to staff about their suggestions, including whether it will be taken forward and if not, why not.
- Set a positive example by reporting all incidents of violence and abuse and not tolerating abusive behaviour from residents, members of the public and other councillors. Make sure you also offer good customer service and follow council policies
- Respond to and, where possible, resolve incidents, ideally before they escalate.
- Monitor incidences of violence and abuse and initiate appropriate action if more measures are needed. Review and amend this policy and the risk assessment as necessary.
- Where possible, direct staff to appropriate support and advice after an incident has occurred. Encourage other staff members to support their colleagues, including those that might have witnessed the incident. If victims are particularly traumatised by the event, provide support where possible, such as time off work or changes to their tasks.
- If an investigation is needed, work with the police and offer any assistance needed to help in their enquiries.

Staff, volunteers and councillors

All staff have personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that they comply with this policy. There are a number of things that staff can do to help prevent work-related violence:

- Be aware of the Council's policy and comply with it
- Offer good customer service and be aware of residents' needs.
- Recognise the potential for work-related violence and take action to resolve it early on. Staff should take positive action and, for example, contact a manager if they think a customer or member of the public might cause problems.
- Don't accept instances of work-related violence directed towards you or others.
Staff/volunteers/councillors should report any instances of violence, threats or abuse, including any details about when it happened, who was involved and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident. Serious incidents should be reported in the incident book kept by the Town Clerk, but minor incidents and incidents of verbal abuse should be reported to managers as they occur.
- Be supportive of colleagues who are victims or witnessed work-related violence.
- Suggest additional measures to managers which might help to prevent and manage work-related violence.

- Staff have a responsibility to act in a way that does not incite or increase the likelihood of violence. Any staff member found to be encouraging or inciting violence may be subject to disciplinary action.

Staff and managers should also work with trade unions/NALC/SLCC, where relevant, in preventing, addressing, reporting and responding to incidents or work-related violence.

Risk assessments

The risk assessments for work-related violence are kept in the Town Clerk's office in the health and safety folder. The risk assessments were conducted by the Town Clerk and are reviewed yearly, unless an increase in the number of incidents suggests the assessment should be reviewed more frequently.

The risks were assessed by talking to staff, reviewing the incident book and considering the work environment and job design. If staff believe a risk factor has not been covered by the assessment or have ideas on further prevention measures, they should discuss these with their manager. The contents of the risk assessment will be communicated to all staff and appropriate training will be given.

Prevention and management measures

There are several measures in place following the risk assessment that staff should be aware of. These fall under the areas of work environment, working practices and training.

Work environment and Risk Reduction Measures

While the Council does not expect employees to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform the Town Clerk or colleague if any employee, claimant, customer or vendor exhibits behavior which could lead to a potentially dangerous situation. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Discussing dangerous weapons and/or bringing such weapons into the workplace.
- Displaying overt signs or extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger.
- Making threatening remarks.
- Exhibiting sudden or significant deterioration of performance.
- Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior

Working practices

Minimal cash is kept in the till, and staff are encouraged to ask the Town Clerk or RFO to deposit notes regularly in the safe. Banking is regularly done to minimize cash on the premises. Card payments are encouraged.

Groundstaff will avoid where possible to work alone at the Depot or Tractor shed. They will also aim to work on sites in twos.

Training

The following training should be provided:

- All staff, including new staff, should receive awareness training on work-related violence, our policy and procedures, how to prevent work-related violence, reporting procedures and what to do following an incident. This may be through formal training or a briefing from managers, depending on the risk potential for the staff members.
- Managers will be trained as above, as well as on how to handle complaints and trouble among customers effectively.
- Groundsstaff will also be made aware of how to manage difficult situations

Reporting Procedures

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to the Town Clerk. Reports of workplace violence may be made anonymously and investigated accordingly. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled and the results of investigations will be discussed with them. The Council will take appropriate action at any indication of a potentially hostile or violent situation.

Actions following an incident

If a staff member is being abused, threatened or attacked, they should approach their manager or a colleague for help. Managers should respond to the situation by talking to the perpetrator, explaining that their behaviour is not acceptable. They should try to resolve the problem and, if that is not possible, call for a councillor or if there is an immediate threat to call the police. Medical assistance should be provided immediately where required.

Any incidents resulting in major injury to staff or that cause staff to be off work for three days or more must be reported under the RIDDOR Regulations 1995. Any incident which results in a member of the public being taken directly to hospital from the premises must also be reported. Managers should contact the HSE Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 9923 to report the incident.

Less serious incidents should still be reported to managers as they occur, and managers should make a note of these. If managers notice an increase in reports, several reports within a short period or reports about the same perpetrator, managers should record the details, ask staff for more information and take action.