

For: OCC Managers
Heads of all Establishments and Settings
Governors/Management Committees
Trade Union Safety Representatives
Employee Noticeboards
Intranet



PERSONAL SAFETY

PHYSICAL & VERBAL ABUSE OF STAFF

LEGISLATION

Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council, having regard to its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act, acknowledges its duty to provide safe working conditions and practices for its employees, based on suitable and sufficient risk assessments [Model Risk Assessment Form](#). The problem of physical and verbal abuse of employees gives cause for concern for managers/heads of establishments/settings and Trade Unions (see also Oxfordshire County Council [Violence to Employees at Work](#) Policy).

Scope

This procedure applies to all managers and staff who find themselves at risk of work related violence. This is particularly relevant in schools and front line services such as those in Social & Community Services and Children, Education & Families and applies anywhere staff are dealing with members of the public.

Preventative Strategy

The likelihood of an employee suffering physical and/or verbal abuse is dependent on factors which can be identified and include the nature of the interaction between the employee and an assailant, the particular situation in which the interaction occurs etc. The personality of assailant(s) and the age and experience of the employee have also been identified as factors which can influence the occurrence of physical and verbal abuse at work.

Issued by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, Customer Services, Unipart House, Garsington Road, OXFORD, OX4 2GQ

The Council is committed to:

- The identification of employee groups which may be at particular risk of violence and the work areas where such incidents can take place. See Annex 1 – *Identification of Risks of Physical and Verbal Abuse of Employees and a Preventive Strategy*.
- The provision of relevant information, instruction and training (especially induction) to reduce the risk of violence.
- The provision of means of protection, e.g. barriers, timed “switch off” lighting systems and alarms etc to reduce significantly the risk of assault.

Managers’ Responsibilities

Implementation and Monitoring

The head of establishment/service/setting must determine which work areas and which work groups within them, are at risk in the work areas under their control and prescribe appropriate precautionary measures based on the objectives outlined above. The arrangements made should take account of the need for periodic inspection and testing of the precautionary measures and a procedure for remedying defects.

Data Collection

Information on incidents of physical and/or verbal abuse of employees is collected via the use of the **on-line Accident and Incident Reporting system** for monitoring and statistical purposes. Employees who experience physical and/or verbal abuse should report each incident. The on-line reporting system is to be found at:

<http://mycases.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hscm/DB7ARWF9.nsf>;

Employees’ Responsibilities

Employees need to:

- Co-operate with their employer by adhering to any local procedures
- Adhere to any relevant training they have been given
- Report any incidents of verbal or physical abuse to their line manager

	email and web addresses	
Specialist:		
Occupational Health	email: occupational.health@oxfordshire.gov.uk web address: http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/occupationalhealth	01865 815421
Staff Care Services	email: staffsupport@oxfordshire.gov.uk . web address: http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/staffcareservice	01865 854416
General:		
Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team	email: healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk web address: http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/healthandsafety	Helpdesk 01865 797222

IDENTIFICATION OF RISK OF ABUSE TO EMPLOYEES AND A PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY

