

# RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## POLICY STATEMENT

### VIOLENCE AGAINST STAFF

#### 1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 The Association is responsible for providing a safe working environment for its employees and will strive to minimise the risk of work related violence.
- 1.2 The Association acknowledges that staff who deal with distressed, anxious and angry customers can be at risk from physical or verbal abuse. Whilst recognising that violent and abusive incidents may occur from time to time, the Association emphasises that staff should not tolerate unacceptable behaviour as simply 'part of the job' nor accept it as an indication of failure on their part.
- 1.3 The Association will not tolerate any act of violence or aggression towards any member of its staff or their property, which is a result of their employment with the Association
- 1.4 This policy applies to all employees and extends to Board members as well as contractors employed to work on the Association's premises.

#### 2. Definition

- 2.1 The Health & Safety Executive's definition of work related violence is: -  
  
'Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'
- 2.1 This definition is taken to include verbal abuse or threats, threatening behaviour, any assault, and serious or persistent harassment. This applies equally to instances of abuse directed at culture, ethnicity, disability or gender.
- 2.3 It is appreciated that some customers may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. Behaviour will not be viewed as unacceptable if a customer is forceful or determined. However, the actions of customers who are angry, demanding or unreasonably persistent may result in unreasonable demands or behaviour towards staff. It is these actions that are considered unacceptable.

#### 3. Implementation

##### 3.1 Legislation

The Association will comply with the statutory requirements of:-

- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977
- The Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

## **Policy Statement**

### **Violence Against Staff**

#### **3.2 Tenant's Responsibilities**

The Association will provide each tenant with a tenancy agreement, which clearly defines their rights and responsibilities. Clauses 3 (5) and 3 (6) of the tenancy agreement place a clear responsibility on tenants for the behaviour of every person living in or visiting their home. This states that persons should not cause a nuisance or annoyance, racial or other harassment to any tenant, agent, employee or contractor of the Association.

#### **3.3 Customers**

The Association expects customers to treat members of staff and contractors with courtesy and respect.

#### **3.4 The Association's Responsibilities**

To minimise the risk of work related violence the Association will –

- Provide relevant training for staff
- Provide appropriate security devices such as mobile telephones, personal alarms and monitoring devices
- Ensure that staff are made aware of known potential risks from violent or aggressive customers
- Encourage employees to report incidents of violence even if they do not wish further action to be taken
- Record and investigate all incidents of violence at work and take appropriate remedial action
- Provide advice and support to any employee involved in a violent or aggressive situation, including referral to counselling services when required.
- Inform a customer when their behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- Consider banning a customer from the Association's offices following a specific violent or aggressive incident. Contact may be restricted to telephone or written communication only
- Consider taking legal action, including injunctions and possession proceedings, where there is evidence that a customer has acted in a way that is likely to injure, intimidate or cause alarm or distress to staff. Such incidents may also be reported to the Police.
- Work with other agencies where a customer's violent or aggressive behaviour is symptomatic of a medical condition, to respond appropriately and reduce any risk
- Clearly publicise this policy

#### **3.5 Employee Responsibilities**

Individual employees will be encouraged to take responsibility for: -

- Complying with the Association's policy and procedures
- Complying with their responsibilities under the Health & Safety Act 1974
- Their own personal safety
- Taking reasonable precautions to safeguard themselves, colleagues, customers and other members of the public
- Identifying and making known their own training needs
- Utilising any training they receive in handling difficult situations and lone working
- Making appropriate use of any personal safety equipment and facilities provided
- Reporting all incidents of violence and aggression

#### **4. Staff Training**

- 4.1 All employees will be informed of this policy. It will form part of their Terms and Conditions of Employment and will be included as part of their induction training programme.

#### **5. Responsibility**

- 5.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

#### **6. Review**

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed biennially or sooner if there are changes in legislation or recommended good practice.

This policy applies to the beneficiaries of Joseph Hornby Stockdale Almshouses.

**February 2009**

**This policy can be made available on request in other languages, large type, Braille or in audio format**