

ASSAULTS ON STAFF – CODE OF PRACTICE

(This Policy was reviewed by the full Council at its AGM held on 15 May 2024, minute 20/24-25)

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Town Council recognises that from time to time some members of staff who come into contact with the public may be the victims of violence. Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council is concerned for the safety and wellbeing of all staff. All acts of violence or threat of violence against employees are taken seriously.
- 1.2 The purpose of this code is to define what is meant by 'violence' in this context, outline the preventative measures that can be taken, and provide guidance to staff and managers on the action to be taken should an incident occur.

2 THE DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE

Violence to staff can be:

- Actual physical violence
- Severe verbal aggression
- Threats of violence to the individual, their family and property.

It is not always easy to define violence where the latter two categories are concerned. Staff and management will need to exercise their own common sense and experience in identifying whether a person is acting aggressively and constitutes a threat.

3 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- 3.1 This is one area where there can be no doubt that prevention is better than cure. Where staff are in frequent contact with the public they are at risk. However there are ways of reducing the risk. The following measures are recommended:
- a) Training will be available to all staff who come into contact with the public on a regular basis. This training will include communication skills and specific skills for handling conflict.
 - b) In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, public reception areas and interview rooms will be designed and operated to reduce the likelihood of violence against employees. Security systems for all buildings will take account of risks to staff and possible assaults.
 - c) Where it is necessary for members of the public to wait for attention the delay will be kept to the minimum. The waiting areas will be as far as possible free from stresses such as excessive noise levels etc. Consideration will also be given to environmental improvements which may provide friendlier, more interesting waiting areas

4 EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Employees are obliged to take reasonable care for not only their own health and safety but also that of their colleagues. This includes attending training courses as offered and ensuring that in dealing with members or the public you remain professional and courteous at all times.
- 4.2 If a situation should occur where you feel a member of the public is or may become violent you are expected to take reasonable steps to defuse the situation. This may mean terminating an interview and leaving the scene of the confrontation.
- 4.3 When dealing with the public you should clearly identify yourself verbally.
- 4.4 You are expected to adhere to any rules and/or procedures introduced by the Town Council to ensure your safety and safe working.

5 EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Training should be provided, as far as practicable and where necessary, to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with incidents should they arise.
- 5.2 Reported incidents should be monitored to identify patterns/risks and take remedial action if possible.
- 5.3 Information should be circulated to staff regarding any hazardous practices.
- 5.4 A safe place of work and working practices will be provided.

6 ACTION FOLLOWING AN ASSAULT

- 6.1 If you become a victim of an assault you should take the following action:
- a) Immediately inform your Manager who will ensure that the Town Clerk is notified.
 - b) If you are injured you should immediately consult a doctor and inform the police.
 - c) As soon as practical after the incident you should, with the help of your Manager and the Town Clerk if necessary, complete an Incident Report form.

7 LEGAL ACTION

- 7.1 Following the incident you should immediately discuss with your Manager and the Town Clerk whether or not you wish to take legal proceedings against your attacker. The Town Clerk will either advise you of the
- 7.2 recommended and/or necessary action to be taken or will obtain that advice for you. It is important that you do not delay taking advice as this may weaken your case should you wish to prosecute.
- 7.3 The Town Council does not have the power to take proceedings for you but the Town Clerk will be willing to arrange representation for you if you are assaulted during the course of your duties as a Town Council employee. The costs of any recommended legal action will be met by the Town Council to a maximum of £300. If, in the opinion of the Town Clerk, you should not prosecute you may still bring your own action. However should the proceedings fail the costs that

