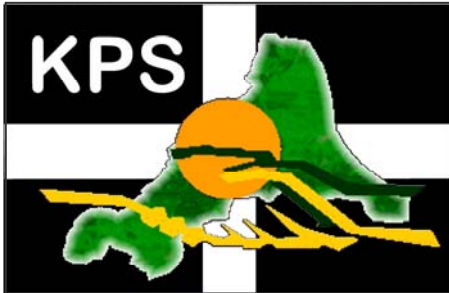


# Personal Safety

Kernow Positive Support



SPECIALISED HIV INFORMATION,  
SUPPORT, RESPITE & RETREAT

POLICY DOCUMENT 2011

# MANAGING PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY

## Definition of Violence

*Kernow Positive Support (KPS) has adopted Cornwall Council's Corporate definition of violence:-*

The application of force, severe threat or serious abuse, by members of the public or others towards people arising out of the course of their work whether or not they are on duty or at a place of work. This includes severe verbal abuse or threat, where this is judged likely to turn into actual violence; serious or persistent harassment, including racial or sexual harassment; threat with a weapon; major or minor injuries; fatalities. Behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful effects, both physically and emotionally on people. Any situation where employees perceive themselves to be threatened.

However, KPS would also consider the “application of force” to include the use of animals, such as dogs and violence “towards people” to include the families of members of staff, volunteers and service users. Perpetrators of violence can include service users and or staff, volunteers as well as members of the public. Many people still assume violence only includes serious physical attack, rape and murder. In practice a wide range of behaviour is now recognised as violent or aggressive and appreciated as being damaging to individual employees and the work of the organisation.

*The range of behaviours includes:*

Physical Violence - Non-physical Violence

- Assault causing death
- Assault causing serious physical injury
- Minor injuries
- Kicking
- Biting
- Punching
- Use of weapons
- Use of missiles
- Spitting
- Scratching
- Sexual assault
- Verbal abuse
- Racist and sexual verbal abuse
- Threats with or without weapons
- Physical posturing
- Threatening gestures
- Abusive phone calls

- Threatening use of dogs
- Harassment in all forms
- Swearing
- Name-calling
- Bullying
- Insults
- Innuendo
- Deliberate silence

## **Employment Responsibilities**

### **Employers**

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and the health and safety of those affected by the work. It is also the employers' duty to organise and control solitary workers and those working out of normal office hours.

### **Employees** (*including contracted practitioners*)

Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in the discharge of their legal obligations.

### **Kernow positive Support (KPS)**

KPS accepts its responsibility for the safety of its staff who, in the course of their work, engage in activities where acts or threats of violence may occur.

*As a result, KPS is fully committed to reducing the risk to staff by:*

- Issuing clear policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Introducing preventive, protective and supportive measures.
- Assisting staff to deal with the effects of violence.
- Providing training, induction and advice.

It will support a member of staff and volunteers who have acted reasonably and has been consistent with procedures and practice advice. Equally, it may not condone or wish to defend actions by staff and volunteers that are judged to be wrong or inappropriate.

## **KPS Training & Instruction**

KPS recognises the need for staff to receive appropriate training and instruction where dealing with violence and lone working is recognised. The KPS Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that staff and volunteers receive regular supervision and appraisal when individual training needs can be reviewed. Managers need to ensure that staff attend a specific 'Managing Your Personal Safety' training or where appropriate 'Managing Challenging Behaviour' training. Each member of staff and volunteer will be issued with this handbook which includes reference to relevant procedures and guidance that are available on-line.

## **Risk Awareness**

It is essential that staff and volunteers are actively involved in the identification of potentially violent situations. Managers have a significant responsibility in increasing awareness of risk in relation to every activity undertaken and for all levels of staff. Risk of violence should never be taken lightly by Managers. Each member of staff and volunteer should be very conscious of their own safety and well-being and that of other persons and take responsibility for being active in promoting these and guarding themselves and others. Staff and volunteers therefore, must be engaged in identifying, reporting and recording risk and implementing agreed strategies for its reduction in individual situations and activities. Managers are responsible for responding to each occasion when risk is identified by their staff and volunteers and exercising judgement in implementing plans for reducing and removing risk of violence.

