Violence at work 2013/14

Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales

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Summary

The number and incidence rate of violent incidents at work has declined over the last decade.

Findings from the 2013/14 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) show that:

- The risk of being a victim of actual or threatened violence at work is similar to the last five years with an estimated 1.1% of working adults the victims of one or more violent incidents at work (CSEW).

- In 2013/14, the survey estimated 257 000 adults of working age in employment experienced work related violence including threats and physical assault.

- There were an estimated 583 000 incidents of violence at work according to the 2013/14 CSEW, comprising 269 000 assaults and 314 000 threats. This was lower than the estimated 656 000 incidents in the 2012/13 survey but this change is not statistically significant.

- The 2013/14 CSEW estimated that 1.0% of women and 1.2% of men were victims of violence at work once or more during the year prior to their interview.

- It is estimated that 56% of victims reported one incident of work related violence whilst 17% experienced two incidents of work related violence and 27% experienced three or more incidents.

- Strangers were the offenders in 56% of the reported incidents of workplace violence. Among the 44% of incidents where the offender was known, the offenders were most likely to be clients or a member of the public known through work.

- The survey found 72% per cent of violence at work resulted in no physical injury. Of the remaining 28% of cases, minor bruising or a black eye accounted for the majority of the injuries recorded.

- In 2013/14 there were 4 936 RIDDOR reports of injuries to employees involving acts of violence in Great Britain (one fatality, 866 major or specified injuries, and 4 069 over-7-day injuries). For more information on over 7-day injuries please see (www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/over7-day-adjust.htm)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is publishing this annual statistical report as part of its responsibility for developing and implementing policy on reduction of work-related violence. HSE has published a wide range of guidance on the prevention and management of work-related violence, and works in partnership with others (including the Home Office, other government departments, employers, trades unions and local authorities), to raise awareness of the issue and share good practice.

Employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place specific requirements on employers to assess the risks to their employees, and to take appropriate measures to prevent or reduce the risks. These legal duties include protecting employees from exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence at work - both physical attacks and verbal abuse.

In order to develop strategies to reduce the risk of violence at work, the extent and nature of such violence needs greater understanding. This report updates previous data published in Budd (1999), Budd (2001), Upson (2004), Webster et al. (2008), Buckley et al. (2010), Packham (2011), Buckley and Cookson (2011) and Buckley (2013). This report is based on findings from the 2013/14 CSEW which interviewed 34 000 adults selected at random from households in England and Wales.
1. Definition of violence at work

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) measures respondents' experiences of crime-related incidents and classifies these into offence types (including physical assaults and threats), and also collects detailed information about the nature of the victimisation. The CSEW defines violence at work on the basis of type of offence (assaults or threats); what the victim was doing at the time of the incident (at work or working); and the relationship between victim and offender (domestic violence is excluded).

Physical assaults include assault with minor injury, assault without injury and wounding; threats include verbal threats made to or against the respondent. The term violence is used in this report to refer to both assaults and threats. However, threats are not usually included in other CSEW measures of violence.

Respondents were asked what they were doing at the time the incident happened – included here are those incidents where the respondent said they were at work or working, including working at home.

Excluded are incidents in which there was a domestic relationship between the offender and victim (current or former partners, relatives or household members) as these cases are likely to be very different in nature from other experiences of violence at work.

Where stated, analysis is based on respondents of working age in employment. From 2010/11 onwards this includes men and women aged 16-64 and prior to 2010/11 this includes women aged 16-59 years and men aged 16-64 years who said they were in paid work in the last seven days at the time of interview (either as an employee or self-employed).

The CSEW is a large, nationally representative, household survey that has been carried out since 1982. The main purpose of the survey is to measure the extent and nature of criminal victimisation against adults, aged 16 or over, living in private households in England and Wales. Respondents are also asked about their attitudes towards different crime-related issues.

The CSEW has run continuously since 2001/02 with each annual dataset reporting on interviews conducted throughout the year, covering incidents experienced by respondents in the 12 months prior to their interview. On behalf of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), TNS-BMRB carries out the fieldwork for the CSEW, which in 2013/14 had a sample of around 34,000 respondents.


2. The extent of violence at work

In order to aid the development of policies to reduce violence at work it is necessary to assess how frequently incidents occur and the risk of victimisation. Two main measures of the extent of violence at work are presented – the number of victims and the number of incidents.

The number of incidents of work related violence in 2013/14 was estimated at 583,000 with assaults accounting for 269,000 of these and 314,000 threats to victims.

Figure 1. Number of incidents of violence at work for adults of working age in employment 2004/05 to 2013/14 (CSEW)
The 2013/14 CSEW estimated that 1.1% of working adults were the victim of one or more violent incidents at work in the year before their interview; 0.5% had been physically assaulted while they were working and 0.6% had suffered threats. This represents an estimated 257 000 workers who had experienced at least one incident of violence at work; 125 000 had been assaulted while they were working and 152 000 had suffered threats.

Note that the overall victimisation risk does not equal the sum of the risks of assaults and threats as some victims will have experienced both assaults and threats within the previous year.

Figure 2. Number of Victims of violence at work for adults of working age in employment 2004/05 to 2013/14 (CSEW)

3. Risk of Violence

The risk of violence at work remains low for people of working age in employment with an overall incidence of assault and threat at 1.1% (0.5% and 0.6% respectively in 2013/14. The incidence has declined significantly over the last ten years from 1.5% (0.7% and 0.9% respectively) in 2004/05.

