

POTENTIALLY VIOLENT PERSONS
STAFF PROCEDURE NOTES & GUIDANCE

April 2010

When to check for a marker

Whenever you are visiting a property and there is a possibility that you will be in close contact with an individual, then you should check to see if there are any markers placed either against the property or the individual you are visiting. Similarly, if you are making an appointment for others to visit a property or an individual then you should check for a marker before booking the appointment.

Why do I need to check for a marker?

Markers have been placed against individuals or properties where there are known facts about individual's (who may be present at marked properties) whose behaviour in the past has been either: unpredictable, threatening or violent. The markers are therefore placed to caution members of staff to ensure that any extra precautions that can be taken are in place, to prevent any potentially difficult situations arising.

What are the markers and how do I check for one?

You will need to be able to log onto the CRM* (Customer Relationship Management) system, and then you can search for either an individual or a property. The markers (if there are any) are then displayed against either of these criteria. The markers are different depending on the level of potential risk, but are set as follows:

** guidance notes on how to log onto the CRM system and search for a property or an individual are available separately.*

Individual marker	Property marker	Possible reasons for being applied	Action to be taken
1	P1	Specific incidents occurred in past directly endangering individuals; Physical abuse of employee's property. Excessive threatening verbal or written abusive behaviour where intent to carry out is considered likely. Death threats to individuals; Unpredictable	Do no visit. Any face to face interaction required should be carried out within an area used by MBC for customer appointments where sufficient numbers of other officers are located as potential back up.

		behaviour due to mental illness;	
2	P2	Past incidents unpredictable; Excessive threatening verbal or written abusive behaviour; Sexual harassment (eg. Inappropriate actions; comments; gestures) Racial or Religious harassment (eg. Inappropriate actions; comments; gestures) Criminal record where individuals could be at risk (eg registered sex offender)	Do not visit alone. Use of a solo protect unit should be obtained.
3	P3	Frequent abusive language	Caution to be taken when individuals with this marker present themselves at any office. If this marker exists and a home visit is necessary then the precautions detailed above for marker 2 is recommended.

Why are the markers not more obvious or more explicit?

The markers are deliberately designed to be noticeable on a screen to a user who is familiar with what to look for but not obvious to anyone else, such as the individual in question, who may be able to see the screen. If the markers were more explicit and could be visible by the individual, in some cases this could provoke unwanted behaviour by the individual.

We can make notes on the system we normally use for recording information and we think it is easier to log a warning here rather than using the CRM system.

It is important that the ONLY place any warning markers are placed against an individual or property is on the CRM system for several reasons, as follows:

- 1) The CRM system is the only system accessible to every officer in the Council that holds both property and individual data. Several officers

may visit the same property or individual but for different reasons and so only recording information on a system only accessible to specific officers may place other members of staff at risk.

- 2) There is legislation that governs the information we can store against any individual and it is vitally important that we follow a process to ensure that when we are applying these markers, we are complying to the guidelines set out. This protects the organisation from any potential legal action but also ensures individuals are not being treated potentially unfairly.
- 3) It is important that the markers are regularly reviewed following an approved process to ensure we are not storing unnecessary information against any individual for an unacceptable period of time. Our process ensures that the markers on the CRM system are reviewed properly at required intervals.

How do the markers get applied?

If an incident occurs or factual information is made available to you on a professional basis and is covered by appropriate Data Sharing protocols (eg. Information provided by the police or health) the details should be reported immediately to a member of the Potentially Violent Persons Officer group (an email can be sent to PVP Group). This reporting can be done by telephone or face to face as well as email but should be done immediately to ensure that a marker is placed as soon as possible to prevent any unnecessary potential situations that could arise. A senior nominated officer who will be part of the PVP Group, will ensure that all the relevant details are obtained from you and recorded accordingly and get the marker applied onto the CRM system. The following information will need to be supplied:

- Nature of incident, details and time or Nature of threat with behavioural examples
- Any recommended action that may have been suggested by professional body
- A proposed review date
- Likely reaction to a letter informing an individual of a marker

You should also note that should an incident occur that an incident/accident form should also be completed to allow for the incident to be considered properly by your line manager to allow for consideration of any remedial and/or preventative actions that need to be implemented.

Are we going to inform the individuals that we are placing this marker?

Wherever possible, we should inform the individual that we are going to place a marker against their personal details, the reasons why and when we intend to review the status. This is because the individual's have a right to know this and can appeal against it. However, in certain cases, if there is evidence that informing the individual may potentially inflame a situation that could lead to increasing the risk of any potentially violent behaviour against an officer then a decision can be made not to do so. This must be considered on a case by case basis and full details recorded of any decisions taken.

In any case, if an individual requests to see the information we have under the Data protection Act, we would provide all such information.

Can I refuse to see these individuals?

No, if your job requires you to meet with individuals or visit properties then you must continue to do so but within the guidelines set out for those that have any markers identified. Nobody can predict any person's behaviour and therefore you should always be aware of how to identify situations that may be developing to ensure your own safety. The markers are placed as an attempt to identify where there may be potential issues and to ensure that any extra precautions that can be taken to reduce the risk are in place. If you have not already had any additional training with regard to personal safety and how you can identify potentially difficult situations and what actions you can take to reduce the risk of feeling vulnerable, then this should be highlighted and discussed with your line manager who will be able to arrange this for you as appropriate.