## **The Role of Management (*KPS Board of Trustees*)**

It is important that decisions regarding the safety of staff and volunteers are taken by managers in consultation with the staff and volunteer concerned to plan and organise effective measures to deal with potential aggression. The team as a whole must strive to develop a culture that seeks to recognise the fear that most or all staff and volunteers feel on some occasions and to promote an atmosphere where such anxieties are shared with managers and colleagues to develop strategies that will reduce the likelihood of serious aggression.

## **Responsibility**

- To create a climate in which violence is taken seriously, and fear of violence can be openly expressed without reproach. The task of the worker may make conflict inevitable and violence possible.
- To build a profile of the service users and the community from which they come. Collecting and sharing information with other agencies is an important part of assessing the potential risk.
- To fulfil a supportive role in relation to individual employees and volunteers.
- To assess risk and try to anticipate situations where it may occur.
- To review risk assessments following any significant changes and or incidents to ensure sufficient control measures are in place to remove or reduce the risk.
- To plan for, and manage, situations where violence is a possibility.

- To provide support to staff and volunteers who work in potentially violent situations, and ensure appropriate counselling and physical care are available.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of their rights if they are involved in a violent incident.
- To ensure that all staff are familiar with procedure(s) in the event of a violent incident.

## **Principles of Good Practice**

### *Causes of Violence*

The best way to avoid becoming involved in violence is to prevent it happening. This is not always possible, however, because violence cannot always be anticipated and can be provoked by internal as well as external stimuli. Epilepsy and head injury may cause reactions of violence. Alcohol and/or drug abuse, as well as other sociopsychological factors such as psychopathic behavioural disorders, can also precipitate aggressive behaviour. Some causes of violence may have simple origins and the build-up of frustration will vary according to the service users group. Elderly people, for example may find it difficult to cope with their own anxiety if appropriate attention is not given to their physical needs. Sometimes causes are more complex and may arise, *for example*, from mental disorder. Some individuals will respond to their delusions in very bizarre ways. Generally very little is known about the incidence of violence, the circumstances in which it is more likely to occur, or the nature of the assaults made upon staff and volunteers within the organization. Aggression shown by parents in objection of Emergency Protection Orders may spill over into violent reactions; formal admission to psychiatric hospitals also carries a certain amount of risk and staff and volunteers working in training and drop-in centres may experience a number of violent incidents. In all these situations staff and volunteer members may inadvertently precipitate violence by insensitive and unskilled practice.

Long delays or lack of attention can frustrate service users. Staff should ensure these are kept to a minimum and service users are kept informed of reasons for delays etc.

Poor communication both between our-selves and with service users is another area that causes frustration. Good communication and the giving of correct information are essential. Lack of training could be a problem for some staff that do not have all the skills needed to help service users in the way they should. Regular supervision and appraisal provides the opportunity to discuss and recognise an individuals training needs.

## Signs and Symptoms

It is important for staff members to recognise the warning signs and symptoms of those service users who are potentially violent. The following are common signs and symptoms:

*He or she may:*

- be tense and agitated;
- alter voice pitch and increase volume;
- reply to questions abruptly, very often with gesticulations;
- show signs of muscular tension in the face and limbs;
- close hands and make a fist;
- bang fist into the palm of the opposite hand, or on a nearby object;
- pace up and down; and
- be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

*In addition, where the service user is well known, the following changes may be observed:*

- and he/she is likely to depart from normal behavior.

Clearly, from the above, it is necessary for all staff and volunteers to have as much up-to-date knowledge as possible about the service user's previous history and especially as to whether there has been a pattern of violent behaviour. It is accepted though, that on occasion's staff and volunteers may have no experience or knowledge of a service user at all.

Direct observation is very important, especially for residential staff and volunteers that spend long periods of time with their service users and, of all staff, it is experience and training what will develop the ability to interpret the significance of behaviour and mood changes.

Sometimes a service user will threaten violence quite openly. All such threats should be taken seriously. Whilst some such threats may well be trivial, others will highlight the need to take preventative action.

