



## VIOLENCE AT WORK POLICY

### DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL

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	SEStran	1.0	FINAL	Policy adopted
Oct 2017	SEStran	1.1	FINAL	Adoption of version control

## **VIOLENCE AT WORK POLICY**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

SEStran aims to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. SEStran is committed to the safety of employees by ensuring that best practices are employed to minimise risks from potential violence at work.

SEStran does not accept that employees should be subjected to violence whilst at work and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to protect employees from violence or threats of violence. SEStran recognises however, that the nature of services provided can place particular employees and Board Members at risk from such violence at work.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

In recent years employers, employee representatives and the Health and Safety Executive have become increasingly concerned about the rising problem of violence to employees. In particular, this has a greater impact and affect on employees working with members of the public, either directly or indirectly, including service users and/or their families. SEStran will take all practical steps to reduce or, where possible, remove the risk of violence to employees whilst at work.

For most employees, the likelihood of serious physical assault is minimal. Those most at risk are employees who deal regularly with situations where, for a variety of reasons, members of the public may become angry, distressed, ill, embarrassed or resentful. These feelings sometimes result in aggression or violence towards employees.

### **3. SCOPE**

SEStran's Health and Safety Policy states that there will be a range of Health and Safety Policies and Guidance developed to support improvement of the work environment.

This Policy encompasses all employees of SEStran and compliments the Accident at Work Policy and other relevant Health and Safety Policies. It also covers all activities undertaken by employees as part of their normal duties.

### **4. DEFINITION**

For the purposes of this policy, SEStran's definition of 'Violence at Work' is:

*"A purposeful or reactive behaviour intended to produce damaging or hurtful effects, either physical, psychological or emotional, on other people or personal effects, whilst in the course of their employment or arising out of their employment. This may include physical violence, verbal abuse, damage to personal property, racial violence or sexual violence."*

In summary, it is any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work

SEStran recognises that whilst seeking to apply this definition consistently, some forms of violence, such as physical assault or explicit threats, are more easily identified than others. Incidents such as severe verbal abuse are more difficult to assess. SEStran further recognises that words or gestures, which may be acceptable to some employees, may be deeply offensive or threatening to others.

Where an employee is subjected to harassment or violence by another employee of SEStran, action will be taken in line with the appropriate policy/procedure e.g. Dignity at Work Policy, Disciplinary Procedure.

## **5. MANAGING THE RISKS**

In accordance with normal Risk Management procedures, activities that place an employee at risk of violence in the normal courses of their duties will be identified. This includes activities where there is the potential for violence.

SEStran will treat violence, or the threat of violence, as serious and unacceptable behaviour. Where employees are at serious risk, SEStran will review whether service provision can be continued by existing methods. In exceptional circumstances, where all actions to avoid/reduce the risk have been taken and the risk to the employee is still high, the Partnership Director may give consideration to withdrawing service provision until the risk reduces to an acceptable level.

## **6. REPORTING OF INCIDENTS**

SEStran's Accident Reporting Policy requires that acts of violence be reported and recorded in accordance with the procedures for an accident at work. It should be stressed to all employees that the reporting of violent incidents will not be taken to imply a failure by the employee concerned, other employees or any other person responsible for the management of the premises concerned. An Accident/Occurrence Form must be completed and submitted to the line manager who will fully investigate the violent incident, making recommendations and taking action to reduce/remove any risk.

Violent Incidents are also subject to the reporting requirements of the Health and Safety Executive, as defined in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). Further advice on this is contained with the Accident at Work Policy.

## **7. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT**

SEStran recognises that employees who are the victims of violence at work may suffer psychological or emotional reactions to an incident, in addition to any physical injuries. Managers should offer all available support to employees who have been

subject to a violent incident.

Managers should also be aware that the psychological and emotional affects may not appear immediately and support should be available for a period after the incident.

Any employee who has been subjected to a violent incident should also be offered support, where appropriate, from a Counselling Service. Further advice on this service is available from Human Resources. Employees will be afforded time off with pay to attend any appointments in relation to support following incidents of violence, e.g. doctors visits. Where an employee wishes time off to undertake counselling they will be entitled to time off with pay to attend any such appointments. Leave will be granted to allow the employee time to come to terms with the incident and to obtain appropriate support.

If the employee is unable to attend work for physical or psychological health reasons, the employee should be advised to visit their Doctor as soon as possible with a view to obtaining a medical certificate.

## **8. POLICE**

SEStran will ensure that, where necessary, the Police are called to provide support or protection to employees during or following an incident.

## **9. LEGAL ACTION**

Where an employee is a victim of violence at work, this will be deemed a serious incident.

Where it is considered to be a practicable and effective option for the protection of any employee SEStran may raise proceedings in the civil courts as an alternative to, or in addition to, a referral to the police as a criminal matter.

SEStran recognises that employees have rights, as individuals, to make a complaint to the Police irrespective of any investigation or action being pursued by SEStran.

## **10. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **10.1. PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR**

The Partnership Director of SEStran is responsible for the effective operation of the Policy. They are also responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are available to implement appropriate protective measures, where the risk assessments have indicated they are required.

### **10.2. MANAGERS**

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees are encouraged to report all incidents of violence at work and that in the case of injury or trauma, that prompt support is provided where required.

First line managers are responsible for ensuring that all details of violent incidents are recorded as soon as possible following the incident. They will discuss in detail the events leading to the incident and the incident itself with the employee. As part of this investigation, they will also identify how the incident could have been prevented and take appropriate actions to avoid a similar situation in the future.

All Managers will comply with the Accident at Work Policy for reporting the incident and will record such details. Managers will also report the incident to the Health and Safety Executive if required under RIDDOR.

### **10.3. EMPLOYEES**

Employees are responsible for reporting all incidents to their line manager as soon as possible following the incident. Employees will be required to give a full and accurate account of details leading to the incident including details of the incident itself.

All employees will be required to co-operate with any investigation into the incident.

## **11. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This document will be reviewed annually by SEStran.