

SERIOUS THREAT **RESPONSE PROTOCOL**

Health, Safety & Wellbeing Guidance - Schools

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Serious Threat Response Protocol

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1. Introduction

Within Derbyshire County Council there may be occasions where the activities of employees and Elected Members result in situations which put themselves and others at an increased risk of threat from aggrieved parties.

These situations can potentially arise within any department but are more prevalent within the Childrens Services and Adult Care functions.

It is essential to ensure that a consistent, proportioned and pragmatic approach is adopted across the Council, providing standardised procedures and templates that all departments can follow in the event of a serious threat being received. This will provide all involved with clarity over the process and ensure that the relevant people are involved in the process. It will also provide information to other parties who may be involved such as the Police, NHS etc. so they are aware of how the Council's process operates and what is expected.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this protocol a serious threat is deemed as:

- any threat of significant harm, either made directly or indirectly (via a third party – colleague or other professional for example) These threats may be specific in nature or implied.
- any situation which in the professional opinion of those involved could pose a viable risk and which has the potential to progress into something more serious. Clarification on whether or not a threat is deemed as serious may be sought from the Health and Safety Team who will liaise with other relevant colleagues to assess the situation. (Reference can also be made to the Risk Matrix attached – See Appendix 4)

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA): This is not a statutory body but provides a mechanism through which the Police, Probation and Prison Services work collaboratively with other organisations to manage risks posed by violent and sexual offenders who now live within the community to ensure the public are protected.

3. Response Process

When a serious threat has been received or situations have arisen where a viable risk has the potential to escalate the person(s) involved must, in the first instance raise it with their line manager who will gather information and seek clarification as to whether or not a Risk Strategy Group Meeting is required.

In the event of a manager being made aware of a threat to an employee they have a duty of care to discuss it with the employee concerned and follow the procedures laid down within this document.

It is important that threats/concerns are reported promptly and addressed by the relevant line manager to ensure that effective measures can be put into place (where required) within acceptable timescales.

Advice may be sought from the Health and Safety Team.

Where a threat has been received it should be recorded via the Council's electronic Incident Reporting form as an assault ([Health and safety incident reporting - Our Derbyshire](#))

Once relevant information has been gathered a decision will be made whether to arrange a Risk Strategy Group Meeting the attendees of which will be selected from parties both within the Council and externally as required. (Where an incident has been formally reported to the Police, a Risk Strategy Group Meeting should be arranged).

The purpose of this meeting is to establish the facts, identify the person or persons at potential risk, the locations likely to be targeted and assess the actual level of risk posed in each circumstance.

The outcome of this meeting will be to produce a clear action plan outlining practical measures to be implemented to protect those under threat as well as others who may be affected as a consequence of that threat.

This action plan should:

- clearly identify all potential targets and their level of risk,
- take account of any factors which could increase this risk,
- identify actions requiring implementation to control these risks based upon order of priority
- identify and allocate responsible persons and timescales for action.

Also depending upon the degree of risk/potential risk it may be appropriate to link with other plans or processes established by other agencies such as the Police, Probation Service, NHS, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) etc. It should be noted that these plans do not negate the need for the Council to hold a Risk Strategy Group Meeting and the two processes should run concurrently with information shared between the two Groups as required to ensure all relevant information is disseminated to the relevant parties.

For situations where a lower threat level has been identified that does not require a full Risk Strategy Group meeting, a lower level operational meeting may be held involving the individuals concerned, their line managers and a member of the Health and Safety team as appropriate. Accurate notes/minutes of this meeting should be taken and actions recorded and allocated as required. (It is important to review these cases on a regular basis to identify any changes to the assigned threat rating – if the risk escalates to a significant level then a full Risk Strategy Group meeting will be required.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is important to ensure that everyone involved with the serious threat process is aware of their own role and responsibilities.

- **Executive and Service Directors**

The role of the Executive and Service Directors is to ensure that suitable measures are put into place so that risks to the personal safety of employees and others affected by the work activity are adequately controlled. This includes ensuring that adequate finance and resources are made available appropriate to the level of risk involved.

