

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Staffing Committee – 29 April 2019

Report Title

Violence at Work Charter

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Ian Henderson Senior Employee Relations Officer
01709 822467 or ian.henderson@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

None

Report Summary

This report provides detail of UNISON's Violence at Work Charter. The Charter sets out measures that UNISON would like employers to put in place to prevent people that they are responsible for from being assaulted as they carry out their work.

Recommendations

1. That Staffing Committee recommend to Council that the authority be a signatory to UNISON's Violence at Work Charter.
2. Staffing Committee are asked to note how the Council currently meets the aims of the Charter

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

UNISON Violence at Work Charter

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Violence at Work Charter

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2015 UNISON surveyed its members and found that 48% of those working in the community and voluntary sector had experienced an incident of violence or aggression at work in the previous two years, whilst 27% felt threatened by violence or aggression at work.
- 1.2 Incidents included staff being physically or verbally abused, being punched, pushed and kicked, threatened with weapons and held against their will.
- 1.3 In common with the Health and Safety Executive, UNISON defines violence at work as “any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”.
- 1.4 UNISON wants to work with employers to put in place a basic level of monitoring, support, safeguards and training.
- 1.5 To qualify for the UNISON Violence at Work Charter mark, employers must meet ten standards. It should be noted that the Council’s current practices are in line with the key principles of the Charter and are covered by the Health & Safety Policy (referenced in **bold text**):
 1. The employer has a written violence and aggression at work policy which is available to all staff (**published on intranet and forms part of induction process**). The policy should also cover lone working (**point 3.19**)
 2. Responsibility for implementing these policies lies with a senior manager (**section 1 and 2**)
 3. Measures are taken to prevent staff working in isolated buildings, offices or other work areas on or off site
 4. Staff are encouraged to report all violent incidents and they are told how to do this (**section 3.1, 3.28 and intranet pages**)
 5. The employer collects and monitors data on violent incidents on a regular and ongoing basis (**2.9 and 2.10**)
 6. Where they are in place, union safety reps are able to access this data and are consulted on solutions to issues relating to violence in the workplace (**2.11**)
 7. Thorough risk assessments are conducted for staff placed in vulnerable situations (**3.27 and 4.0**)
 8. The employer has in place support pathways for staff who are victims of violence at work, so that they know where to turn for advice and support (**Health & Safety Team, Employee Assistance Programme**)
 9. Training to ensure staff are aware of the appropriate way to deal with threatening situations (**3.35**)

10. Where appropriate, independent counselling services are available to staff who are the victims of violence at work (**Employee Assistance Programme**)

2. Key Issues

2.1 As part of highlighting the Charter there is one minor point where Council practice doesn't appear to fully conform:

- Measures are taken to prevent staff working in isolated buildings, offices or other work areas on or off site

2.2 Council policy states that no employees will be expected to carry out any activity, which poses an unacceptable risk either to themselves or to other persons (**3.42**) and includes lone working protocols. Managers are required to undertake risk assessments to ensure that appropriate precautions are in place to protect employees and others.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Not to adopt the Charter.

3.2 The recommended option is to adopt the Charter at Council. The first point of the Charter includes lone working, which appears at odds to the third point highlighted in point 2.1 above. However, Council policy allows for appropriate assessment of risks for lone working, including mitigating any specific risks associated with 'working in isolated buildings, offices or other areas on or off site'.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Consultation has been undertaken with Cllr Alam who supports the adoption of the Charter.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 There is no set timescale for implementation. The Council already operates in the spirit of the Charter so there would be no change to existing policy or implications for agreeing to adopt.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 There are no financial implications.

6.2 There are no direct procurement implications associated with this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 There are no direct legal implications from this report. The Charter would help facilitate RMBCs duty to provide a safe working environment for its employees.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 The Charter supports the standards of Health and Safety operated by the Council to protect employees.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The Charter would apply to all employees across the Council.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 In making any decision the Council is required to have due regard to its equalities duties and in particular with respect to the Equality Act 2010, section 149, part 11 of the public sector duty:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and eliminate any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act,
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who are a protected characteristics and persons who do not share it and to
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10.2 The recommendation before the Council will not have any adverse impact on anyone with one or more protected characteristics, namely age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

11. Implications for Partners

11.1 There are no implications for Partners.

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 There is no risk associated in adopting the Charter.

13. Accountable Officer(s)

Shokat Lal Assistant Chief Executive
Lee Mann Assistant Director Human Resources

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive		Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	12/04/19

Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.

*Report Author: Ian Henderson Senior Employee
Relations Officer*

01709 822467 or ian.henderson@rotherham.gov.uk

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