

Health Service Circular



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sets out a specific action on the part of the recipient with a deadline where appropriate

CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST STAFF WORKING IN THE NHS: NHS zero tolerance zone

For action by:

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CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST STAFF WORKING IN THE NHS: NHS zero tolerance zone

Summary

1. The NHS zero tolerance zone campaign was launched by Frank Dobson on Thursday 14 October with the support of Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor and Lord Williams, the Attorney General. The aims of the cross-Government campaign are:

- to get over to the public that violence against staff working in the NHS is unacceptable and the Government (and the NHS) is determined to stamp it out;
- to get over to all staff that violence and intimidation is unacceptable and is being tackled.

Violence against staff working in the NHS is a particular concern of the Secretary of State, and he has made reducing incidents of violence a high priority for health service managers.

2. An NHS zero tolerance zone resource pack containing publicity material for the campaign and guidance for managers and staff is enclosed with this health service circular. The resource pack contains the following items:

- NHS zero tolerance zone campaign posters (x4);
- NHS zero tolerance zone campaign postcards (2x4);
- Managers Guide – Stopping Violence Against Staff Working in the NHS;
- Resource sheets for managers and staff:
 1. NHS zero tolerance zone – Key Messages,
 2. The Criminal Justice System – Working for You,
 3. Preventing Violence Against Staff Working in the NHS,
 4. Case Studies and Examples of Good Practice,
 5. Further Reading and Useful Contacts.

To allow for reproduction and distribution locally, the pack also includes a floppy disk with the text of the Managers Guide and each of the resource sheets (Microsoft Word). Also included on the disk is a template with the NHS zero tolerance zone campaign strapline, insignia and NHS logo.

3. Further copies of the NHS zero tolerance zone resource pack are available by contacting the NHS Responseline on 0541-555455.

Action

4. NHS Trusts, Health Authorities and Special Health Authorities should:

- support NHS zero tolerance zone by raising awareness of the campaign amongst all staff groups and ensuring that the campaign posters are prominently displayed in public waiting areas and staff rooms;
- involve staff in developing local policies addressing safe working conditions, to include a full assessment of the risks to staff and the development of local prevention and reduction strategies;
- follow the performance management arrangements set out in Health Service Circular 1999/229;
- establish robust, uncomplicated reporting systems to encourage staff to record details of all incidents of violence; and
- work closely with the police to formulate and implement local crime and disorder strategies.

Background

5. The human resources framework '*Working Together*' set the NHS a national target for reducing the incidence of violence against NHS staff by 20% by 2001 and 30% by 2003. By 2000 NHS Trusts are also required to have systems in place to record incidents of violence against staff, and have published strategies in place to achieve a reduction of such incidents. HSC1999/229, published on 18 October 1999, sets out details of the performance management process for ensuring that the national targets for the NHS are achieved.

6. A survey of sickness absence, accidents and violence in NHS Trusts conducted by the NHS Executive in 1998/99 showed that, on average, 7 violent incidents were recorded each month per 1,000 staff. This is equivalent to approximately 65,000 violent incidents against NHS Trust staff each year. The main findings of the survey were circulated with HSC1999/229.

7. NHS zero tolerance zone applies to all health service settings including primary care. It had originally been intended to include a resource sheet on specific measures to tackle violence against

GPs as part of the enclosed resource pack. These measures are currently being considered and supplementary advice on violence against GPs will be issued separately in due course.

8. The NHS zero tolerance zone campaign is a cross-Government campaign and has been developed by the NHS Executive working with colleagues in the Home Office, Lord Chancellor's Department and in the Crown Prosecution Service.

This Circular has been issued by:

Hugh Taylor
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