

# PREVENTING WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

Joint guidance implementing  
a European social partner agreement



This project is organised with the financial  
support of the European Commission

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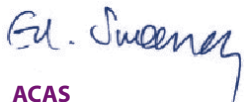
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## Foreword

Paid employment gives people not only an income but also affords them opportunities to contribute to society as a whole, their employer's business and their individual development. The workplace should not be a setting where people are subjected to threats of or actual violence, harassment or bullying. This behaviour is unacceptable but unfortunately too many people are exposed to these risks as part of their work. Whilst the incidence varies from one workplace and one sector to another, it is a problem across Europe.

Employers and unions have a common, shared interest in preventing harassment and violence. In 2007, the European Union social partners reached an autonomous agreement on the issue – freely entered into. The UK equivalents – the Trades Union Congress (TUC) for workers, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Partnership of Public Employers (PPE) for employers in the private and public sectors – have now issued this guidance to implement the agreement in the UK. They have the support of the Government, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Together, we are committed to ensuring that the risks of encountering harassment and violence whilst at work are assessed and prevented or controlled. We will implement our agreement and review its operation. We aim to make a difference, and we hope to prevent harassment and violence at work.



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ACAS Chair



**CBI**  
**Richard Lambert**  
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## Introduction

Any form of harassment and violence against workers, whether committed by co-workers, managers or third-parties, is unacceptable. It breaches ethical standards, as well as affecting the physical and psychological health of those affected. Yet according to the 2006/07 British Crime Survey (BCS), there were an estimated 684,000 workplace incidents, comprising 288,000 assaults and 397,000 threats of violence. Tolerance, diversity, dignity and respect are benchmarks for business success, so it is in employers' interests to identify and address the threat or occurrence of workplace harassment and violence. But employers also have legal duties to protect the health and safety of all their workers, so failure to deal with and take reasonable steps to prevent harassment and violence will undermine business performance and could be unlawful.

As part of ongoing dialogue on issues of common concern, European level employer and trade union organisations reached agreement on the need for action to highlight the importance of this issue. This guidance has been drawn up by the UK organisations that are represented in EU Social Dialogue in order to implement the European level framework agreement<sup>1</sup>. It is supported by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). It is designed for use by both employers and workers. The intention is to provide a guide to the European agreement, practical advice on dealing with harassment and violence at work, and to draw together in one place for the first time information on the key relevant pieces of legislation and support available in the UK.

## Aim of the agreement

The responsibility for determining the appropriate measures to prevent and deal with harassment and violence in the workplace rests with the employer. But workers play an important role in identifying and reporting incidents. Employers should involve workers – and where recognised, trade unions – in establishing procedures to deal with harassment and violence. Together, they may agree how to prevent harassment and violence and, where employers recognise trade unions, this could be done through established channels of collective bargaining or through consultation with Health and Safety representatives.

### The stated aim of the agreement therefore is to:

- Raise awareness and increase understanding of employers, workers and their representatives of workplace harassment and both internal and third party violence;
- Provide employers, workers and their representatives with a framework of response to identify, prevent and manage problems of harassment and all forms of violence at work.

Employers can create their own procedures and methods for tackling harassment and violence. However, to ensure workforce buy-in, it is advisable to involve workforce representatives – including safety representatives – in establishing, monitoring and updating these measures. A basic framework of measures is included in this guidance document to assist employers in developing their policies and procedures.

The existing laws governing harassment and violence at work are annexed in this document.

While harassment and bullying share some commonalities, bullying is not specifically dealt with in the EU agreement, or in this implementing guidance. This guidance is however intended to complement measures being taken in the UK to tackle bullying, for example the Dignity at Work Partnership Project.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.erc-online.eu/content/default.asp?PageName=OpenFile&DocID=18774>

<sup>2</sup> [www.dignityatwork.org](http://www.dignityatwork.org)

## Definition of harassment and violence

The European agreement defines harassment and violence as unacceptable behaviour by one or more individuals that can take many different forms, some of which may be more easily identifiable than others. Harassment occurs when someone is repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and/or humiliated in circumstances relating to work. Violence occurs when one or more worker or manager is assaulted in circumstances relating to work. Both may be carried out by one or more manager, worker, service user or member of the public with the purpose or effect of violating a manager's or worker's dignity, affecting his/her health and/or creating a hostile work environment.

