

Title of POL: Managing Violence and Aggression

Custodian: Chief People Officer

Version Number: 02

Issue date: 01.05.26

Review date: 01.05.29

POLICY (POL)

Title of Policy	Managing Violence and Aggression		
What type of document is this?	Policy (POL)	Policy Reference Number	HHH-POL-062
Purpose of POL	This policy outlines Helping Hand’s approach for managing the risk of violence and aggression to employees, along with inappropriate behaviour. It also provides guidance to employees and managers on the action to take to avoid such incidents and following any reported act(s) of violence and/or aggression.		
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES Include in this section details of the key roles and associated responsibilities relevant to the document			
Roles	Responsibility		
All Directors/Managers	To ensure that the policy is embedded within the teams and adhered too.		
All Employees	To adhere to this policy		
Scope of POL	<p>Helping Hands believes that employees should be safe at work and should not be exposed to undue or unreasonable risk. It believes that employees should be able to work safely, free from the threat of injury or upset through acts of aggression or violence.</p> <p>Attacks on employees at work are, fortunately, very rare and we will do all we can to minimise this risk still further and ensure that employees working for us are as safe as possible.</p>		

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POLICY (POL)**1.0 Aim of the Policy**

This policy is intended to set out the principles and policies underpinning the Helping Hands approach to aggression and violence towards employees.

This policy outlines Helping Hand's approach for managing the risk of violence and aggression to employees, along with inappropriate behaviour. It also provides guidance to employees and managers on the action to take to avoid such incidents and following any reported act(s) of violence and/or aggression.

Helping Hands understands that sometimes, due to individual circumstances, our customers won't always be polite and calm when they call or during visits and may behave in a way that makes us feel uncomfortable.

Helping Hands is committed to supporting any employee who suffers violence or aggression or inappropriate behaviour during, or arising out of, their work duties.

2.0 Our Policy

2.1 This policy applies to all Helping Hands employees without exception.

At Helping Hands:

- Employees should work to minimise the risk of, and avoid the occurrence of, aggression and violence at all times.
- Violence against employees working for Helping Hands will not be tolerated.
- Helping Hands has in place systems to record incidents of violence against employees.
- All violent incidents must be reported by employees to their managers at the time they occur or as soon as possible thereafter.

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- Any customer or person who acts in a violent or abusive manner towards employees should be challenged regarding their unacceptable behaviour.
- In the case of a customer who acts in a violent or abusive manner towards employees their plan of care should be reviewed and discussed with them and changes agreed.

2.2 Definitions

Behaviour considered as inappropriate includes:

- Swearing or abusive language,
- Threatening or abusive behaviour,
- Verbal or physical abuse of any kind

3.0 Responding to Violent Situations

3.1 Violent situations are, thankfully, very rare within Helping Hands. However, in the event of a violent or aggressive incident employees should adhere to the following procedure:

- The first priority of employees should be for their own safety and for the safety of other employees and customers.
- Employees should immediately try to summon help, by asking another employee to assist, if available, or by making a telephone call to the Helping Hands manager.
- Employees should try to calm the situation wherever possible, talking to the potential aggressor calmly, trying to find out what is wrong and pointing out how their behaviour is affecting people – employees should try not to get angry and should never shout back.

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- Where the level of threat continues to increase and the employee feels that they are in imminent danger then they should try to escape and remove any other people from the situation immediately and get assistance.
- Where an employee is actually attacked then they are permitted to defend themselves, but they must use only the "minimum reasonable force" to do this.
- In the event of an actual physical assault, or if the incident involves an intruder, then the Police should be called immediately.
- Where the "attacker" in a violent situation is the customer and the situation requires some form of restraint then action should be taken in accordance with the Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy.

4.0 Reporting and Support

- Any violent or abusive incidents towards employees, no matter how minor should be reported at once to the Line Manager.
- Employees involved should complete and submit an incident report.
- Appropriate support will be offered by the Line Manager to employees who are involved in violent or aggressive incidents.
- Violent or aggressive incidents, even if they just amount to being shouted at, can be very upsetting for an employee and, in extreme cases, can lead to them suffering psychological trauma or illness – employees should therefore be given the opportunity to discuss their experience.

