

STAY SAFE AT WORK

8 NOVEMBER 2018
NATIONAL PERSONAL SAFETY DAY



PERSONAL SAFETY & THE RETAIL SECTOR

A guide to the risks and a charter for improving personal safety for employers and employees

**LIVE
LIFE
SAFE**
suzy lamplugh
trust

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

Suzy Lamplugh Trust was founded by Diana and Paul Lamplugh following the disappearance of their daughter Suzy, a young estate agent, in 1986. Since then, the Trust has pioneered personal safety as a life skill and a public policy priority.

Our vision is a society in which people are safer – and feel safer – from violence and aggression; we want people to be able to live life to the full. Our mission is to reduce the risk of violence and aggression through campaigning, education and support.

Each year, Suzy Lamplugh Trust trains over 4,000 people across the UK from a wide range of sectors including housing, councils and government, education and the voluntary sector. Trainees regularly highlight a number of personal safety concerns in the workplace, including:

- a lack of reporting of personal safety incidents, either because reporting structures aren't in place or because workers don't report incidents for reasons such as not receiving feedback afterwards from employers when they did report
- a lack of understanding about the purpose of and need for training
- risk management being deprioritised by employers
- unclear or inaccessible personal safety policies
- a lack of face-to-face time with managers

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) 2017, between April 2016 and April 2017, 24% of all violent incidents took place on work premises. The Health and Safety Executive states that in 2016/17 this equated to an estimated 1.3% of working adults being the victims of one or more violent incidents at work. In total, in 2016/17, **326,000 adults in employment** experienced work-related violence, including threats and physical assault. There were estimated to have been **642,000 incidents of violence at work**, according to the 2016/17 CSEW, including 269,000 assaults (the remainder being threats).¹

24%

OF ALL VIOLENT
INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE
ON WORK PREMISES

326,000

ADULTS IN EMPLOYMENT
EXPERIENCED WORK-
RELATED VIOLENCE



“After 12 years of security work... I have been pushed, grabbed, elbowed, punched, dragged across a car park by a car, threatened with a knife, followed home on one occasion, sworn at, spat at and had death threats in person and via phone calls to my personal mobile phone when the person somehow got hold of my number.”

VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION IN THE RETAIL SECTOR

Those working in the retail sector face a number of specific personal safety risks including verbal and physical abuse and threats from customers. Shop workers report coming under particular threat when asking for ID before selling age-restricted products such as tobacco and alcohol, as well as dangerous items such as knives and some household chemicals.

A survey carried out by The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW)² in 2017 shows that asking for proof of age is a flashpoint for violence and abuse from customers, with more than three-quarters of respondents having experienced problems. One in ten of those surveyed experienced problems on a daily basis.

SUZY LAMPLUGH TRUST'S PERSONAL SAFETY RETAIL SURVEY

In September 2018, Suzy Lamplugh Trust carried out a survey of over 1,000 employees and employers in the retail sector to learn more about their personal safety risks and how employers are successfully mitigating them. Full survey results are included in this link³ and key themes are outlined below. The results highlight a clear need for employers to do more to help their staff feel and be safer, such as implementing the steps set out in Suzy's Charter for Workplace Safety below.

Respondents

The majority of respondents (88%) identified themselves as employees rather than managers (8.7%) or employers (1.4%) and covered a wide geographical range within the UK: Scotland 14%, Northern Ireland 0.5%, and Wales 8%. Within England, the greatest number of respondents were from the West Midlands (5.6%), Greater Manchester (4.4%), Tyne and Wear (4%) and South and West Yorkshire (7.1%). Interestingly only 2.7% were from Greater London.

More than 60% were aged over 45, while 67% of respondents identified themselves as female.

Respondents largely represented supermarket workers (73%), with the majority on the shop floor or having face-to-face contact with customers (90%).

"I receive some aggressive behaviour and swearing from some customers from time to time when I ask them for ID for an age-restricted item. Unfortunately I feel no measure in my workplace will change this. It is what it is."

