

Zero Tolerance Policy

POLICY REFERENCE NUMBER	DHS 37	
AUTHOR	Head of Patient Experience/Community Engagement Officer	
LEAD DIRECTOR	NAME Director of Planning & Performance Improvement	SIGNATURE
CONSULTATION PROCESS – list the groups/committees that this policy been to and commented by Please provide dates	NHS CENTRAL LANCASHIRE Policy Group 30/09/2011	
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	YES  L:\Clinical Governance\Policies\I	
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT		NO
BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE POLICY	<p>NHS Central Lancashire has a duty to provide information and guidance to staff who may come into contact with patients, their carers and relatives who may become frustrated and aggressive and display habitual and vexatious behaviour. This policy provides guidance on managing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitual callers • Vexatious callers • Disproportionate use of staff time and resources • Zero tolerance approach to verbal and physical abuse of staff • Unacceptable and inappropriate contact by members of the public 	
FINANCIAL RISK If yes, please add comments	YES	
	Comments If staff are not adequately safeguarded against violence and abuse there is the potential for claims against the PCT as an employer	
REPUTATIONAL RISK	YES	

If yes, please add comments	Comments Incidents involving violence or abuse could be reported on by the media with the potential to damage the PCTs reputation	
WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS If yes, please add comments	YES	
	Comments Without a policy for guidance and referral the workforce can be left vulnerable to violence and abuse and the responses to incidents can be inconsistent	
APPROVING COMMITTEE(S) AND DATE	Executive Committee Policy Group October 2011	
RATIFICATION DATE	October 2011	
REVIEW DATE	March 2013	

NHS Central Lancashire is committed to ensuring that, as far as it is reasonably practicable, the way we provide services to the public and the way we treat our staff reflects their individual needs and does not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity.

Should a member of staff or any other person require access to this policy in another language or format (such as Brail or large print) they can do so by contacting the communications department or the relevant policy holder. NHS Central Lancashire will do its utmost to support and develop equitable access to all policies.

Managers are responsible for ensuring staff within their area of responsibilities are aware of NHS Central Lancashire policies and that staff adhere to them.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that a system is in place for their area of responsibility that keeps staff up to date with new policy changes.

Staff are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with policies, know where to locate the documents on the organisation's internet, and seek out every opportunity to keep up to date with NHS Central Lancashire policies.

Independent contractors are expected to identify a lead person to be responsible for ensuring staff employed within their practice are aware of NHS Central Lancashire policies.

This policy is individual to NHS Central Lancashire. NHS Central Lancashire does not accept any liability to any third party that adopts or amends this policy.

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Page 3 of 8

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Contents

1.	Zero Tolerance Statement	5
2.	Aims	5
3.	Areas of accountability	5
4.	Assessing the risk of violent behaviour	6
5.	Implementation	8
6.	Review and monitoring arrangements	8

1. Zero Tolerance Statement

NHS Central Lancashire believes that any act of aggression, violence or intimidation, both physical and non-physical from any member of staff, patient, visitor or member of the public is unacceptable. The PCT is committed to the creation of a culture and environment where employees may undertake their duties without fear of abuse or violence.

As an organisation, we are committed to introducing measures, through the Zero Tolerance Policy and relevant guidelines, to reduce risk and to have procedures in place that will enable staff to manage appropriately an aggressive or violent situation should it arise.

All staff have a vital role to play in protecting themselves, including participation in appropriate training, reporting of incidents and taking appropriate action against perpetrators of abuse or violence. NHS Central Lancashire has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate support is given to staff in such instances.

2. Aims

This policy aims to outline the organisations' commitment to the safety of its employees, local contractors and their staff, provide clear lines of accountability and engender a working environment that embodies the rights and expectations of both staff and patients as outlined in the NHS Constitution.

3. Areas of accountability

3.1 Organisational responsibility

It is the responsibility of the organisation to develop policies, procedures, systems and environments that reduce the risk of violence and aggression.

NHS Central Lancashire recognises that it is an integral part of the community which it serves and its overall policies and procedures directly affect what happens at the interface between staff and clients.

NHS Central Lancashire undertakes to:

- Identify as far as reasonably practicable, the potential for violence, aggression and vexatious behaviour arising in the workplace, including those most at risk
- Take practical steps to eliminate/reduce the risk
- Identify safe working practices and provide training for staff appropriate to their needs, e.g. de-escalation training, breakaway, care and responsibility
- Ensure security management specialists are available to advise and attend appropriate meetings
- Encourage reporting of all incidents via Datix
- Maintain an effective reporting system

Page 5 of 8

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- Ensure arrangements are in place to treat known violent patients
- Work with local out-of-hours providers to ensure that systems are in place to treat violent patients outside normal hours
- Investigate significant incidents
- Take appropriate action against service users who assault, threaten or abuse staff
- Provide support to individuals who have been a victim of assault or abuse
- Evaluate the effectiveness of any measures undertaken

3.2 Work team responsibilities

Policies and systems determined at organisational level have to be incorporated into procedures and practices at team level. It will be the responsibility of managers, GPs and work teams to ensure that this occurs and to report any areas of concern.