### **The European agreement recognises that harassment and violence can:**

- Be physical, psychological, and/or sexual;
- Be one off incidents or more systematic patterns of behaviour;
- Be amongst colleagues, between superiors and subordinates or by third parties such as clients, customers, patients, pupils, etc;
- Range from minor cases of disrespect to more serious acts, including criminal offences, which require the intervention of public authorities.

While harassment and violence can potentially affect any workplace and any worker irrespective of company size, field of activity or form of employment relationship, certain groups and sectors can be more at risk.

The sectors identified as most at risk in the UK are those where third party harassment and violence are more likely. According to the 2006/7 British Crime Survey (BCS), respondents in the protective service occupations (for example police officers) were most at risk of violence at work. But high rates were also shown, for example, for workers in the transport, health, retail and leisure (e.g. pubs) sectors.

While the BCS indicates that 1.7% of working adults in England and Wales were the victim of one or more violent incidents at work, workers' perceptions are also important in managing work related stress, an issue closely linked to harassment and violence at work. For example, 22% of workers who had contact with members of the public thought it very or fairly likely that they would be threatened at work in the next year. 9% of workers with face-to-face contact with the public thought it very or fairly likely that they would be assaulted. This guidance therefore seeks to address both violence between fellow workers and violence perpetrated by a client, customer or member of the public against someone who is at work.

## Preventing, identifying and managing harassment and violence

Employers are responsible for identifying and managing the risk of harassment and violence at work. They should provide clear policies in relation to harassment and violence, detailing their own responsibilities, as well as those of their workforce, to raise awareness of related issues among the workforce, and set standards for workplace behaviour. In larger organisations, these policies will normally be formalised to ensure consistency and fairness of application. In smaller employers, these policies may be less formalised, but in any case workers should still be aware of the behaviour expected of them and the options available to them should they feel they have been victim of violence and/or harassment. To stress the seriousness of the issue, this information should also include recourse to the law where necessary.

Many organisations already have policies and procedures in place for dealing with harassment and violence. These existing procedures may be sufficient, or may only need to be adapted in the light of this agreement. The measures introduced by employers should be established in consultation with their workforce representatives.

### **The UK Partners consider that, when considering existing or developing new procedures:**

#### **Employers must:**

- Ensure, so far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their workers;
- Assess the risks to their workers (including the risk of reasonably foreseeable violence), decide how significant these risks are, decide what to do to prevent or control the risks, and develop a clear management plan to achieve this;
- Establish clear grievance and disciplinary procedures consistent with the ACAS code of practice;
- Consult with the workforce and their representatives about risk assessments and action arising from them;
- Ensure that everyone is aware of their harassment and violence policy and their responsibilities in relation to it.

#### **Employers should:**

- Provide a clear statement to staff and service users that harassment and violence will not be tolerated and will be treated as disciplinary offences (up to and including dismissal or, if appropriate, criminal action) – together with information on how to report harassment and violence;
- Be clear what constitutes unacceptable behaviour on the part of managers/other workers as well as service users or members of the public;

- Provide a statement of their overall approach to preventing and dealing with the risks of harassment and violence, including training (training could be tailored by each company and be produced 'in-house');
- Provide advice to workers on relevant legislation applicable to them/their responsibilities within the workplace;
- Advise that the victim(s) keep a diary of all incidents (and possible witnesses) and copies of anything that is relevant;
- Provide a statement that all complaints should be backed up by detailed information;
- Make clear that all parties involved will receive an impartial hearing and fair treatment and that the dignity and privacy of all will be protected, i.e. no information will be shared to parties not involved in the case;
- Make clear that false (i.e. malicious) accusations will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action;
- Make clear what support is available to the victim(s) (including with reintegration if necessary);
- Include information as to how the policy is to be implemented, reviewed and monitored.

#### **Employers could:**

- Include specific procedures where a criminal case may need to be brought;
- Seek qualified advice from external parties/agencies or advisers on their policies and procedures if they feel this will be helpful.

#### **Informal approaches**

In some cases it may be possible to rectify matters informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease. It may be that the individual will choose to do this themselves, or they may need support from human resources management, a manager, an employee representative, or a counsellor. However, sometimes informal approaches can blur the issues and cause greater problems later on, so careful judgments need to be made about whether to use formal or informal methods.