Types of personal safety incidents

Concerningly, **66% of respondents⁴ stated that they had experienced violence or aggression in the workplace.** Of those who gave details about violence and aggression experienced, 83% reported experiencing verbal abuse, but there was also a concerning high incidence of other types of violence and aggression (see table below):

66%
**HAD EXPERIENCED
VIOLENCE OR
AGGRESSION IN
THE WORKPLACE**

Type of behaviour	Respondents ⁵ who gave details about the kind of behaviour they had experienced
Verbal abuse	83%
Verbal harassment (persistent)	39%
Verbal threat (expressing a specific intent to harm)	37%
Bullying	29%
Physical Violence	16%
Emotional abuse	16%
Sexual harassment/ unwanted attention	14%
Stalking	5.9%
Online abuse	1.9%
Sexual violence	0.5%
Other (including having items thrown at them and intimidating behaviour such as customers coughing into their face)	3.7%



The prevalence of violence and aggression in the workplace identified in our survey highlights the ongoing risks to personal safety that retail workers face and the need for employers to have comprehensive measures in place to assess and mitigate such risks.

Motivation for incidents

Respondents highlighted what they perceived the motivation of the incident of violence or aggression to be. In some cases, respondents said they had been targeted because of their personal characteristics, while others said that they believed that an incident had occurred for reasons relating solely to the perpetrator.

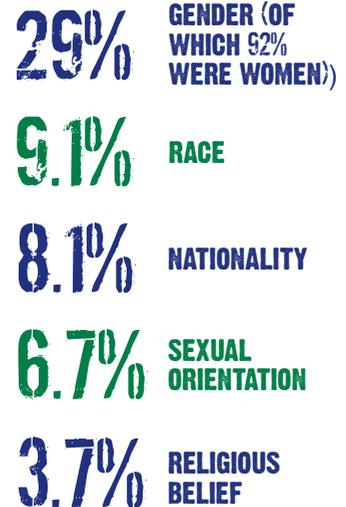
Personal characteristics

The most prevalent perceived motivating factor for incidents of violence or aggression relating to respondents' personal characteristics was gender, with 29% of respondents⁶ stating this was a cause. Of those, 92% were women. Other factors stated included race (9.1%), nationality (8.1%), sexual orientation (6.7%) and religious belief (3.7%).

Issues relating to the person initiating the incident

A greater number of respondents (515) perceived the incidents of violence or aggression to be driven primarily by issues being experienced by the aggressor him/herself rather than being motivated by the personal characteristics of their victim. The most prevalent underlying factors cited were drug or alcohol misuse (53%) and objections to enforcement of age-restriction on the retail of certain products such as video games, dangerous chemicals, alcohol and tobacco (51%). Respondents also mentioned incidents of violence or aggression resulting from customers having mental health issues, being refused refunds, complaining about slow customer service, and being confronted about stolen goods.

THE MOST PREVALENT PERCEIVED MOTIVATING FACTOR FOR INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE OR AGGRESSION RELATED TO RESPONDENTS' PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:



Other factors

Respondents also reported other factors contributing to violent or aggressive behaviour, including grievances against the company rather than against a specific member of staff. For example, there not being a particular item in stock, and anger or aggressive behaviour in general (i.e. not targeted at one individual worker).

"I have been verbally abused a number of times on the shop floor usually because we don't have certain products in stock or don't sell them. I've been called stupid, an idiot, a bitch, a bastard and a cow. One customer was jabbing me in the arm because we'd stopped selling the eggs he liked until I pushed him away. I've been pushed out of the way and rammed with trolleys instead of someone saying, 'Excuse me please.' Someone came behind me and slammed his hands down on my shoulders so hard he bruised me."

Measures to mitigate risks to workplace safety

What's currently in place to make workers safer

Suzy Lamplugh Trust was keen to establish in the survey the kinds of measures currently in place across the retail sector to protect the personal safety of workers and how effective workers believe them to be. Suzy Lamplugh Trust advocates a number of personal safety measures including those set out in Suzy's Charter for Workplace Safety below, to reduce the risk of violence and aggression.