3.3 Individual responsibilities

Every individual has a responsibility to follow safe working practices and co-operate with the employer to promote safety at work. In the community, where individuals are often working alone or in small groups, they also need to remain watchful of their own safety and that of their colleagues.

Individuals have a responsibility to report incidents of violence and aggression, including verbal abuse.

NHS Central Lancashire does not expect staff to place themselves at risk to protect or prevent damage to or theft of property. NHS Central Lancashire does not expect staff to place themselves at risk in order to deliver care.

4. Assessing the risk of violent behaviour

4.1 Violent behaviour

Violence is defined as “any incident where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.”

Violent incidents do not necessarily have to cause physical harm. They can:

- involve a threat, even if no serious injury results
- involve verbal abuse
- involve non-verbal abuse, for example gestures
- involve other threatening behaviour, for example stalking
- require first aid only
- require medical assistance
- cause major injury

It is acknowledged that violence can come from other workers as well as clients and members of the general public.

4.2 Risk assessments

NHS Central Lancashire has developed a strict procedure that must be followed in order to provide services to patients who are persistently violent and abusive. Where this relates to primary care services staff should refer to the Zero Tolerance Patients Scheme (protocol for dealing with violent patients), which is a mechanism for implementing sections 202 and 203 of the GP GMS contract.

When dealing with a known or suspected violent or abusive individual, under no circumstances should staff see such people on their own. They should seek advice from their Line Manager and Security Personnel before face-to-face meetings are arranged.

Whenever there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of violence, department managers must ensure that NHS Central Lancashire risk assessments are completed. All risk assessments relating to violence and aggression will be added to the NHS Central Lancashire Risk Register and must be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis by the relevant manager or when there is a change in circumstances.

In making a risk assessment the following may indicate that there is a risk of violence:

- Dealing with intoxicated or distressed members of the public
- Dealing with patients suffering from mental illness or stress
- Patients who are confused / disorientated / suicidal / known criminal history
- High-risk areas such as contentious issues or complaints or staff working alone
- Tasks where money, drugs or other valuables may be a target for theft
- When withholding or withdrawing a service
- Irregular situations such as where persons known to be potentially violent are referred to other disciplines, services or Trusts

The list shown above is not exhaustive and managers must take care to assess all possible personal security risks within their responsibility.

Police assistance should be sought where the presence of drugs / weapons has been detected or to deal with violence or threatened/suspected violence.

IN ANY SITUATION WHERE PHYSICAL ASSAULT IS CONSIDERED LIKELY, STAFF SHOULD IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE.

4.3 Processes for staff following violent or abusive behaviour

All instances of actual or threatened violence and aggression must be reported in accordance with NHS Central Lancashire Incident Reporting Policy (this can be found on NHS Central Lancashire website). Incident reporting will be used to

ensure that other members of staff benefit from shared experiences and training can be realistic and relevant.

All staff who are subjected to violent / abusive behaviour should report such incidents to their line manager with whom referring the matter to the Police will be considered.

Incidents of violence and aggression can have a detrimental effect on the victim out of proportion to the scale seen by outsiders. Managers are to ensure that staff are properly cared for and debriefed immediately, or as soon as is reasonably practicable, after each such incident(s). Even those staff not directly involved can be subject to anxiousness and concern. It is important that all staff are informed as soon as possible of the basic details of the incident and any counter measures planned.

Counselling is available in strict confidence, to all staff via the Employee Assistance Programme, firstassist.

NHS Central Lancashire will make training available in the management and handling of violence and aggression, based on the training needs analysis.

In any cases where a member of staff feels that an individual has behaved in an unprofessional or inappropriate manner, the relevant Line Manager must be informed of the occurrence and an Incident Form completed (Datix).

5.0 Implementation

The Head of Patient Experience and Community Engagement will oversee the implementation of this policy.

6.0 Review and Monitoring Arrangements

This strategy will be reviewed annually.

The Head of Patient Experience and Community Engagement will ensure that a Zero Tolerance Register is established as part of the monitoring arrangements. Reports from Datix concerning the number of incidents reported will also be used to monitor elements of this policy.