Figure 3.Incidence rate of violence at work for adults of working age in employment 2004/05 to 2013/14 (CSEW)
4. Occupation

The occupational data presented here is data produced for 2012/13 and 2013/14 of the Crime Survey for England and Wales. Due to the detailed nature of the occupational codes, it is necessary to use two years data to achieve sufficient sample sizes for meaningful analysis. Occupational findings are therefore only updated every two years.

National level estimates of violence at work mask variation in risk among workers with different occupational characteristics. Previous research has shown that not all workers share the same risk of violence at work (Mayhew et al., 1989, Jones et al., 1997, Budd, 1999 and 2001, Upson 2004, Webster et al., 2008, Buckley et al., 2010, Packham, 2011, Buckley 2013).

The CSEW assigns a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code to the current occupation of all respondents, or if they were not in work in the week prior to the interview, their last main job (ONS, 2010). The individual SOC codes can be grouped into categories to allow analysis of occupational differences in risk. Data in this section is organised using SOC 2010 occupation codes.


Only respondents who were working in the week prior to their interview are included in the analyses presented in this chapter. Respondents may not have been in employment for the entire 12 months of which the risks are measured; however, the CSEW does not ask respondents how long they had been in the current job. The inclusion of people who had not worked throughout the year may lead to an underestimation of the level of risk. Furthermore, some respondents may have changed jobs during the year; the violent incident may have occurred in a previous occupation, details of which are not collected. It is not possible to identify these cases.

The CSEW shows that there is large variation in the risks at work across occupational groups.

Table 1. lists the occupational groups most at risk of assaults or threats at work. Overall, respondents in protective service occupations (such as police officers) faced by far the highest risk of assaults and threats while working at 9.6% – 8 times the average risk of 1.2%. Additionally, health care professionals and health and social care specialists had higher than average risk at 3.1% and 3.4% respectively. These professions have consistently had the higher than average risk rates over the last number of years. Other professions with higher risk include transport and mobile machine drivers at 3.0%. Examples of workers least at risk include workers in elementary trades, agriculture plant and storage-related occupations, science and technology professionals and associate professionals and workers in administrative occupations.
Table 1. Risk of violence at work for adults of working age in employment, by occupational category, 2012/13 and 2013/14 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Adults of working age in employment</th>
<th>Assaults</th>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>All violence at work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% victims once or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers, Directors and Senior Officials</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate managers and directors</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other managers and proprietors</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science, research, engineering and technology professionals</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health professionals</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and educational professionals</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business, media and public service professionals</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professionals and Technical Occupations</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science, engineering and technology associate professionals</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health and social care associate professionals</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protective service occupations</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture, media and sports occupations</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business and public service associate professionals</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Secretarial Occupations</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative occupations</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretarial and related occupations</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Trades Occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skilled agriculture and related trades</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skilled metal and electrical and electronic trades</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skilled construction and building trades</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Textiles, printing and other skilled trades</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring personal service occupations</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Customer Service Occupations</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales occupations</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service occupations</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process, Plant and Machine Operatives</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process, plant and machine operatives</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary trades, plant and related occupations</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary administration and service occupations</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source, Crime Survey for England and Wales, ONS
5. Repeat Victimisation

Figure 4. Repeat Victimisation at work for adults of working age in employment 2013/14 (CSEW)

In 2013/14, of those respondents who were the subject of assault or threat in the workplace, 56% were assaulted or threatened once whilst a further 17% reported being threatened or assaulted twice and a further 27% reported being assaulted or threatened three or more times.

6. Offender- Victim Relationship

The 2013/14 CSEW asserts that in all work related violence the offender was unknown to the victim in 56% of incidents, whilst in 44% of incidents the offender was known to the victim. In cases where the offender was known, they were most likely to be either a client, customer or work colleague.

Figure 5. Offender – Victim relationship for adults of working age in employment 2013/14 (CSEW)
7. The consequences of violence at work

Experiencing violence at work can have both physical and emotional consequences for victims and worry about workplace violence may impact upon people’s health (Chappell and Di Martino (2006)). This paragraph examines the physical injuries caused during incidents of workplace violence.

Figure 6. Percentage of violence at work incidents by injury type 2013/14 (CSEW)

For incidents of assault in the workplace, 72% resulted in no physical injury whilst 28% resulted in a physical injury. Of these physical injuries, minor bruising or a black eye was the most common injury. Severe bruising from heavier trauma was suggested in 5% of physical assaults in the workplace. Cuts and scratches were estimated at 4% and 7% respectively with other injuries at 2%, which includes broken bones, broken nose, broken, lost or chipped teeth, concussion or loss of consciousness, facial or head injuries or other injuries.

8. Influence of drugs and alcohol

In the 2013/14 CSEW respondents suggested that in the incidents in which they experienced a threat or physical assault that they considered the offender to be under the influence of alcohol in 35% of instances and drugs in 19% of incidents.

Figure 7. Offender under the influence of alcohol for adults of working age in employment 2013/2014 (CSEW)
9. Conclusions

The risk of work related violence in the workplaces of England and Wales in 2013/14 was 1.1%.

The Protective service occupations is the occupation group with the highest risk by far of experiencing workplace violence with occupations in health and health and social also having a higher than average risk.

Just under half of individuals are subject to multiple incidents of violence at work, which may pertain to the nature of the job situation or an endemic problem within a particular area of work. In many cases individuals are likely to know the offender.

Whilst the majority of injuries sustained in a violent incident are classified as minor injuries a proportion are of a more serious nature which may cause longer term physical and psychological harm to the individuals involved.

10. Acknowledgements

Crime Survey for England and Wales data for this report was collected and supplied to the Health and Safety Executive and the Office for National Statistics. We would like to give particular thanks to Joe Traynor and Laura Downham for conducting the data analysis.
11. References

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