## Anticipation and Prevention of Violence

Emphasis should always be placed upon anticipation and prevention of violent behaviour. If the early warning signs and symptoms are recognised, it is often possible to prevent violence from happening, or to avoid direct confrontation. Sometimes it is possible to identify situations of high risk and it will be important for the staff and volunteer members to discuss with the line manager the need to visit and/or interview in pairs as well as the need for a female colleague to accompany a male member (*or vice versa*) if this would be helpful. A risk assessment should always be carried out when the potential for violence is identified, and this must include the action plan, and a decision as to whether the action plan will adequately control the risk and what further action is required to reduce or eliminate the risk.

When problems are anticipated it will sometimes be necessary to ask for Police advice, *for example*, in some formal admissions to psychiatric hospital or in the process of executing an Emergency Protection Order. Where outside visits involve statutory action and it is anticipated that there is a high risk of violence, staff and volunteers should not go unaccompanied. In some cases potentially violent service users should be encouraged to visit the workplace in order to avoid putting the community worker at risk by visiting the service user at home.

Sometimes staff and volunteer members may inadvertently precipitate the assaults made on them. Service users will often sense what staff expect of them and if aggression is expected, they may well respond in that way. On the other hand, a member of staff and volunteer who is confident and gives the impression that everything is under control may often make the service user feel secure. The violent assault is not only precipitated by the anxious, insecure person but the domineering authoritarian staff member may also produce a similar reaction.

When staff and volunteers are planning to work alone with service users who are actually/potentially violent, or who are unknown, they and their Line Manager have a joint duty, as a matter of good practice, to discuss staff safety issues, including:

- Whether the Service Users record is “tagged” for violence and the implications of this
- How potential violence is to be managed (i.e. risk assessment)
- Whether the contact should be re-arranged for a setting where assistance would be to hand
- Adequate arrangements for summoning help, if violence should occur
- What the arrangements are for indication that the contact has been completed and the staff, volunteer member is safe
- The advisability of a joint contact, involving another staff member or possibly a Police Officer
- KPS’s Risk Assessment Procedure Policy can be viewed on line at [www.kpsdirect.com](http://www.kpsdirect.com)

## **Controlling Violence**

*“KEEP TALKING TO THE VIOLENT SERVICE USER.  
TRY TO KEEP CONTROL IF THERE IS A RISK OF PHYSICAL INJURY.”*

Some acutely violent people are afraid of their own violent urges and will seek controls and curbs on their aggression. In such instances it is important to reassure the service user that he/she will not be allowed to lose control. Calm, reassuring phrases are often helpful in this situation. These require firmness and considerable presence of mind, but they are often effective in conveying a sense of control.

Sometimes it is possible to deal with potential violence in such a way that no damage is caused to person or property. If there is a risk of physical injury, either to the service user himself/herself or another person, staff members should make a judgement regarding their capacity physically to control the situation before placing themselves in a position of personal risk.

If the violence is solely directed at property, staff and volunteer members should attempt to control it only to an extent which places the worker in a situation of no personal risk. Property is expendable. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort. Talking, or careful listening, as appropriate, is the most effective way of helping a service user gain self-control. At the same time it is important to be aware of body posture and position and try to stand or sit in a way that will be least threatening to the service user. Try to position yourself in such a way that escape is possible and remove potential weapons.

## **Verbal Abuse**

All staff and volunteers may be subjected to verbal abuse. The majority of abuse to administrative staff comes from telephone callers. It is accepted that on occasions there will be times when service users make it impossible to continue the conversation, particularly when they become personally abusive towards members of staff, volunteers.

Where an abusive and aggressive service user on the telephone or face to face continues to be verbally abusive/aggressive after all reasonable steps have been taken to help the service user and to ascertain their problem, staff and volunteers may have to make a judgement as to whether or not to continue the conversation. There is no specific length of time which determines when a conversation should end. Common sense should be used on each occasion. Members of staff do not have to “stand and take it” and if it is deemed appropriate to terminate the conversation, staff should explain that they are unable to continue, but will do all they can to help if the problem is explained in a reasonable manner.

