SOUTHSIDE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Policy on De-escalation and Management of Challenging Behaviour

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1.0   POLICY STATEMENT

1.1   Southside Housing Association Ltd (SHA) acknowledges that Challenging Behaviour by service users can and does occur within the services it provides, that it is not acceptable and that the organisation has a responsibility to reduce or eliminate it.

1.2   Good quality services that value individual service users do make an impact on reducing Challenging Behaviour. However, the behaviour patterns of some service users may still result in episodes of Challenging Behaviour.

1.3   SHA has a commitment to the welfare of its employees and acknowledges the organisation's statutory responsibilities and duty of care as an employer

1.4   Training and support of staff will be vital in turning this policy into everyday practice and the investment in the role of employees is essential to the success of this policy.

1.5   The policy aims to provide staff with clear guidance of SHA's procedures for preventing challenging behaviour and in particular aggression, assessing and minimizing risk, managing challenging situations and dealing with the aftermath of incidents.

2.0   PRINCIPLES, PURPOSES AND STANDARDS

2.1   In managing Challenging Behaviour, SHA will adopt the principles that:
- Individual risk assessment is the foundation on which the reduction of risk of Challenging Behaviour is based
- All employees of SHA have a role in reducing the risk of Challenging Behaviour
- The employee's responsibility extends to anyone who might be adversely affected by an individual whose behaviour can be challenging
- Reporting and learning from incidents of Challenging Behaviour will assist in reducing and eliminating them
- Support is offered automatically without the worker having to request it
- In the case of challenging behaviour involving violence staff should always minimise the risk to themselves and others and seek assistance from the police. Restraint by staff must only be used as a 'last resort' and involve minimal reasonable force.

2.2   SHA adopts the key <u>purposes</u> of:
- Assessing risk of Challenging Behaviour and planning to reduce or eliminate it
- Acting to eliminate or control risk of Challenging Behaviour by implementing control measures that have been identified
- Reviewing risk management with a view to learning what other measures, including practical and training measures, need to be taken
- Providing a framework to ensure a consistent approach to potentially violent behaviour and violent incidents
- Defining what Challenging Behaviour is
- Setting out circumstances where physical intervention may be necessary
- Consulting with managers, workers and service users, and drafting regular reports to those at the most senior level in SHA.

2.3   Standards

The following standards are expected:
- The service has a clear policy on the management of violent behaviour and violent incidents and recommends the involvement of the police or specialist services to deal with such.
- Staff receive training, tailored to the particular needs of their service, in appropriate methods of managing Challenging Behaviour
- Measures are taken by staff to minimise the risk of Challenging Behaviour to themselves or others
- Individual risk assessments prepared and incorporated into the Support Plan for service users
- Measures are taken to reduce the likelihood of occurrence of violent behaviour
- Staff intervene to the minimum extent necessary
- Staff only use techniques in which they have been trained
- Reporting, recording and investigation is prompt, accurate and impartial
- A record shall be kept of any occasion on which restraint or control has been applied to a service user
- Staff clearly understand the circumstances which would justify the involvement of the police or any other external agency
- Staff are supported after an incident and offered specialist support if required
- Service users have the facility to make a complaint if they so wish
- Findings are studied and the implications both for the individual service user and for agency practice are acted upon

3.0   SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

3.1   **Definitions**

Challenging Behaviour is defined as 'Incidents where persons are treated, abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health'.

Challenging Behaviour encompasses physical, sexual and emotional Challenging Behaviour, including any form or harassment or abuse. This could include:

- Physical attack
- Verbal abuse
- Persistent harassment
- Racial and sexual abuse
- Threatening behaviour
- Stalking
- Attack by an animal under control of individual
- Damage to property as a means to intimidate worker
- Threats to worker's family

The term **'physical intervention'** has wider application than the term **'control and restraint'** whose meaning is generally restricted to direct physical contacts intended to manage aggressive and violent behaviour. Physical interventions are likely to fall into three broad categories:

1. Direct physical contact between a member of staff and a service user
2. The use of barriers such as locked doors to limit freedom of movement
3. The use of materials or equipment that restrict or prevent movement

Physical interventions should only be used on rare occasions, and in the best interests of the service user.

