



Policy No: SJD/ORG/03	Authorised by: Davina Powell	Review Date: 2 nd November 2023
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ASSAULTS		

Introduction

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 the 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 or termination of placement 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 aim 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 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 in the daily operation of the home.

Young people in SJD Homes' care need to be assured that they will not be physically controlled or restrained unless it is necessary to ensure their safety, but that 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. Our expectation is however that a decision not to prosecute will be taken only 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 all young people in our care, the employees of SJD Homes and any other person who is involved in an assault of our young people or employees.

Good Practice

Good practice in residential childcare, semi-independent or independent living is to create a safe climate for everybody. This requires clear and fair boundaries. No one living or working or visiting SJD Homes should feel threatened or be subjected to violence.

Staff need to follow the practice guidance outlined in the section on care and control in the staff handbook. Staff should not threaten or aggressively challenge young people. Staff need however to feel empowered to call for assistance to help enforce appropriate boundaries and ensure safety.

For some of the young people who are in SJD Homes' care it is important that they learn that violence and threats of violence does not have to be a part of everyday life. If staff at SJD Homes can teach this

by example through their own behaviour, then 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 in the children's home or semi-independent placement and the young person is under 18 years of age the local Child Protection Team must be notified immediately. If the victim is a young adult 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 placement 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 around incidents of threatening behaviour the on-call manager should be called 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 on duty that may necessitate the police being called.

Once the police have been called the on-call manager should be informed, as soon as is practical.

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 placement.

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

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

The individual young person assaulted should also be consulted by a senior member of the placement's team management 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 and a written report submitted to the appropriate LADO by email where the young person is under 18 years of age.

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 for the placement to consider would be termination of the placement and/or to recommend that the young person involved be prosecuted.

Child Protection must be informed automatically if a resident were to be assaulted by a member of staff (see also Notifications).

In the event of one young person assaulting another, consideration should always be given to activating the Child Protection Procedures. This decision depends upon the judgement 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 needs to 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 in all placing authorities by the placement manager, informing them of the and any formal comments made by the Police, Child Protection Team or Vulnerable Adult Protection Team, together with any proposals for new or updated policies should also be included