## Implementation and follow-up

The UK Social Partner representatives (CBI, TUC & PPE) are committed to ensuring that employers and workers are effectively equipped to deal with harassment and violence at work. The UK Social Partners are committed to raising awareness of this guidance with their member organisations, actively encouraging the implementation of policies on the themes contained in the agreement.

Where possible, within existing systems and frameworks, the UK Social Partners will collect information on the current level of harassment and violence at work experienced by their member organisations (i.e. at the time of publication of this guidance).

Three years after publication of this guidance, its distribution and impact will be evaluated. This will include information on their continued activity to raise awareness of harassment and violence at work and the collection of data (again, where possible, within existing systems and frameworks) on incidences occurring within their member organisations. It will also include the views of these organisations on their ability to tackle them, i.e. what procedures they have in place and the usefulness of the guidance in providing them with a clearer framework for identifying and managing harassment and violence. The social partners will feed their experiences into the review process at the European level.

The UK Government fully supports the work being undertaken to tackle harassment and violence at work. As such, BIS, HSE and ACAS will make this guidance available on their websites.

## Annex A

### The UK legislative framework on harassment and violence at work

#### Summary

The European agreement and this guidance are intended to complement existing legislation and guidance already available in the UK.

#### Law

Under British law it is an offence to lay your hand on to another person without their consent. However, there are varying degrees of assault which are governed by the seriousness of the injury, the harm done and the circumstances.

In addition, health and safety law applies to risks from violence (including verbal abuse), just as it does to other risks at work. Breach of contract may include the failure to protect an employee's health and safety at work.

Employers have a 'duty of care' for all their workers. If the mutual trust and confidence between employer and employee is broken – for example, through harassment and violence at work – then an employee can resign and claim 'constructive dismissal' on the grounds of breach of contract. Employers are usually responsible in law for the acts of their workers.

Workers who are assaulted, threatened or abused at work also have legal remedies available to them under civil law. These can result in damages against the employer or individuals, the most common remedy for which is a personal injury claim.

#### Enforcement

Where breaches of criminal law occur, the UK's law enforcement authorities are responsible.

In the case of breaches of Health and Safety legislation, the Health and Safety Executive or local authorities are responsible for enforcement.

While it is possible for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to bring a criminal action over harassment, it is not possible to make a direct complaint to an employment tribunal about harassment. However, workers are often able to bring complaints under anti-discrimination laws.

#### UK legislative framework – detail

Some of the key pieces of relevant existing legislation are (copies of these various pieces of legislation are available from: [www.opsi.gov.uk/](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/) or +44 (0)870 600 5522):

#### Health and safety – employer responsibilities

- The [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 \(HSWA\)](#) – Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their workers when at work;
- (a) [Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977](#); and (b) the [Health and Safety \(Consultation with Employees\) Regulations 1996](#) – Employers must inform, and consult with, employees in good time on matters relating to their health and safety. Employee representatives, either appointed by recognised trade unions under (a) or elected under (b) may make representations to their employer on matters affecting the health and safety of those they represent;
- The [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 \(RIDDOR\)](#) - Employers must notify their enforcing authority in the event of an accident at work to any employee resulting in death, major injury, or incapacity for normal work for three or more days. This includes any act of non-consensual physical violence done to a person at work;
- The [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) – under this Act, employers must consider the risks to workers (including the risk of reasonably foreseeable violence); decide how significant these risks are; decide what to do to prevent or control the risks; and develop a clear management plan to achieve this;
- The [Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007](#) – introduced a new offence, so that companies and organisations can be found guilty of corporate manslaughter as a result of serious management failures resulting in a gross breach of a duty of care, i.e. where serious failures in the management of health and safety result in a fatality.

#### Harassment & discrimination

In all strands of discrimination, it is not the intention of the perpetrator which defines whether a particular type of conduct is harassment but the effect it has on the recipient. For a verdict of harassment to be reached, it must occur in circumstances where it would appear to a reasonable third party that it would amount to harassment.