Control and restraint are safety interventions of last resort and are not treatment interventions. Seclusion and restraint should never be used for the purposes of discipline, coercion, or staff convenience, or as a replacement for adequate levels of staff or active treatment.

Because of the nature of the support provided by SHA, staff are not trained in the use of control and restraint and for any incident requiring this staff should ensure their own and others safety, then summon the police.

3.2   The challenges presented may mean that violence is part of the challenging behaviour, and that physical interventions may be unavoidable as a last resort.

These challenges will include:

- Challenging Behaviour towards staff, other service users and members of the public
- Self injury
- Reckless disregard for personal safety
- Serious damage to possessions or property
- Verbal abuse or intimidation

Services that respect the dignity, privacy and individuality of service users are *less likely* to provoke aggressive responses than services that neglect these ideals. However, it may not be possible to eliminate such responses. The guiding principle must always be that physical interventions can only be justified and used *if* it is clear that such action is in the best interests of the service user *and* is the least restrictive intervention possible in the circumstances.

Punitive and aversive responses will not be permitted

SHA will strive to safeguard and promote the welfare and interests of everyone affected by violent or aggressive challenging behaviour. All staff at all levels of the organisation will be expected to respect this policy.

3.3   Assessment procedures include risk assessment which highlights the inter-relationship between people and situations, and the following is noted here as a reminder.

3.4   **Situations** that may affect risk include:
- Perceived infringement of rights or autonomy, including questioning on
- Having to wait a 'long' time
- Lacking privacy in confidential or sensitive matters
- Implied control or supervision, inconsistent or unexplained treatment
- Disputes where unfairness, discrimination or 'labeling' is perceived
- Imposition of sanctions or restraint
- Tired or stressed service users
- Inexperienced, tired or stressed staff

3.5   **People** are more likely to be aggressive or violent if they:
- Are under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Have a history of Challenging Behaviour or of being a victim of Challenging Behaviour
- Have threatened Challenging Behaviour or intimidated others
- Have recently been behaving in a potentially violent or aggressive manner, particularly if differently from normal, in an intimidating way
- Bear a grudge against someone or organisation, harbour a sense of injustice or grievance
- Feel their rights or autonomy are threatened
- Suffer from a mental disorder, and exhibit any of the above
- Have experienced rejection, anger, resentment, distress or loss, now or in the past
- Have a background of unstable relationships, or lack support
- Have difficulty expressing themselves, e.g. due to a communication or sensory impairment problem
- Are bored, lack activity or cannot make sense of their environment

Individuals who are considered to be very high risk, include people:

- Who are registered sex offenders
- Who present with a history of aggression or Challenging Behaviour
- Who may self harm
- Who may abuse others

3.6   **Responding to Challenging Behaviour**

Alertness

Staff should be alert to the risk of challenging behaviour in any situation, and in relation to any individual where the risks are known, and have been assessed.

Some service users will be unknown to staff. In these circumstances staff should be aware of the warning signs and triggers of impending Challenging Behaviour (voice tone, muscle tension, aggressive gestures, insults, obscenities etc).

Where the service user is known to the service, the member of staff should consider/discuss the potential for Challenging Behaviour through discussions with colleagues and study files with particular reference to any previous history of violent behaviour.

Some service users will have a known potential for challenging behaviour, cognisance should be taken of this at the application for service assessment.

Reducing risk

In the services provided by SHA, staff may be dealing with a number of service users whose potential for Challenging Behaviour will be unknown to the staff on duty. Effective strategies for reducing the risk of Challenging Behaviour are likely to include:

- Clarity about the behaviours which are acceptable in the service and the responses to unacceptable behaviour
- Ensuring good communications between workers on duty and, in settings where shifts are worked, between teams of at hand-over about possible risks
- Sensitivity to situations of potential Challenging Behaviour and readiness to intervene to assist colleagues
- Sensible positioning in the room (allowing access to exits) and readiness to summon colleagues
- Using technological aids to risk management, such as entry and alarm systems, panic buttons and surveillance cameras
- Isolating a service user in a room or settings where potential Challenging Behaviour to self or others is minimised
- Excluding the service users from the building as a last resort

In addition, strategies also likely to reduce the risk for Challenging Behaviour will include:

