

It's **not** part of the job



Violence at work report

Health & Safety Conference
October 2025

**UNISON**
Scotland

Introduction

Our 2025 Violence at Work report, as in previous years, continues to show that violence and aggression at work to be a real and consistent problem in our public services in Scotland. Employers have a legal duty to protect their staff, and UNISON aims to raise awareness and encourage best practice in tackling violence at work in public services. We want to put an end to it being seen as either a routine or normal part of the job. Violence at work is not part of the job!

Our survey cannot of course give a complete picture of the incidents of violence experienced by workers delivering public services in Scotland. Reports from across different sectors can often be less detailed than others and there are many different recording systems in terms of the types and natures of incidents that are recorded used by employers.

We rely heavily on public service organisations providing information in a usable form. This year's survey has seen an increase in employers applying some level of exemption on areas of data or indicating that a charge would be necessary to be paid to obtain parts of information requested. It is, as in previous reports, apparent from this year's responses that public bodies lack a shared understanding of GDPR. Where there are small numbers some organisations do not disclose either the total number of incidents, or breakdown incident type, job role or sex on the grounds that individuals may be identifiable, while other organisations are willing to disclose. The threshold for this also varies widely between different public bodies, although many have very detailed recording systems in terms of the types and nature of incidents.

However, from the information we have been able to obtain through the FOI process, it is clear that violence and aggression continues to affect public service workers daily and is an ongoing and persistent issue.

Methodology

The survey is carried out by means of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request being sent to all Local Authorities and Health Boards in Scotland, as well as to employers in the other public services who are also subject to the FOI legislation. For the 4th year since the extension of FOI legislation to this sector, this years' report includes information received from Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations).

The FOI requests ask for details on the number of "total violent incidents" during the preceding 12-month period from our previous years' UNISON Scotland Violence at Work Report. The exact questions are set out in Appendix 1. For the second year we have included request for a breakdown in details for male/female (sex). And for racial abuse and sexual harassment/violence as distinct categories.

2025 Findings

Headlines:

- The survey registered a total of 75,411 incidents of violence (206 per day) against public service staff in the year to 31 March 2025
- The total number of incidents was 15 % higher than recorded in 2024, with an additional 9,536 incidents reported.
- Just over 6 in 10 of all incidents in our 2025 report (62%) involve violence against local authority staff.
- Health Boards account for almost a quarter of a violent incidents reported (18,579 or 24%)
- Violent incidents against local authority staff rose by 17% (+ 6,943) in this year's report.
- Schools, nurseries, and other education establishments continue to account for the majority of incidents that were reported in FOI data.
- 8 of the 12 groups of public bodies responding to our FOI survey showed an increase in reported incidents from 2024.

Violence is not part of the job

Violence in the workplace is not part of the job and employers have a duty to protect their staff from abuse, threats, and assaults.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), defines violence at work as “any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.” Any definition must include incidents major injury (requiring medical assistance) and minor injury (requiring first aid or no medical aid). But it is equally important to include threats and verbal abuse even if no physical injury occurs. Such abuse can lead to physical violence and will contribute to the levels of stress experienced by staff.

According to the HSE, physical attacks are “obviously dangerous, but serious or persistent verbal abuse or threats can also damage employees’ health through anxiety or stress.” Repeated verbal abuse can also lead to work related ill health, reduced morale, and increased sickness absence. It is also important to remember that work-related violence is not limited to the actual workplace and can take place in the community, to and from work, in isolated areas or even at the home of the worker.

Employers and the Scottish government need to take swift and strong action to ensure that all staff are safe at work. Public bodies must also meet their legal obligations under the Freedom of Information. It is not acceptable to avoid scrutiny by delaying or not responding to requests for information – particularly in areas as important as violence against public service staff.

Employers must:

- Ensure that reporting systems are fit for purpose, consistent and that all staff are report all incidents of violence and aggression they experience in the course of their work.
- Use the reporting systems and the data collated on violence and aggression at work to design and implement strong policies and procedures to protect staff support their health and wellbeing whilst at work and to promote a zero-tolerance approach to violence and aggression in the workplace.
- Ensure that data relating to violence and aggression targeted on protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) is accurately collated in order to ensure that public bodies are meeting their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and take action to protect staff from abuse related to any protected characteristic.

The Scottish Government must:

- Ensure bodies and organisations delivering public services are recording incidents, promoting a zero-tolerance approach, and protecting all staff from violence and aggression at work.

The Information Commissioner should:

- Remind bodies of the legal obligations under FOI legislation.