Of 564 respondents who answered the question asking what measures were currently in place in their workplace to improve their personal safety, a worrying 14% did not know of any measures, while only 9.4% felt they would only receive any kind of post-incident support were an issue to arise.

While 53% had security staff on site, only 34% knew of a written personal safety policy and fewer still 21% knew of clear reporting procedures for personal safety incidents. Less than 18% had received personal safety training in person or online and 10 respondents stated there were no measures in place at all where they worked.





Effectiveness of measures

Respondents were asked to indicate, from the following list of safety measures, which they considered to be the most effective in their workplace.

- Security staff on site
- A written personal safety policy
- Panic button to call for security support e.g. in a shop environment
- Clear reporting procedures for personal safety incidents
- Personal safety training online
- Don't know
- Security passes for restricted work areas
- Personal safety training in person
- Body-worn cameras
- Post-incident support
- CCTV linked to an alarm receiving centre
- Personal alarms – for distracting an aggressor in the event of a violent or aggressive incident
- Other (please specify)
- An established procedure that enables staff working alone to alert colleagues in the office if they feel unsafe or in need of assistance (e.g. a code word to use on the phone to covertly raise the alarm)
- Lone worker devices – personal safety devices or smartphone apps etc. which are given to employees and alert the emergency services if workers are in danger when working alone
- A buddy/tracing system – ensures that someone always knows where you are and how to contact you to ensure you are safe

Of those that responded, 27% said that having security staff on site was the single most effective personal safety measure, followed by panic buttons (cited by 8.4% as the most effective measure); personal safety training delivered in person (4.1%), having a written personal safety policy (3.9%) and body-worn cameras (3.3%). A few respondents stated that none of the measures in place in their workplace were effective. Only one person stated that post-incident support was effective.

27%
SAID THAT
SECURITY
STAFF ON SITE
WAS THE MOST
EFFECTIVE
PERSONAL
SAFETY MEASURE



ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Overall, our survey illustrates that despite some measures being in place in some workplaces to reduce the risk of violence and aggression to workers, many workers do not believe that these are sufficient to mitigate the risks they face. In some cases, staff are not aware of any measures being in place. This indicates an urgent need for employers to embed personal safety into workplace culture and to take steps outlined in Suzy's Charter for Workplace Safety to ensure that risks are sufficiently assessed and mitigated.

PERSONAL SAFETY SUCCESS STORIES

We asked respondents to tell us about any examples where personal safety measures in their workplace have worked well. Several mentioned headsets and radios as working well to let one another know if there are any risks to be dealt with on the shop floor, as well as panic buttons, lone worker devices, code words to covertly request support in the event of an incident and CCTV. Others cited good management and a safety policy that prioritises staff welfare above all else.

"I challenged a shoplifter in the store car park and he pulled a knife on me and held it to my throat. I was the security colleague on duty and I wasn't issued with a radio or a personal attack alarm. I now suffer from PTSD anxiety and depression."

We know from our consultancy work that workers greatly appreciate being consulted by employers about the risks they face in order to ensure risk assessments adequately reflect the reality of the work they are doing. This is the first step in Suzy's Charter for Workplace Safety which builds on the feedback we have received over many years from employers and employees about their experiences of personal safety.

EFFECTIVE PERSONAL SAFETY MEASURES



SECURITY STAFF

PANIC BUTTONS



PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING DELIVERED IN PERSON



WRITTEN POLICY



BODY WORN CAMERAS



CASE STUDIES: PERSONAL SAFETY MEASURES THAT WORK

“Security in many stores now have access to body-worn CCTV. I found this very helpful as shoplifters were more likely to give stock back, and it reduced violent incidences.”

“Following a session at the Charity Retail Association conference run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust, I worked with my team to talk them through what to do if they feel threatened (included dynamic risk assessment, exit strategy, expectations) and this helped shop teams to feel more confident dealing with matters. I plan now to make it into formal training as part of new staff inductions and training.”