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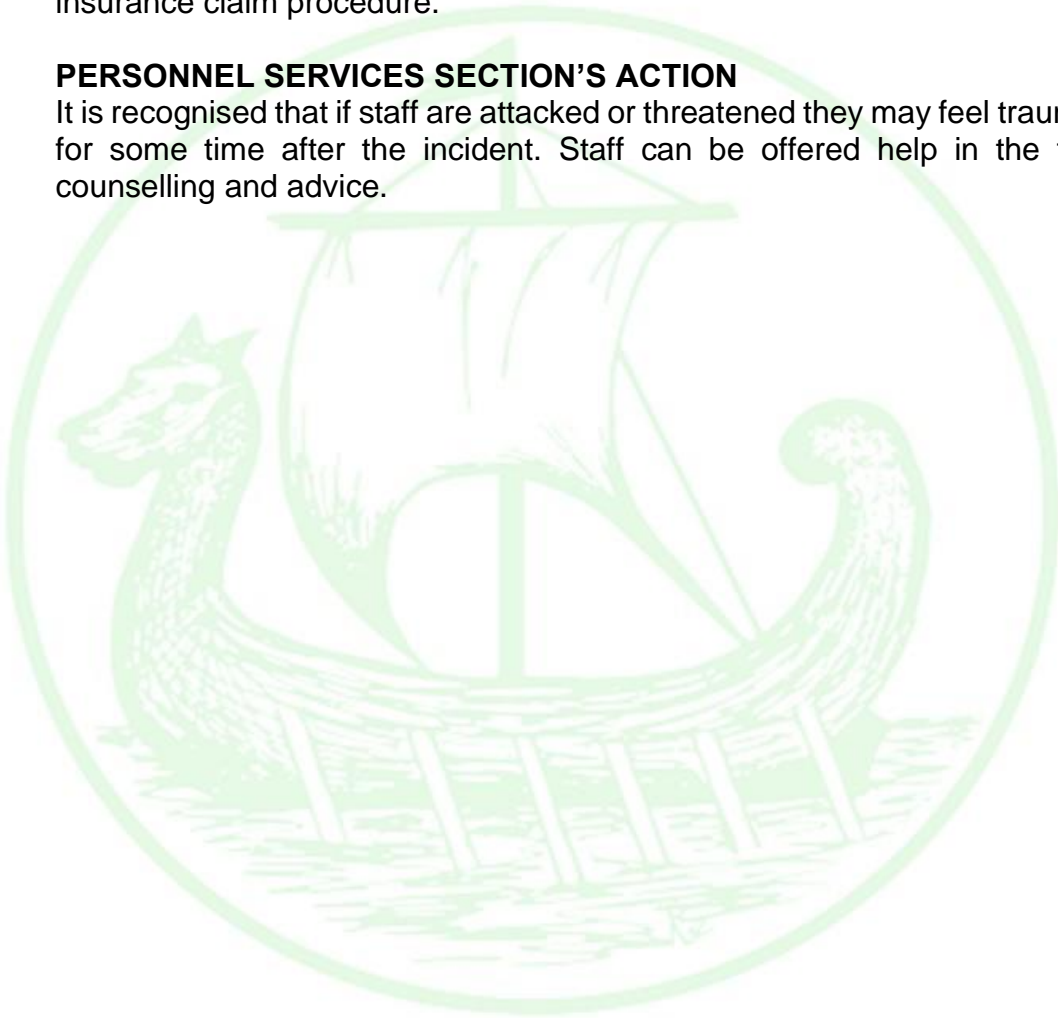
may be *awarded* will have to be borne by you. Representation will not be made available where it is decided that the attack was provoked by your own behavior.

8 PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE - ASSAULT

All Town Council Employees in pursuance of their duties are covered against bodily injury by violent or criminal assault resulting in death or disablement within 24 months of receiving such injury. Employees personal effects and/or clothing are also insured against damage or destruction arising from assault causing bodily injury. For the purpose of this policy assault will include attack by animals. The Town Clerk will advise employees on the personal accident insurance claim procedure.

9 PERSONNEL SERVICES SECTION'S ACTION

It is recognised that if staff are attacked or threatened they may feel traumatized for some time after the incident. Staff can be offered help in the form of counselling and advice.



ASSAULT ON STAFF – INCIDENT REPORT FORM.

Employee' s Name:

Nature and details of incident (please include as much detail as possible):