- The [Public Order Act 1986 \(S5\)](#) makes it an offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour, within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress thereby. These actions should take a verbal, physical or a written form;
- The [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994](#) – makes it a criminal offence to cause harassment or distress, defined as using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour, or displaying any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting. Updated by the [Criminal Justice Act 1998](#) – to cover common assault;



- The police may apply for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) under section 1 of the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#) (c.37) in circumstances 'where a person has acted in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not in the same household as himself';
- The [Sex Discrimination Act 1975 \(Amendment\) Regulations 2008](#) gives an expanded definition for sexual harassment as 'related to her sex or that of another person'. Claimants now only have to show the treatment was associated with the sex of the victim or any other person. It extends protection to include witnesses of harassment, or where conduct related to sex has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for one sex. This can include "environmental harassment" – for example the hanging of posters that make an environment unwelcoming to one sex. The amendment also confirms employers' liability for third-party sexual harassment in situations where they are aware of sexual harassment and fail to take reasonably practicable (proactive and reactive) steps to protect female workers when it is known to have happened on at least two other occasions;
- The [Sex Discrimination Act 1975 \(amended in 2003\)](#) gives protection against discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of sex, marriage or because someone intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment;
- The [Sex discrimination \(Indirect Discrimination and Burden of Proof\) Regulations 2001](#) gives additional protection relating to sex discrimination in matters of employment, self-employment and vocational training;
- The [Race Relations Act 1976](#) gives protection against discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins. The regulations that amended the Act (Race Regulations 2003) also give a stand alone right to protection from harassment on the grounds of race and ethnic or national origin;
- The [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#) gives protection against discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of disability;
- The [Employment Equality \(Sexual Orientation\) Regulations 2003](#) gives protection against discrimination and harassment on the – lesbian/gay – 'opposite sex' – heterosexual – and 'both sexes' – bisexual;
- The [Employment Equality \(Religion or Belief\) Regulations 2003](#) give protection against discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief and no religion or belief;
- The [Employment Equality \(Age\) Regulations 2006](#) give protection against discrimination and harassment on the grounds of age;
- Under Article 3 of the [Human Rights Act of 1998](#), inhuman and degrading treatment is prohibited. Employers that do not prevent bullying and harassment outside the context of the equality legislation may therefore be in breach of this Act;

- [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) – in terms of Section 8 of this Act every individual has the right to be free from harassment and the person must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another.

Where previously if a victim suffered discrimination on more than one ground (e.g. because of race, gender and age) it is only possible to bring a case under one piece of discrimination legislation, although multiple claims can be brought. Employers are reminded that an Equalities Act is planned for 2010 which may change aspects of this framework and they will need to give this Act due consideration.

### Violence

- The [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) – covers all physical forms of sexual abuse, specifically non-consensual sexual activity;
- [Offences Against the Person Act 1861](#) – covers assault and battery, which are defined respectively as when a person 'intentionally or recklessly causes another to apprehend the immediate infliction of unlawful force' and 'when a person intentionally and recklessly applies unlawful force to another.'

### Sector specific legislation

- [Rail bylaws](#) – made under Section 219 of the Transport Act 2000 and confirmed under Schedule 20 of the Transport Act 2000, for regulating the use and working of, and travel on or by means of, railway assets, the maintenance of order on railway assets and the conduct of all persons while on railway assets – they deal with anti-social behaviour, e.g. assaults (such as shoving);
- Section 547 of the [Education Act 1996](#) (c.56) makes it an offence to cause nuisance or disturbance on school premises with a related power, exercisable by a person authorised by a local education authority, to remove a person committing the offence;
- Clauses 146-148 of the [Criminal Justice & Immigration Act \(2008\)](#) provides powers for a constable or an authorised member of NHS staff to remove a person suspected of causing a nuisance/ disturbance on NHS hospital premises. This enables the NHS to tackle (i.e. without having to wait for the Police) low-level disturbance behaviour (intimidation, swearing, blocking of staff from performing their duties) and help to prevent the escalation of such behaviour to more serious offences such as assault on NHS staff;
- The [Emergency Workers \(Scotland\) Act 2005 \(EWA\)](#) makes it a specific offence to assault, obstruct or hinder someone providing an emergency service - or someone assisting an emergency worker in an emergency situation.

