

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**14 JANUARY 2018**

### **HEALTH & SAFETY - VIOLENT INCIDENTS UPDATE**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update Members on violent and potentially violent incidents affecting the Council and its partners staff.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 At the previous meeting held on 5 November 2018 a health & safety update report highlighted an increase in the number of violent incidents that have been recorded since moving into Castle House. Members expressed concerned at the number of incidents since relocating and requested more detail on the nature of the incidents.

#### **3.0 Proposals**

3.1 The table below shows a breakdown of the incidents recorded at Castle House since February 2018 to November 2018. February was the first month when the Customer Care Officers (Security Guards) reported all incidents for central recording.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Incident Details</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>	<b>Organisations Involved</b>
1	VERBAL ABUSE A verbally abusive customer became irritated waiting for a probation appointment. Had to be physically restrained from attempting to gain access to the secure area upstairs.	Customer Care Officers (CCO's) intervened. Customer written to and added to the Council's Risk Register.	Probation. NSDC CCO's intervened.
2	POLICE INCIDENT This was an incident where the Police attended to collect a DWP customer.	Police returned to examine a litter bin looking for an object left by the customer.	Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
3	VERBAL ABUSE A verbally abusive customer became irate with reception staff.	CCO's intervened and monitored the situation.	NSDC Reception NSDC CCO's
4	VERBAL ABUSE A probation customer became very irate whilst in a meeting with Probation officer. Shouted at CCO's.	CCO's intervened. Customer written to and added to the NSDC risk register.	Probation NSDC CCO's
5	VERBAL ABUSE Newark and Sherwood Homes (NSH's) customer became irate with reception staff and started swearing at NSDC reception staff.	CCO intervened and instructed him to refrain from swearing	NSH NSDC CCO's

6	DRUGS INCIDENT Needle and drugs paraphernalia found within Castle House public toilets.	Items disposed of. CCO's closely monitor toilets.	NSDC CCO's
7	VERBAL ABUSE DWP customer became very irate.	CCO's monitored	DWP NSDC CCO's
8	DRUGS/DRINK INCIDENT DWP customer attended whilst being highly intoxicated. Was also seen by NSDC housing team.	CCO's closely monitored	DWP NSDC housing staff NSDC CCO's
9	DRUGS INCIDENT Rough sleeper found underneath storm porch of main Castle House entrance.	Dealt with initially by NSDC CCO's then handed over to Ambulance Service	NSDC CCO's
10	VERBAL ABUSE Customer became aggressive and demanded action.	Housing Options staff called to monitor.	NSDC Housing Options
11	VERBAL ABUSE NSH client became verbally abusive with reception staff. Verbally threatened CCO's when they intervened.	NSDC CCO's intervened and asked to customer to leave.	NSDC Reception NSDC CCO's
12	DRUGS INCIDENT Change, Grow, Live (CGL)/DWP visitor attended whilst under the influence of an unknown substance.	CCOs monitored the situation	CGL DWP CCO's
13	VERBAL ABUSE Individual (adult) entered Castle House on a child's scooter. Claimed it was his mobility scooter. Became verbally abusive when asked to leave the scooter outside	Intervention by CCO's	NSDC CCO's
14	DRUGS INCIDENT Probation client attended site whilst under the influence of either drink or drugs.	CCOs monitored situation	Probation CCO's
15	DRUGS INCIDENT DWP client attended whilst believing to have taken mamba or spice. Number of staff became ill from exposure to the fumes. Suspect substance found deposited within toilet waste bin.	CCO intervention Individual written to by NSDC	DWP NSDC CCO's

