



London Ambulance Service **NHS**
NHS Trust

Violence Prevention Policy and Procedure

DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.

Purpose of the document: to reduce the risks to staff as a result of perceived, threatened or actual violence at work.

Sponsor Department: Health, Safety and Risk

Author/Reviewer: Local Security Management Specialist. To be reviewed by June 2013.

Document Status: Draft

Amendment History			
Date	*Version	Author/Contributor	Amendment Details
23/09/10	2.1	Governance and Compliance Manager	Reference added to TP056
10/05/10	1.3	Local Security Management Specialist	Revised introduction, scope, objectives, responsibilities, definitions, monitoring, telephone numbers and sections 7.3, 7.7, 7.8 7.9. Added: policy statement from former HS12 Staff Safety Policy Statement; sections on training and lone workers.
17/03/10	1.2	Local Security Management Specialist	Reformatted, added scope, responsibilities, definitions, training;
15/09/08	1.1	Senior Health, Safety and Risk Advisor	Reformatted, added monitoring elements
01/03/07	1.0	Senior Health, Safety and Risk Advisor	

***Version Control Note:** All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

For Approval By:	Date Approved	Version
RCAG	23/08/2010	2.0
Chief Executive Officer	01/03/07	1.0
Agreed by Trust Board (If appropriate):		

Published on:	Date	By	Dept
The Pulse	05/10/10	Governance Administrator	GCT
LAS Website	05/10/10	Governance Administrator	GCT
Announced on:	Date	By	Dept
The RIB	10/10	Governance Administrator	GCT

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EqIA completed on	By
11/05/10	Senior Health, Safety and Risk Advisor
Staffside reviewed on	By

Links to Related documents or references providing additional information		
Ref. No.	Title	Version
	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	
	Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999	
H&S / 011	Incident Reporting Procedure	
H&S / 012	Staff Safety Policy	
H&S / 012b	Post Violence Support Procedure	
OP / 010	High Risk Address Register Procedure	
H&S/017	Lone Workers Policy	
	Personal Safety and the Management of Conflict – A Guide to Staff © Maybo Limited	
	Stab Vest - Wearer Policy	
TP056	Core Training Policy (inc. TNA)	

Document Status: This is a controlled record as are the document(s) to which it relates. Whilst all or any part of it may be printed, the electronic version maintained in P&P-File remains the controlled master copy. Any printed copies are not controlled nor substantive.

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1. Introduction

The London Ambulance Service (LAS) has a legal duty to take all reasonable steps to protect staff from violence and aggression. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, places a legal duty on employers to provide for the Health and Safety of their employees, and also for employees to take reasonable care of themselves and other people with whom they come into contact with. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a responsibility on employers to undertake an assessment of related risks.

The LAS recognises that its staff, by the nature of their duties, are at risk of being subject to abusive, threatening or violent behaviour.

2. Scope

This procedure defines the process to be followed when dealing with physical and non-physical abuse towards operational staff. It is not intended to encompass voluntary or contracted ambulance services.

3. Objectives

1. Define the Trust's position on physical and non-physical abuse towards staff
2. Outline ways for staff to reduce the risk of physical and non-physical abuse
3. Set out the responsibilities for staff and managers in reducing the risk of physical and non-physical abuse

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Chief Executive/Chief Ambulance Officer

The Chief Executive/Chief Ambulance Officer takes overall responsibility for Risk Management within the LAS.

4.2 Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development

Operational responsibility for Health and Safety has been delegated to the Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development

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4.3 Corporate Health and Safety Group

The Corporate Health and Safety Group will receive and monitor figures relating to physical and non-physical abuse and report as appropriate to the SMG

4.4 Ambulance Operations Managers/ Duty Station Officers/ Site Managers and Department Heads

Managers have responsibility for ensuring that this procedure is implemented and in addition:

- Supporting staff in the implementation of this policy and procedure
- To provide guidance to staff in reducing the threat of violence
- Identifying staff to be prioritised for Personal Safety Training in conjunction with the Safety and Risk Adviser/ Local Security Management Specialist (LSMS)
- Ensuring that staff who have been issued with Stab Vests are carrying them when on duty
- Providing support to staff following a violent incident, in compliance with the HS12b Post Violent Support Procedure
- Where staff are subjected to abuse the DSO / line manager will ensure that appropriate support is available to those affected

4.5 EOC Staff

EOC staff are responsible for obtaining and providing information to the attending crew, about risk associate with calls

- Providing information about risks associated with addresses on the High Risk Address Register
- Prioritising requests for urgent police assistance received from Operational staff
- Alerting Duty Station Officers of all incidents where violence or distress has been suffered by Operational staff
- In the absence of a manager, supporting staff who have suffered either Physical Violence or suffered Non-Physical Abuse and taking the initiative in considering whether a period stood down from duty would be appropriate

4.6 Local Security Management Specialist (LSMS)

The LSMS is responsible for following up incidents of physical and non-physical abuse, liaising with police where appropriate, providing support to staff and management and submitting details of all reported incidents of physical and non-physical abuse to the NHS Security Management Service and submitting figures of physical and non-physical abuse to the Corporate Health and Safety Group.

