



# Castle Quay Offices Security Policy

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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## DOCUMENT APPROVALS

This document requires the following committee approvals:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting pending approval</b>
CLT	December 2025
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## DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION

This document will be distributed to all employees of Cherwell District Council.

## DATE FOR REVIEW

No later than January 2029 but sooner if impacted by legislative changes.

## REVISION HISTORY

<b>Version</b>	<b>Revision date</b>	<b>Summary of revision</b>
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## **1. Introduction**

This policy identifies how Cherwell District Council will manage the security risks at the Castle Quay Offices for both staff and visitors during normal business operations and emergency situations.

## **2. Purpose**

To provide clear guidance for both staff working in the reception area on managing challenging and potentially disruptive visitors, contractors or members of the public, ensuring the safety of staff and visitors, and outlining the escalation, lockdown, and evacuation procedures at the Castle Quay offices.

This document ensures the safety of staff and visitors and outlines the de-escalation, lockdown, and evacuation procedures.

## **3. Policy Statement**

Cherwell District Council recognises that employees could face a threat from members of the public who visit the council offices. The Council also accepts that some employees may be more at risk than others due to the nature of their role at the council.

This guidance outlines the arrangements the Council has put in place to help protect all employees working in the offices to ensure the safety as far as possible of our employees and other members of the public every employee must comply with this policy.

Team procedures should be followed for escalation of issues in normal circumstances including if an employee requires additional assistance from a team member or manager with a query.

Team procedures should also still be followed for known customers who may be a challenge and have been flagged as needing two members of staff present for interviews. If a customer is visiting the offices and additional support i.e. Security Officer or Police presence is required team procedures should be followed providing as much advance notice as possible.

Employees, for their part, are required to co-operate with the implementation of this Policy to assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations. Employees should also draw to the attention of their management any deficiency in this Policy in order that they may be reviewed and any suitable amendments made in the appropriate cases.

Though we occupy part of the Castle Quay Centre we do still require to have our own procedures in place to ensure the safety of everyone. This document has been produced in conjunction with Castle Quay Centre on-site management and will be reviewed where necessary.

The Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, and Service Managers are responsible for ensuring the requirements of this Policy are implemented within their areas of responsibility.

#### **4. Legislation**

Whilst there is no specific health and safety legislation around the security of buildings and employees when they are at work the council has an obligation under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to provide a safe working environment for all employees.

The Terrorism Act 2005 requires certain premises and events to ensure steps have been taken to prepare for potential terrorist attacks and get ready to help keep people safe in the event of an attack. In addition, certain larger premises and events will be required to consider and, where appropriate, take steps to reduce their vulnerability to acts of terrorism.

The Castle Quay offices are categorised under the standard tier premises. We are required to have in place, so far as is reasonably practicable, appropriate public protection procedures.

These are procedures that may be expected to reduce the risk of physical harm to individuals if an act of terrorism occurred at the premises or in the immediate vicinity. They are procedures to be followed by people working at the premises where they suspect an act of terrorism is occurring, or is about to occur, at the premises or in the immediate vicinity.

The types of procedure are listed in the Act. The requirements for these smaller premises are focused on activities to enact policies and procedures that are expected to be simple and low cost. The aim of these requirements is to improve staff preparedness and responses. The Act does not require physical alterations to premises or the purchase of equipment for the purpose of having these procedures in place.

#### **5. Risks**

There are risks to the council and all employees that need to be considered which could lead to them being threatened by a member of the public. The most inherent risks are detailed below:

- Unauthorised access to council premises by members of the public.
- Suspect packages being left on the premises
- Bomb threat warnings coming in via telephone to anyone working in the offices and not necessarily via customer services.
- Verbal threats during interviews and meetings
- Physical threat to themselves and others in the reception area or interview rooms.
- Damage to property including personal belongings.
- A security incident within the shopping centre
- Notification of a problem within Banbury Town Centre by the Police.

# Part 1 – General security procedures at Castle Quay

All councillors, employees, agency staff and contractors have responsibilities regarding ensuring the continued safety of the premises at all times.