- **Heads of Service and Senior Managers**

Heads of Service and Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring that suitable systems are put in place to protect employees and others affected/potentially affected by serious threat situations. They are also responsible for ensuring these measures are monitored to ensure their continued effectiveness. To assist in this process they may liaise with relevant advisers and external organisations as appropriate.

- **Chair of Risk Strategy Group Meeting**

This Group must be chaired by someone with sufficient authority to approve any recommendations (including employee resources, changes to methods of working, financial considerations etc.) Where the serious threat situation affects more than one department, the Chair should be mutually agreed by the parties involved and this person will oversee the co-ordinated approach.

(For more information on the responsibilities of this role please see Section 5- Risk Strategy Group Meetings)

- **Health and Safety Team**

The Health and Safety Section will provide advice and support to the Risk Strategy Group members to ensure that statutory health and safety legislation and Council policies and procedures are adhered to. They will also advise on best practice to assist the Group in identifying the relevant risks and control measures required to mitigate against those risks. At the request of the Group Chair the team can also provide practical advice regarding an individual's or work group's security both at an establishment and private property level.

- **Risk and Insurance Manager**

Additional support may also be provided by the Risk and Insurance Manager who will advise on the wider Council implications.

- **External Organisations**

- i) **Police**

To ensure that all relevant factors are considered within any serious threat situation it is imperative that the Police are informed and professional advice is sought from them regarding the actual or potential threat level. This ensures a co-ordinated approach which is proportionate to the degree of risk posed. Wherever possible a designated Police representative with sufficient authority to authorise any required Police assistance should sit on the Risk Strategy Group and attend the meetings.

- ii) **Other Agencies**

Consideration must be given to the inclusion of other relevant agencies when establishing the Risk Strategy Group. This assists in determining the threat level posed by the serious threat situation and ensures that all relevant parties have the appropriate information required to enable a sufficient risk assessment to be created and suitable control measures implemented. These other agencies may include: Probation Service, Community Mental Health Teams, NHS Support Staff, Contractors, Agency Workers or other involved parties.

- **Person Under Threat**

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act an employee affected by the serious threat situation has a duty to alert their manager to that risk or potential risk so that Council can assess it, identify and implement suitable control measures to protect that employee and others who may be affected. All affected employees also have a duty to follow these measures to protect themselves and others around them.

5. Risk Strategy Group Meetings

To ensure a co-ordinated, proportionate response it is important to ensure that Risk Strategy Group members are carefully selected. Group membership should include those under threat or potential threat, their representatives as well as Service Managers, Advisers and representatives from other external organisations. The Chair, as outlined in Section 4 above should have sufficient authority to approve recommendations made by that Group.

Suitable Group representatives will include:

- Senior Manager(s) – one of whom will Chair the Group Meetings
- Health & Safety Team member(s)
- Manager(s) of the person(s) under threat
- Risk and Insurance Manager or their representative
- Police representative
- Persons who are at risk/and or their representatives
- Representatives from other agencies/organisations
- HR representative (if relevant)
- Minute Taker

This list is not exhaustive but provides an example of the parties who could assist with the assessment process and identification of suitable control measures including the allocation of required resources.

The Chair of the Group meetings is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that a suitable assessment has been made of the situation.
- Ensuring that an action plan has been developed and is monitored to ensure its effective implementation.
- Allocating tasks and timescales to identified parties.
- Ensuring any recommendations made at the meeting are adequately resourced and acted upon in a timely manner.
- Arranging subsequent meetings as necessary.
- Acting as the response co-ordinator and be the liaison contact for all parties.
- Keeping the relevant Executive/Service Directors updated on progress and the meeting outcomes.
- Ensuring the minute/notes accurately reflect the discussions of the meeting.

(A meeting template can be found in Appendix 1)

6. Documentation and Confidentiality Considerations

Due to the nature of the information gathered and held as part of the serious threat response process it is essential that document control measures are robust and in line with data protection legislation.

