

8 in 10 workers Have Experienced Abuse at Work in Past Year

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A new survey published by the [TUC](#) this week shows 8 in 10 surveyed workers have experienced some form of abuse at work in the last year.

The findings, based on a survey of 5,004 workers, show that in the last 12 months:

- 1 in 5 (19.4%) have experienced physical assault
- 1 in 10 (9.9%) have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence at work
- 8 in 10 (79.1%) have experienced verbal abuse such as shouting, insults or threats at work
- 4 in 10 (44.9%) have experienced threats of physical harm

The report is published as the TUC holds its Violence at Work conference today, established following concerns from unions about violence and abuse against public-facing workers.

More than 8 in 10 (84.1 %) of respondents said their roles are public facing.

The report finds:

- 11.8% work in education
- 38.9% work in transport
- 9.9% work in prisons or secure facilities
- 4.9% work in health and social care
- 14.9% work in central or local government

When asked how regularly they experience violence or abuse at work, more than half of workers (51.4%) said they experience violence or abuse weekly or more, while 17.1% said they experienced violence or abuse on a monthly basis.

When asked who is responsible for the violence and/or abuse workers have experienced:

- 45.9% said customers were the perpetrators
- 36.4% said passengers
- 15.2% said other members of the public
- 10.9% said pupils or students
- 9.2% said colleagues
- 8.5% said managers

When asked about the impact of the most severe incidents they have experienced, 48.7% said they feared for their safety, 13.9% said they experienced physical injury, 8.9% required medical treatment, 26.2% required police involvement, 16.8% had to take time off work, while 32.8% experienced mental trauma.

More than half (51.9%) of those who did not report it said it was because violence is seen as “part of the job”, while 33.7% said they felt it would not be taken seriously.

Health and Safety Executive

The TUC says employers have a legal duty to keep staff safe at work and all employers must assess the health and safety risks in their workplaces.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) can prosecute employers who do not manage the risks of violence.

HSE inspectors play a vital role in keeping workplaces safe.

But the TUC says the HSE has been left “struggling to operate” due to the “devastating” impact of cuts under the Tory government.

The HSE – the country’s main workplace health and safety regulator – has seen its funding cut by more than 50% since 2010.

As a result, inspector numbers, inspections, and employer sanctions are at an all-time low – putting workers at risk.

TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak said: “It doesn’t matter what you do for a living – violence at work is never ‘part of the job’.

“Nobody should go to work fearing for their safety, but that is the reality for thousands of our vital frontline workers.

“The Tories left the HSE in tatters and left the current government cleaning up their mess. But ministers must reinvest in the HSE, so we have more inspectors visiting workplaces and enforcing safety rules.

“My message to anyone worried about their safety and welfare at work is to join a union. We know that unionised workplaces are safer because union reps work with employers to reduce risks. “