An appointed security company is responsible for ensuring that the building is kept secure and safe outside of core hours covering evening meetings, late night working etc. The security company can also be called upon to assist in the event of an incident in the offices but will not be on site. The Customer Services team, facilities team, and the duty director have their contact details.

## 6.1 Responsibilities

### All building users

Everyone has a responsibility for ensuring the continued safety of staff, councillors and visitors to the Castle Quay offices. Therefore, everyone must ensure that:

- All employees wear their ID badges when working in the buildings.
- Doors are not left propped open for any reason allowing access to unauthorised persons.
- Everyone must ensure that no tailgating occurs at the entry and exit points and challenges any persons entering without their ID badge. Where necessary directing them to the main reception area.
- Following any evacuation planned or otherwise that all access and egress points are secured.
- Ensuring that all external doors are closing when entering or leaving the building to prevent tailgating.

### Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Security Policy and ensuring that all operations and undertakings of the council are carried out with due regard for the health, safety and welfare of all employees and visitors to Castle Quay offices.

In particular the Chief Executive will ensure that:

- There are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risks associated with security at the Castle Quay offices.
- Resources are provided for putting the policy into practice; and
- There are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to security on site and that regular reviews of the effectiveness of the policy are carried out.

### Executive and Assistant Directors

In addition to the Chief Executive each Executive Director and Assistant Director has a key role in ensuring that this policy is maintained, both across the council and in their directorate. Each Executive and Assistant Director will ensure that within their directorate:

- Implementation of this policy, guidance and procedures are monitored and reviewed as necessary, taking into account organisational changes.

- Resources are allocated to enable these responsibilities to be carried out.
- Employees are aware of this policy and receive clear information and instruction on risks to their health and safety identified by a risk assessment and the safe system of work procedures to be used.
- Suitable information, instruction, training and supervision are arranged for all employees required to undertake work activities in the reception area.
- Any incidents are reported promptly to the health and safety team, investigated and appropriate remedial action is taken.
- Where any work situation that threatens serious and immediate danger; or any hazard or failure or inadequacy in health and safety precautions are reported by employees or other persons are investigated as required and corrective action taken.
- Ensure that managers and supervisors within their services uphold their responsibilities with regards this policy.

### **All Line Manager & Supervisor Responsibilities**

All Managers and/or Supervisors of employees have the following responsibilities: -

- To ensure all employees including agency staff follow this policy wherever they work within Castle Quay offices.
- Ensure every employee affected by this policy, has access to, or are issued with and familiarise themselves with this policy.
- Ensure that all staff have read and understood any risk assessments and work procedures relating to activities including security within their service.
- Ensure that all staff attend any training which is provided for their benefit and awareness.
- Following any incident ensure that staff affected are debriefed accordingly and appropriate support is provided including the utilisation of the council's Employee Assistance Programme.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

All staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of themselves and others whilst working at Castle Quay offices. They must:

- Comply with this policy at all times.
- Advise their line manager of a potential issue at the earliest opportunity.
- Participate in any training provided for them where required.
- Report any incidents whilst working in the area at the earliest opportunity to their manager.

### **Health & Safety Team Responsibilities**

- Monitor all incidents and highlight with relevant line manager to take appropriate action.
- Support Managers in any necessary training for employees where it is identified.
- Monitor and review compliance with this policy.

- Report to senior management any incidents and any subsequent findings on a monthly basis.

### **Security Provider Responsibilities**

- Act as primary responder to any incidents at Castle Quay offices as required.
- Acknowledge any request asap, despatching nearest trained security officer, conduct a dynamic risk assessment
- Notify CDC of approx. time of arrival at site
- Obtain a basic report on the situation from staff at castle quay.
- Upon arrival on site respond accordingly
- Participate in any debriefs as required.

## **6.2 Post-Incident Actions**

Following any incidents within Castle Quay offices a thorough debrief must take place as soon as possible with all parties involved including our security provider where appropriate in order to review and look at lessons learned.

- A **debrief** must be held by all persons involved and the Duty Manager at the time of the incident.
- An **Incident Report** must be completed within 24 hours.
- Any system faults, behavioural concerns, or lessons learned must be documented.
- Staff requiring support should be provided with details of our Employee Assistance programme.