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- In extreme cases Helping Hands understands that there may be a need for ongoing support and referral to occupational health services or professional counselling.

Where the original incident did not involve the police then the Line Manager must make a decision in each case about whether or not to report the incident to the authorities. The nature and severity of the incident should be carefully considered along with any criminal intent and assessment of future threat. Wherever possible any decision about reporting the incident to the Police should be done with the approval and consent of the employee attacked but Helping Hands does reserve the right to report the matter without the victim’s consent where it deems this to be the correct action to take.

The Branch Care Manager should review all reports of aggression and violence or potential aggression and violence and look for any trends or patterns or lessons to be learned.

TRAINING	Yes
Is training required?	
Details of training	All employees should be trained to recognise the early warning signs of potential aggression and in responding to pleas for assistance. Positive Behaviours training is included in the induction training for all new care employees.
COMPLIANCE	Mangers to monitor understanding and compliance with requirements through one-to-one discussions and team meetings.
How is compliance within this document going to be monitored?	

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION		
	Positive/Negative/N/A	Comments
Does the document have a positive or negative impact on one group of people over another based on their:		
• Age?	N/A	
• Disability	N/A	
• Gender assignment?	N/A	
• Pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)	N/A	
• Race (including nationality, ethnic or national origins or colour)?	N/A	
• Marriage or civil partnership?	N/A	
• Religion or belief?	N/A	
• Sex?	N/A	
• Sexual orientation?	N/A	
If you have identified any potential impact (including any positive impact which may result in more favourable treatment for one particular group of people over another), are any	N/A	

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exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	
If the impact on one of the above groups is likely to be negative:	
Can the impact be avoided?	N/A
What alternatives are there to achieving the document's aim without the impact?	N/A
Can the impact be reduced by taking different action?	N/A
Is there an impact on staff, customer or someone else's privacy?	N/A
Changes since previous version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added to new policy template Care Manager amended to title of Branch Care Manager.
Who was involved in developing /reviewing/amending the document? (list titles)	ER Advice Team Lead
How confidential is this document	Public Can be shared freely within and outside of Helping Hands
References	
Associated Documents	<p>Reducing the risk of violent and aggressive behaviours Quick guides to social care topics Social care NICE Communities About NICE</p> <p>Health Services - Workplace Violence</p>

Appendix 1

Guidance on Personal Safety

1.0 Assessing the Risk

In order to assess the risk to yourself or colleagues you should consider:

- Anything you may do or the manner in which it is done which may upset or annoy a person/persons (e.g. breaking bad news)
- Some customers you work with may have behaviour which can be unpredictable (e.g. alcohol abuse, distressed, mentally ill etc)
- Where you are working, some places could be unsafe
- Whether there are times of the day when you might be at higher risk.

If you identify areas of risk then you should, in the first instance, discuss them with your line manager to look at possible solutions/actions which can be taken to minimise the risks.

2.0 Recognising Danger Signs

The danger signs can be evident in a number of ways with examples given below.

Verbal Signs

These can include:

- Change in voice (increase or decrease in volume or pitch)
- Talking over your replies and not allowing you to finish speaking
- Actual threats which start off at a relatively low level but increase

Non-verbal Signs

We communicate in a non-verbal way for up to 93% of our communications. Signs to consider include:

- Agitation, restlessness and frequent movements
- Eye to eye contact (confrontational)
- Banging tables or other furniture
- Crossed arms (confrontational)
- Clenched fists or movement to position of body to 'launch' a physical attack
- Poking fingers or pushing
- If a normally extrovert (noisy) person suddenly becomes quiet and withdrawn

2.1 Situations which may trigger aggressive behaviour

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There are many situations which may increase the risk of or trigger violent or aggressive behaviour.

Examples include:

- When assisting with personal care
- Any changes in daily routines
- Any restrictions on movement
- Feeling they are not being listened to

This is not an exhaustive list.

If you recognise the danger signs or situations then:

- Watch what you say
- Watch how you say it
- Watch out for other danger signs
- Consider if you need assistance
- Consider whether to stay or get away

3.0 Managing Confrontation

You must decide in any confrontational situation, what your objectives are.