All staff and volunteers that terminate a conversation should report their action to their Line Manager and report using the On-line Reporting system. If a service user who is threatening, irrate or abusive asks a member of staff, volunteer for his/her name, they do not have to give their full name if they feel their personal safety is threatened. Common sense should tell staff whether it is appropriate or not to give full identification.

## **Challenging Behaviour**

There are different acceptable methods of physical restraint but their use requires training and practice. You should not approach a violent service user with the intention of using these methods unless you have received appropriate training and have the confidence in your ability to apply the methods learnt. If possible, remove yourself from the situation. However, it may be necessary to control a service user physically when he or she becomes disturbed to the extent that there is a danger to self and/or others.

**IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COVER EVERY EVENTUALITY AND IN THE LAST RESORT EFFECTIVE ACTION WILL DEPEND ON THE JUDGEMENT OF STAFF ON THE SPOT.**

***Points to consider:***

- Do you need to do anything? Property is less important than people.
- Whenever possible, call for assistance, either verbally or by an agreed warning system. Do not approach a violent person alone unless you have to go to the aid of someone else.
- Until assistance is available, make every attempt to avoid physical contact. Do not corner the service user, do not have your own way out blocked, and do not put your hands on the service user unexpectedly.
- Continue to talk to the service user and, when possible, use any pre-existing relationship. Try to remain calm yet firm yourself, the more excited a service user becomes, the more controlled staff should be. Try not to show fear.
- Never ask a service user to restrain another member of staff, volunteer or another service user unless this is absolutely necessary.
- If you raise your voice to be heard, try to ensure that this is not interpreted as an aggressive signal.
- Beware of non-verbal signals that you may be giving, for example aggressive postures and grimaces.
- If you have received training and are able to use physical restraint, bear in mind the possible hurt to the other person, and try to avoid a trial of strength. Once you have someone in a hold, release pressure to avoid injury, but do not release the hold entirely until you are sure that the person will not resume the violence.
- If a service user is armed with a knife or similar weapon **DO NOT** approach. If possible keep between the service user and the door so that a quick exit can be made. Otherwise, try to keep a large obstacle, such as a table, between yourself and the service user, or pick up a chair. It may be possible to throw a coat or blanket over the service user to cause distraction and give yourself time to get away. Speak quietly but firmly and ask for the weapon to be put down. Whenever possible, urgent Police assistance should be requested, and any action delayed until their arrival.

Violence occasionally occurs very suddenly and at such times there is usually no opportunity to call for assistance from the Police. The use of physical restraint to repel violence is, in law, perfectly acceptable, subject to the qualification that the restraint must only entail reasonable force. *“REASONABLE”* means THAT AMOUNT OF FORCE WHICH IS SUFFICIENT TO STOP THE ATTACKER OR TO PREVENT YOURSELF BEING INJURED. It should not be greater.

An important consideration is to demonstrate by your actions that you do not want to fight. Courts will expect you to retreat whenever possible and if the choice is between hitting your attacker and running away then you should take the latter course of action. There will be very few occasions when the only way in which you can protect yourself is by harming the service users but, if this is absolutely necessary, it may be acceptable in law. It is better to restrain a service user than inflict injury.

Whenever possible get away and try to obtain assistance. Your assistance might be needed immediately, for example, by other people who are being threatened, or the assailant might be intent on harming himself. If you have used physical restraint to the extent that the service user

has been forced to the ground, it is important not to over react by using more force than is necessary to keep him there. As soon as sufficient help arrives, relax holds and attempt to gain control by talking rather than by using physical means.

Of particular relevance to staff and volunteers are the 1983 Mental Health Act and the Code of Practice, and the area in which it is designed to assist in a mental health crisis. People experiencing acute mental health problems may be extremely distressed and frightened and in some circumstances may act aggressively in response to a perceived threat. At these times they may find it difficult to engage in discussion and their behaviour may be erratic and difficult to initially explain.

