



Act Now on violence and abuse at work

Threats, abuse and attacks are not part of the job. Here is what employers must do, and the questions safety reps can ask.

HSE describes work-related violence as any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work. In education this can come from pupils, parents or visitors. Staff often say little because they feel it is expected, but it is a health and safety matter like any other.

689,000

incidents of violence at work in 2024 to 2025, including 370,000 assaults and 319,000 threats (HSE).

1.2%

of working adults were a victim of violence at work in the year, according to the Crime Survey.

38%

of assaults at work led to a physical injury.

It takes **many forms**

Threats and abuse

Shouting, swearing, intimidation, threats of harm and abuse because of who someone is.

Physical attack

Hitting, kicking, biting, scratching, throwing objects or pushing, including by children.

Online and phone abuse

Abusive emails, calls, messages and social media posts aimed at staff.

It is **not** part of the job

Many staff accept being sworn at, grabbed or hit as normal, and do not report it. HSE warns that a number of minor incidents can build up to a serious one.

Staff working alone, out of hours or away from the building are at greater risk, for example on home visits, trips or at the end of the day.

What **must** be reported

Under RIDDOR the employer must report violence that causes a death, a specified serious injury or more than seven days off work.

Injuries that keep a worker from normal duties for more than three days must be recorded. Verbal abuse is not reportable, but it should still be recorded.

Record everything. A pattern of incidents is what gets the employer to act.

Six questions to ask about violence and abuse

THE KEY POINT

Being threatened, abused or hit is not part of the job.

1

Is there a policy and a risk assessment?

Covering every role, including lone working, trips and the end of the day.

2

Is every incident recorded?

Including threats and abuse, so that patterns can be seen.

3

Are staff trained?

To spot early warning signs and calm situations, including supply and agency staff.

4

Is the building safe?

A secure reception, good lighting, alarms and a quick way to call for help.

5

Is there support afterwards?

Time off, counselling, help to report to the police and a say in what happens next.

6

Is it reviewed?

The risk assessment reviewed after every serious incident, and RIDDOR reports made when needed.

If you have been attacked or abused

Make sure you are safe and get any medical help you need. Write down what happened while it is fresh, and report it to your manager.

Tell your union rep. You can also report a crime to the police. You should not be left to cope alone.

Legal and other standards for prevention and control

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- HSE guidance on violence and aggression at work



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