



West Lothian  
Council

# Personal Safety at Work Policy



Approved by PP&R Cttee 5 November 2002

Revised August 2005  
Revised January 2011  
Revised January 2013

DATA LABEL: INTERNAL ONLY

## **WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL**

### **PERSONAL SAFETY AT WORK POLICY**

(Covers ALL council employees)

#### **1. POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES**

West Lothian Council has a statutory duty to safeguard the health, personal safety and welfare of its employees whilst at work. The nature of services that the council provides can potentially place the personal safety of some employees at risk. The council's policy is to take all reasonable practicable steps to eliminate or minimise that risk.

#### **2. POLICY AIMS**

The aims of the Personal Safety at Work Policy are to:

- Establish, communicate and promote the council's commitment to minimising the risks to employees from violence at work and protect the lone worker;
- Require effective risk assessments in relation to the personal safety of employees;
- Ensure that services put in place processes to protect their employees from violence and that all employees are aware of these processes;
- Require the reporting and monitoring of all acts of violence to employees in the course of their duties;
- Promote a working environment which is supportive to the after care of victims of violence;
- Make available appropriate support services such as counselling to help employees cope with the effects of violent behaviour;
- Ensure that effective systems are in place for the monitoring of incidents within each service group.

#### **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

The policy will be implemented through the 'Personal Safety at Work Framework Procedure' and will be supported by the 'Personal Safety at Work Guidance Notes for Employees' and any further advice and guidance that may be issued by Health and Safety.

#### **4. DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE**

For the purposes of this policy, violence is defined as any behaviour towards an employee in the course of their work in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted and that has an adverse physical or psychological effect on them

Examples of such behaviour are:

#### **Non-physical Violence**

- threatening gestures
- verbal abuse
- harassment in all forms
- racial or sexual abuse
- swearing/shouting
- bullying
- abusive telephone calls
- road rage
- cyberbullying

#### **Physical Violence**

- kicking
- use of weapons
- spitting
- assault
- punching
- throwing objects
- sexual assault
- nipping/biting/scratching
- slapping

### **5. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Chief Executive and Depute Chief Executives are responsible for the implementation of this policy. Heads of Service are responsible for communicating and ensuring compliance is monitored and enforced and that delegated responsibilities are written into the Service Supplementary Health and Safety Policy and Safety Arrangements Booklets.

Health and Safety legislation requires the council to conduct suitable and adequate assessment of risks to the health and safety of employees, including risk to personal safety. Risk assessment findings must be communicated to employees, together with the actions proposed to prevent or minimise the risks.

The council must also introduce safe systems of work for their employees following the risk assessment process.

### **6. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employees to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

Employees must comply with the procedures that have been put in place to safeguard their personal safety.

All incidents of violence must be reported to the appropriate manager or supervisor within specified timescales.

### **7. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, a system will be put in place to monitor the number and type of:

- Violent incidents, attacks assaults or injuries; and
- Days lost as a result of incidents of violence

### **8. REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed as appropriate in consultation with the trade unions and in light of health and safety or other specialist advice.