

Cafcass Health and Safety Procedure

Title: Personal Safety (The control of violence and aggression)			
Document Number:	Cafcass – SP10	Revision 2	Date of Issue: 6/2/03

This procedure is written and issued in accordance with Cafcass' Safety Management System Framework and Protocol.

The responsibility for upkeep and amendment of this procedure rests with the corporate Health & Safety Advisor. All requests for modification should be made to Cafcass Headquarters.

CONTENTS

Section 1	Policy
Section 2	Procedure
Section 3	Definitions

1. Policy

It is CAFCASS policy that appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that the risk to the personal safety and well being of its staff from physical or emotional violence during their work activities is reduced to the lowest possible level.

2. Procedure

2.1 The Health and Safety Steering Group are responsible for the ongoing review, development and implementation of this procedure.

2.2 Directors and Regional Managers will ensure that generic risk assessments take account of the risk of violence or the threat of violence to staff and volunteers. These assessments will cover:

- Buildings.
 - External lighting.
 - Building and room security.
 - The environment and contents of waiting rooms.
 - Reception area security.
 - Layout and content of offices and interview rooms.
 - Location and content of notices providing information to clients.
- Initial client contact.
- Reception of clients.
- Late night reporting arrangements.
- Alarm procedures.
- Personal alarms.

Cafcass Health and Safety Procedure

Title: Personal Safety (The control of violence and aggression)			
Document Number:	Cafcass – SP10	Revision 2	Date of Issue: 6/2/03

- Prison visits including working in cell areas.
 - Home visits.
 - Outdoor activities.
 - Probation Centres and Drop-in Facilities.
- 2.3 They will ensure that these assessments evaluate the effectiveness of existing control measures and where necessary lead to the introduction of additional or alternative controls. These will include:
- Workplace modifications
 - The introduction of new or modified systems of work.
 - The provision of supervision
 - Group situations, e.g. in a waiting area or interview room.
- 2.4 As required support will be provided by the Health and Safety Advisor, Regional Business Managers and, as appropriate, by other internal or external specialists.
- 2.5 Managers will ensure that completed risk assessments are reviewed whenever there is reason to believe that the assessment is no longer valid, e.g. as the result of accidents, inspections, employee complaints, or enforcing authority action.
- 2.6 Line managers will ensure that risk assessments covering each client, and the environment in which interviews/meetings are to take place are carried out. These assessments will take the following into consideration:
- The known history of the client/visitor.
 - The purpose of the present interview especially when there is a need to convey 'bad news' to clients.
 - Where the employee or volunteer may be working alone, either in an office or on a home visit.
 - Group situations, e.g. in a waiting area or interview room.
- 2.7 Client assessments will distinguish between the forms of violence to which the employee or volunteer may be at risk, e.g. physical assault, threat, abuse, harassment, etc. These assessments will be recorded and placed on the client's file for future reference.

Cafcass Health and Safety Procedure

Title: Personal Safety (The control of violence and aggression)			
Document Number:	Cafcass – SP10	Revision 2	Date of Issue: 6/2/03

2.8 Practitioners supported by their Team Manager will ensure that the risk control measures identified by the assessment are implemented. They will take into account:

- The immediate environment including means of access and egress.
- The presence of objects that could be used as weapons.
- The current situation, e.g. the possible influence of alcohol or drug abuse.
- If the individual has been left waiting, even unavoidably, especially without an explanation.
- Where bad news is to be communicated or cash is to be refused.
- Group situations, e.g. in a waiting area or interview room.
- The need to 'disarm' the situation.
- The need to 'retreat' from the situation.
- The location of secure refuges.
- The likelihood of assistance from other members of staff in the vicinity.
- The need for the employee or volunteer to be accompanied by another competent person during the visit or interview.

2.9 Each office will keep a movement register so that it can be readily determined where a member of staff is. All Practitioners and staff must co-operate in maintaining this register. Whenever a difficult home visit is anticipated the movements register must identify the client's name and the address to be visited.

2.10 Staff are requested to provide their manager with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons to whom contact should be made in the event of an emergency affecting themselves. This information will be held in a secure confidential file either within the Regional Head Office or their base office.

2.11 Team Managers in conjunction with the Regional Business Manager will ensure that all staff whom risk assessments have identified are at risk of violence or aggression during their work activities receive training covering the:

- Avoidance of conflict and promotion of personal safety while:
 - On the road
 - Visiting clients
 - In the office

Cafcass Health and Safety Procedure

Title: Personal Safety (The control of violence and aggression)			
Document Number:	Cafcass – SP10	Revision 2	Date of Issue: 6/2/03

- Conducting interviews
 - Management of conflict situations in which they find themselves, including the provision of assistance to colleagues. This will include:
 - Recognition of the warning signs within
 - The aggressor’s behaviour.
 - Their own behaviour or appearance.
 - The environment.
 - Help them to:
 - Control/use the environment.
 - Avoid trigger conditions.
 - Adopt alternative adaptive behaviours.
 - Act on observing the early warning signals of a potentially aggressive incident.
 - Use various techniques to help diffuse incidents & prevent escalation.
- 2.12 Employees and volunteers are required to report all acts of violence or aggression. These include incidents of verbal abuse and threats of violent action whether or not they resulted in injury. Management will investigate these events and take all appropriate action to prevent a reoccurrence (**See procedure Cafcass-SP06 The Reporting and Investigation of Accidents**). The findings and actions taken to prevent a reoccurrence will be positively communicated to all staff and volunteers who may be at risk of a similar occurrence.
- 2.13 Employees, volunteers or their managers will report to the Police all incidents when violence is used or if threats are assessed as not being idle but are statements of intended action. Police assistance is to be swiftly obtained if restraint and control of persons is likely to be necessary or if continued violence is probable.
- 2.14 Directors and Regional Managers will ensure that systems are established to provide support and counselling to employees and volunteers who have been the victim of violence/aggression. The persons line manager will offer the comfort and reassurance victims need in the immediate aftermath of an incident and will debrief both the victim and all other staff in the location. Independent counselling will be offered to the victim.

Cafcass Health and Safety Procedure

Title: Personal Safety (The control of violence and aggression)			
Document Number:	Cafcass – SP10	Revision 2	Date of Issue: 6/2/03

3. Definitions

3.1 Violence/aggression: This is any behaviour which physically or emotionally harms another and can be:

- **Physical**, e.g. hitting, spitting, pinching, pushing, urinating, throwing, use of weapons.
- **Emotional**, e.g. spitting, shouting, gestures, crowding, eye contact, swearing, threats, abuse.

3.2 Risk Assessment: The overall process of identifying hazards and estimating the magnitude of the associated risks, coming to a decision on whether the risk is tolerable or acceptable. It includes the identification of suitable additional and/or substitute control measures.

3.3 Hazard: A property of a substance, article or situation with a potential to cause harm to persons, damage to property, the environment or business interruption.

3.4 Hazard identification: The process of recognising that a hazard exists and defining its characteristics.

3.5 Risk: The combination of the likelihood and consequences of a specified hazardous event occurring

3.6 Competency: This is the ability to perform a task and meet recognised good practice standards. It is based on the consistent application of underpinning technical knowledge, skill and attitude.