Any documentation and information shared amongst the relevant parties must be treated as RESTRICTED and only used for the purposes of the Risk Strategy Group meeting. Any minutes taken must provide a full and accurate account of what was actually said including a full account of any questions and responses given.

In situations where it isn't appropriate to share all information with the full group (for example where threats are made by one employee to another and further investigations may be required) abridged versions can be used to outline pertinent points. In all cases, however an agreed action plan must be included.

7. Follow-Up Process and Debriefing

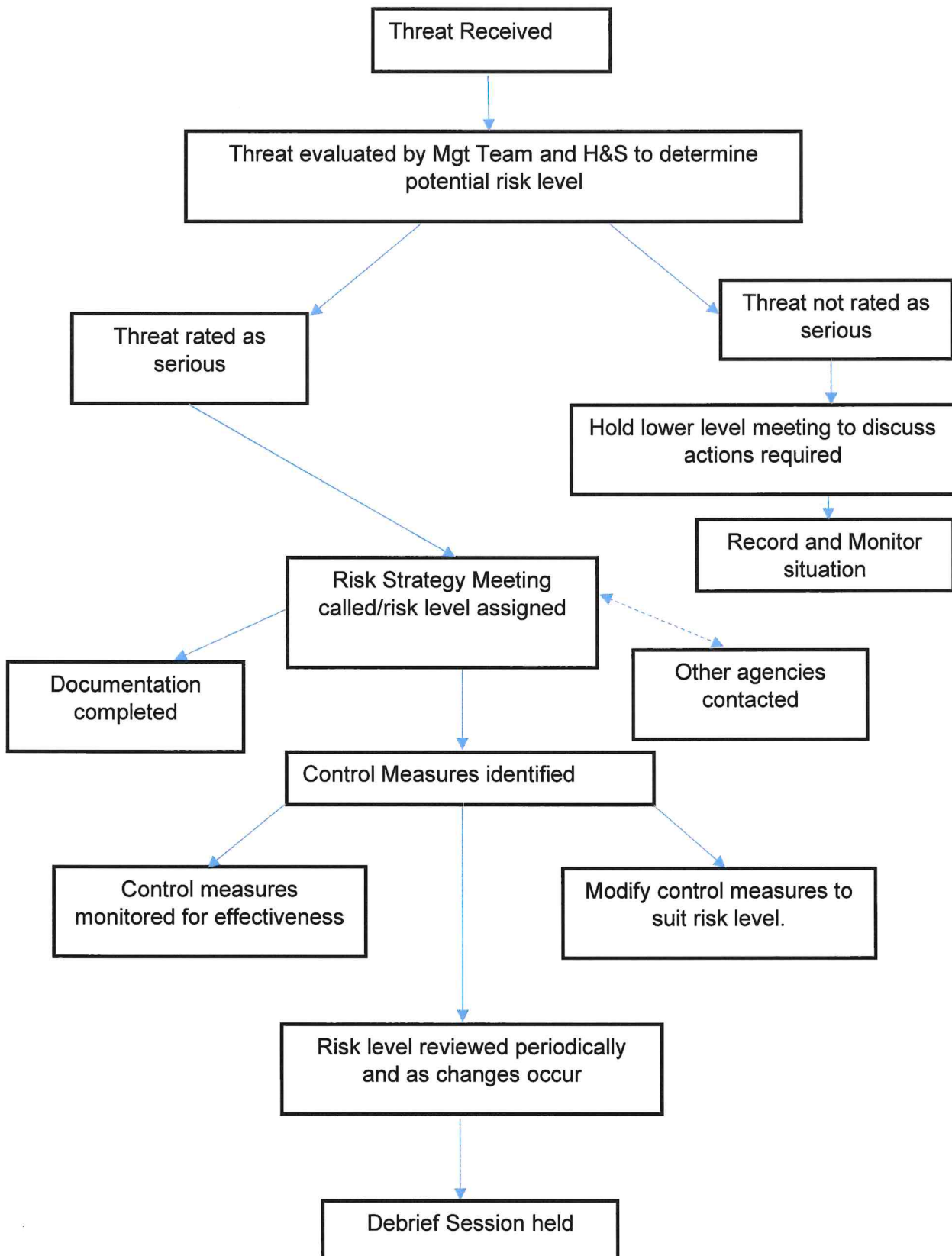
It is important to reassess the threat level based upon the evolving situation so that any further potential targets are identified and any existing control measures reassessed to ensure their continued validity and effectiveness.