- Providing opportunities for privacy and peace
- Offering service users the right to complain and assisting them to implement SHA complaints procedure
- Using processes to ensure that service users are fulfilling their aspirations and living their lives in the way that they chose
- Maintaining dialogue, and using empathetic listening, to allow a gradual reduction in levels of tension
- Either increasing or decreasing engagement levels dependant on whether the behaviour is aimed at increasing stimulus or avoiding stress

Staff should:

- Use personal alarms, mobile phones and 'phone-in' systems to enhance security when visiting the room, flat or home of the service user, or in any outside setting
- Be aware of entry or exit points in any setting
- Avoid situations which may trigger Challenging Behaviour, such as crowding, invasion of privacy, aggressive competition or withdrawal of privileg
- Take steps to limit access to anything which could be used as a weapon

3.7   It may be necessary to consider the termination of a service to the service user if there is an extremely severe incident or a project cannot cope with their behaviour pattern. Also, where other service users may be at risk and/ or be unable to cope with the situation. Service users who have been involved in a violent incident may seek a 'fresh start' themselves and seek a termination on this basis.

In clearly hazardous situations SHA may have to refuse to provide services.   This does not deny the Service User access to the various rights and procedures in place such as:

- Accessing or complaining to statutory Agencies such as Social Services or the Care Commission
- Policies and procedures for breaches of the rules, or tenancy agreements.
- The Complaints Procedures and the right to appeal

Terminating the service to a service user should be subject to review to allow examination of both the reason and consequences of the incident and to determine if any exclusion from service should be short, medium or long term.

Managers will be required to approve a termination of service and ensure that all assistance has been given to the client to obtain alternative accommodation and that the proper authorities have been informed of the situation.

3.8 **Legal Considerations**

Under law, every citizen is entitled to live without interference from others. In theory, a physical intervention could lead to a charge of assault or battery. However, it is recognised that there are circumstances when interference is not only reasonable but also highly desirable. Every citizen is entitled to protect himself or herself from injury and the law also recognises that intervention is justified, if harm to other people or to property is thereby prevented.

All staff have a 'duty of care' towards the service users. This means that reasonable care needs to be taken to avoid acts or omissions that are likely to cause harm or create risk.

Victims of challenging behaviour, which includes assault, may take action against an employer. Proof of breach of statutory duty and/ or negligence would have to be evidenced by the staff member.

The main pieces of health and safety law that are relevant to Challenging Behaviour against workers are:

- **Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)**
  Employers have a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who might be affected by their acts or omissions.

- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992)**
  Employers must assess the risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety.

- **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995) (RIDDOR)** Employers must notify their enforcing authority in the event of an accident at work to any employee resulting in death, major injury or incapacity for normal work for three or more days.

- **Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (1977), and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (1996)**
  Employers must inform, and consult with, employees in good time on matters relating to their health and safety.

- **Employment Rights Act (1996)**
  Under this legislation, an employee has the right not to be penalised by their employer for taking actions to protect themselves or other persons.

4.0   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1   Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff
There are a number of responsibilities, which are common to all staff and volunteers within SHA irrespective, of their function within individual services and the wider organisation. These are:

- Ensure they are aware of the importance of Managing Challenging Behaviour, good practice guidelines and their role in Southside Housing Association operational procedures on Managing Challenging Behaviour
- If, during discussion of an incident with their line manager, staff feel that they may be subject to a disciplinary or police investigation, they should stop the meeting and seek advice from their trade union or advisor before proceeding
- Ensure implementation of this policy

4.2   The Staff will:

- Treat service users with dignity and respect
- Be aware of signs of potential Challenging Behaviour
- Take practical steps to ensure their safety if Challenging Behaviour occurs
- Keep calm, and avoid challenging behaviour which could escalate the situation
- Use de-escalation techniques, but only if trained
- Use physical intervention as a last resort and with minimum reasonable force
- Respond appropriately to Challenging Behaviour
- Make a verbal report to senior member of staff
- Record all instances of challenging behaviour especially those including violence, (including 'near misses'), using the accident and Incident report forms
- Provide accurate information, about an incident involving violence, to senior member of staff after the incident
- Undertake training
- If there is no line manager available, contact police in an incident of extreme severity, requiring assistance from police. Contact should be made as soon as possible with the line manager
- Make complaints procedure available to service users if requested
- Give completed forms to the Manager within, at least, one working day

