

Violence at Work

Violence at work statistics from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey & RIDDOR.

Contents

Summary	2
Number of incidents of violence at work for adults of working age in employment 1991 – 2010/11	2
Definitions	3
Overall scale	3
Risk of violence at work for adults of working age in employment, 1991 to 2010/11	4
Demographics and trends	4
Age and Gender	4
Occupation and Industry	4
Offender Characteristics	5
Links and references	5

Summary

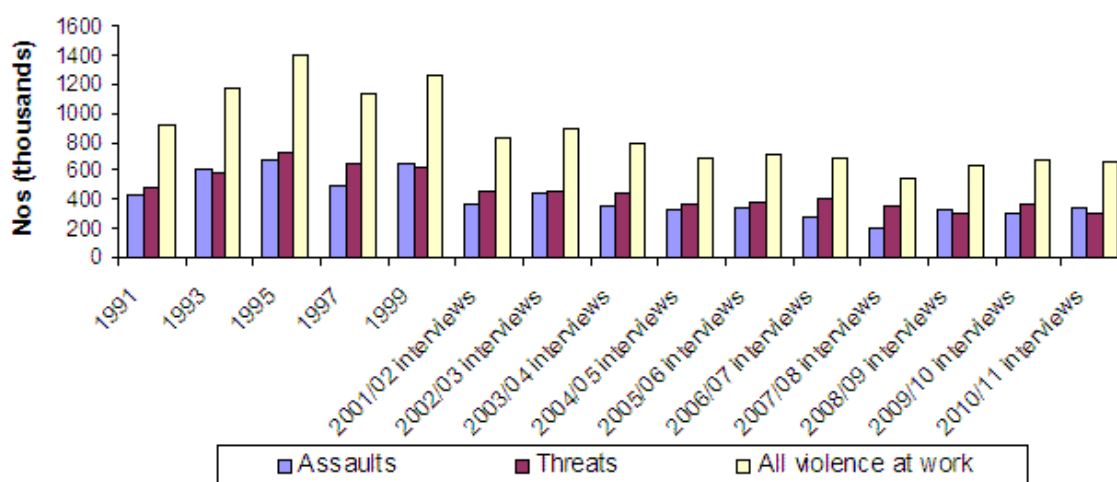
The number of violent incidents at work shows a downward trend over the last decade, with incidents remaining fairly constant over the last five years.

Findings from the British Crime Survey (BCS) and RIDDOR data show that in 2010/11:

- There were an estimated 313 000 threats of violence to British workers during the 12 months prior to the interviews, down 15% from the previous year (BCS).
- There were an estimated 341 000 physical assaults to British workers during the 12 months prior to the interviews, up 10% from the previous year (BCS).
- An estimated 43% of all people assaulted or threatened at work were repeat victims (BCS).
- According to BCS data, the highest risk age group for work related violence for men was 25-34, whereas for women it was 55-59 (BCS).
- There were 6 078 reportable injuries to employees caused by violence at work, down 0.4% from the previous year (RIDDOR).

It should be noted that the changes quoted above are not statistically significant, when compared with the previous year.

Number of incidents of violence at work for adults of working age in employment 1991 – 2010/11



Source: British Crime Survey

Definitions

HSE defines work related violence as "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work".

Our preferred source for estimating the scale of work related violence in the Great Britain working population is the British Crime Survey (BCS), currently run by the Home Office. Statistics from this source are also supported by information taken from RIDDOR.

The BCS allows for the calculation of the number of threats of violence and physical assaults to workers in the 12 months prior to their interview. It also examines some of the victim demographics, evidence of repeat victimisation and patterns of the offender-victim relationship.

Violence to employees can cause pain, distress and even disability or death. Physical attacks are an obvious danger. However, serious or persistent verbal abuse can be a significant problem too, as it can cause damage to employees' health through anxiety and stress. More information is available at HSE's pages on work-related stress (www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm).

Overall scale

Data on the estimated number of assaults and threats from the BCS in 2010/11 can be found in the full report (www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/violence/british-crime-survey2010-11.pdf) produced jointly by HSE and the Home Office.