4.7 All Staff

- Responsible for following this policy/ procedure
- Responsible for their personal health and safety Use, as required, all provided personal protective equipment and clothing, specified safe systems of work, specific safety equipment, identified control measures etc. provided by the employer
- Ensure all incidents of work-related violence are promptly recorded in accordance with the Trust's incident reporting policy.
- Report all incidents of work-related violence to the police as appropriate

5. Definitions

Physical Violence – Any application of force to the person of another without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury or personal discomfort.

Non-Physical Abuse – The use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress and/or constituting harassment.

Abuse – Within the context of this document the term abuse used refers to either or both physical and non-physical abuse of staff.

6. Policy Statement

The Trust is committed to reducing the threat of abuse of its staff, and recognises that it is the right of every employee to undertake their duties without the threat of abuse. The LAS will support staff in pursuing prosecution against members of the public who abuse them.

When recognising an escalation of threatening behaviour, staff should attempt to calm the situation using skills taught in Conflict Resolution Training, or within the LAS Personal Safety Guide to Staff. Staff are responsible for putting their own safety first, and should be cautious when confronted with violent situations.

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Personal safety of staff is paramount, and staff will be supported when a decision is taken to withdraw from a violent situation to ensure personal safety.

7. Procedure for Managing and Reducing the Threat of Physical and Non-Physical Abuse towards Operational Staff.

7.1 Advance Notification

EOC will notify the on-call crew of potential risk/s that they are aware of when a call is received, or during subsequent calls, and any relevant information received from other agencies such as the police.

7.2 Individual Risk Assessments:

Staff must assess situations, and should be particularly cautious in the following circumstances:

- Where there is a clear indication that individuals may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- When attending calls at public houses, clubs or where alcohol may be present
- Where the patients, friends or bystanders are known to be violent
- Situations involving crowds
- When the patient is clearly angry

Patients with mental health problems are unlikely to be violent and probably need help and reassurance. However, you have a right to know about factors that affect your safety. To assess the risk presented by an individual you should make discreet enquiries amongst psychiatric staff or social workers who are present.

7.3 Staff Safety – Good Practice

There are many steps that can be taken to reduce the threat of violence, and the following is not an exhaustive list. Personal Safety is paramount and measures to reduce the threat of violence can be taken before reaching the patient:

- Lock the vehicle while driving to scene

- Park as near as practical to the address you are called to, in such a position that you are able to leave the scene quickly if necessary, and preferably in a well lit area after dark
- Take all equipment that you are likely to need in to the premises
- Lock the vehicle whilst you are away
- Stand well clear of the doorway after ringing or knocking. Stand sideways on.
- If the behaviour of any person gives you cause for concern, for example if they are drunk or a potentially dangerous person is present and you are uneasy about your safety, make an excuse not to go in. Advise EOC of your decision and subsequent action.
- Follow the occupants in when entering premises
- Remain aware of the environment and maintain exit routes in case problems arise

7.4 Managing Situations

The most effective means of minimising the risk of abuse, is to assess the situation and manage or avoid potential areas of conflict. This should be done in compliance with Conflict Resolution Training provided by the LAS. It is recognised that the very nature of violence is unpredictable, and it is therefore imperative that staff should;

- Remain vigilant at all times
- Monitor and assess changes in behaviour and attitude
- Communicate with patients, and bystanders explaining actions taken
- Wear LAS issue Stab Vests to any incident where there is a known threat of violence in compliance with the Stab Vest Wearer Policy
- Carry LAS issue Emergency Crew Assist (ECA) Phones
- Carry LAS issue Tetra radio

7.5 Dealing with Bystanders

When violence occurs it can often come from anxious friends or relatives. It is important to work as a team. Whilst one crew member is dealing with the patient,

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the other should deal with concerns from other people who are present. Keep bystanders informed and explain procedures where necessary. Treat patients and bystanders courteously, and in addition:

- Draw bystanders away to allow the patient to receive necessary treatment
- If a bystander is becoming agitated ask them to do a job, such as getting the patients clothes ready for the journey to hospital

7.6 When Physical Violence or Threatened Violence Occurs:

- Put your own safety and that of your colleagues first
- Withdraw from the situation to a safe place if you have suffered physical violence, or believe that violence is imminent
- Call for Police Assistance
- Use Tetra radio emergency function button (this provides remote listening to EOC/UOC to incident)
- Use non-aggressive disengagement techniques

7.7 After an Incident has occurred

Abuse at any time is stressful, and even more so when you are trying to treat a patient. Following an incident allow yourself time to recover and seek support from your colleagues. Even after minor incidents, feelings may be difficult to control, and may affect your ability to deal with further calls. This is a natural reaction. Where necessary request the following actions, if they have not been activated on your behalf;

- A Duty Station Officer to attend to the immediate aftermath, and to provide advice and guidance and ensure that the appropriate incident form is submitted.
- Call the Police if they are not already on scene
- Time out to recover from what has occurred.
- Medical assistance appropriate for your injuries
- Counselling, Staff Support or Occupational Health Services
- The assistance of the Local Security Management Specialist (LSMS) to assist with police liaison

7.8 You should report the incident under the Incident Reporting Procedure by completing an LA277 which will, where appropriate, place the location where the incident occurred on the LAS High Risk Address Register. Your manager should provide ongoing support to you following an incident, in line with the Post Violence Support Procedure (H&S / 012b)

Further advice on managing and reducing the threat of violence, and actions to be taken when an incident occurs are contained in the LAS Personal Safety and the Management of Conflict – A Guide to Staff

Any incident where a member of staff is off for more than 3 days, not including the day of the incident, is RIDDOR reportable. The form is accessed on the Pulse and when submitted a copy is sent to both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Safety & Risk Dept, who will include it in the specific incident file.

8. Technology

The importance of maintaining contact with colleagues, whether crewmates, or EOC cannot be over emphasised. This is particularly important when away from the vehicle.

ECA Phone and Tetra radio should be carried at all times

Contact Telephone Numbers

LAS Counselling Services – 020 7346 3387

LAS Occupational Health Services 020 7346 3387

Local Security Management Specialist (LSMS) – 020 7783 2565

LAS Employee Assistance Programme – 0800 587 8116

9. Use of Physical Control for Avoiding Violence

If members of staff find themselves in a situation where they are under attack, then a non-injurious disengagement technique of the type taught as part of the Personal Safety Training course should be employed. For staff who have not attended the training they should seek to withdraw from the situation, without inflicting injury to the aggressor.

The actions you have taken to defend yourself could be used as evidence in a court of law, and you could therefore be required to defend your physical actions. In Common Law, any force you use to defend yourself must be reasonable.

Common Law:

- Recognises circumstances when force may be used on another without committing a crime and includes a person's right to protect themselves from attack and to act in the defence of others.
- No more force than is reasonable to repel attack may be used. Minimum use of force
- Proportionality of force used
- Seriousness of threat to be prevented
- Right of self defence

Instances may occur where LAS staff and the police are in attendance together. It is not the role of staff, even when assisting police, to intervene or tackle criminals or potential criminals, even if attempting to restrain an individual.

10. Lone Workers

Lone workers, and their line managers, should ensure that they are familiar with the Trust's Lone Working Policy in addition to this document.

11. Training

Conflict Resolution Training (including Violence and Aggression training) is provided to all Clinical staff as identified in the Training Needs Analysis (TNA). Training is delivered inline with the National Syllabus set by the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS). The training consists of a mix of skills for reducing the threat of violence, and withdrawing from a violent incident when it occurs. The training also includes a number of basic disengagement techniques.

The training will be evaluated as part of the TNA and revised on an annual basis.

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Implementation Plan

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
Intended Audience	For all LAS staff
Dissemination	Available to all staff on the Pulse
Communications	Revised Procedure to be announced in the RIB and a link provided to the document
Training	See section 11
Monitoring	<p>This policy will be monitored in line with Counter Fraud & Security Management Services best practice guidance.</p> <p>The Trust will undertake specific monitoring by reviewing:</p> <p>LA277 incident reports are sent to the Safety & Risk Department to be entered onto the risk management system (Datix) and for the Local Security Management Specialist to follow up and submit to the CFSMS. Quarterly reports of the numbers of incidents of abuse are sent to the Corporate Health and Safety Group</p>