

Public sector workers face high levels of violence

Abusive behaviour against public sector staff is rising
2016/2017



Of more than 6,000 incidents reported to the HSE, almost 1,468 were against care assistants and home carers, 731 were against police officers, 627 were against nurses and 467 were against prison officers. Proportionally, staff in the Prison Service the police and the NHS are in most danger (bus and coach drivers are also at risk but are mainly private sector employees)

Care Staff

In local government, social workers, residential care assistants, library staff and day care workers are most likely to have experienced threatening or violent behaviour. Data from 2005 surveys found 3% of respondents reported having been victims of violence requiring medical assistance or first aid, while 14% said they had been physically threatened.

Next year, the health department is paying for 30,000 personal alarms to be issued to frontline staff in trusts. Although that is just a drop in the ocean, given that there are 750,000 frontline workers in the NHS, it is better than nothing.

Around a third of victims of workplace violence or abuse do not report it. While in some cases the individual may feel the incident was too trivial, 14% said they did not believe management would have done anything even if they had reported it.

Dave Prentis, the General secretary of Unison says: "It's disgraceful that violence against nurses, paramedics social workers and other public sector workers is on the increase and we need tough measures to deal with it. No one should have to put up with violence and abuse just for doing their job".

"Clearly it is unacceptable that any public sector worker should face abuse or violence while they are doing their job. It is important that where at all possible, Incidents are prevented rather than relying on action after the event.

"The responsibility lies with both employers and staff to ensure risks are identified, action agreed and importantly taken to ensure that staff can carry out their duties free from fear of abuse".

“ I feel so scared sometimes just doing my job ”



Abuse

More than 1 in 10 of 1000 public sectors interviewed by law firm Slater Gordon said they had been physically assaulted And the majority said it happened at least once.

A further 18 per cent had witnessed a colleague being attacked and almost a quarter had been threatened.