## Annex B

### Existing guidance which may provide useful information

#### General

1. National Occupational Standards on the management of work-related violence – intended to help employers, workers and training organisations manage the risk of violence at work. [www.ento.co.uk/standards/wrv/index.php](http://www.ento.co.uk/standards/wrv/index.php)
2. ACAS has published a leaflet and handbook on bullying and harassment in the workplace which provide advice and guidance on what employers and workers should expect from each other. [www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=794](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=794)
3. Work-related stress – managing the causes of work-related stress may enable employers to tackle harassment and violence through a structured approach. The UK Social Partners published guidance on stress helping workers and employers understand the issue of work-related stress and how to manage it effectively. [www.berr.gov.uk/files/file25664.pdf](http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file25664.pdf)
4. HSE have also similarly produced guidance, which outlines how to understand the causes of stress at work, and to identify and solve problems in your workplace. [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress)
5. Dignity at Work Partnership – encouraging employee representatives and employers to build cultures in which respect for individuals is regarded as an essential part of the conduct of all those who work in the organisation. [www.dignityatwork.org/advice](http://www.dignityatwork.org/advice)
6. Business Link is a government portal that provides free business advice and support services, available online and through local advisors. They have produced guidance which supports business in recognising and dealing with bullying and harassment at work. [www.businesslink.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bullying)
7. Directgov is the website of the UK government for its citizens, providing information and online services for the public all in one place. They have produced a guide which gives advice to those who may be suffering from harassment at work. [www.direct.gov.uk/discrimination](http://www.direct.gov.uk/discrimination)

#### Addressing third party harassment and violence – general

5. Respect Action Plan – Government initiative on anti-social behaviour – focusing on the need for two-way respect, between workers serving the public and the individuals and communities to whom they provide a service. [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/respect-action-plan?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/respect-action-plan?view=Binary)
6. HSE guidance *Violence at work: A guide for employers* which gives practical advice on how to find out if violence to staff is a problem, and how to tackle it. [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf)

#### NHS

7. HSE scoping study for an e-learning tool on work-related violence – a report on the influence of workplace design and on violence training in the NHS. [www.hse.gov.uk/research/hsl\\_pdf/2007/hsl0701.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/hsl_pdf/2007/hsl0701.pdf)
8. NHS Security Management Service (SMS) was established (2003) to form the NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service – to address the high incidence of harassment and violence against staff members. [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/security](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/security)
9. The National Audit Office – *A Safer Place to Work (2003)* – on improving the management of health and safety risks to staff in NHS trusts. [www.nao.org.uk/publications/0203/nhs\\_health\\_and\\_safety.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0203/nhs_health_and_safety.aspx)

#### Education

10. DCSF/Home Office guidance – *School security: Dealing with troublemakers (1997)*. Aimed primarily at schools and police, the guidance provides advice on the general principles of the law, local co-operation and good practice. [www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9232](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9232)
11. HSE – *Violence in the education sector (1997)* – Provides advice to managers and staff in the education service on: identifying potential risk of violence; formulating an action plan and statement of intent; recording incidents; preventive strategies; supporting staff who are victims of violence and the role of the police. [www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/88-2.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/88-2.htm)
12. DCSF guidance – *A legal toolkit for schools: Tackling abuse, threats and violence towards members of the school community (2002)*. [publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DfES-0504-2002.pdf](http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DfES-0504-2002.pdf)

#### Lone workers

13. HSE – Case studies to show how some employers have tackled the problem of violence towards lone workers. [www.hse.gov.uk/violence/loneworkcase.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/loneworkcase.htm)

#### Licensed and retail premises

14. HSE (with HSL, Westminster Council and LACORS (the local authority regulatory body)) – web-based toolkit for use in their sectors to manage the risk of violence to staff. [www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/index.htm)

#### Small businesses

15. HSE – *Work-related violence: Managing the risk in smaller businesses (2002)* – Case studies of how owners and managers of smaller businesses manage the risk of violence, as well as examples of real incidents faced by workers. Available as a priced booklet from HSE books or free online. [www.hse.gov.uk/violence/smallbusiness.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/smallbusiness.htm)

## Annex C

### Current statistics (on violence at work)

There are a range of data sources available on the extent of violence at work and its consequences in UK. These each define violence in a different way, with no source covering the entire range of violent incidents included within HSE's definition of violence as "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work".