16	INAPPROPRIATE/THREATENING BEHAVIOUR DWP client made member of DWP staff feel unsafe during interview.	CCO's escorted member of DWP to their car	DWP CCO's
17	VERBALLY ABUSIVE Customer became aggressive to NSDC reception staff. Individual turned on CCO's when they intervened.		NSDC Reception Staff NSDC CCO's
18	VERBALLY ABUSIVE DWP client became aggressive whilst being interviewed	CCO's intervened and monitored	DWP NSDC CCO's
19	INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR Customer attended Castle House. On arriving he approached the CCO's and said that he had an axe in his pocket and could they look after it whilst he attended CGL. Suspected individual was under the influence of substances.	CCO's removed axe and refused to return it.  Informed Police who supported the action taken.	NSDC CCO's
20	INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR Member of public walked into Castle House with baseball bat.	CCO's intervened and removed whilst customer undertook his business.	NSDC CCO's
21	INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOUR Probation customer was intimidating to NSDC reception staff.	CCO intervened.	NSDC reception staff NSDC CCO's
22	VERBALLY ABUSIVE Member of public became verbally abusive on a number of occasions. His concern related to Housing Benefits and NSH issues.	CCO intervened. Written to and added to the NSDC risk register.	NSDC staff NSDC CCO's
23	VERBALLY ABUSIVE Elderly man visited reception a number of times and became verbally abusive when unable to resolve his request for a bus pass.	CCO intervened.	CCO's
24	VERBALLY ABUSIVE DWP client became aggressive after waiting to be seen.	CCO intervened.	DWP NSDC CCO's
25	DRUGS INCIDENT Used drugs paraphernalia found within Castle House public toilets	CCO's dealt with removal and are monitoring the toilets.	CCO's

- 3.2 The incidents are mainly verbal abuse (52%) or substance abuse (28%) and generally involve customers accessing services provided by our partners (64%). The table below gives a breakdown of the incidents.

Service Being Accessed		Officers Affected		Category of Incident	
DWP	36%	CCO's	88%	Verbal Abuse	52%
NSDC	36%	DWP	28%	Substance Misuse	28%
Probation	16%	Reception	24%	Inappropriate Behaviour	12%
NSH	12%	Probation	12%	Intimidating Behaviour	4%
CGL	8%	NSDC Housing	12%	Police Incident	4%
		CGL	4%		
		Police	4%		
		Ambulance	4%		

- 3.3 The intervention of the Customer Care Officers has been required in the vast number of cases (88%) and this shows a proactive response on behalf of the Council to preventing verbal incidents escalating into worse cases and considering the impact that such outbursts may have on other service users accessing the building.
- 3.4 Members also requested the displaying of a sign in the reception area and this has been actioned (see **Appendix One**). This poster appears at the reception desk in plain sight of those coming into Castle House.
- 3.5 Members may also wish to note that the reception area of Castle House is comprehensively covered by an internal and external CCTV system which has been helpful in establishing the actual circumstances after allegations have been disputed by those accused of acting in a violent or aggressive manner. This has provided our officers with increased confidence and support that matters can be addressed if disputed.
- 3.6 To support members of staff dealing with those affected by substance misuse a training session was arranged with 'Change, Grow, Live' (the current commissioned service for substance misuse services across Nottinghamshire) and was delivered on 11 December 2018. A short briefing session was held for front line reception staff whilst a more in depth half day session was held for those officers who may deal with individuals in more depth. A range of services were in attendance for this longer session with officers from Benefits, Environmental Health, Community Safety, Customer Services, and Housing Options in attendance.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

- 4.1 This report looks at incidents that have occurred and no individual detail of protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 is recorded. Members of staff dealing with customers have been trained and made aware of the need to identify and be aware of individual's needs, including whether or not a relevant protected characteristic has an influence on the matter being dealt with e.g. a mental health disability or language barrier.
- 4.2 If a protected characteristic was identified when dealing with a violent incident this would be taken account of in our response e.g. warning letters may be sent out in a different language, or letters may be hand delivered and communicated verbally.

**5.0 Financial Implications (FIN18-19/6717)**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members note the content of the report and take the opportunity to ask questions of Officers present.**

**Reason for Recommendation**

**To give Members the opportunity to ask questions and seek reassurance that violent and aggressive incidents are being dealt with appropriately and members of staff are being given adequate protection from harm.**

**Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Ben Adams on Ext 5232

Karen White  
Director - Safety

Health and Safety Poster