One of the most effective ways of achieving this is by having a formal review process in place to ensure that that actions plans are monitored and relevant information is captured and communicated to relevant parties so that informed decisions can be made with regards to future plans. This may involve further Risk Strategy Group meetings or other processes involving key staff.

After the event, the Group should be called together for a formal debriefing session to identify areas of good practice and those where lessons could be learned with regards to the process to promote improvement during future situations not only within that Service Area but across the Council as a whole.

Appendix 1

Process Flowchart



This form is classified as RESTRICTED when information added.

Appendix 2: Factors to Consider as part of the Serious Threat Assessment Process

Incident Nature or Threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the trigger for the threat and the context in which it was made? Give accurate details of exactly what was said, implied or actually done and ensure Senior Managers are alerted.• What was communicated, how was it communicated and what was its seriousness and detail?

General Information – to give background information, and information about the subject's (person making the threat(s)) current life situation and circumstances.
Personal Details:
Name and aliases:
Date of birth:
Current address
Current telephone number
Physical description – any distinguishing features, is there a current photograph available?
Does the individual hold a driving licence and have access to a vehicle(s) – if so, give details
Names of any children and dates of birth, school(s) they attend (if applicable) and where and who they live with?
Does the subject have contact with the children? is the subject a risk to the children? e.g. schedule 1 offender.
Names and addresses of close relatives
Close associates of the individual and their contact addresses?
Does the individual work? Give details, including address
Address of person(s)/sites under threat and their proximity to the above addresses. Does the person have knowledge of the address? Or live in close proximity?

General Information – to give background information, and information about the subject's (person making the threat(s)) current life situation and circumstances.

Has the person(s) seen or signed any documents relating to the case e.g. legal report/placement form, with address/personal details included?

Background Information:

Education and training

Any previous DCC Assault report forms

Criminal history

Instances of violent behaviour

Has the person previously engaged in planning or committing violent acts, and/or engaged in threatening, menacing, harassing, stalking or similar behaviour? If so, has this behaviour increased in frequency and/or seriousness recently? Any previous history of actually doing it?

Has the threat maker shown an abnormal interest in violence, weapons, self-abuse, suicide, abuse of animals or other progressions of violent behaviour? Has the person shown an interest in others who have committed such acts and how they did so?

Military history

Does the person have an interest in military matters?

History of expertise with and use of weapons

Does the person hold a firearms certificate?

Does the person making the threat have a pre-determined action plan? Does it include specific steps or supportive details? Does the person have the ability and tools to carry out the threat? How organised is the person? Is he/she capable of carrying out a plan?

Marital and relationship history:

Have there been major stressors in the life of the threat maker? e.g relationship/family difficulties. Does the person have a social support system? What is the person's willingness to seek help?

What factors in the subjects life and/or environment might increase/decrease the likelihood of the subject attempting to carry out their threat(s)? e.g.??

Mental health history (especially psychiatric commitments, episodes of depression or despair, including suicidal thinking and behaviour, and violent behaviour while mentally ill)
Does the threat maker have undiagnosed and/or untreated mental illnesses or emotional disturbances such as depression, hallucinations, feelings of desperation and/or persecution?

Background Information:
Does the threat maker display signs of emotional detachment and, if so, to what degree and has there been progressively increased detachment?
History of substance/alcohol abuse History of grievances
History of harassing others
Interest in extremist ideas or radical groups

Identify all possible targets including - people/buildings/organisations
Person(s) under threat
Name
Home Address
Family details e.g. young children, lives alone
Contact telephone numbers –do they have a mobile phone (network coverage?)
Is their home telephone number ex-directory?
Are they removed from 192.com etc?
Are they on the electoral role?
Is their vehicle registration blocked by DVLA or listed at work/P.O Box?
Have they received any malicious phone calls?
Has anything unusual/odd occurred recently? e.g. strange/unusual cars/calls etc.?
Does the Group assess this as a valid threat / risk?