The three main sources of data on the UK's working population are reports made to HSE or local authorities under the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), the British Crime Survey (BCS) and HSE's Fit3 (Fit for work, fit for life, fit for tomorrow) employee survey. Other bodies such as the British Retail Consortium and the NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service collect information specific to their sectors, which provides a useful insight into the nature and scale of the problem within some of the most at-risk occupations or industries. These statistics are published on the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk/violence/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/index.htm)

#### RIDDOR

- There were 6404 RIDDOR reported injuries caused by violence at work during the financial year 2006/07. These reports comprise 4 fatal injuries, 932 major injuries and 5468 non-major injuries that resulted in absence from work for at least three days. This compares to 6624 RIDDOR reported injuries caused by violence in 2005/06.
- This corresponds to a total estimated rate of 21.1 per 100,000 workers. The total number of reported incidents of violence in 2006/07 was of a similar order to the previous year. Trends in violence at work are difficult to interpret, with survey estimates tending to fluctuate from year to year. However, recent figures have been fairly stable.

#### Fit3

- The 2006 Fit3 survey asked workers to report whether they had experienced work-related violence in the last three months; the nature of this violence; and what, if anything, they did in terms of reporting the incident(s).
- Estimates from the 2006 Fit3 employee survey suggest that 16% of workers have been subject to abuse or violence in the last three months. For 67% of these victims this happened more than once and 66% of victims knew the person who was abusive or violent towards them.
- Amongst those reporting having suffered abuse or violence, 87% report having been verbally abused while the next most frequent types of abuse or violence were grabbing/pushing and hitting/punching.

#### BCS

- There were an estimated 684,000 incidents of violence at work according to the 2006/07 BCS, comprising 288,000 assaults and 397,000 threats.
- The risk of being a victim of actual or threatened violence at work is low; the 2006/07 BCS indicates that 1.7 % working adults in England and Wales were the victim of one or more violent incidents at work. This is broadly similar to the levels of risk since the 2001/02 BCS. Approximately 355,000 workers had experienced at least one incident of violence at work in the 2006/07 BCS, 40% fewer than the peak of 592,000 workers in 1997.

#### British Retail Consortium

The British Retail Consortium's annual surveys show that the level of violence against retail workers has decreased by 63% compared with the previous year when a 37% increase was recorded. 69% of the violence reported in 2008 was in the form of verbal abuse, with 10% being threats of violence and the remaining 21% actual physical abuse.

#### NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service

The NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service collects statistics on physical assaults to NHS staff and estimates that there were 56,018 assaults on staff in 2007/08.

#### Eurofound

The Eurofound report – *Violence, harassment and discrimination in the workplace (2005)*,<sup>3</sup> found that 9% of the overall workforce in the UK reported having been personally subjected to violence either from fellow workers or from others. And 5% of female workers in the UK reported incidents of sexual harassment, or unwanted sexual attention.

#### The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

BIS, Employment Market Analysis and Research (EMAR) team published in September 2009 the *Fair Treatment at Work Report: findings from the 2008 Survey*.<sup>4</sup>

3 [www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/ewco/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter4.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/ewco/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter4.pdf)

4 <http://www.berr.gov.uk/employment/research-evaluation/errs/index.html> (p76-79 details on harassment in the workplace)

## Further information and help

### TUC (Trades Union Congress)

[www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/rights\\_violence.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/rights_violence.cfm)

### CBI (Confederation of British Industry)

[www.cbi.org.uk](http://www.cbi.org.uk)

### PPE (Partnership of Public Employers)

[www.ppe.org](http://www.ppe.org)

### Local Government Employers

Pay, pensions and employment solutions (including advice on health and safety and employment law) for local government

[www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk)

### EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission)

[www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/)

### ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

ACAS has published a leaflet and handbook on harassment in the workplace which provide advice and guidance on what employers and workers should expect from each other:

[www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=794](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=794).

They have also produced a Code of Practice for Disciplinary and Grievance procedures which provides basic practical guidance to employers, workers and their representatives and sets out principles for handling disciplinary and grievance situations in the workplace:

[www.acas.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1047](http://www.acas.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1047)

### HSE (Health and Safety Executive)

with information, research, case studies and access to the HSE Management Standards.

[www.hse.gov.uk/violence](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence)

### Business Link

Government portal that provides free business advice and support services, available online and through local advisors

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/>

### Direct Gov

Directgov is the website of the UK government for its citizens, providing information and online services for the public all in one place

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/>

### Other

Advice can also be obtained from your trade union, legal adviser, and Citizens Advice Bureaux.



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