The staff member or volunteer must, therefore, make every effort to obtain as much information about the situation as is possible before he/she goes into it, and to ensure that where there is risk to either him/her, the service user or others that appropriate help is at hand and readily available. Line managers must be informed and consulted whenever possible, particularly if the situation is one where the staff member or volunteer may find themselves isolated, i.e. a home visit.

Section 139 of the 1983 Mental Health Act gives protection against litigation to persons acting in pursuance of the Act or any regulations or rules made under the Act, so long as the act in question was not done in bad faith or without reasonable care. The new Mental Capacity Act is designed to safeguard the rights of people who lack capacity to make particular decisions. In some circumstances the act allows for a person to be restrained in their best interests.

***Section 6(4) of the act defines restraint as:***

“The user of threat or force to help do an act which the person resists, or the restriction of the person’s liberty of movement, whether or not they resist”. The act says that restraint may only be used where it is necessary to protect the person from harm and is proportionate to the risk of harm. The Learning, Training & Development Unit website provides information on the Mental Capacity Act. Visit the department’s homepage: <http://social/default.htm> and click on ‘Learning, Training & Development Unit’ under the heading ‘Training’.

## **The Need for Discussion**

It is important that staff members and volunteers consult with their direct Line Manager and/or Responsible Trustee when it anticipated that a service user is likely to be threatening in his/her behaviour. This will help to define how potential violence should be managed. Similarly, occasions of violence should always be followed by an opportunity for the staff member to review and discuss what happened.

Sometimes this will be with an immediate senior. Occasionally if the incident was of sufficient severity trustees of KPS also need to be involved, not as a fault-finding committee but as a team of colleagues who are anxious to establish a climate of helpfulness and support. Such senior members of staff are not usually directly involved with the circumstances being reviewed and will be able to bring objective support into the analysis of the situation.

Every incident should be followed up by a Responsible Trustee over a period of three months to ascertain whether any longer term effects on the individual are apparent and also to review the operation of any changes in practice which may have been instituted as a result of the incident.

Occasionally, staff and volunteers are themselves responsible for precipitating a violent episode. In the ensuing staff and volunteer discussion there should be willingness to admit fault and a desire to learn from experience. If the incident is of a serious nature it should be remembered that a formal enquiry will be necessary. However, all incidents/potential incidents, however minor, should be the subject of discussion.

Talking about experiences of violence enables staff to learn. This can be of mutual benefit to the person assaulted and to colleagues with whom the matter is discussed.

## **Reporting**

There are professional as well as legal requirements for comprehensive recording of incidents of violence in case files and daily diaries that are kept in residential establishments. Additionally, staff and volunteers should make their own written record for future personal use. Notes made out soon after a violent incident are likely to be more accurate than those compiled a day or two later. If the matter is reported to the Police it will be necessary for a further statement to be made.

### ***Staff and volunteers may be reluctant to report violence because:***

- They feel the incident reflects badly on them
- They do not take the incident seriously enough
- They do not wish to cause trouble for a service user
- They do not wish to get involved in the aftermath of an incident
- They empathise with the service user and his or her problems
- They feel, especially in incidents of sexual harassment, that they may be misinterpreting ambiguous situations or that the facts may be “misread” to their own detriment. Also they may feel uncomfortable about discussing any matters with sexual overtones.

### ***However, reporting is vital because:***

- It may help in protecting others
- It assists management in taking an overview of violence at work
- It helps in monitoring trends in violence and modifying practice
- It can support follow up action, e.g. prosecution, industrial injuries, claims etc.

One of the important reasons for writing full details is to conform to the requirements of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. As a general rule the KPS Board of Trustees require victims of all incidents to report the matter to the Police without delay. The KPS Board of Trustees, at their discretion, may waive these requirements and a report to an employer or other responsible authority may justify waiver. The KPS Board of Trustees stress, however, that the matter of reporting must be such as to enable a proper decision to be made by the authority

whether or not Police intervention is appropriate; a mere note in an accident book is not sufficient.

## **Reception**

### ***Management of resource areas***

First impressions are very important. The service user coming to any KPS premises with a problem is usually in a stressful frame of mind and believes we can help. The service user is an individual with a real problem and as such must be responded to with respect and consideration, the respect and consideration you would demand for yourself.

