

Dealing With An Incident At The Leith Walk Office - Procedure

Set out below are the procedures relating to and dealing with abusive or violent behaviour in the Leith Walk office. These may be adapted and developed in time. All staff and volunteers will be kept up to date with any changes. It should be recognised that some scenarios covered are extremely unlikely and are there as guidance only should such an unlikely event happen.

1. While working at reception / in reception area

Scenario 1a. If a person is waiting in the reception area and they begin to become verbally abusive or to threaten violence initially attempt to calm the situation down by verbal reasoning and by finding out what the problem is. Simultaneously activate either the fixed or the mobile panic alert in order to inform other members of staff that you need assistance. The fixed panic button* is located on the reception desk, to the right near the wall. The mobile panic button* is located on first shelf of the reception desk on the right hand side. (Activating the mobile panic button will in fact alert the police who should then make their way to our premises). If you are behind the reception desk stay there. If you are in the reception area itself move towards door leading to the corridor holding it open if possible. (*You should be shown how to activate the panic buttons.)

If the person does not calm down ask them to leave the building and inform them that if they do not you will have no option but to call the police. Enter corridor, if possible ensuring that the security door* is properly closed and the door to the walk in stationery cupboard is locked*. (*You should be shown how to secure both doors.)

If the person does not leave or if they attempt to enter the corridor make your way to the training room or rear office and immediately dial 999* asking for the police and giving the address (AdvoCard, 332, Leith Walk,

Edinburgh, EH6 5BR.) as well as the nature of the problem. Monitor the situation from the rear office remaining on the phone to the police if possible. If the person succeeds in entering the corridor vacate the rear office immediately through the rear office door following the path along the side of the building, turning right at the corner and exiting through the external white door and down the small alley to Leith Walk* whereupon you should seek assistance from one of the near by shops or from a passer by. (* dial 9 for outside line + you will be shown route to street.)

Summary of scenario 1a

- Attempt to calm situation down
- Simultaneously activate the panic buttons
- Stay behind reception desk or near door to corridor
- If they are still not calm ask them to leave the building
- Move into corridor securing both safety doors
- Tell them you will call the police
- If they attempt to follow or do not leave dial 999
- If they succeed in following leave via rear exit for Leith Walk
- Seek help

Scenario 1b. If you experience a person being verbally abusive or threatening violence towards those inside while they themselves are on the street outside the main front door do not under any circumstances let them in but attempt to speak to them through the door or if preferred move towards the rear of the building having activated the panic button. You may decide to call the police even if they have not entered the building but their threatening behaviour continues.

Scenario 1c. If a person succeeds in entering the building by forced means instigate the procedure as described in **Scenario 1a.**

Staff in the office, on hearing the panic button should:

Dial 999 and ask for the police giving our address and informing them that one of our panic buttons has been activated.

Approach the relevant area (reception area) and enter behind the reception desk.

Attempt to assess the situation. State clearly that you have contacted the police.

Ask the person to leave the building and attempt to get the staff member or volunteer to safety without physically intervening but by using verbal reasoning.

If unsuccessful in this attempt, try to contain the situation by speaking in a calm and reassuring manner until the police arrive.

Under no circumstances put yourself in unnecessary danger.

2. While working in the interview rooms

It is recognised that if a member of staff or volunteer for whatever reason does not feel comfortable about being in the room with one other individual they have the right to request that another member of staff or volunteer be present or to refuse to work in that room. If this occurs the Coordinator would endeavour to establish what the problem was and assess any potential risk involved to staff and volunteers. If he / she assesses their to be an unreasonable level of risk they may refuse to help that person at the present time. If the risk is assessed to be acceptable they will try to assign a new member of staff or volunteer to that person to then continue the advocacy process.

The following procedure is on the assumption that a member of staff or volunteer has agreed to work with a service user in one of the interview rooms and should be followed at all times.

Use of Interview Rooms

Before entering the room make sure that you inform another member of staff of which room you are working in and with whom you are working. Ask them to check on your progress after one hour has elapsed.

On entering the room invite the service user to sit in the chair **furthest away** from the door. You should always sit in the chair **nearest** the door. (This is to ensure that you are able to more easily exit the room should you need to.)

Make sure you know the location of the panic button. (Located low down on the wall near the door behind your chair.)

If you dial R20 using the telephone this will connect you to reception.

If at any time you feel uncomfortable, leave the room, making your excuses and approach another member of staff.

If faced with threatening or abusive behaviour:

Attempt to verbally calm the person down and establish what is wrong.

If this does not work attempt to leave the room and contact a member of staff.

If you are unable to leave the room activate the panic button and wait for a member of staff who will arrive immediately.

For staff in the office - on hearing the panic button

Dial 999 and ask for police giving our address and stating that one of panic buttons has been activated.

Approach the relevant area (either one of the interview rooms) and cautiously enter the room, staying by the door.
Attempt to assess the situation. State clearly that you have contacted the police.

Ask the person to leave the building and attempt to get the staff member or volunteer to safety without physically intervening but by using verbal reasoning.

If unsuccessful in this attempt, try to contain the situation by speaking in a calm and reassuring manner until the police arrive.

Under no circumstances put yourself in unnecessary danger.

3. While working in the training room or rear office

It is recognised that these rooms do not present as high a risk as the above rooms / areas. If you are in the training room you can very easily access the rear office where there is usually one or more member of staff. If you are in the office you can more easily exit the building using the rear exit.

In the event of someone being verbally abusive or threatening violence:

Attempt to verbally calm the person down and establish what is the problem.

If this fails ask the person to leave and state that you will call the police.

If this fails attempt to leave yourself and then seek help.