4.3   **The Manager will:**

- Provide supply of forms, information, instructions and training for staff
- Arrange meetings, as soon after the incident as possible, with staff to discuss incident, ensuring a supportive environment for staff
- Make decisions on whether staff should be allowed home following a violent incident. (Supportive contact with staff when at home should be maintained)
- Consider whether police should be involved
- Brief staff on subsequent shifts
- Discuss each incident and confirm appropriate action
- Ensure that staff are adequately trained and supported in Managing Challenging Behaviour to Staff
- Ensure that latest research and good practice guidelines on Managing Challenging Behaviour to Staff are disseminated
- Ensure that the workplace and environment is safe and that there are safe systems of work
- Arrange a meeting as soon after the incident as possible with staff
- Use learning from an incident as discussion point at staff meetings
- Consider whether there has been inappropriate conduct by the member of staff and whether this requires disciplinary or other actions SHA's experience of this is that incidents where this type of action is required are rare
- Deal with complaints made by service user
- Consider whether a termination of service is necessary. If necessary relevant others should be contacted e.g. family, social worker, C.P.N.
- Organise a review if the housing support plan requires to be altered, if the incident is of a significant severity
- Advise staff of process to make claim to Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority for compensation (a police number will be required)
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training in managing Challenging Behaviour

4.4   **The Director will:**

- Receive copies of Challenging Behaviour incident records
- Consult with managers, workers and service users.
- Take overall long term charge, of SHA's approach to managing Challenging Behaviour
- Deal with press enquiries on specific incidents
- Deploy, implement, monitor and regularly review this policy
- Report to the Management Committee on the subject of Managing Challenging Behaviour as required

4.5   **The Management Committee will:**

- Ensure deployment, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

5.0   IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

5.1   Where it is evident that Challenging Behaviour may occur, or it is already happening, the following actions should take place in the minutes leading up to, during and following an actual violent incident.

CHECKLIST OF ACTION (DURING and AFTER A VIOLENT INCIDENT)

1.   BE AWARE OF THE TRIGGERS OF POTENTIAL CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR
   i.   Observe closely what is going on around you
   ii.   If Challenging Behaviour looks likely, consider what you would do

2.   PRACTICAL STEPS IF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR OCCURS
   i.   Consider your escape route
   ii.   Keep closer to the door than the perpetrator
   iii.   If possible, try to get a large object, like a table, between yourself and the perpetrator
   iv.   Remove anything which could be used by the perpetrator as a weapon, e.g. cutlery or an ashtray
   v.   Call for help
   vi.   Get out of the situation as quickly as possible
   vii.   If attacked, defend yourself using minimum reasonable force

3.   KEEP CALM AND AVOID CHALLENGING POSTURES
   i.   Speak quietly but firmly
   ii.   Reassure the perpetrator that you will not harm them
   iii.   Avoid sudden movements
   iv.   Do not try to challenge the perpetrator by 'staring them down'

4.   DE-ESCALATING THE SITUATION
   i.   Avoid a heated argument, talk reasonably and indicate you understand the service user's grievances
   ii.   Remove other service users from the situation
   iii.   Use distractions

5.   PHYSICAL INTERVENTION
   i.   Only use minimal physical intervention as a last resort. Involve the police
   ii.   Be consistent

6.   RESPONDING TO A VIOLENT INCIDENT
   i.   Make service users safe
   ii.   Provide or obtain medical treatment. Access specialist help such as psychiatric service etc
   iii.   Report to police if appropriate
   iv.   Prevent re-occurrence

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7.   REPORTING
- i.   Make a verbal report to a senior member of staff
- ii.   If out of office hours contact senior staff 'on call'
- iii.   Report 'near violent' incidents

8.   RECORDING
- i.   Record incident using Accident and Incident procedure
- ii.   Describe the incident, making the information as factually accurate as possible

9.   FOLLOW UP AND ASSESSING THE IMPLICATIONS
- i.   Manager discusses incident with staff involved
- ii.   Manager considers action investigation, calling police, termination of service etc.
- iii.   Manager considers additional support to service users
- iv.   Manager receives any complaint by service user

10.   SUPPORTING STAFF
- i.   Manager will support staff after incident
- ii.   Manager will provide opportunities for learning for all staff from an incident
- **iii.**   Training will be provided for all staff.