Public service workers experiencing violence at work should:

- immediately report it to their line manager/record on reporting systems, follow organisational reporting policies and procedures. UNISON advocates for a zero-tolerance approach, encourages reporting to reduce further incidents.

Why it is important to report

- **Early Intervention:** Reporting incidents, even minor ones, helps prevent future escalations.
- **Data Collection:** Reporting helps gather data that demonstrates the scale of the problem and informs strategies to improve safety.
- **Employer Accountability:** Reporting encourages employers to take action, understand their responsibilities, and invest in preventative measures.
- UNISON encourages public service workers to ask their employers to sign up to our Violence at Work Charter, which outlines a commitment to tackling violence at work and encourages employers to implement policies, conduct risk assessments, provide training, and ensure adequate staffing to prevent incidents.

2025 overview

Total number of incidents reported by sector.

	Total number of violent incidents reported 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025	% share of all incidents reported 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025
Local Government	47,249	63%
NHS Territorial Health Boards	18,579	24%
NHS Special Health Boards	2,024	3%
Fire & Rescue	59	0%
Police Scotland	5,776	8%
Scottish Government	11	0%
Scottish Water	10	0%
NDPBs	38	0%
Leisure Trusts	101	0%
HE Universities	38	0%
FE Colleges	64	0%
Housing Associations	1,462	1.5%
TOTAL	75,411	100%

Change in number of violent incidents reported by sector, 2023 - 2025.

	2025	2024	2023	Change 2024-2025
Local Government	47,249	40,306	35,470	+17%
NHS Territorial Health Boards	18,579	16,793	10,984	+11%
NHS Special Health Boards	2,024	1,585	1,340	+27%
Fire & Rescue	59	-	80	
Police Scotland	5,776	5565	5822	+4%
Scottish Government	11	4	-	+175
Scottish Water	10	6	3	+66
NDPBs	38	36	19	+5.5%
Leisure Trusts	101	169	120	- -40
HE Universities	38	43	65	--12
FE Colleges	64	70	54	--9
Housing Associations	1,462	1296	727	+13%
TOTAL	75,411	65,875	54,684	+14%

Reasons for year-on-year change

The total number of violent incidents reported increased by 14 % in 2025 (+ 9,536) compared with our 2024. A rise in the number of incidents recorded by both local authorities (+6,943) and territorial and special health boards (+1,786 & +439) accounts for most of this. As in previous years, the other main reasons relate to either non-responses or discrepancies in year-on-year responses from individual organisations and these are noted in the sections below.

Local authorities

Reported a total of 47,249 incidents of violence and aggression accounting for 63% of all incidents recorded in this year's report. This marking a 17% increase in the figure reported the previous year. As in our 2024 report, several local authorities applied FOI exemptions to parts of the data requested. There was increasing occurrence of FOI exemptions being applied due councils advising to cost thresholds would be breached to provide information.

Breakdown by incident type and by job role

Each year we highlight the problem that there is no consistent classification system in use for recording incidents of violence against staff. Some councils have developed very detailed categories and sub-categories. Others continue to use basic categories of physical violence, verbal abuse, and threats of violence. Our FOI request asks for the total number of violent incidents on staff broken down by job title/ category and incident type. Few councils were able to provide a breakdown by incident type.

Violence towards staff in educational establishments

As in outlined in our previous year's report, in 2025 schools and nurseries together account for almost 80 % of all violent incidents reported by councils in the information provided to us. A majority of violent incidents have been recorded in education for as long as UNISON has conducted its annual violence at work survey and addressing this has been a priority campaign for UNISON over the past year.

In general, most violent incidents in schools and nurseries are experienced by education support staff. Currently it is difficult to establish the exact extent of violence within schools because of issues with the reporting and recording of incidents.

Some of the key issues include:

- **Non-reporting:** UNISON is aware that a substantial number of incidents are not reported by education staff. This is for many reasons, including, a general misunderstanding that violent incidents are 'part of the job', a feeling that it is pointless to make reports as previous reports have been ignored or not satisfactorily addressed, or there is no awareness that violent incidents should be reported or how to report them.
- **Non-recording of reported incidents:** UNISON also believes that there are instances where our members report violent incidents but find their report goes no further than a manager's desk, due to factors such as, management time restraints, a local dismissal of the event or a lack of clear understanding of the procedure for reporting upwards. Non-recording may, potentially, also reflect managers' concerns about a high record of reported incidents at their premises/establishment.
- **"Invisibility" of recording categories:** councils do not always categorise reported incidents in a way that allows violent incidents in educational establishments to be identified. In this year's survey many councils were unable to provide a breakdown of recorded incidents by department/service, or by job role. The resultant 'lumping together' of reported incidents makes the true extent of violence in schools unclear.