In addition, reception and waiting room facilities in all our facilities are important, especially in our main office to which the majority of service users come. KPS Reception Workers (*staff or volunteers*) have responsibility for the general appearance of these area as well as the availability of suitable reading material.

Display boards should be kept up-to date and it is important that there should be toys for children to play with. Finally, try to avoid service users being kept waiting for lengthy periods. Where this happens keep the service user informed; tell them what is happening; be sympathetic to the fact that they have to wait. Busy Reception Workers may find it difficult to remind the service user frequently he or she is not forgotten, but this should always be attempted.

## **Resources Available**

Violent service users in the reception area can be frightening and there are occasions when the Reception Workers may need to call the Police. Where possible advice should be sought from the senior staff member present before calling the Police but common-sense and initiative should be used.

The number of the local police station should be on prominent display for the Reception Worker to see. However, some local stations are only staffed for limited periods and an Emergency 999 call may need to be made. Reception Workers/other staff and volunteers should ensure the local situation is clarified and relevant numbers displayed for their use. This would form part of the Premise Co-ordinators site risk assessment.

### ***A provision for Panic Attack Alarms***

If a member of staff or volunteers requests the need for Panic Attack Alarm(s) they should approach a member of the KPS trustees who will issue them with one along with guidance notes for their use if felt necessary. The KPS Board of Trustees will review the need for Panic Alarms (*personal and/or for premises*) within the organization upon request.

## **Risk reduction**

***On a personal basis, staff can help reduce the risk when dealing with the public by following the guidelines below:-***

- Be confident. A pleasant attitude can make all the difference and if you are interviewing someone face-to-face, allow them their own space both verbally and physically. Keep your voice calm and reassured. Breathe slowly and evenly. Be relaxed and on the same level as the person you are talking to, i.e. invite the person to sit down or stand up yourself. Smile and make frequent eye contact but avoid staring.
- Be honest and give reliable information. Admit any uncertainties or delays when they exist. Apologise if you have made a mistake.
- Be consistent and fair with service users. People are less likely to be abusive if they are treated fairly in the same manner.
- Be careful in what you say, and the tone used.
- Take note of any indications that the service user is potentially violent, e.g. Service User records.
- Do not be dogmatic. Leave room in discussion for either party to compromise and yet not lose face.
- If necessary, check your understanding by repeating what the service user has said and seeking confirmation that this is correct. Try to keep the discussion on the topic.

## **Coded message**

The reception worker, to alert other staff and volunteers that a potentially difficult service user, visitor is in reception, will use the terminology – “I have a Mr/Mrs etc. here, whom I think you will need to help “ Coded messages can also be used by all community outreach workers (*i.e. Lone Workers*) to their colleagues, Reception or Administration staff and volunteers in cases of service users visits when the service user becomes aggressive. Community outreach workers must familiarise themselves with the policy for coded messages and ensure that they have all the relevant numbers available for access in an emergency.

## **Lone Working**

Before making service user visits, the ‘Lone Worker’ must have full knowledge of the hazards, and risks to which he or she may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks.

***Have you:***

- Checked the Service User records for up-to-date information?
- Contacted the referrer for up-to-date information on the service user?
- Consulted other colleagues that may have worked with the service user?
- Read and understood any service user specific risk assessment documentation?