AWARENESS

5.2   Be Aware of Triggers of Potential Challenging Behaviour
        Always observe what is happening around you and recognise situations where a
        service user:
        a) Has recently been behaving in a violent or aggressive manner
        b) Is becoming tense, agitated and angry
        c) Is bored and frustrated
        d) Is reacting adversely to the presence of another service user
        e) Is reacting adversely to unwelcome information from a member of staff
        f) Perceives their rights to be infringed
        g) Is in a bad mood
        h) Is overtired and stressed
        i) Is under the influence of alcohol or drugs
        In situations such as above, staff should consider if the situation is likely to escalate
        into Challenging Behaviour and consider what actions they might take to avoid harm.

5.3   Practical Steps if Challenging Behaviour Occurs
        a) If you feel frightened and in need of more help than is available, the golden rule is get
            out of the situation as soon as possible.
        b) Looking after yourself is not a failure and safe practice is good practice for workers
            and service users.
        c) Always consider your escape route when encountering an escalating situation. A good
            idea is to keep some large object between yourself and a perpetrator, e.g. a table.
        d) Position yourself closer to the door than the perpetrator and avoid placing yourself in a
            corner with no escape route.
        e) Call for assistance if you sense you are about to be attacked

        Self-defence is OK - but you are legally entitled to apply only enough force to break free to
        get away. You may take action to prevent injury to any person or serious damage to
        property, if you can show that there were strong indicators that injury would otherwise have
        followed.

        Remember that in many instances:

        a) **Many things come together before Challenging Behaviour happens**. Even if you
            understand the reasons only with hindsight, this learning can be used in the future to
            assess and plan both in working with individuals, groups and families and in managing
            the organisation and its responses
        b) **Use your own experience as well as professional knowledge** about the situations
            which spark off anger
        c) **However, be aware that sometimes Challenging Behaviour is unpredictabl**e and
            its reasons cannot be understood even after the event.

5.4   Avoid Challenging Postures and Stay Calm

Perpetrators of Challenging Behaviour can react to fear and the impact their behaviour is making on their victim. Remain calm and try not to give indications to the perpetrator that their threatening behaviour is having the desired affect. Sometimes ignoring the behaviour and not reacting may be sufficient to resolve the situation.

If you are faced with a situation, you should:

a) **Keep calm** - do your best not to act in a temper or show panic. Do not be sarcastic or do anything that could cause the person to lose face. Think about posture and tone of voice, and do not reinforce racial, gender or other stereotypes

b) **Avoid physical contact**

c) **Do not try to have a 'battle of wills'**, which might be interpreted as an invitation for a fight

d) **Move slowly** to avoid the perpetrator thinking you are going to attack them

e) **Reassure** them you have no intention of attacking them

f) **Do not use physical force except in self-defence**

g) **Do not use restraint techniques unless you have been trained**, know what you are doing and are sure that this is within the organisation's procedures. Workers could be open to a counter allegation of assault

h) **Try to be aware of opportunities of ending the situation and use them** - they are not always easy to spot

i) **Remove dangerous items** which could be used as a weapon or which could be dangerous if thrown

j) **Do not risk being attacked to protect property or cash**

5.5   De-escalating the Situation

You should attempt to calm and de-escalate the situation when Challenging Behaviour is threatened or inflicted. This may involve:

a) **Talking down the situation** using de-escalation techniques. (Providing that the member of staff has been trained in these techniques and they are an agreed response to the particular individual)

b) **If you have been trained - Safely escalating the situation to allow the release of tension or emotion through verbal rather than physical expression** (again, providing that the member of staff has been trained in these techniques and they are an agreed response to the particular individual)

c) **Separate service users** where more than one person is involved

d) **Summon assistance** from colleagues or others

e) **Use distraction techniques**

f) **Ask firmly that the perpetrator put down any weapon they may have**

5.6   Physical Intervention

a) A physical intervention should be a final resort, employed only after other management strategies have failed.

b) The first level of management strategies involves communication and de-escalation.

c) The second line of intervention is to remove others from the scene, ensure your own safety. Where possible and without risk to yourself or others ensure the safety of the perpetrator/s

d) The third level of physical intervention should involve outside bodies, such as the police or specialist medical services.