	Total 2025	Total 2024
Aberdeen City Council	1337	947
Aberdeenshire Council	2095	1067
Angus Council	2056	471
Argyll and Bute Council	137	109
City of Edinburgh Council	4981	3767
Clackmannanshire Council	1086	668
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	399	380
Dumfries and Galloway	1814	1610
Dundee City Council	225	96
East Ayrshire Council	1,483	1685
East Dunbartonshire Council	521	584
East Lothian Council	-	952
East Renfrewshire Council	819	1078
Falkirk Council	1363	1441
Fife Council	5552	7202
Glasgow City Council	7707	7144
Highland Council	63	39
Inverclyde Council	427	404
Midlothian Council	1286	5<
Moray Council	-	24
North Ayrshire Council	1671	1229
North Lanarkshire Council	2607	1644
Orkney Islands Council	*	43
Perth And Kinross Council	1303	10
Renfrewshire Council	1550	1112
Scottish Borders Council	931	985
Shetland Islands Council	1227	1106
South Ayrshire Council	137	827
South Lanarkshire Council	943	1883
Stirling Council	995	954
West Dunbartonshire Council	402	845
West Lothian Council	2132	2124
Total	47,249	40,306

Key * Exemption applied

Not in receipt of response – reminder/review/resend submitted.

NHS Territorial Health Boards

Health Boards reported a total of 18,579 incidents of violence and aggression for the 12-month period. Incidents included a wide range of violence and aggression, including verbal abuse, objects being thrown, verbal abuse both in person and online.

Worryingly an elevated level of physical aggression and assaults were also reported. Violent assaults against NHS staff are rising with staff experiencing physical violence & aggression from patients, relatives or public.

As in previous years it has been difficult to gauge the true level of violence and aggression as many NHS Boards figures are reported with a breakdown where incidents involving between 1-5 staff and reported as <5, with an exemption under GDPR being applied. For the purpose of this report where figures were provided in this manner within FOI responses, this was counted as one incident.

	Total 2025	Total 2024
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	1379	1184
NHS Borders	725	528
NHS Dumfries and Galloway	187	209
NHS Fife	1321	1536
NHS Forth Valley	1460	1600
NHS Grampian	888	2314
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	7188	4884
NHS Highland	1028	1603
NHS Lanarkshire	968	980
NHS Lothian	1773	1608
NHS Orkney	63	41
NHS Shetland	-	17
NHS Tayside	1535	105
NHS Western Isles	64	184
TOTAL	18,579	16793

Key * Exemption Applied

Not in receipt of response – reminder/review/resend submitted.

NHS Special Health Boards

NHS Special Health Boards reported a total of 2204 incidents of violence and aggression on staff in the 12-month period, a 27% rise in the figure reported in 2024's data. This is largely accounted for by a marked increase in incidents reported in The State Hospital. Again, with where the values of statistics provided fell below 5 but are greater than 0, these statistics are represented were by '<5' for many boards. For the purpose of this report, we have counted these figures as one incident as exact figures could not be provided.

The Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) outlined there were 367 reported violent incidents on Scottish Ambulance staff.

SAS advised that: "The information is not gathered in a way to allow us to break it down by job title/ category sex etc, it is for this reason we have applied section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act 2002 as information not held. It should be considered that ALL staff within the Scottish Ambulance Service have the capability to report violent incidents experienced while working and these figures reflect all incidents reported. Of the 367 incidents, 201 of these incidents are where staff experienced physical assault – 9 of which were Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). There were 166 incidents reported of verbal assault, none of these were RIDDOR."

	Total 2025	Total 2024
NHS Education for Scotland	0	0
NHS Public Health Scotland	*	0
Golden Jubilee	32	27
NHS 24	295	278
Scottish Ambulance Service	367	333
State Hospital	1507	947
NHS National Services	3	-
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	0	0
TOTAL	2204	1585

Key * Exemption Applied

Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Of the total incidents reported by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, 56 involved firefighters and 3 involved support staff.

All incidents involving support staff were of a verbal nature. Of the total incidents involving fire-fighters, 71% involved physical violence.

Fire and Rescue	Total 2025	Total 2024
	59	

Police Scotland

Of the total incidents 5,609 involved officers; 156 police staff and 11 special constables. 51 incidents were reported under RIDDOR requirements.

