



POLICY ON HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK (PERSONAL SAFETY)

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Alternative Formats

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board (PBNI) using the following contact information:

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CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.1	Definitions	4
1.2	Application of Policy	4
2	Background	5
3	Policy Aim	5
4	Policy Objective	5
5	Policy Outcome	6
6	Policy Statement	6
7	Linkages	6
8	Procedures/Guidance	7
9	Complaints	7
10	Breach of Policy Provision	7
11	Review	7
12	Signature	7

1. Application of Policy

1.1 Definitions

Board Members – The Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Members of the Board appointed by the Minister of Justice under the Probation Board (NI) Order 1982.

Employee – An employee is any person under a current contract of employment with PBNI, including temporary and fixed term contracts.

Agency Worker – An Agency worker is any person supplied to work with PBNI through an employment agency.

Seconded – A seconded is any person working with PBNI under a formal secondment agreement between the Board and another organization.

Student – A student is any person working with PBNI on the basis of a formal agreement between Board and his/her university, college or other course provider.

Volunteer – A volunteer is any person working with PBNI under the Board's Volunteering Policy.

Partnership worker – A partnership worker is any person working with PBNI on the basis of a formal partnership agreement between the Board and another organisation.

1.2 Application of this policy

This policy applies to all categories defined at 1.1 above except Board members.

Except where the context otherwise requires, references in this policy to an employee should be read as referring also to all the other categories set out above, subject to variation between categories in line with agreements governing the relationship between PBNI and those not under a current contract of employment.

The application of this policy to any of the categories defined at 1.1 above who are not employees of the Board does not in any way confer on them employee status.

In line with responsibility under legislation the Board recognises its health and safety obligations to persons other than persons at work in the matter of risks to health and safety arising out of or in connection with the Board's work activities.

2. **Background**

The nature of probation work is such that employees are required to work with, and respond to, people who for a variety of reasons have lost the ability to exercise normal control over important parts of their lives. In this situation feelings of frustration, anger or hurt cause some people to be abusive, threatening or physically violent in an attempt to regain control. Anxiety in such people is often high and can be exacerbated when critical decisions and actions are taken by probation employees in holding the offender to account for his/her actions.

While it is recognised that the majority of the people we deal with do not pose a threat to our employees it is a fact that there have been situations where employees have been threatened or have suffered actual physical assaults in the course of carrying out their duties or because of their identification with PBNI.

In this context violence includes a range of socially unacceptable behaviours which may be either physical or verbal as it is recognised that threatening behaviour can produce fear and distress.

The definition of Personal Safety offered by The Suzy Lamplugh Trust Research Institute is as follows:

‘An individual’s ability to go about their everyday life free from the threat of fear of psychological, emotional or physical harm from others.’

‘This means that personal safety relates specifically to harm caused by other people’s behaviour. This is where personal safety is clearly different to ‘health and safety’ as it excludes harm caused by things such as chemical substances, electricity, fire, etc.’

The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the issues and to set out for employees, general guidance on behaviours to maintain personal safety at work. The policy recognises however that no procedure can provide a guarantee against such incidents ever occurring, and the ‘Organisation and Key Responsibilities for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Personal Safety)’ sets out in detail responsibilities at different levels in the organisation and the ‘Arrangements for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Personal Safety)’ provides guidance with regards to maintaining personal safety at work and procedures to be followed in the event of an incident.

3. **Policy Aim**

The aim of this policy is to support the provision of a safe working environment for PBNI employees across a range of situations where they are in contact with offenders and the public.

4. **Policy Objective**

To provide guidance and procedure in support of good practice.

5. **Policy Outcome**

That all of those to whom the policy applies are informed of the guidance and procedures which the Board has put in place.

6. **Policy Statement**

The Probation Board believes that the protection of employees from threat and violence in the course of their duties is of the utmost importance and that all reasonable steps should be taken to secure such protection.

The Board recognises the duty as set out in Health and Safety legislation, to actively promote the safety of employees from threat and violence whenever and wherever they carry out their official duties.

Management at all levels has the responsibility to give effect to the policy through the activities detailed in the supporting documents:-

- ❖ Organisation and Key Responsibilities for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Personal Safety)
- ❖ Arrangements for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Personal Safety)

Employees at all levels in all locations have the responsibility to go about the performance of their duties in a way which has regard to the need to recognise the potential for dangerous situations. Secondly, to take proper action to safeguard themselves and others from potential danger and finally where threatening or violent situations occur to manage those situations to the best of their abilities as set out in the above mentioned supporting documents.

Principles

- ❖ The Board recognises that there is the possibility of violence from some of those we deal with in the provision of services.
- ❖ The Board is committed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that steps are taken for the protection of employees from threats and violence.
- ❖ Where an incident does occur the Board is committed to provide a swift and appropriate response to alleviate distress and to support the employees concerned.

7. **Linkages**

This Policy also links to the following:-

- ❖ Policy on Health and Safety at Work (Main) and supporting documentation ie:-

- Organisation and Key Responsibilities for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Main)
- Arrangements for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Main)
- ❖ Operational policies, procedures and standards.

8. **Procedures/Guidance**

This policy is supported by documentation in respect of:-

- ❖ Organisation and Key Responsibilities for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Personal Safety)
- ❖ Arrangements for the Policy on Health & Safety at Work (Personal Safety)

9. **Complaints**

External complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Board's Complaints Policy, Guidance and Procedures.

Internal complaints may be raised through normal management or supervision arrangements or under the Board's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

10. **Breach of Policy Provision**

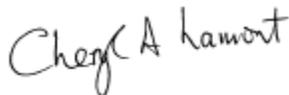
Breach of the Board's policy and procedures by employees may merit consideration under the Board's Disciplinary Policy.

11. **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed 3 years from date of approval.

Interim reviews may also be prompted by feedback, challenge, h&s legislative changes or identified best practice.

12. **Signature**



Signed:

Director of Probation