## **Part 2 – Managing difficult customers**

### **7.1 Purpose**

To provide clear guidance for reception staff and council employees on managing challenging or potentially disruptive visitors, contractors, or members of the public. This document ensures the safety of staff and visitors and outlines the de-escalation, lockdown, and evacuation procedures.

### **7.2 Scope**

Applies to all reception staff, office-based employees, facilities team, and senior management during office hours: Monday to Friday, 08:45 – 17:15.

Outside of the normal office hours when the building is open a security guard will be on site to respond to any incidents as required.

### **7.3 Responsibilities**

#### **Initial response for reception or staff dealing with member of public**

- Attempt to de-escalate the situation remaining calm at all times.
- Make contact with duty officer if necessary for support and assistance.

### **7.4 Managing Difficult Visitors**

## **Reception Initial Response**

- Greet visitors courteously.
- Identify visitor causing concern.
- Attempt de-escalation using calm, neutral language.
- Avoid physical confrontation or raised voice.

## **Escalation to Duty Officers (Line Manager)**

- Call relevant duty officer which should be a more senior person in the employees team if de-escalation fails.
- Duty officer to attempt resolution by speaking with the person concerned.

## **Escalation to A Senior Manager or Duty Director**

- Contact senior management if unresolved.
- A senior manager on site or the duty director decides whether to initiate lockdown of the offices.

## **7.5 If a Lockdown of Reception or assistance from security is deemed necessary**

- Further action should only be taken as a last resort when other avenues have been explored.
- Please refer to Part 3 Panic button instructions for further guidance.

## **7.6 De-Escalation Behavioural Guidance**

### **Early Awareness and Prevention**

- Observe tone, body language, and emotional state.
- Address early signs of agitation.
- Offer practical help where possible.
- Maintain calm and child-safe environment.

### **Dos and Don'ts**

Do	Don't
Stay calm, speak slowly	Argue or raise voice
Open posture, hands visible	Cross arms or point
Use names respectfully	Label or criticise
Listen fully before responding	Interrupt or dismiss
Keep safe personal space	Invade space or touch

### **Helpful Phrases**

- "I can see this is frustrating — let's find a solution together."
- "I want to help, but I need us both to stay calm."

- "Let me bring a colleague to assist further."

### **Body Language & Tone**

Positive	Avoid
Slight nods, relaxed stance	Eye-rolling or folded arms
Calm facial expression	Smirking or sarcasm
Moderate eye contact	Staring or avoiding completely
Standing at slight angle	Confrontational posture

## Part 3 - Panic Alarm Procedure – Castle Quay Offices

### 8.1 Purpose

To provide a clear, coordinated, and safe response to all panic alarm activations within Castle Quay. This procedure ensures that threats are managed by trained personnel and that employees, visitors, and contractors are protected through rapid triage, communication, and lockdown measures.

### 8.2 Panic Alarm Activation

#### When to Activate

A panic alarm must be activated **only when a person experiences or witnesses:**

- Immediate personal threat
- Verbal or physical aggression
- Violence or attempted assault
- Threat involving a weapon
- Any situation where safety is at immediate risk

### 8.3 Alarm Transmission

- The panic alarm sends an instant signal to both the **Main Office** and the **security providers Control Room**. They will automatically respond.
- **Reception will immediately enter lockdown preventing anyone leaving or entering through those doors.**
- **Fire Wardens** will be positioned at door entrances to prevent persons entering/leaving via Reception area.
- **Customer Services, Facilities Management, and Senior Management** on site will initiate the wider lockdown procedure when instructed.

### 8.4 Panic Alarm Response Procedure (Step-by-Step)

#### Step 1 – Initial Triage (Customer Services / Facilities / Reception)

Upon receiving an alarm:

1. **Identify the alarm location** via the control panel/system alert.
2. **Assess the type of threat**, including:
  - Verbal aggression
  - Physical altercation
  - Weapon or suspected weapon
  - Unknown threat
3. Assess and decide whether the Security personnel is sufficient or whether the Police are required.
4. **Notify the police (999) if assessed as necessary.**
5. **Notify the shopping centre security personnel** of the situation.