Police Scotland	Total 2025	Total 2024
	5776	5565

Scottish government

11 formally reported incidents relating to violence and aggression, involving 12 staff. None have involved physical attacks, racial abuse or sexual harassment / violence. There were no RIDDOR reportable incidents involving violence and aggression during the period outlined in FOI request.

Scottish Government	Total 2025	Total 2024
	11	4

Scottish Water

Of the 10 incidents reported, 3 involved verbal abuse and/or threatening behaviour; 2 incidents involved physical abuse (though not RIDDOR reportable), and 1 incident involved verbal abuse and physical assault.

Scottish Water	Total 2025	Total 2024
	10	6

Universities

Several Scottish Universities applied FOI exemptions to data provided for the purpose of this year's report, it is therefore difficult to gauge an accurate picture of the true level. Incidents reported were primarily involving verbal aggression and abuse and affected both lecturing and support staff, where a breakdown was provided in FOI response.

University	2025	2024
Aberdeen	0	*
Abertay	0	0
Dundee	-	0
Napier	<5	*
Edinburgh	24	11
Glasgow Caledonian	2	0
Glasgow School of Art	<5	0
Glasgow	3	16
Herriot Watt	*	*
Queen Margaret	0	0
Robert Gordon	0	0
Royal Conservatoire	0	0
St Andrews	7	8
Stirling	0	0
Strathclyde	0	7
UHI	-	0
West of Scotland	-	0
SRUC	0	1
Total	38	43

Key * Exemption Applied

Not in receipt of response – reminder/review/resend submitted.

<5 These statistics are counted as 1 incident – actual figures were subject to exemption due to the small numbers involved further detail cannot be provided as disclosure of the information may lead to the indirect identification of individuals.

Further education

Scottish Colleges reported varying incidents of verbal aggression and abuse impacting both lecturing and support staff. A number applied FOI exemptions to data provided or we did not receive a response to our FOI request.

	Total 2025	Total 2024
Ayrshire College	4	5
Borders College	0	4
City of Glasgow College	10	2
Dumfries & Galloway College	-	-
Dundee & Angus College	8	4
Edinburgh College	<5	2
Fife College	6	3
Fort Valley College	-	7
Glasgow Clyde College	8	10
Glasgow Kelvin College	10	13
Inverness College UHI	<10	0
Lewis Castle College UHI	-	-
Moray College UHI	8	5
Newbattle Abbey College	0	1
New College Lanarkshire	5	8
<u>North East Scotland</u>	0	0
Orkney College UHI	-	-
Perth College UHI	0	0
Sabhal Mor Ostaig UHI	0	-
Shetland College UHI	0	-
South Lanarkshire	0	0
West College	1	1
UHI North, West & Hebrides	2	4
West Lothian College	0	1
TOTAL	64	70

NDPBs

Non departmental Public Bodies reported an increasing number of incidents of verbal abuse, physically threatening behaviour, threatening online messages. The Scottish Children's Reporters Association reported 2 incidents of physical abuse on staff.

NDPB	2025	2024
Highlands & Islands Enterprise	0	0
Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority	8	10
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	3	1
Scottish Enterprise	1	-
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency	9	9
Scottish Qualifications Authority	0	0
Scottish Social Services Council	1	2
Skills Development Scotland	7	6
Care Inspectorate	7	9
SIC	2	1
TOTAL	38	36

Leisure trusts

Leisure trusts in Scotland reported ongoing levels of verbal aggression and abuse from members of the public, impacting a varying range of staff. Several trusts advised in their responses that the “the job title / category/sex of worker involved in the incidents” were not recorded.

	2025	2024
Highland Life	5	11
South Lanarkshire	25	10
Perth & Kinross (Live Active)	11	10
East Dunbartonshire	6	9
Angus	13	19
Scottish Borders (Live Borders)	2	0
East Renfrewshire	-	11
Dundee	10	13
East Ayrshire	24	15
Argyll & Bute	3	-
Glasgow Life	2	71
TOTAL	101	169

Key

Not in receipt of response – reminder/review/resend submitted.

Housing associations

This report marks the 4th year that includes responses from housing associations. There are approximately 150 registered housing associations and housing co-operatives (also known as Registered Social Landlords or RSLs) in Scotland. They manage housing for over 1.2 million people living in social housing across the country. Some of these are managed by a housing group, the largest of these being the Wheatley Group. Where this is the case, a response has been submitted on behalf of all the organisations within the group. It should also be noted that some housing associations have care homes within their group and data for these can also be reported in group figures.