Possible Action Plan Considerations (dependent upon nature and degree of risk)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Statements • Crime Prevention reports • Procedures – office relocation • Control of telephone calls • Personal Safety Training • Personal Alarms • Mobile Phones

Appendix 3 – Serious Threat Group Meeting Template

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date, venue and time of meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Members names and designations/organisation details
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline of meeting format and purpose by Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threat Outline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of those affected
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of perpetrator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of risk level
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of Action Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreement of actions, who is responsible for what and timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions and answer session
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date of next meeting

Appendix 4 - Risk Matrix (to help assess potential threat level).

Things To Consider	Score
A. Nature of Threat	
Level of Severity	Choose an item.
B. Subject Background	
Does the individual have any previous relevant convictions?	Choose an item.
Address of person(s)/sites under threat and their proximity to the above addresses. Does the person have knowledge of the address? Or live in close proximity?	Choose an item.
Has the person(s) seen or signed any documents relating to the case e.g. legal report/placement form, with address/personal details included?	Choose an item.
Have there been any previous DCC Incident Report forms?	Choose an item.
Does the subject have criminal history	Choose an item.
Instances of violent behaviour : Has the person previously engaged in planning or committing violent acts, and/or engaged in threatening, menacing, harassing, stalking or similar behaviour? And Has this behaviour increased in frequency and/or seriousness recently?	Choose an item.
Has the threat maker shown an abnormal interest in violence, weapons, self-abuse, suicide, abuse of animals or other progressions of violent behaviour? And Has the person shown an interest in others who have committed such acts?	Choose an item.
Military history Does the person have an interest in military matters?	Choose an item.
History of expertise with and use of weapons Does the person hold a firearms certificate or have history of keeping weapons?	Choose an item.
Does the person making the threat have a pre-determined action plan? Does it include specific steps or supportive details? Does the person have the ability and tools to carry out the threat? How organised is the person? Is he/she capable of carrying out a plan?	Choose an item.

<p>Marital and relationship history Have there been major stressors in the life of the threat maker? e.g. relationship/family difficulties.</p>	Choose an item.
<p>And Does the person have a social support system?</p>	Choose an item.
<p>And Is the person or (previously been) willing to seek help?</p>	Choose an item.
<p>What factors in the subjects life and/or environment might increase/decrease the likelihood of the subject attempting to carry out their threat(s)?</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Mental health history (especially psychiatric commitments, episodes of depression or despair, including suicidal thinking and behaviour, and violent behaviour while mentally ill)</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Does the threat maker have undiagnosed and/or untreated mental illnesses or emotional disturbances such as depression, hallucinations, feelings of desperation and/or persecution?</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Does the threat maker display signs of emotional detachment If so, has there been progressively increased detachment?</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Do they have a history of substance/alcohol abuse</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Do they have a history of grievances</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Do they have a history of harassing others</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Do they have an interest in extremist ideas or radical groups</p>	Choose an item.
C. Person(s) Under Threat	
<p>Do they have young children?</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Do they live alone</p>	Choose an item.
<p>Do they live in a remote location without close neighbours</p>	Choose an item.

Contact telephone numbers –do they have a mobile phone (network coverage?)	Choose an item.
Is their home telephone number ex-directory?	Choose an item.
Are they removed from 192.com etc.?	Choose an item.
Are they on the electoral role?	Choose an item.
Is their vehicle registration blocked by DVLA or listed at work/P.O Box?	Choose an item.
Have they received any malicious phone calls?	Choose an item.
Has anything unusual/odd occurred recently? e.g. strange/unusual cars/calls etc.?	Choose an item.
Overall Score	

Risk	Risk Treatment Plan
Choose an item.	Choose an item.