

Challenging Behaviour and Critical Incident Procedure

This document is relevant to:	
Staff	✓
Volunteers	✓
Trustees	✓

Purpose

To explain procedures related to Challenging Behaviour and Critical Incidents.

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Introduction

All Dorset Mind staff, volunteers, trustees and service users have a right to be treated with respect and Dorset Mind will not tolerate violence. Dorset Mind will take all necessary steps to ensure that staff, volunteers, trustees and service users are safe while providing or using Dorset Mind services. This includes responding to critical incidents, managing challenging behaviour and putting into place policies, procedures and practices that ensure that such incidents are eliminated or minimised.

Dorset Mind will record and review all incidents of such nature to ensure that its response is appropriate and in line with legal requirements and best practice.

Dorset Mind recognises that its service users, by virtue of the fact that they identify as having a mental health problem, will often be suffering from anxiety and other negative emotions that may

lead them to behave in untypical ways and recognises that due allowance should be made in this respect. However, at all times the safety of Dorset Mind staff, volunteers and trustees is paramount.

Dorset Mind does not advocate the use of physical restraint. Workers should use de-escalation techniques and avoid or break away from a physical attack.

Challenging Behaviour

For the purposes of this policy, challenging behaviour is defined as violent behaviour, or behaviour which has the purpose or effect of either violating another person's dignity, or making them feel intimidated, abused, threatened, degraded, humiliated, offended, vulnerable or helpless.

Dorset Mind recognises that challenging behaviour can take many forms. This may include direct physical assaults or threats, messages by phone, e-mail or text, intimidation, bullying, harassment or emotional blackmail, etc. Any incident where staff are threatened, abused or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health e.g. unreasonable and/or offensive remarks or behaviour; harassment; threatening behaviour; actual assault; attacks on members of staff/volunteers/trustees or other service users; damage to employee's/employer's property.

Challenging behaviour by members of staff, volunteers or trustees may be misconduct or gross misconduct and will be covered by Dorset Mind's relevant policies and procedures.

Critical Incidents

Critical Incidents are events involving Dorset Mind which have resulted in, or might have resulted in, physical assault or injury to staff, volunteers, trustees, service users or members of the public, or events which have resulted in staff, volunteers, trustees, service users feeling intimidated, abused, threatened, degraded, humiliated, offended, vulnerable or helpless; or events which result in damage to property. Critical Incidents will usually arise from challenging behaviour.

Critical Incidents do not include accidents, accidental injury or accidental damage to property.

Critical Incidents may take place at Dorset Mind services or outside services where the Challenging Behaviour is directed towards a person because of their involvement with Dorset Mind as a member of staff, trustee or volunteer.

Dorset Mind will record all Critical Incidents and all staff, volunteers and trustees have a duty to report such events to the Service Delivery Manager or the Chief Executive as soon as possible after the incident has occurred.

Immediately following the incident any member of staff, trustee or volunteer who has been involved in a Critical Incident should inform the Service Delivery Manager (or if not available, the Chief Executive).

Classification of Critical Incidents

The Service Delivery Manager will determine (in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Chair of Trustees if necessary) whether the event is to be treated as low level, moderate or serious.

Low Level – single incident of challenging behaviour which has the purpose or effect of making the recipient feel intimidated, abused, threatened, degraded, humiliated, offended, vulnerable or helpless.

Moderate Level – repeated, persistent or sustained behaviour which has the purpose or effect of making the recipient feel intimidated, abused, threatened, degraded, humiliated, offended, vulnerable or helpless; threatening body language or behaviour, damage to property.

Serious Level – direct threats, physical aggression, assault, serious damage to property.

Actions

1. Immediately following an incident any member of staff, trustee or volunteer who has been involved in a Critical Incident should inform the Service Delivery Manager (or if not available, the Chief Executive).
2. The Service Delivery Manager, in consultation as outlined above, will determine the level of incident.
3. The Service Delivery Manager, with the support of the relevant staff, volunteer, trustee member, will record the Incident in the Critical Incident Book. The record will include all details including date, time, place of incident, those present, who perpetrated the incident, circumstances leading up to the incident and its classification and action planned.
4. With regard to the Befriending Service (and any other Lone Working services), personal safety is paramount and the Service Delivery Manager will normally suspend visits and contact until a decision is made whether the service should be withdrawn from the client.
5. **Low Level Incidents** – informal, or no action, may be appropriate. A warning may be given indicating that if the behaviour is repeated more serious action will be taken. Refer to Group Rules.
6. **Moderate Level Incidents** – this may result in a period of exclusion or other sanctions agreed by the appropriate staff.
7. **Serious Level Incidents** –
 - a) the Service Delivery Manager will notify the Chief Executive as soon as possible
 - b) if a crime has been committed such as assault or criminal damage, Dorset Mind will report that to the police
 - c) the individual responsible will be excluded with immediate effect from ALL Dorset Mind's service and an email to this effect will be sent to all staff and trustees. The Service Delivery Manager (or Chief Executive in their absence) should be informed if any contact is received from an individual excluded from its services on this basis

- d) a letter will be sent to the perpetrator advising them that they are permanently excluded from all Dorset Mind services and that the police may be called if they try to attend any of its services
 - e) the Service Delivery Manager will submit a report at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees who will consider whether any further actions are necessary and whether any changes to operational policies, procedures and practices is necessary to prevent a reoccurrence.
8. The Service Delivery Manager will use the Critical Incident Book to identify any trends or patterns involving the same individual and may independently bring to the attention of the trustees any level of behaviour that indicates that exclusion or other action may be appropriate.
9. If trends or patterns emerge from examination of the Critical Incident Book, the trustees may ask for a current risk assessment about an individual to be provided (Appendix 1) and will consider the information at their next meeting and a subsequent note made in the Critical Incident Book.
10. Following any Critical Incident, the member of staff, volunteer or trustee will be encouraged to attend clinical supervision to be supported. If appropriate, counselling with an independent, registered practitioner will be offered.

Appendix 1

Sample letter

On examination of the Critical Incident record, I would like to ask all staff to respond to the following regarding: (name)

1. Does this person currently (ie within the last month) attend the service you lead?

Yes / No

2. If yes, can you please complete the following risk assessment based on their most recent attendance.

Current risk to other service users	Low	Medium	High
Current risk to Dorset Mind staff / volunteers	Low	Medium	High
Current risk of harm to self	Low	Medium	High

2. Procedure Ownership

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Approval and review status

Approved by	Signature	Date
Chris Price	<i>Chris M Price</i>	

Consult the Chief Executive for the latest version of this procedure.

Document Control

Reviewers

Name	Position
Chris Price	Chair of Trustees
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Mandy Nicholson	Service Delivery Manager
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Change History

Issue	Date	Author	Reason
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