



# FIRST STOP CENTRE

## VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION GUIDELINES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Some of the Visitors being supported by First Stop may, on occasions, behave in a threatening or aggressive manner. In these situations, staff may be subject to verbal and/or physical attacks which can be frightening and dangerous. Staff may also be involved in attempting to prevent such attacks on other visitors, staff or members of the public. In managing such situations there needs to be demonstrated respect for the individuals and protecting their right to personal dignity, care and support irrespective of their behaviour, as well as taking account of the health and safety of others. First Stop recognises that in order for staff to act and react in ways that are compatible with its philosophies they need to feel confident and competent in managing various situations which may from time to time occur. Please see First Stop's Health and Safety Policy for a more generic view.

### 2. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH VIOLENCE

#### Prevention of Aggressive and Violent Behaviour

- 2.1 When dealing with violence and aggression it is important to try and understand the rationale for the behaviour. This behaviour cannot be viewed as isolated from the individual's environment nor from the individual's possible frustrations.
- 2.2 Wherever possible attempts should be made to avoid or prevent aggressive and violent behaviour through the provision of a physical, social and intellectual environment that meets the needs of the individual visitor. This environment should be identified through the visitor's risk plan and with the support of various professionals and support services available to the visitor.

#### Avoiding Violent Behaviour

- 2.3 It must be acknowledged that all individuals may, from time to time, become agitated, angry or violent. Although this may be a natural human process much can be done to avoid the escalation of anger/agitation that can lead to violence or a loss of control. In particular "Flashpoint/Trigger" situations need to be avoided if possible and mounting agitation or anger recognised and defused.

#### New referral (Visitors unknown to staff)

- 2.4 When a visitor who may be exhibiting signs of challenging behaviour is either new to First Stop Centre or the member of staff involved is new or does not know the visitor particularly well, the most crucial factor is getting to know the individual concerned. Ways in which this could be done are:
- Speak to staff who know the visitor



- Read old case notes and records.

2.5 Staff must ensure they are familiar with current guidelines for working with visitors whose behaviour may be threatening and/or violent

### 3. GUIDELINES

3.1 The following guidelines should be adopted.

- The Centre Manager should co-ordinate an individual planning meeting to assess risk, identify known triggers and establish strategies for dealing with the particular individual
- Staff unfamiliar with a visitor should not be supporting the visitor on his or her own until the risk assessment is carried out and strategies are established
- All staff need to be committed and supported to follow agreed guidelines
- Guidelines must be available in writing to staff
- All relevant information should be collated which then must be shared with all resources used by the visitor to ensure consistent practice
- Any practices set out in the guidelines which are consistently not effective must be reviewed and amended as necessary.

### 4. A VISITOR WHO YOU KNOW CAN BE VIOLENT

4.1 This section gives general guidance on practical action that should be taken when a visitor who is known to staff becomes violent. The guidelines within the individual plan for working with the particular individual may suggest a different course of action, in which case those guidelines should be followed. All staff must be familiar with the guidelines established for the individual and should avoid where possible known triggers.

#### **The Visitor becomes agitated**

4.2 Intervention may be necessary to:

- Protect others from harm
- Help the visitor to calm down
- Help the visitor to regain and maintain his or her dignity
- Minimise public intervention.

Attempt intervention by:

- Diverting the attention of the visitor to more pleasant activities
- Removing, if known and where possible, the cause of agitation
- Actively encouraging the visitor to relax
- Talking to the visitor in order to understand the cause of distress and convey that understanding to the individual.

Different approaches will be appropriate for different individuals.

#### **The Visitor becomes violent**

4.3 In such circumstances, the following procedures should be followed.



- Ask others, including visitors, to leave the immediate vicinity, where possible, taking with them dangerous objects
- In some extreme circumstances, it may be appropriate to clear all staff and visitors out of the room/building
- This will be down to the judgment of the staff on duty at the time
- Stay with the visitor and allow him/her to calm down in his/her own time
- Do not attempt physical restraint unless the person is inflicting actual and serious physical harm to him or herself and/or others.

## 5. RESTRAINT AND CONTROL

- 5.1 This section gives guidance on the use of control and restraint. The need to take such radical action should be rare. Restraint and control must only be used where there is no other course of action possible. Restraint and control are used to provide the safest means of helping a person who is highly agitated to calm down with a minimum risk to him or herself and/or others.

### **ALL STAFF SHOULD ONLY CARRY OUT RESTRAINT AND CONTROL AFTER THEY HAVE RECEIVED THE APPROPRIATE TRAINING**

#### 5.2 Carrying out Restraint

- A minimum amount of force to be used in accordance with the law
- Where possible more than one staff member should be involved in physical restraint to reduce the risk of injury to visitor and staff.
- However, the number of people involved must be kept to an absolute minimum
- If more than one member of staff is involved in the restraint procedure one must be identified as the 'leader' and be responsible for giving instruction to the other(s)
- The period of restraint should be kept to an absolute minimum
- While restraining a visitor, speak in a quiet calm manner explaining what is happening and why, thereby reassuring the visitor.

#### 5.3 A situation is becoming out of control and staff are unable to cope

- The person is behaving in such a way which threatens to inflict serious physical harm to him or herself and/or others
- The person cannot be redirected from the behaviour and all other attempts at stopping the behaviour have failed
- Press panic alarm
- Call the police.

#### 5.4 The Visitor is calmer

- You feel confident to contain and manage the situation
- Return the environment back to normal as quickly as possible with as little fuss as possible
- Ensure that support has been given to other visitors who may have been involved or witnessed the incident to calm and reassure



- Continue to support and reassure the visitor involved in the incident
- Ensure that incident is recorded in full including events preceding the episode and any subsequent action.

#### **After the Event**

5.5

- Incident must be fully recorded
- Counselling for other visitors or staff who may have been involved in the incident should be provided. It is important that they be given time to recover from what may have been a traumatic episode for them.

5.6 It must be remembered at all times that careless use of restraint may lead to injury and may constitute assault.

### **6. COMMITMENT TO STAFF**

6.1 First Stop recognises that working with people who present challenging behaviour, which may involve physical attacks on staff, is both demanding and stressful. In view of this, First Stop will ensure that staff teams faced with such situations receive training and support.

6.2 *Any incident arising from violent or aggressive behaviour by a visitor should be recorded in accordance with the process set out in the Incident Procedure.*