

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Title: Implementing the agreed approach to preventing Violence and Aggression towards NHS staff in Wales.

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For Action by:

Chief Executives and Chief Operating Officers of Health Boards and Trusts
Workforce Directors

Action required by: Immediately

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Enclosure(s): None

To all Chief Executives
Health Boards and Trusts in Wales

C.C. CMO, Directors of Finance, Directors of W&OD, Medical Directors

The Document “Obligatory Responses to Violence in Healthcare” in updated format is set out in full in the second Schedule.

Introduction

In the context of the *A Healthier Wales* commitment for the NHS to become an exemplar employer in respect of the health and well-being of its workforce, all NHS organisations have agreed the approach to preventing violence and aggression towards NHS staff in Wales. The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic also adds further pressure upon NHS services in an array of ways that will foreseeably increase the risk of violence being inflicted on NHS Workers.

This work is important to drive both practical and cultural change to ensure that:

- the public, staff and patients are aware how seriously the NHS in Wales takes incidents of violence and aggression against its staff and that the NHS have first responsibility to energise the initiative;
- all NHS staff in Wales can be confident that we are taking a concerted effort to protect them from violence and aggression whilst they are at work; and
- if staff are involved in any such incident they can be reassured there are clear policies and procedures in place, these will be followed robustly and effectively to support them through the process and appropriate actions will be taken against the perpetrators.

NHS organisations undertake to collate, review and analyse the body of incident reports relating to violence against staff in order to prevent violence occurring in the first instance and revise risk management measures by learning from events.

The purpose of this circular is to set out plans and a timeline to fully embed the requirements to implement and report upon violent incidents as set out in the NHS Anti-Violence Collaborative’s *Obligatory Responses to Violence in Healthcare* within all NHS organisations. It acknowledges and respects the commitment to the initiative made by the Police, CPS and Partner agencies by elevating its status.

New Arrangements

In 2017, the NHS Anti-Violence Collaborative (AVC) was formed, and between June 2017 and November 2018 the AVC collaborated with NHS organisations in Wales and with other partners to determine the effect and response including prevention of assaults upon NHS workers. This work culminated in the launch of a document entitled *Obligatory Responses to Violence in Healthcare* (ORV) which was signed on 21 November 2018 by the NHS, 4 Police services and CPS in Wales.

The document has been universally well received and achieved the following aims:

- re-established relationships between the NHS, Police and CPS in Wales;
- extended the scope of the existing agreement to include primary care, community pharmacy and podiatry services in Wales;
- re-affirmed NHS Wales organisations' commitment to the reduction and prevention of violence in healthcare;
- placed the victims of violent crime in the NHS "front and centre" of the agreement;
- dealt with the use of 'capacity' as a proxy term for intention to commit a crime; and
- clarified the role of case managers in implementing the agreement.

Furthermore the document identifies the need to raise public awareness proactively at all times but especially at times of crisis such as during a pandemic outbreak, i.e. Covid-19, when pressure upon services can foreseeably increase the risk factors leading to assaults on staff.

The new agreement was very well received and provided as a communicable document utilising digital technology and providing a refreshed and comprehensive range of posters for distribution and awareness raising.

Embedding the changes

Following the launch and embedding of the changes more needs to be done to raise awareness of the protocol, build capability across Wales, share effective practice in implementation and ensure that implementation is consistent across Wales through improved monitoring.

The following schedule identifies the key actions and timeline for each NHS organisation to demonstrate its compliance with the ORV

First Schedule

Each NHS organisation in Wales will need to formalise implementation across all sites by:

1. identifying responsibility for anti-violence and aggression at Board level within each organisation; and
2. ensuring organisations assign appropriate resource to the critical Case Manager role to enable them to play a proactive role, including:
 - Support and guide victims through the criminal justice system and signpost them to well-being support available in the NHS.
 - Provide monthly reports to the Health and Safety Department and the lead director for Violence and Aggression in their own organisation.

- Provide a six monthly aggregate report to the AVC in a standard format to enable them to identify issues and progress at an all-Wales level with periodic meetings with the AVC.
- Provide an annual report that follows the example report set out in Annex M of the ORV agreement, to its board for Formal sign off. That report will be provided to the Anti Violence Collaborative by the 31 February 2022.
- The AVC will provide an annual review of implementation of the ORV from the reports received from its wider membership and from NHS organisations as a whole which will be made available to the Welsh Government. The first such report will be provided to Welsh Government by 1 April 2022
- It is recommended that each NHS organisation should reaffirm its commitment to the ORV by ensuring that the Chief Executive or Chair re-sign the agreement as part of a public campaign to be launched in June /July 2020 promoting the agreement.
- The AVC in conjunction with its partners will provide guidance and training on the implementation of the ORV.

Second Schedule

The ORV can be found here - [Obligatory Responses to Violence in Healthcare](#)