Zero Tolerance Policy

LSOT – Laura Slader Independent Occupational Therapy Services Ltd.

1. Our Commitment

At LSOT, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive and respectful environment for everyone who uses or works within our service.

As an employer and healthcare provider, LSOT has a duty of care to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees, associates and other individuals involved in delivering our services. We recognise that staff mental health and emotional wellbeing are just as important as their physical health.

We are committed to ensuring that all staff are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their role or the circumstances in which care is provided.

Equally, we are committed to treating all clients, their families and representatives with compassion, dignity and respect.

We expect the same standards of behaviour in return.

LSOT recognises that a person's health condition, disability, cognitive or communication difficulties, age or developmental needs may affect their behaviour and their ability to understand or respond to expectations. These factors will inform our response to incidents, including consideration of reasonable adjustments, individual risk assessment and appropriate clinical support. This does not remove the need to protect staff and others from harm. Staff may end an interaction or leave a visit where they feel unsafe.

2. Our Zero Tolerance Approach

Any form of abuse, intimidation, threatening behaviour or assault directed towards a member of staff in connection with their work is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This includes behaviour occurring during:

1. Face-to-face appointments or assessments.
2. Home visits and community-based appointments.
3. Telephone conversations or video consultations.

4. Written correspondence, emails, text messages and other digital communications.
5. Interactions through social media or other online platforms.

Unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse, aggressive or intimidating language, persistent swearing, shouting, harassment and behaviour that causes staff to feel threatened, distressed or unsafe.

No member of staff should be expected to tolerate abusive behaviour as part of their professional responsibilities.

3. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

The following behaviours may result in a formal warning, suspension or termination of services, depending on the nature, seriousness and frequency of the incident:

1. **Violence or physical assault:** Any form of physical aggression, assault or unwanted physical contact towards a member of staff.
2. **Threatening behaviour:** Intimidation, harassment, threats or behaviour intended to cause fear or distress.
3. **Verbal abuse:** Swearing, offensive language, shouting, aggressive tone or persistent derogatory comments.
4. **Discriminatory behaviour:** Racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory remarks, gestures or actions.
5. **Sexual harassment:** Inappropriate sexual comments, gestures, advances or unwanted physical contact.
6. **Aggressive or intimidating conduct:** Behaviour that causes staff to feel threatened, unsafe or significantly distressed.
7. **Persistent unreasonable behaviour:** Repeated disruptive, intrusive or excessively loud behaviour that interferes with the safe delivery of services.
8. **Malicious allegations:** Deliberately false or malicious accusations against staff, other clients or associated individuals.
9. **Offensive gestures or conduct:** Gestures, actions or behaviours intended to intimidate, humiliate or offend.
10. **Alcohol or substance misuse:** Being under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs during an appointment or home visit where this compromises safety or the delivery of the service.
11. **Drug-related activity:** The possession, use or supply of illegal drugs during staff visits.
12. **Damage to property:** Wilful or deliberate damage to staff property or equipment.
13. **Theft:** Stealing or attempting to steal property belonging to staff or the practice.
14. **Online abuse:** Repeated derogatory, threatening or harassing comments about LSOT or individual members of staff, whether communicated verbally, in writing, digitally or through social media.

This list is not exhaustive. LSOT reserves the right to take appropriate action in response to any behaviour that compromises the safety, dignity or wellbeing of staff or others.

4. Action Following an Incident

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and considered on an individual basis.

Depending on the circumstances, the action taken may include:

1. A verbal or written reminder of the expected standards of behaviour.
2. A formal written warning.
3. A first and final warning.
4. Suspension or cancellation of an appointment or home visit.
5. Temporary suspension of services while the incident is reviewed.
6. Termination of the professional relationship and withdrawal of services.

The action taken will reflect the seriousness of the incident, any previous history of unacceptable behaviour and the potential risk to staff and others.

In cases involving violence, physical assault or credible threats, the police may be contacted. Where appropriate, incidents will be reported to the relevant authorities.

Staff are entitled to withdraw from an appointment or leave a home visit if they feel unsafe or threatened.

5. Complaints and Concerns

We recognise that clients may occasionally feel dissatisfied, frustrated or unhappy with aspects of the service they receive.

We welcome constructive feedback and encourage clients to raise concerns through our formal complaints procedure. This allows us to investigate concerns fairly, respond appropriately and identify opportunities to improve our service.

Clients are entitled to express dissatisfaction, make a complaint or seek an alternative occupational therapy provider.

However, dissatisfaction or disagreement does not justify abusive, threatening, discriminatory or intimidating behaviour towards staff.

There are appropriate and constructive ways to raise concerns, and we ask everyone to use these channels.

6. Our Shared Responsibility

LSOT believes that effective occupational therapy is built on mutual trust, collaboration and respect.

We are committed to providing a professional, compassionate and person-centred service, and we ask all clients, relatives and representatives to support us in maintaining a safe and positive working relationship.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in upholding these standards.

We have zero tolerance for abuse, but we remain committed to treating everyone with dignity, fairness and respect.