They may include:

- I want to defuse this situation before it escalates
- I want to get out safely
- I want to stand firm on the decision (this is potentially going to act as a trigger)

To defuse any such confrontation then you should:

- Move away from the aggressor
- Blink and don't stare
- Resist touching (unless to protect yourself)

this will give a "calming" message to the other person and possibly reduce the risk.

4.0 Avoiding Danger

The use of common sense in the majority of situations would mean that you are less likely to put yourself in dangerous situations.

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Some things which you could do:

- Maintain alertness especially during darkness and if in the community, parking or working alone, or if in areas which are unfamiliar to you
- Ask for a relevant customer history including any history of violence. If so should you be visiting them on your own?
- Ensure you report incidents so information can be available for other people who may deal with this person
- Decide if a situation can be dealt with at a different time when additional resources or staff can be available
- If you sense something is not right move away/get out
- If out of hours or in the community, ensure people know your movements or have "check in" arrangements
- If in the community, park in well-lit areas
- DO NOT get involved in family squabbles (move away)
- Have emergency plans to call for help
- Do not carry holders/bags with straps diagonally across the body (it could be used to drag you to the ground or somewhere else)
- If attacked for a bag, do not fight for it
- Take care when using lifts
- Report all incidents

5.0 Diffusing Anger

Some ways which you can defuse anger and/or difficult behaviour include:

- Keep calm, breathe slowly and deeply as this will help to maintain control over your actions
- Speak in a non-patronising way
- Where you cannot comply with a specific request, state clearly why you cannot do so
- Do not argue
- Do not make promises which cannot be kept
- Don't leave people waiting for long periods (as they will feel neglected or forgotten)
- Remember the reasons why they are using our services and may be acting the way they do (pain, fear, worry etc.)
- Put yourself in their position, are they being unreasonable?

Points to remember:

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- Good communicators can ease a situation
- Maintain a non-aggressive stance
- Apologise where genuine mistakes have been made
- Listen (and let them know you are listening)
- Warn other people and report
- If on the telephone, hear the person out
- Tell them you will help but not accept inappropriate behaviour
- If distressed get help
- If you are subject to unpleasant/verbal abuse on the phone, warn the caller that if they continue you will end the call

6.0 Lone working

The main issues to consider if you are working alone include:

- Accessibility of support
- Be traceable in your movements
- Raising alarm/help (ask persons to contact help)
- Ask yourself if the work can be done at other times

Visiting Homes

- Certain aspects need to be considered at various stages but the over-riding rule is if you don't feel safe, get out.

On the doorstep:

- Are there any indications of potential aggressive behaviour (if so re-arrange appointment or alternative arrangements).

Going in:

- Get the other person to lead the way and you attend the door so you can check what you need to do to open it
- If sitting down, sit on a chair which you can get out of quickly
- If dogs are present, ask them to be moved to another room
- Be careful about touching a person/patient whenever there is a dog present

Leaving:

Leave immediately you have finished

- If you need to abandon visits then do so

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- Retreat at the earliest opportunity

Travelling Around

Dress:

- Avoid wearing expensive looking jewellery/watches etc
- Don't carry handbags or have little of value/items in them
- Think about what you wear and the impression it may give
- Keep your hands free (not in pockets)

Dangerous Places:

- Try to stay clear of places such as public parks, multi-storey car parks, lifts etc where there is no-one else around or in hours of darkness
- Ask if area has reputation and arrange suitable "check in" plans etc

Darkness:

- Avoid poorly lit areas
- Have car keys or bus fare handy so you are not fumbling to find them
- If locking up in the dark, have someone with you
- If you think you are being followed walk briskly to a shop or public house and call the Police (if none available, choose a suitable house where the lights are on)

Driving:

- Don't stop to assist someone who has broken down unless you know that you know them (call the Police)
- Check no-one else is in the car when you get in
- If people are near your car when you approach it, cross the road and call Police
- Have your keys in your hand
- Always lock your car when you leave it (even in petrol stations)
- Don't get lost or look as if you are lost
- Check your petrol gauge before your journey
- Do not leave equipment in view