INCIDENTS RELATING TO OTHER PEOPLE

A worrying 70% of respondents⁷ stated that they know someone else who has experienced violence and aggression in the workplace apart from themselves. These behaviours include:

- stalking
- verbal abuse
- intimidation
- physical threats
- violence e.g. being hit in the face, bitten or threatened with a knife or needle
- racist abuse
- sexual assault
- in one case, murder
- bullying
- harassment

70%

**KNOW
SOMEONE
WHO HAS
EXPERIENCED
VIOLENCE
AND
AGGRESSION
IN THE
WORKPLACE
APART FROM
THEMSELVES**





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WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO TO IMPROVE PERSONAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE?

Suzy Lamplugh Trust has developed Suzy's Charter for Workplace Safety as a guide to improving personal safety. Suzy's Charter for Workplace Safety builds on

the feedback we have received over many years from employers and employees about their experiences of personal safety.

Suzy Lamplugh Trust delivers training and consultancy on how employers can successfully embed personal safety firmly into workplace culture; for more information on this and the Charter, please contact training@suzylamplugh.org

SUZY'S CHARTER FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY

1. Embed a workplace personal safety culture

- Employers should embed a culture of personal safety in their workplaces by ensuring regular consultation and dialogue with staff about the risks they face and the steps they would like to see implemented. This should counter any perceptions or acceptance by employees of violence and aggression being 'part of the job'.

2. Implement adequate risk assessments

- Employers should prioritise risk assessment and mitigation for all employees and adhere to legislation and guidance setting out obligations for protecting the personal safety of staff.
- Risk assessments should include specific consideration of lone workers as well as risks related to all specific environments that different staff work in, such as clients/patients homes and remote locations etc. Employers should follow HSE guidance on risk assessments.⁸
- Risk assessments should include consideration of all forms of violence, aggression and harassment, both online and offline.

This should include stalking as well as any violence or harassment motivated by prejudice on the basis of a worker's personal characteristics or perceived personal characteristics.

- Risk assessments should include the impact of stress and mental health implications of violence and aggression at work.

3. Provide adequate reporting procedures

- Employers should provide access to reporting tools for all staff, including remote workers, to enable immediate and reactive reporting of all work-related personal safety incidents.

4. Provide personal safety training

- Employers should train all employees in preparing for and responding to personal safety risks.

5. Implement a tracing system

- Designated colleagues should always know each other's whereabouts and contact details while they are working alone or on the front line. This should include checking in and out when arriving at and leaving an appointment or meeting, including out of normal

office hours.

6. Have a system in place for colleagues to covertly raise the alarm

- Enable colleagues to alert the office in case of an emergency while working alone.
 - Where possible have discreet lone worker devices available.
- ## 7. Have a clear procedure to follow if a colleague does not return or check in when expected
- ## 8. Ensure colleagues share contact details of the person they are meeting
- This should include the exact location and time.
- ## 9. Offer all staff a personal safety alarm
- ## 10. Regularly consult on, update, inform staff and provide access to all personal safety measures available



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Sources:

- ¹ www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/violence/work-related-violence-report-2018.pdf
- ² www.usdaw.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=a6949e1a-3a16-4da2-96b3-3a0a9accf87b
- ³ www.suzylamplugh.org/national-personal-safety-day-2018-stay-safe-at-work
- ⁴ 982 people responded to the question 'Have you experienced violence or aggression in the workplace'
- ⁵ 648 people responded to the questions asking 'Can you tell us which category below the incident/s fall under?'
- ⁶ 431 people responded to the question asking, 'Do you believe that any of the incidents were motivated by the following factors relating to you?'
- ⁷ 834 respondents to this question
- ⁸ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/>

Survey questions distributed by Usdaw (Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers), National Business Crime Centre, NFRN (Federation of Independent Retailers) and the Charity Retail Association among others.

For full survey results, please see:

www.suzylamplugh.org/national-personal-safety-day-2018-stay-safe-at-work

NATIONAL
STALKING
HELPLINE

0808 802 0300

The National Stalking Helpline is run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Calls to the helpline are confidential and free from most telephone networks. Twitter: @TalkingStalking www.facebook.com/stalkinghelpline
Around 5.6% of individuals who contact the National Stalking Helpline state they are being stalked by a colleague. For further information see: <https://tinyurl.com/ya3abpr5>

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