



<b>Policy No:</b> SJD/HS/02	<b>Authorised by:</b> Davina Powell	<b>Review Date:</b> 24th October 2023
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<b>ASSAULTS</b>		

## **Introductions**

It is SJD Homes' policy that all assaults by staff, young people or others perpetrated on staff or young people or others associated with SJD Homes' work — whether occurring on SJD Homes' premises or not — will be investigated.

SJD Homes works on a presumption that all acts of physical violence will be prosecuted. Other actions that may be taken in addition to prosecution are banning individuals from SJD Homes premises and termination of placement, employment or work contract as appropriate.

### **SJD Homes has a No Restraint Policy.**

SJD Homes is opposed to the use of violence and physical force to control people but also believes that both young people and staff have the right to be protected and to feel safe. SJD Homes will take vigorous action against any person using violence or threatening violence.

SJD Homes aims to create a climate of safety where young people trust the adults that care for them. This sense of safety is generally best provided through the mutual respect of boundaries that apply equally to staff and young people. Fulfilling and valuing the needs of young people therefore has to be a fundamental priority.

While young people in SJD Homes' care need to be assured that they will not be physically controlled or restrained, staff also need to feel safe at work. It is therefore SJD Homes' policy to report all assaults and serious threats of assault to the police and to take follow up action as a matter of course. This can include closure of the placement and anybody assaulting anyone else at SJD Homes can expect to be prosecuted.

There may be incidents from time to time where it is felt that prosecution is not appropriate or will serve little purpose. A decision not to prosecute will only be taken where there are strong extenuating circumstances or other factors of an exceptional nature and with the approval of the management team.

This policy applies equally to the young people in our care, employees of SJD Homes and any other person who is involved in the assault of our young people or employees.

### **Good Practice**

Good practice is to create a safe environment for all. This requires clear and fair boundaries. No one living in or working in or visiting SJD Homes should feel threatened or be subjected to violence.

Staff need to follow the practice guidance outlined by SJD Homes. Staff should not threaten or aggressively challenge young people. However staff need to feel empowered to call for assistance to help enforce appropriate boundaries and ensure safety.

For some of our young people it is particularly important for them to learn that violence and threats of violence do not have to be a part of everyday life. If staff at SJD Homes can teach this by example through their own behaviour, they will have significantly helped prevent those young people repeating abusive patterns of behaviour when they become adults.

## **Procedures**

Wherever an assault or serious threat of assault has occurred, and the young person involved is 18 years of age or under and cared for under *Section 20 or Section 31 of the Children Act 1989* (i.e., is 'looked after'), the local Child Protection Team must be notified immediately. If a young adult over the age of 18 is a victim, the Vulnerable Adult Protection Team must be notified immediately.

All assaults are to be reported to the local police particularly if it is felt that such behaviour makes the accommodation unsafe for other young people and/or staff, or if there are grounds for thinking that there could be a continuation of the behaviour.

Where staff on duty are unclear whether the police should be called following an incident of threatening behaviour, the on-call manager should be contacted for advice and help in making a risk assessment.

Where staff assess a situation as needing immediate intervention, they do not need prior approval to call the police. Wherever possible however, staff should talk to the on-call manager if they have concerns about a deteriorating situation that may necessitate the police being called. Once the police have been called the on-call manager should be informed, as soon as is practicable.

Where staff on duty consider there is a danger of violence continuing, they should request the police to remove the young person involved pending a formal investigation of the incident.

It is likely that the police could and would deal with issues of common assault by telephone, with no police attendance at the establishment.

Any young person removed by the Police as a consequence of assaults would not be allowed to return to the home until it was deemed safe for them and the other residents. In the case of a decision being made to close the placement they would not be allowed to return and arrangements made to return their possessions via their social worker or personal advisor.

If staff are involved in committing assaults they will be suspended with immediate effect, asked to leave the premises without delay and instructed not to return until a formal disciplinary investigation has been completed.

The individual young person assaulted will be consulted by a senior member of the management team regarding their views about further action.

All incidents of a young person being assaulted must be reported to the respective social workers, or the duty officer in the placing authority, by the end of the shift. Where the young person is deemed to be 'looked after' a written report must be submitted by the placement manager to the appropriate LADO, by email.

All serious incidents committed by a young person must be followed with a formal planning meeting at which the young person's placement may be terminated.

If there is continued evidence of violent behaviour, the options to consider would be termination of the placement and/or to recommend that the young person involved be prosecuted.

In the event of one young person assaulting another and one or both are 'looked after' consideration should always be given to activating the Child Protection Procedures. This decision depends upon the judgment of a senior manager and should initially be referred to the on-call manager.

It is crucial that the victim is adequately protected from further assault and injury and the perpetrator may need to be removed until the incident can be fully investigated.

In the case of serious incidents, a de-briefing meeting with all relevant parties will be called as soon as possible in addition to any internal investigation that SJD Homes might decide to hold.

Whenever there is evidence that serious incidents have occurred in the home which have resulted in significant risk or harm, then an incident sheet must be sent to the social worker or personal advisor in all placing authorities, informing them of the incident.

Details of the investigation should be provided, and include any formal comments made by the Police, Child Protection Team or Registration and Inspection Department as appropriate, together with any proposals for new or updated policies