6. **Fire Warden** responds immediately to secure internal reception doors to prevent staff entering the area from the inside of the office space.
7. **One Fire Warden** positions at the main public entrance to prevent entry by employee or public from the inside of the office space.

### **Step 2 – Reception being put into Lockdown**

**Upon reception entering lockdown the reception staff must:**

- Lock internal doors and secure their immediate area.
- Ask where possible for visitors to leave for their own safety.
- Ensure that entry doors are being secured with Fire Wardens positioned on the staff side. This can be actioned through use of the radios, so as not to cause panic or through the Customer Services team and FM.
- Avoid confrontation; prioritise protecting themselves and others.
- Await further instructions from Management, whilst ensuring their own safety.
- Maintain radio contact with the Duty Manager
- Update via radio as and when necessary.

**Fire Wardens:**

- Deploy to the **three main entry points**.
- Prevent entry or exit until our security provider or the Police issues the **All Clear**.
- Direct staff/visitors to the safest location.

**Duty Manager**

- Start a log to keep track of events and timelines.
- Decide whether to put the whole office into lockdown and advise accordingly.
- Act as point of contact with Security personnel and/or the police.
- Ensure that FW are rotated if the situation is prolonged.
- Liaise with FM and H&S personnel.

**Line Manager of persons involved**

- Provide the necessary support during and after the event to all involved.
- Attend any debriefings with those involved.

**Council staff**

- Follow all lockdown procedures and instructions.
- Remain in safe locations, do not leave the building whilst the event is ongoing.

## **8.5 Method Statement – Panic Alarm Response**

**Objective**

To ensure a safe and systematic approach to managing panic alarm incidents.

**Scope**

Applies to all staff within Castle Quay Council Office and surrounding areas.

## Method

1. Threat Identified → Alarm Activated
2. Signal received in security providers Control & Main Office
3. Triage conducted to determine location and nature of threat.
4. Lockdown initiated in Reception and surrounding areas if required.
5. Fire Wardens deployed to secure entry points.
6. Security personnel respond to the incident area.
7. Duty Manager coordinates communication, including Police if required.
8. Incident is resolved and verified safe by our security provider
9. "All Clear" issued by the security provider and Duty Manager.
10. Debrief & documentation completed after every activation.

## 8.6 Risk Assessment – Panic Alarm Procedure

**Risk Assessment Summary Table**

Hazard / Threat	Risk Description	Likelihood	Severity	Controls in Place	Residual Risk
<b>Violent or aggressive individual</b>	Staff may be threatened or assaulted	Medium	High	Panic alarms, lockdown process, trained staff	Low/Medium
<b>Delayed response</b>	Staff unable to access help quickly	Low	High	Direct alarm to security provider + Main Office, trained responders	Low
<b>Uncontrolled public access during incident</b>	Bystanders could enter danger zone	Medium	Medium	Fire Warden door control, lockdown system	Low
<b>Miscommunication between teams</b>	Slower or incorrect response	Medium	Medium	Duty Manager coordination, radios/phones, clear procedure	Low
<b>Staff panic or confusion</b>	Improper actions may increase risk	Medium	High	Regular training, clear signage, defined roles	Low/Medium
<b>Failure to evacuate or shelter correctly</b>	Staff/visitors could be exposed to danger	Low	High	Fire Wardens + lockdown protocols	Low

## Part 4 – Security Lockdown at CQ Offices, Method Statement & Procedures

## 9.1 Purpose

To provide clear, rehearsed, and coordinated instructions for all Castle Quay offices, Council staff, Fire Wardens, and Security teams during a security lockdown or evacuation. The aim is to protect life, maintain order, and ensure all personnel understand their responsibilities, including communication with emergency services.

## Method Statement for Security Lockdown

### 9.2 Scope

This method statement applies to: - All Castle Quay Council Offices - Castle Quay Shopping Centre operational areas - All staff, Security Officers, Fire Wardens, and Facilities Management.

