



For better
mental health

Richmond Borough Mind

Incident Policy & Procedure

1.0 DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

- 1.1 Any incident which involves a breach of service rules / codes of behaviour, is of significance to the service or that results in the Police being called, **must** be recorded on an incident record sheet (**annexe A**). The most common examples of breaches of service rules are verbal abuse, sexual harassment, threatening behaviour and physical assault.
- 1.2 If a service user / visitor / member of staff has been assaulted or seriously threatened (i.e. with a weapon), or there is damage to Richmond Borough Minds (RB Mind's) property then the police should always be called. (**See box A below**). If you witness such an incident dial 999 immediately or get a colleague to do so. Never wait until the incident is over.
- 1.3 Any incident which involves serious verbal abuse / threats / physical assault of staff must also be reported to the Director.
- 1.4 If a member of staff or service user asks for help in dealing with an incident please give this immediately.
- 1.5 Never get physically involved in an incident unless it is absolutely necessary. Remember your safety comes first. It may be appropriate to leave to get help. If it is necessary to restrain, the minimum amount of restraint should be used, i.e. only enough to allow time for the victim to escape. Remember there is a fine line between restrain and assault. The only time it is necessary to restrain someone is if the victim or member of staff / public is being or about to be seriously hurt.

2.0 POTENTIALLY VIOLENT INCIDENTS

- 2.1 Try to prevent a violent situation arising by listening, staying calm and avoiding provocative behaviour.
- 2.2 Call for help either from another colleague, the police or both.
- 2.3 Try to get all people not involved with the incident out of the way.
- 2.4 Give the aggressor an opportunity to leave the scene (i.e. do not corner them).
- 2.5 Clear all possible missiles away.

Box A – Guidelines on Reporting Thefts, Assaults, etc. to the Police

All incidents at RB Mind's projects involving theft of property, criminal damage or criminal assault on a client, volunteer, member of the public or staff must be reported to the police. If a staff member feels there are exceptional circumstances which make it inadvisable to inform the police of an incident they should discuss these with their line manager immediately.

1. Reasons for reporting

It is understandable that staff members' first reaction to such an incident may be to protect the people involved and to try to deal with the problem themselves. This is not acceptable, however, for the following reasons:

- a) If such incidents are not reported Mind's public liability and property insurance could be invalidated. Even if there is no intention to make a claim Trustees and the insurance company have the right to all information with a bearing on their level of risk and they require the reporting of all serious incidents, whether or not a claim is made. The decision whether to claim from the Insurance Company is for the Finance Committee and Director to make.
- b) When incidents are not reported the perpetrators may get the message that there will be no bad consequences whatever they do and commit further crimes.
- c) Helping people to achieve as normal a life as possible – "Normalisation" - is a key part of RB Mind's work and protecting people from the consequences of their actions does not fit with this kind of work.
- d) Not contacting the Police could result in the rights and interests of other service users, volunteers or members of the public being infringed upon.

2. What to do when the police are called

If the police are called into a project staff will need to ensure that the situation is explained to service users and that they are given support and reassurance.

The police should not interview people who are vulnerable through mental distress without an 'appropriate adult' being present.

3.0 REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

- 3.1 All incidents must be reported as soon as possible to a Line Manager or the Director. If your Line Manager and Director is not available then it should be reported to another Manager. The Manager will ensure you have received support and will give you time to recover and complete the Incident Form.
- 3.2 All serious incidents will be reported by the Director to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

4. SUPPORT

- 4.0 Dealing with an incident is not easy. Even the simplest of incidents can cause distress. You may need to recover or may even need to go home. If a colleague has been involved in an incident do not expect them to carry on working immediately. Give them time. Ask them how you can support them.
- 4.1 It sometimes helps to talk about an incident after it has happened. We all have doubts about whether we handle something correctly. Talk it through with your colleague or your Line Manager. Following serious incidents it is possible to have a session with a mental health Clinician known to RB Mind, to talk through your involvement in the incident. If colleagues feel this session would be useful they should contact the Director.
- 4.2 If you are involved in an incident and working with temporary staff tell them what has happened and ask them for support. Do not be worried about asking. Give temporary staff support also and inform their agency
- 4.3 Incidents happen that sometimes leave us feeling bad if service users still attends the service. Talk to your colleagues and Line Manager about how you are going to interact with that service user in future. It may be appropriate that you and your Line Manager meet with that service user to talk about the incident.
- 4.4 Service users are also affected by incidents. Please give them support as you would a staff member and ask if they want anyone else informed or involved.
- 5.0 COMPLETION OF THE INCIDENT FORM**
- 5.1 You must always complete an incident report form (**annexe A**) if you witness an incident or are involved in an accident as described in 1.1.
- 5.2 Enter the day, date and time on the incident form. The time is important and has to be as precise as possible. It is not enough to write in the morning or afternoon.
- 5.3 Statements should be obtained from witnesses. If the witness is a service user they may refuse to write or give a statement. We must respect this wish; however assurances should be given to them around support and confidentiality. Attach statements to the incident form.
- 5.4 The incident form could be used in a court as evidence. Remember this when completing it. Please remember this, stick to the facts and do not give opinions. They are also not for writing down your feelings about an individual's character. Managers should ensure that all incident forms are legible and record all facts.
- 5.5 Incident forms should be filled in as soon as possible after the incident and forwarded to the Director. Please remember though that staff and service users may need time to recover after an incident.
- 5.6 If more than one member of staff is reporting the incident make sure that all the details of the incident are factually recorded separately.

