

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The ZTSG work in partnership with the local PSNI and liaise with the Criminal Justice Agency to develop a common understanding of how attackers are dealt with. The following pieces of legislation have informed the development of the policy and associated action plan. This list is not exhaustive.

**The Health and Safety at Work
(Northern Ireland) Order 1978**

Emergency workers (Obstruction) Act 2006

Public Order (NI) Act 1987

Circulars

HSS (Gen) 3/2007
HSS (Gen 1) 1/2004
HSS (Gen 1) 3/2003.

Copies of legislation and circulars are available from your Human Resource Department.

Please wear this badge at work to help reinforce our Zero Tolerance message and to show your support for the campaign.



ZERO TOLERANCE STRATEGIC GROUP (ZTSG)

The ZTSG was re-established in October 2005 to develop and promote Best Practice Guidance in order to achieve a cultural shift in the approach and attitude towards HSC staff and help eradicate violence from the workplace, while acknowledging the rights and responsibilities of HSC stakeholders. The Group comprises representatives from the Department, HSC employers, Staff Side organisations and PSNI.



supported by PSNI

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**Protecting Healthcare
and Emergency Workers
from Violence**

INTRODUCTION

Attacks on healthcare and emergency workers are totally unacceptable and a Zero Tolerance approach must be adopted. Healthcare staff are facing an increase in the number of physical and verbal attacks with over 5500 incidents being reported during 2006.

All Healthcare staff must be protected to ensure that they can provide a quality service to patients and their families without the fear of abuse.

All stakeholders must work together to put a stop to such attacks and ensure that the perpetrators face the full rigour of the law. It is imperative that staff are supported throughout whatever course of action they take including prosecutions. Circular Gen 3/2007 sets out a commitment to promoting and maintaining a safe working environment for all stakeholders of the HSC family and supports both the employer and employee in taking forward their responsibilities to ensure that a safe working environment is provided to all.

The Zero Tolerance Strategic Group (ZTSG) continues to work in partnership to develop guidance and initiatives, aimed at ensuring measures are in place to support staff and help bring about an end to attacks on healthcare and emergency workers.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

WHAT IS ZERO TOLERANCE?

Zero Tolerance is when all abuse against staff is totally unacceptable.

WHAT IS NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE?

The use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress and/or constituting harassment.

WHAT IS PHYSICAL ABUSE?

The intentional application of force against the person of another without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury or personal discomfort.

WHAT ARE WE DOING AS AN EMPLOYER TO PROTECT YOU?

We as your employer operate a Zero Tolerance Policy on abuse of staff.

Preventative measures have been adopted to minimise risk to staff eg. risk assessments, appropriate staff training.

Case Study:

A nurse working in an A&E Unit within the South Eastern Trust area experienced a horrific assault, the nurse was punched in the face by a drunken patient. The attacker was subsequently jailed for four months sending out a clear message that attacking healthcare staff is not acceptable.

Case Study:

A North Belfast doctor working in outpatients experienced a serious physical violent attack. She reported the attack to her employers who ensured additional security measures were in place in order to prevent further occurrences.

HELP US TO SUPPORT YOU

HELP US TO HELP YOU BY:

- Reporting all incidents of verbal and physical abuse
- Familiarising yourself with the procedures that are in place to support you
- Advising management of any risks

WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE ABUSE

- Receive medical attention immediately if physically hurt
- Obtain names and addresses of any witnesses
- Report the incident immediately to your line manager
- Complete the necessary incident forms to ensure that the incident is recorded fully
- Receive support via Managers, Occupational Health Service, Confidential counselling etc
- Report incident to police
- Pursue your chosen course of action eg bring charges against the assailant

A Senior Director within your Trust is responsible for ensuring that you are supported throughout your course of action.