Violence at work in the community and housing association sectors, is a fundamental problem. It is consistently raised by UNISON members as one of their greatest concerns at work.

FOI responses show that staff continue to experience experienced incidents of violence or aggression at work. Incidents include staff being threatened, punched, pushed, and kicked while conducting their jobs. It is also clear that “lower level “verbal abuse is worryingly seen by some staff as a routine part of their working lives – with a number of responses outlining that some incidents are not recorded.

Verbal abuse continued to be the most common type of incident recorded, which included threatening language or behaviour. Responses outlined staff being subject to aggression, shouting and foul language both in person or online or on the phone.

Staff being subject to violent incidents work in a wide range of job roles including housing officers, support workers, and customer service advisers, these roles being cited frequently in responses.

Recording practices of incidents do appear to remain inconsistent across the sector. But in a positive development, this year saw an increase in the number of Housing Associations who responded to our FOI requests. Some housing associations responding to the FOI survey for the first time, which is responsible in some part for the marked increase alongside a significant increase in incidents reported from the Wheatly Group.

Housing Associations reported incidents of violence against staff including verbal, physical and threatening behaviour. A total of 1462 incidents were reported against housing association staff for our 2025 report. This is an increase of 13 % (+166) compared with 2024, where a total of 1296 incidents were reported. Of the 76 Housing Associations responding to our FOI survey 46 (60%) reported that incidents of violence and aggression had taken place.

	2024	2025
Abertay HA	7	5
<u>Abronnhill</u> HA		0
Albyn Housing	9	9
Angus HA	1	0
Ardglen		0
Ark HA		0
Argyle Community Housing Association		0
Ayrshire Housing	4	6
<u>Bield</u> Housing and Care	8	17
Blackwood Group		20
<u>Blairtummock</u> HA	2	3
Blue Triangle		211
<u>Cadder</u> Housing Association	6	3
<u>Castletoun</u> Housing Association		1
Castlehill Housing Association		2
Caledonian Housing Association	16	8
Calvay HA	-	1
Cairn	9	9
Clydebank HA	-	1
Clyde Valley Housing Association	1	1
<u>Craigdale</u> HA		0
<u>Dunbritton</u> Housing Association		0
Drumchapel Housing Co-op	-	0
<u>Easthall</u> Park HA	-	3
Eildon Housing	-	6
<u>Elderpark</u> Housing	1	11
<u>Ferguslie</u> Park Housing Association		3
Fife Housing Group	11	26
Forth Housing Association	2	1
Fyne Homes		0
<u>Garedeen</u> HA	-	0
Glasgow West HA		

Housing associations continued

	2024	2025
Glen Oaks Housing Association	13	3
Govanhill HA	-	35
Hebridean HA	-	0
Hillcrest Homes	117	179 (141 incidents)
Horizon Housing Association (Part of Link Group)		0
Key HA		0
Kingdom	33	26
<u>Knowes HA</u>	-	*Data not collected in required format – organisation operate “no lone register” – listing tenants who have been aggressive to staff and contractors”
Lanarkshire HA	-	4
<u>Langstone Housing Association</u>	12	22
Larkfield Housing Association (Part of Link Group)		1
Link Housing Association	5	6 (3 incidents)
Lochaber HA	-	0
Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association	1	1
<u>Lochfield Park HA</u>	-	0
<u>Loreburn HA</u>	33	40
<u>Linthouse Housing Association</u>		0
Mannor Estates Housing	2	0
Melville Housing Association	-	5
NG Homes	11	18
North View Housing Association		0
Oak Tree Housing		8
<u>Ochilview Housing</u>	20	9
Paragon HA	2	0
<u>Provanhall HA</u>	3	1
<u>Queenscross HA</u>	35	33
River Clyde Homes	8	16

	2024	2025
Riverside Housing		8
Rosehill Housing	-	2
Rural Stirling Housing Association	-	0
Rutherglen & Cambuslang HA	0	0
Scottish Border Housing Association	83	65
Scottish Veterans	10	4
Shettleston	7	10
Trafalgar HA	-	0
Trust HA	59	188
Viewpoint	1	3
Wellhouse Housing Association	4	0
West Highland Housing Association (Part of Link Group)	-	0
West Granton Housing Cop-op		0
Wheatley Group (FOI response provided to include all subsidiaries and operational departments)	257	469
Yoker HA	-	0
Yorkhill HA	2	0
TOTAL	1296	1462

Conclusion

Our 2025 report highlights that violence at work continues to be a very real and ongoing problem for public service workers in Scotland, with our public services seeing a rate of 206 violent incidents every day over the time period we surveyed.

