

Croydon Council is committed, as far as is reasonably practicable, to the personal safety of its employees. It should be clearly understood by all concerned, that, in any situation, the reduction and avoidance of risk incidents is of paramount importance.

Clients, their families, and contacts need to be clear that any violent or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. Violence and threatening behaviours must never be seen as an inevitable part of the job.

This policy applies to staff conducting home visits as part of their duties. This policy should be read in conjunction with our [Lone Working Policy](#) , [The Red File Scheme](#) and [Procedures and the Council's Corporate Health and Safety](#).

Situations of Potential Risk

There is potential risk when visiting a client in their own homes; the following are just some of occasions when potential risk may be heightened.

- Visiting outside normal working hours
- Issues of location- outside work area or remote areas
- Lone visits
- Visiting in situations where abuse, including any verbal or physical threats have been directed towards staff or the council
- Having to carry out Safeguarding visits, un-announced welfare, or unplanned welfare visits

In considering a visit where the worker feels that there is a risk of threat or possible violence, the worker MUST discuss the visit with their Team Manager. In some cases, it might be necessary to work with a partner agency such as the police. Team Manager should consider safety arrangements, such as:

- Asking the client, family, or other relevant person to visit the council
- Meeting the client, family, or other relevant person in a public place

- Visiting the client, family, or other relevant person with a colleague
- Undertaking a doorstep interview and do not enter the person's property

Prior to a Visit

Prior to a visit where there might be safety concerns, the following should be done.

- Worker to conduct a risk assessment by checking on LAS for any concerns (red flags/hazards) or risk relating to the client, family or other relevant person who might be at the property. Worker should also check for risk relating to the home, animals and or weapons. If there are concerns, worker to discuss with Team Manager.
- Worker should also check the Corporate Red File database as this contains details about known violent individuals.
- If there are any other indicators that the client could be known to other external services such as SLAM, CGL (formerly Turning Point) etc then worker should contact these services for information around risk prior to visit.
- If the decision is to go ahead with the visit, the worker is to ensure that they have an emergency contact and that they are aware of the safety phrase ***can you please mark in the yellow folder that I am running late for the next client.***
- Worker is to ensure that full details of the visit (name, address, client ID, time of visit) is clearly recorded on their Outlook and a case note made against the client's record. Worker is to ensure that their manager/team has full access to their calendar so the details of the visit will be made visible
- Take your charged mobile phone and ensure your manager or relevant colleague know your number
- If you are visiting after working hours or your visit will go beyond normal working hours, ensure that your manager or relevant colleague has your out of office contacts

- Where appropriate, the worker should ensure that their partner, family, or other relevant person has their manager's details, in the unlikely event that they become concerned about your whereabouts
- Worker should inform their manager or relevant colleague of when they are going on the visit and expected return time
- Worker should arrange a check in call with their manager or relevant colleague and remind themselves of the safety phrase ***can you please mark in the yellow folder that I am running late for the next client*** prior to the visit. Worker can also agree a safety or "distress" word to be used in the event of an emergency or if you are feeling unsafe
- On arrival, before entering the property, check your mobile phone for signal. If you are concerned about your safety at this point, stop, do not enter the property. Contact your manager and await managerial direction
- If visiting with a colleague agree a "distress" or "safe word" prior to the visit
- If on arrival, there is an aggressive reception, or the client, family or other relevant person appears to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, otherwise out of control or you have seen animals that can be used to threaten, intimidate, or harm or weapons, do not enter the property. Move away from the property and contact your manager

During the Visit

- Introduce yourself and show your ID
- Check who is in property, including animals
- Think about where to sit, so, if necessary, you can leave quickly
- If a check call was agreed, it is essential that you call or answer at the agreed time. If your manager or relevant colleague has not received a call or they are unable to get hold of you, at this point, they will need to decide on contacting the police

- If you feel unsafe at any time during the visit, inform the client, family, relevant person that you are about to leave and do so at the earliest and safest of opportunity. Contact your manager/relevant colleague after you have left
- If you are unable to leave safely and you are concerned about your safety, call 999

After the Visit

- Inform your manager or relevant colleague of your return
- If there were risk, discuss with your manager and record on LAS and discuss updating the Corporate Red File with your Team Manager
- If a red flag/hazard has been recorded, set a review date

Reporting and Recording Incidents

- Any worker who suffers verbal abuse, aggression or violence must inform their manager as soon as possible. This will allow for the appropriate support to be provided
- The incident should be recorded and reported using the Council's accident database as soon as possible, but within 2 working days of the incident
- Where there has been an assault, Managers should consider sending a formal letter to the client, family or relevant person warning them that legal action may be taken. Managers should seek legal advice on the content of the letter
- Workers should be encouraged to report assaults to the police; where the police are unable to take actions, the Council might be able to take actions on the worker's behalf or assist them to do so in their own name