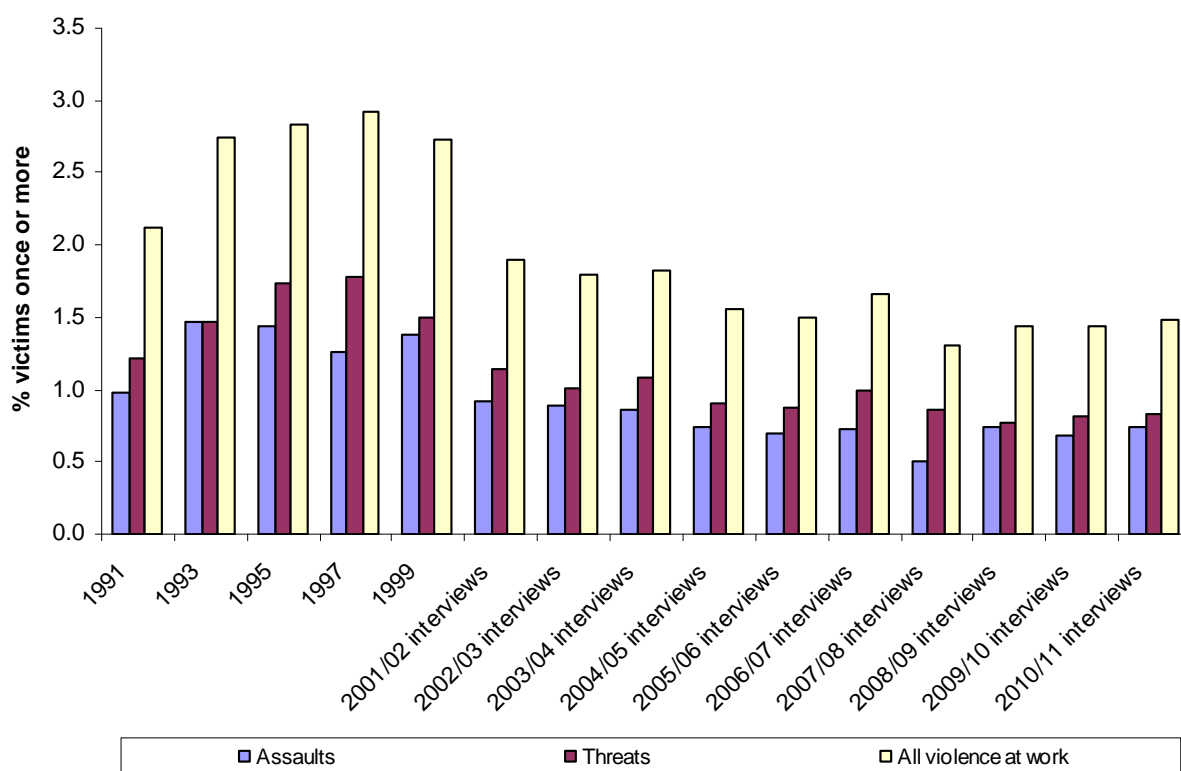
It was estimated from the 2010/11 BCS that there were 313 000 threats of violence to British workers during the 12 months prior to the interviews, and 341 000 physical assaults. The risk of experiencing at least one violent incident (threat or assault) was estimated at 1 500 per 100 000 workers for the year.

The 2010/11 BCS estimated that 43% of all people assaulted or threatened at work were repeat victims, with 24% experiencing three or more incidents of workplace violence during the year, while a further 19% experienced two incidents during the year.

The number and estimated rate per 100 000 employees of fatal, major and over 3 day injuries reported through RIDDOR are shown in Table RVIOL01 (www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/rviol01.xls). In total, there were 6 078 RIDDOR reported injuries to employees caused by violence at work during the financial year 2010/11. This corresponds to a total estimated rate of 24.3 per 100 000 employees. These reports comprise 955 major injuries and 5 123 non-major injuries that resulted in absence from work for at least three days. The total number of reported incidents of violence in 2010/11 was slightly lower than the previous year, as shown in the table.

Rates from the BCS are higher than those for RIDDOR for a number of reasons: partly because BCS incidents may on average be less serious than RIDDOR reports and to a lesser extent because there is known to be under-reporting by employers to RIDDOR. Only physical injuries resulting from acts of violence suffered by people at work are included as reportable under RIDDOR. Therefore cases where a worker suffered shock from witnessing an act of threatening behaviour would not need to be reported.

Risk of violence at work for adults of working age in employment, 1991 to 2010/11



Source: British Crime Survey

Demographics and trends

Full details of demographics and trends in violence at work can be found in the BCS 2010/11 report (www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/violence/british-crime-survey2010-11.pdf). Below is a summary glance at some of the main demographic breakdowns available in the report and through RIDDOR.

Age and Gender

Age and gender distributions of RIDDOR reportable violent incidents find that for men, the age group with the highest rate is that of ages 25-34. For women, the age group with the highest rate is that of 35-44 and 45-54. This is reflected to a certain extent in the findings from the BCS – here, the age group for men with the highest rate was also found to be 25-34. However, for women the age group with the highest risk was 55-59.

■ Table RVIOL02: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/rviol02.xls

Occupation and Industry

Occupation and industry findings from both RIDDOR and the BCS indicate that the occupations most at risk of violence at work are those in the protective services (e.g. police officers), and those working as health, and associate health professionals. Alongside data from the BCS full report, RIDDOR contains a number of tables relating to job role:

■ Table RVIOL03 – occupation: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/rviol03.xls

■ Table RVIOL04 – top level industry: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/rviol04.xls

■ Table RVIOL05 – some industry sub-groups: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/rviol05.xls

Offender Characteristics

Details on offender characteristics are not available through RIDDOR. In 2010/11, the BCS estimates that in 35% of assaults at work, the offender was under the influence of alcohol in the opinion of the victim, while an estimated 30% of threats at work were made by someone under the influence of alcohol. In 25% of cases of assault at work, the victim believed the offender was under the influence of drugs. For threats, this figure is estimated as 19%.

The relationship between offender and victim is also investigated in the BCS. In 2010/11, an estimated 66% of assaults on workers were perpetrated by a stranger, with the next highest grouping being clients or members of the public known through work (21%). 59% of threats were made by strangers, with 22% by clients or members of the public known through work.

Links and references

- RIDDOR Regulations 1995: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/sources.htm#riddor
- Fit3 worker survey 2006: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/publications/fit3.htm
- British Crime Survey (Home Office): <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/research-statistics/crime/crime-statistics/british-crime-survey/>
- Retail Crime Survey (British Retail Consortium):
www.brc.org.uk/brc_policy_content.asp?iCat=48&iSubCat=646&spolicy=Retail+Crime&sSubPolicy=BRC+Retail+Crime+Survey
- British Medical Association Report on violence against doctors:
www.bma.org.uk/employmentandcontracts/morale_motivation/violence08.jsp
- NHS Counter Fraud & Security Management Service: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/security
- Call Centre Association: www.cca.org.uk/
- Teacher Support Network: www.teachersupport.info/

© *Crown copyright* If you wish to reuse this information visit www.hse.gov.uk/copyright.htm for details.
First published 01/12.