But what our survey cannot show is the exact and true level of violence and aggression experienced by staff, with the level of the problem likely to be even more serious than what our report outlines. Moreover, our report also cannot show the very real and devastating personal impact that incidents of violence and aggression can have on workers mental and physical wellbeing.

The major variance and lack of consistency in reporting systems and gathering of data on incidents of violence and aggression on staff across public services, is a sign that employers and government need to do much more to tackle this issue. As has been outlined in previous reports we have conducted, there is a clear and pressing need for accurate and reliable systems for reporting violence and aggression against public service workers.

We need action by employers and stronger regulation and oversight by government, to make violence against staff a priority issue. Over the last few years public services workers continue to deal with ever increasing workloads, declining wages, and cuts in staffing. Within recent months there has been an increasing focus on looking at “reform” in public services by the Scottish Government. We would suggest that the issue of year on year increasing levels of violence and aggression against public service workers, is an area very much due for “reform” and one that the Scottish government and employers should focus attention on.

For some years now, it has been recognised that violence towards people working in public services is a significant problem and it is getting worse. UNISON evidence gathering consistently finds prominent levels of staff experiencing incidents of violence or aggression at work. Appalling incidents include staff being punched, kicked, pushed, and spat on. Staff have been threatened with weapons. In addition, staff continue to experience high levels of verbal abuse both in person or over the phone/ or online. Our own UNISON reps tell us they are seeing more examples of violence against staff who are simply trying to do their jobs.

It is time for real and effective action to tackle this significant issue impacting thousands of public service workers every year. Violence is not, and should never be seen as, part of the job.

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**END
VIOLENCE
AT WORK**

UNISON's Violence at Work Charter

**Campaigning for an end to violence
at work in public services**



Background to the Violence at Work Charter

For some years now, it has been recognised that violence towards people working in public services, is a significant problem and it's getting worse.

UNISON evidence gathering consistently finds high levels of members experiencing incidents of violence or aggression at work. Data gathered by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has also shown that violence and verbal abuse of workers is an acute problem. UNISON believes violence must not be seen as "part of the job".

Appalling incidents include staff being punched, pushed and kicked. Staff have also been threatened with weapons and held against their will. UNISON Reps tell us they are seeing more and more examples of violence against members who are simply doing their jobs.

UNISON wants to work with employers to put in place a basic level of monitoring, support, safeguards and training. These are measures that every employer should be able to deliver. We are asking only that employers take their duty of care to staff seriously.

UNISON defines violence at work as "Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work."

Meeting these standards will show the workforce and the employers' stakeholders that organisations are serious about protecting their staff.

Additionally, meeting the standards shows the organisation is prepared to put in place measures that prevent people they are responsible for from being assaulted as they carry out their work.

The Violence at Work Charter standards

To qualify for the UNISON Violence At Work Charter mark, employers must meet the following standards:

1. The employer has a written violence and aggression at work policy, which is available to all staff. The policy should also cover lone working.
2. Responsibility for implementing these policies lies with a senior manager.
3. Measures are taken to reduce staff working in isolated buildings, offices or other work areas to a minimum.
4. Staff are encouraged to report all violent incidents and they are told how to do this.
5. The employer collects and monitors data on violent incidents on a regular and ongoing basis.
6. Where they are in place, union safety reps are able to access this data and are consulted on solutions to issues relating to violence in the workplace.
7. Thorough risk assessments are conducted for staff placed in vulnerable situations.
8. The employer has support pathways in place for staff who are victims of violence at work, so that they know where to turn for advice and support.
9. Training to ensure staff are aware of the appropriate way to deal with threatening situations.
10. Where appropriate, independent counselling services are available to staff who are the victims of violence at work.



Implementation of the Violence at Work Charter

UNISON will approach all major employers in public services and ask them to sign up to the charter.

All employers seeking to sign up will be asked for evidence of their compliance with the 10 points prior to signing.

Organisations which need to make changes to their practices will be given one year to make those changes and state, at the time of signing, what their plan is to deliver on all 10 points.

To find out more about UNISON's Violence at Work Charter, contact UNISON's Health and Safety national officer:

Joe Donnelly at healthandsafety@unison.co.uk

UNISON's Violence at Work Charter

Campaigning for an end to violence at work in Public Services