5.7 Incident forms should be numbered and kept centrally with the Director, and on a confidential file in the project office. A summary of the incident should be put in the Communications book with reference made to where the incident form is kept and any incident number.

6.0 BANNING OF SERVICE USERS FROM RB MIND'S SERVICES

6.1 If there are a series of incidents concerning a particular service user, or if a service user is the perpetrator of a serious incident, it may sometimes be necessary to implement a ban on the person using RB Mind's services.

6.2 For minor infringements of rules the Manager of the service will decide if a short term ban (i.e less than two weeks), from using the service is necessary. Where possible the Manager will consult with the staff team before coming to a decision on the necessity and length of the ban.

6.3 Short term bans will be communicated to the Director and also to other RB Mind project managers, if there is a possibility that the perpetrator may use other RB Mind services.

6.4 Where a Service manager believes there is a pattern of incidents concerning a service user, that there has been a major infringement of service rules or a likelihood of significant risk to RB Mind staff, property or people who use RB Mind's services, an immediate ban of one week from all RB Mind services will be imposed, whilst further investigation and decisions are taken. Where possible the manager will aim to consult with the project staff about this immediate ban. The Manager will communicate this immediate ban to all other projects.

6.5 Advice will then be sought by the Director as to what future action should be taken, that balances both the safety of RB Mind and the vulnerability of the service user and their possible dependency on RB Mind services.

6.6 The Director will obtain the views of RB Mind colleagues, external professionals (e.g. Insurance Company, National Mind, Police, Mental Health Nurses, Probation Officers etc) before coming to a final decision on the length of the ban and if it should cover all RB Mind services. Where there are Mental Health Professionals on the Board of Trustees their views will also be obtained.

6.7 Within two weeks the Service User will then be informed in writing of the ban that has been imposed. This letter will be handed to the service user next time they attend the project.

6.7 At the time of the review date a face to face meeting with a Service manager and a colleague (Director, Trustee or fellow staff member), will be offered to the service user. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss future access to RB Mind's services and the behaviour that is expected. A written agreement between RB Mind and the service user may be necessary.

6.9 The Director will ensure that serious incidents and long term (i.e. more than two weeks) banning of service users from services of are communicated to all RB Mind staff and Trustees.

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7.0 **MONITORING**

- 7.1. Managers are to ensure reports on service incidents, for example, involving a serious injury or death of a service user, staff or visitor, or fire, are fully recorded and a report submitted within 24-hours to the Director. Such incidents must be verbally reported to the Director *immediately*.
- 7.2. Managers are responsible for the review of all incidents in team meetings and in their own supervisions, with staff involved and with the Director where necessary.
- 7.3. All services are to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment review of incidents / potential incidents, at least every quarter and following any serious incident or potential serious incident.
- 7.4. The Director will carry out spot checks periodically to ensure incident forms are completed and actioned appropriately.
- 7.5. The Director will report to Personnel Committee a summary of incidents at each meeting.

ANNEXE B - INCIDENT RECORD FORM

This form should be completed for all incidents which have involved the Police being called, or that require further action in terms of a warning letter, a ban or legal action including incidents of racial or other forms of harassment. It should also be completed for all incidents which result in personal injury or damage to property.

Copies of Incident Record Sheets should be passed to the Director

1. DATE OF INCIDENT DAY OF WEEK TIME
PROJECT
2. TYPE OF INCIDENT - Please tick appropriate line
Assault Threatening behaviour
Abuse Racial Harassment
Sexual Harassment Other (please state)
3. NAMES OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCIDENT (if known)
Service Users Name(s) _____
Service Users Name(s) _____ (where applicable)
4. NAMES OF WITNESSES TO THE INCIDENT
Service Users Name(s) _____
Staff Name(s) _____

If possible witnesses should be asked to provide a statement.

5. WHAT HAPPENED?
Describe what happened including any relevant events leading to the incidents. Your description should be as full as possible (please continue on back of form if necessary).

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6. ACTION TAKEN FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT
Including if incident has been communicated to other RB Mind services, external professionals, ban implemented from RB Mind services etc
7. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY PREVIOUS INCIDENTS CONCERNING THIS SERVICE USER?
If so, when and to whom?
8. OUTCOME
Describe any lasting effect of the incident e.g. injury or damage to personal / other property.

Signature of Staff Member _____ **Date** _____

9. ACTION TAKEN BY DIRECTOR (where applicable)

Signature of Director _____ **Date** _____