***Having collected all the relevant information you then need to plan your contact:***

- Trust your intuition and always think of your personal safety
- What is the best time of day to visit; assess the situation, are you familiar with
- the property location? Consider the weather/visibility; seasons - will you be
- driving in the dark?
- Where is the most appropriate place to see this person?
- Do I need to take another worker with me?
- If another agency is involved can we undertake a joint visit?
- Ensure someone knows where you are at all times; do not make last minute/unplanned
- visits
- Use the 'wipe board', a 'wipe board' is immediately visual and informs administration and
- Staff/volunteers of your planned visits
- Are you aware of emergency procedures? Do I have all the relevant contact numbers e.g. Office, Line Manager, KPS Help line or other nominated persons
- Do you have your personal panic attack alarm (*if applicable*) and or mobile; check it is charged
- Know where you are travelling to; Check your route to avoid stopping & asking strangers for directions
- Park near street lighting or lit areas whenever possible
- Reverse into parking spaces to ensure a quick getaway
- Keep all doors locked whilst driving and keep valuables out of sight
- It is not good practice to visit service users because 'your passing' or your 'on the way home'
- If you do not intend to return to the office at the end of the day, let someone know at the office.
- Visit the KPS website to view the 'Managing Personal Safety and Lone Worker
- Policies; [www.kpsdirect.com/pol.htm](http://www.kpsdirect.com/pol.htm)

## **Interview/Counselling Rooms**

Careful positioning of furniture can be helpful in ensuring the safety of staff and volunteers in an Interview/Counselling room. The seating arrangement should enable the staff and volunteers to be positioned near the door, without any obstruction to allow for a quick exit should this become necessary. If establishments are equipped with alarm systems, it is important for members of staff and volunteers to know how and when to summon urgent assistance. Equally important, other staff and volunteers in the building should be familiar with their role in the event of an alarm sounding.

If a service user is known to KPS, the service user's record should be consulted before an interview takes place. Take note of any indications that the service user is potentially violent e.g. "Tagged".

The Reception Worker should be notified by any member of staff or volunteer conducting interviews which may continue after the closure of the office. At the closure, the Reception worker will check all interviewing facilities. Where staff or volunteers are still involved with service users they will be asked to terminate the interview or another member of staff or volunteer will need to stay behind until the interview is finished.

## **The Police**

Staff or volunteers in charge of establishments where violence may be a problem, to the extent that the Police are likely to be called upon to assist from time to time, should establish a relationship with the Police which will lead to a better understanding of each other's problems and responsibilities. Although calling for Police assistance must be a matter for individual judgement, it should be within the context of procedures agreed by senior management. As a point of good practice, if you anticipate that the Police may be required at some juncture, you should give them early warning and brief them on details. If subsequently they are not required, you should inform them as soon as possible.

A likely area that may involve staff and volunteers with the Police in the context of violence is where a breach of the peace occurs. A breach of the peace occurs where there is an actual assault or wrongful acts are committed which would reasonably produce alarm in the observer, either fear for oneself or for others or of a real disturbance in the neighbourhood. It should be noted that mere annoyance, abusive language or great heat and fury without personal violence are not in themselves generally sufficient to constitute such a breach.

In dealing with a breach, or threatened breach of the peace, the Police may make an arrest without a warrant and as a general rule they may enter private premises without a warrant in order to stop or prevent a breach of the peace if they have reason to suspect that this may occur. However, without a warrant, or unless other arrestable offences are involved (*i.e. firearms*), they have no right to search premises or remain on private premises without invitation once the breach of the peace has been dealt with.

It must be remembered that the role of the Police outlined is purely in context of a situation where violence occurs or is threatened. The Police are obviously also involved in other activities which bring them in contact with staff and a good relationship with them in these areas helps all sides when violence does occur.

## **Security Guards**

When the KPS Board of Trustees considers that a threat of serious violence may be attempted at an office or establishment, the Responsible Trustee can be asked to approve the employment of Security Guards until such time as the threat is resolved.

## **What to do after a violent incident**

### **Medical Treatment**

Medical treatment or advice, wherever appropriate, should be immediately obtained through the normal channels, e.g. GP, Hospital, including those incidents where there is concern and distress but no physical injury.

Corporate Guidance relating to AIDS/HIV, Hepatitis & Blood Bourne  
[http://personnel/Services/H&S/Corp\\_Policy/CSPHome.htm](http://personnel/Services/H&S/Corp_Policy/CSPHome.htm)

### **Counselling and Support**

Staff and volunteers must inform the subject of the incident of any action taken, and keep them updated on developments as they progress, e.g. risk assessment outcomes, Police involvement, Court appearances etc. Counselling, either professionally or in-house, will be made available to the person concerned and/or other staff or volunteers who may be involved in the incident.