You should only use physical intervention techniques in which you have received proper training. An untrained staff member should not attempt to use physical intervention. All staff in a particular service should use the same approach or method and some may need to 'unlearn' techniques acquired in other service settings. The aim should always be to use a physical intervention that uses the minimum reasonable force and is applied for the shortest time.

The use of any physical intervention technique that relies on inflicting pain or discomfort through localized pressure or 'locks' will not be permitted by SHA.

5.7   Immediate Response to a Challenging Behaviour involving a Violent Incident

a) The first action should be to make sure that any persons involved are safe. Provide or obtain medical attention where necessary.

b) In certain circumstances, it will be necessary for the Police or other emergency services to be involved. Staff, who believe that the welfare of the service user or any other person is threatened should summon the police if they are not in a position to safeguard the safety of the person(s) involved. Also Staff who are not in a position to summon assistance from colleagues.

c) The decision to report the incident to the police is the right of every staff member as an ordinary citizen. In a situation occurring at their place of employment, the member of staff will also receive positive support and assistance from SHA Managers. This may take the form of a manager making the complaint to the police on behalf of the staff member and with their approval.

d) In explaining this policy to service users, it is appropriate to advise them of the serious repercussions of violent behaviour and that the matter can result in a complaint being made to the police. This should not be presented as a threat, but as a matter of fact. This explanation, in itself, may cause a service user, at a point in the future, to draw back from an assault.

e) Managers should also give advice to staff on making a claim to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority for compensation.

f) If the perpetrator of an assault is a person with a learning disability, the person's parents or main carers should be advised, in order to give them an opportunity to support the person during any questioning after an incident.

g) Managers should use their discretion as to whether a member of staff should be allowed time off from work following a violent incident. This may be an accumulation of incidents or a single occurrence.

5.8   Preventing recurrence

a) The service user should be removed to a safe place with due regard for the dignity and privacy of the service.

b) Any object or person which provoked the Challenging Behaviour should also be removed, especially any object which had been used or could be used as a weapon.

c) Emergency psychiatric services may be involved if there is a possibility that intervention may be required under the terms of the Mental Health Act.

d) At the appropriate time, service users should also be supported through debriefing and, if possible, helped to come to terms with the feelings and emotions expressed in the incident.

5.9   Reporting

At the earliest opportunity, a verbal report should be made to the most senior member of staff present in the workplace. If a serious incident has occurred, contact should be made with the Manager or Director. If the incident occurs out of hours and a standby system is in operation, the standby duty officer should be informed.

Staff should report not only actual incidents of Challenging Behaviour but also allegations and suspicions of Challenging Behaviour from any source of information. Staff should attempt to distinguish in their report between observed fact, opinion, suspicion and allegation. Staff should not wait until an account of the incident can be written down, but should convey a verbal account as promptly, clearly and concisely as possible.

The Manager may decide on the involvement of Police or other external agencies. The staff on subsequent shifts should be informed of the incident both verbally and through diary recording.

5.10   Recording

All incidents that involve aggression or Challenging Behaviour should be clearly and promptly recorded using SHA's Accident and Incident procedure. Again, staff should distinguish between fact, opinion, suspicion and allegation, and describe the incident clearly, concisely and in chronological order.

a) All records should incorporate information about:
b) The time, date and location of the incident
c) The names and status of all staff and service users involved
d) Age if under 18 years
e) Witnesses names and status
f) Who was informed – managers, family, doctors or other professionals
g) A description of the incident, including events leading up to the incident
h) Why you thought the incident occurred
i) Details of any variation from agreed practice or procedures concerning physical interventions.
j) The interventions used and their duration
k) Description of how the incident was resolved
l) Whether the police were called
m) The nature and extent of any injuries to staff or service users
n) Any medical treatment given and by whom

o) Any physical intervention used including type of intervention
p) The extent and rough cost of damage to property or possessions
q) The likely psychological or physical effects of intervention on the service user
r) Any forensic evidence which may assist further investigations
s) Initial action taken concerning critical incident debriefing for the member(s) of staff involved
t) Additional action taken or recommended, including changes in policy or procedures
u) Any reportable accident or incident must be reported to the enforcement authority as required.
v) If the accident or incident could result in an insurance claim against SHA, early notification to our insurers should be made.