#### Overview of Lockdown Types

Type	Trigger	Purpose	Key Actions
Local Lockdown	Panic alarm activated in Reception or Council areas	Contain a localised threat and safeguard nearby staff	Reception locks down; Fire Wardens secure and monitor 3 designated points
Full Site Lockdown	Triggered by security providers Control or Shopping Centre alarm	Protect all building occupants; prevent access or movement	All departments secure rooms: staff remain sheltered in place
Evacuation	Fire alarm or confirmed emergency with safety risk	Move all persons to external safety	Fire evacuation routes followed to Assembly Points

### 9.3 Lockdown Procedure (Council Offices)

Upon Hearing the Lockdown Signal (distinct tone)

1. Stop all movement immediately. Direct all visitors and non-staff to the nearest safe internal area.
2. Secure all access points:
  - Lock the main entrance.
  - Lock internal access doors.
  - Close blinds where possible.
3. Fire Wardens to deploy:
  - Man, the three designated entry doors.
  - Report lockdown status to security providers Control room.
4. Remain silent, calm, and away from windows.
5. Await further instruction from our security providers Control, Duty Manager, or Police.

## 9.4 Emergency Communication Procedure

### 9.4.1 Process for Calling the Police (999)

1. Provide the operator with:
  - o Location: Castle Quay / Council Offices (state building/level)
  - o Nature of threat: violence, weapon, intruder, suspicious activity, etc.
  - o Your name and position.
  - o Number of people present and any injuries.
2. Follow Police instructions exactly.
3. Do not leave the safe area to make the call unless safe to do so.

### 9.4.2 Informing Castle Quay Security

1. Call our security providers Control Room via internal line or radio.
2. State:
  - o Type of incident
  - o Exact location
  - o Visible threat
  - o Whether Police have been contacted
3. Maintain communications until instructed otherwise.

### 9.4.3 Informing Fire Wardens and Facilities / Management

- Fire Wardens become first responders in a lockdown.
- Facilities Management secures plant rooms, utility access, and sensitive areas.
- The Duty Manager assumes operational control until Police or Centre Management take over.

## 9.5 Full Site Lockdown Procedure

1. Departments secure all internal rooms:
  - o Lock doors
  - o Turn off lights if appropriate
  - o Move occupants away from sight lines
2. Staff and visitors remain sheltered in place.
3. Our security providers Security Officers assess the threat and respond accordingly.
4. The Duty Manager coordinates all information flow between our security provider, Fire Wardens, Centre Management, and Council Senior Management.
5. Do not open doors for any reason until **ALL CLEAR** is issued by our security provider, Duty Manager, or Police.

## 9.6 Evacuation Procedure

1. When the fire alarm sounds, begin immediate evacuation.
2. Fire Wardens conduct area sweeps and assist staff/visitors.
3. Proceed to Assembly Points via designated routes.

4. Our security provider coordinates emergency services arrival and updates Duty Manager.
5. Re-entry is only permitted when authorised by Fire Officer, Police, or our security providers' Duty Manager.

## 9.7 Training & Implementation

- Frequency: Twice per year (1 x Lockdown drill, 1 x Evacuation drill)
- Led by our Security provider with Cherwell District Council
- Records kept by: Facilities Management
- Post-Drill Debrief: Within 24 hours, covering:
  - Response timings
  - Communication effectiveness
  - Behavioural observations
  - Corrective actions

## 9.8 Communication Tools

- Distinct Lockdown Sounder (not fire alarm tone)
- Internal Announcement Template: > “Attention all staff: A security situation is being managed. Please initiate lockdown procedures immediately. Await further instructions from our security providers Control or the Duty Manager.”

## 9.9 Post-Drill Review

Our security provider and Fire Wardens evaluate: - Time required to secure all access points - Staff understanding and behaviour - Communication clarity - Improvements to be implemented.

## 9.10 Summary of Roles

Role	Responsibility
Staff Member	Activate panic alarm if threatened; follow lockdown instructions
Security providers Control	Receive alarms, assess threat, communicate with Duty Manager, initiate lockdown
Fire Wardens	First response: activate sounder, secure 3 entrances, support communications
Security Officers	Attend incident, evaluate risk, manage threat, escalate to Police
Duty Manager	Oversee incident, liaise with Council and Centre Management
Facilities Management	Secure building utilities, ensure safe mechanical/electrical areas
Council Reception / Offices	Lock down area and await <b>All Clear</b>