### **Sick Leave**

Where a member of staff or volunteer is physically injured or suffers from shock or anxiety as the result of a violent incident which occurs in the course of his/her duties, (s)he may as a result be absent on sick leave. The normal provision of sick pay scheme will apply in these circumstances although, in the case of serious injury or where a member of staff with short service is involved, an extension of sick pay may be considered.

In case of injury, where a member of staff has exhausted full sick pay provision, KPS will apply its discretion to an extension of full sick pay. Where a victim of a violent incident is either unwilling to take sick leave or where the medical opinion does not support this, up to two weeks paid leave may be granted according to the circumstances and at the discretion of KPS. There is also provision for the granting of further leave without pay, as appropriate.

### **Opportunity for discussion and debriefing**

Every serious incident will be followed up by the KPS Board of Trustees over a period of three months to determine whether there are any long term effects on the individual. During this review period the member of staff or volunteer must be made aware of the Risk Assessment and Action Plan undertaken as a result of the incident, particularly any changes in practice which may have been instituted.

### **Adjustment of Duties/Work Commitments**

Sympathetic consideration will be given to employees and volunteers who feel that an adjustment of duties or work commitments would be helpful in terms of their recovery from a violent incident.

## **Police involvement**

In all cases of purposeful physical violence, serious threats to persons or property, or actual damage, the perpetrator must be reported to the Police, except in the most extenuating circumstances.

## **Risk Management**

The KPS Board of Trustees should undertake an assessment to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future; this will include:-

- An assessment of risk
- An action plan
- A decision as to whether the action plan will adequately control the risk
- A decision on what further action is required to reduce or eliminate the risk

The KPS Risk Assessment Procedure Policy can be accessed via [www.kpsdirect.com/pol.htm](http://www.kpsdirect.com/pol.htm)

Perpetrators must be prevented from taking further action that could be harmful to their own best interest or those of others. They may particularly require immediate advice regarding the consequences of the violence, and this advice may come as a warning from the Police, a Solicitor's letter, or from the KPS Board of Trustees, informing the perpetrator that his/her actions will not be tolerated.

This policy also includes the identification of risks posed to both clients and staff during lone working. KPS recognises that a significant proportion of the support provided will be through one to one contact in a variety of settings and the risks to clients, staff and volunteers need to be identified. Staff and volunteer training and induction procedures will highlight the potential risks to staff and volunteers, and the risk to clients will be identified in the client handbook. As part of the overall service provision staff and volunteers are required to draw to the attention of perspective clients the relevant section of the client handbook which deals with these potential risks.

Information covering these potential risks and how staff, volunteers and clients deal with the possible risks which can arise from one to one working are contained in several policy documents including:

- KPS Risk Assessment
- KPS Lone Worker Policy
- KPS Whistleblowing Policy
- KPS Safeguarding Policy Children/Adults
- KPS Harassment Policy
- KPS Ethics and Practices Policy
- KPS Disciplinary Procedure Policy

- KPS Conflict of Interest Policy
- KPS Confidentially Policy
- KPS Complaints Policy
- KPS Health & Safety Policy

Including the KPS Client Handbook, and the KPS Staff and Volunteer Handbook.

## **Legal/Crown Prosecution Service**

KPS will offer legal advice and support, where possible, to staff who are the subject of violence – actual or threatened/abuse or harassment – arising in the course of their work. If the Police prosecute a perpetrator, employees will receive support and representation from KPS who will liaise with the Crown Prosecution Service and provide advice about giving statements of evidence.

## **Insurance**

KPS has insurance policies to cover situations where employees and volunteers suffer physical assault while carrying out their duties. Employees and Public Liability applies where an assault took place as a result of negligence on the part of KPS or its employees and volunteers. Personal Accident (*Assault*) applies in respect of injuries which result in death or permanent/partial disablement.

All KPS policies and procedures are reviewed annually; this PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY has been reviewed and ratified by the KPS Board of Trustees commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 (*under 'policies' as shown in the KPS Annual Report and Accounts*).

***Ref: PSP2011/12.***