5.11   Assessing the implications

Following an incident, the line manager should discuss the incident with staff members involved. This should be supportive to staff and should not seek to 'blame' them for the incident. Good practice should be commended and reinforced, by using examples within team meetings to build confidence in the team when dealing with violent incidents, and in building consistent approaches to working with service users. Any reflection on practice, where a member of staff has made the wrong decision, should be viewed as an opportunity for learning.

Members of staff may require medical treatment after an incident or be distressed and require to leave early to go home. Managers should deal with this sensitively, while at the same time trying to conclude the post incident discussion as speedily as is appropriate.

If it emerges that there may be a requirement for disciplinary procedures to be invoked, or the matter to be referred to the police, the manager and member of staff should postpone the meeting to a point when the member of staff has suitable support from a trade union or other representative.

a) The areas covered in the post incident discussion should include:
b) Reading through the report together
c) Discussing the appropriateness of actions taken
d) Discussion on use of any physical intervention
e) Action to take place following the incident
f) Whether the service user has made a complaint about the incident
g) Who should be advised about the incident
h) Identifying the person responsible to co-ordinate the actions required, along with a timescale for this

In the event of a serious incident, the Manager may make a formal investigation, which may involve external representatives.

5.12   Supporting staff

SHA will ensure that:

a) Staff are protected, by planning the management of Challenging Behaviour in ways which aim to minimise the risk to staff
b) Interventions are clearly defined and set out in a way which is readily understandable by all staff
c) Staff are entitled to appropriate medical attention and sick leave
d) There are formal mechanisms for critical incident debriefing, following a physical intervention likely to cause distress to staff members. There are opportunities for specialist counselling where necessary
e) The manager will have many different roles to play following a serious incident – counsellor, investigator, human resources manager, information processor, policy reviewer etc. The manager would need to be prepared to:
f) Arrange hospital treatment or medical attention if necessary, either for the staff member or service user
g) Take further action, if necessary, to ensure the aggressor is no longer a danger to staff colleagues, to others, or to members of the public
h) Involve the police either to ensure the safety of the people involved or in order to bring criminal charges
i) Ensure that other members are informed, and are providing appropriate support, to colleagues and service users
j) Carry out a post incident discussion with the staff member(s) as soon as practicable to establish facts, but also to provide reassurance, ascertain immediate needs and wishes and define the nature of support over the longer term (notes should be taken if possible)
k) Consider whether time off work may be necessary for the staff member(s) affected: a brief period of time away from work may allow staff to come to terms with the incident and start afresh the next day or the next week. Insistence on carrying on as normal may be a form of denial with consequences in the longer term. Conversely staying away from work may create a phobic reaction known as the 'incubation of fear'. If a worker does require to take time off work, the manager should keep in regular contact by telephone or visits to provide an assurance of support and concern.
l) Reallocate workloads or responsibilities as appropriate.
m) Carry out a full investigation of the incident incorporating feedback from all parties concerned (including wherever possible the service user(s) and ensure that all details are recorded in accordance with agency policy).
n) Arrange a meeting for everyone involved in the incident to allow feelings to be expressed and consensus reached on future courses of action. Such meetings can be highly constructive if lessons are learned and emotional support and solidarity is harnessed. It is also possible for meetings to lower morale and affect good team working when work colleagues attribute blame to others or are unsupportive.
o) Identify whether practice needs to be changed at individual service user level by reviewing the individual response strategy or whether there are more generic implications for policy change across the whole service or the whole agency.

p) Consider whether the staff involved should play a continuing role in the provision of services to the service users or whether a transfer of work responsibilities is indicated

q) Consider whether the agency is prepared to continue to offer a service to the service user in question or whether a temporary exclusion or suspension from the service may be appropriate

r) If practicable, make clear to the service user where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour lie, what action the agency intends to take and what options (complaints procedure etc.) are open to the service user

s) Consider whether any member of staff may need professional counselling following the incident, recognising that this need may only become apparent at a later date

5.14   Evaluating and Reviewing the Policy

It will be useful to collate routinely collected information such as:

- The number of incidents
- When they occur
- The types of staff involved
- The categories of service users involved
- The environments/locations where incidents happen
- The severity of the incident
- The preventive measures taken

Always **feed back to staff** the reports that are produced, and any actions decided upon - this will encourage reporting by dispelling the widely held perception that it is not worth reporting incidents because nothing ever happens to the reports.