



**VIOLENCE AT WORK:  
NEW FINDINGS FROM THE 2000  
BRITISH CRIME SURVEY**

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**JULY 2001**



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# 1 Introduction

The report *Violence at Work: Findings from the British Crime Survey* provides the most comprehensive and reliable findings to date on the extent and nature of violence at work in England and Wales (Budd, 1999).

The report, jointly published by the Home Office and Health and Safety Executive, examined the results from the 1992, 1994, 1996 and 1998 sweeps of the British Crime Survey in relation to violence at work. It examined the number of incidents of violence at work between 1991 and 1997. It also looked at how risks of victimisation vary for different occupational groups and the nature of violence at work. The main findings from the report are summarised in Appendix B.

This report provides new findings from the 2000 British Crime Survey.

- ❖ Chapter 2 reports on the extent of violence at work in England and Wales in 1999 and examines how the level of violence at work has changed over the 1990s. Two main measures of violence at work are considered: the total number of *incidents* and the total number of *victims*.
- ❖ Chapter 3 looks at the results from new questions included in the 2000 BCS to assess how concerned workers are about being a victim of violence at work.

## The British Crime Survey (BCS)

The British Crime Survey is a large nationally representative household survey. The primary 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. It has been conducted eight times to date. Each sweep measures experiences of crime in the preceding year.

The 2000 BCS has a nationally representative sample of 19,411 respondents. The response rate was 74%. The National Centre for Social Research and the Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics conducted the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) interviews between January and July 2000.

## Definition of violence at work

The British Crime Survey measures both physical assaults and threats. It defines violence at work as:

**All assaults or threats which occurred while the victim was working and were perpetrated by members of the public.**

Appendix C provides further information about the methodology of the British Crime Survey and how it measures violence at work.



## 2 The extent of the problem

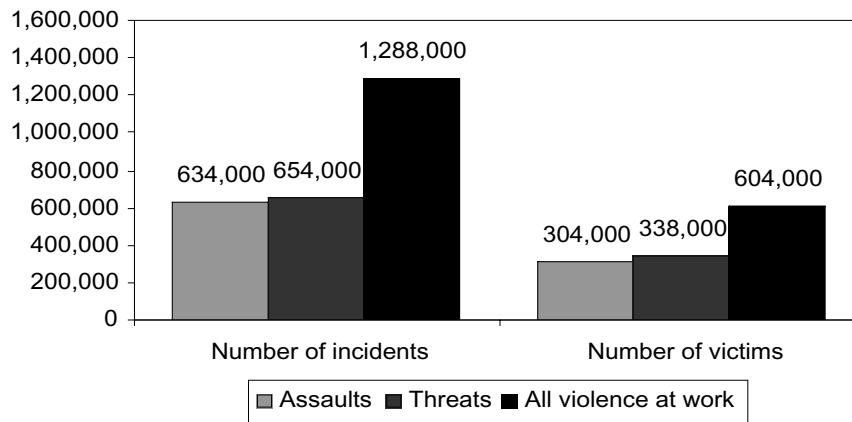
This chapter looks at the extent of violence at work in England and Wales in 1999 and examines how this has changed during the 1990s. Two main measures of the extent of violence at work are presented - the number of *incidents* and the number of *victims*. The chapter updates the estimates presented in *Violence at Work: Findings from the British Crime Survey*, which looked at the level of violence at work in the period 1991 to 1997 (Budd, 1999).

The Health and Safety Commission launched a three-year programme in June 2000 aimed at reducing the number of incidents of work-related violence by 10%. The BCS will be used to monitor whether this target is being met, with the 2000 survey being used as the baseline measure.

### The level of violence at work in 1999

The 2000 BCS estimates that there were almost 1.3 million incidents of violence at work in England and Wales in 1999, comprising 634,000 physical assaults and 654,000 threats. In total, 604,000 workers had experienced at least one incident in 1999, 304,000 workers had been assaulted on at least one occasion and 338,000 had been threatened (Figure 2.1).<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 2.1** Number of incidents/victims of violence at work in 1999



These estimates are subject to sampling error, and may differ to the true number of incidents/victims in England and Wales in 1999. Table A2.1 in Appendix A gives the range of estimates in which there is 90% and 95% chance the true number of incidents lie.

<sup>1</sup> The number of victims is lower than the number of incidents because a victim can experience more than one incident in the year.

## Trend in violence at work

Between 1997 and 1999 the total number of incidents of violence at work is estimated to have increased by 5%. Although this increase is not significant it does suggest that the decrease between 1995 and 1997, when there was a 19% fall, may have been partly reversed.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2.2 shows separately the estimated number of assaults and threats at work during the 1990s (see also Table A2.2). For both assaults and threats the number of incidents increased significantly between 1991 and 1995 (assaults by 61% and threats by 57%). Between 1995 and 1997 there were signs that the number of incidents had fallen (assaults fell by 28% and threats by 10%, though neither fall was statistically significant<sup>3</sup>). The downward trend continued for threats between 1997 and 1999 (a fall of 7%), but there was an increase in the number of assaults (up by 21%) (again neither was statistically significant).

**Figure 2.2 Trend in physical assaults and threats at work, 1991 to 1999 (based on working adults of working age)**



Table 2.1 shows the trend in the number of victims of violence at work during the 1990s. Between 1997 and 1999 the estimated number of workers who had been a victim of violence at work fell by 7%, from 649,000 to 604,000 victims. The pattern differed for assaults and threats, with the number of assault victims increasing by 10%, while the number of workers threatened fell by 14%.

The fall in the overall number of victims of violence at work between 1997 and 1999 contrasts with the small increase in the number of incidents. This is a result of an increase in repeat victimisation (i.e., where a victim experiences multiple incidents during the year). In 1997, 21% of victims said they had experienced three or more incidents during the year. In 1999, 26% of victims had done so.

<sup>2</sup> Tests of significance are based on incident rates, that is the number of incidents per 10,000 workers of working age. Table A2.3 gives the details.

<sup>3</sup> The falls were not significant at the 10% level.

**Table 2.1 Number of victims of violence at work in England and Wales, 1991 to 1999 (based on workers of working age)**

<i>Number of victims in thousands</i>	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	% change 1991 to 1999	% change 1995 to 1999	% change 1997 to 1999
All violence at work	472	530	570	649	604	28	6	-7
Assaults	227	287	290	275	304	34	5	10
Threats	264	286	352	395	338	28	-4	-14

Notes:

1. Source: 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 BCS. Weighted data. Estimates based on working age adults in work.
2. The number of victims is derived by multiplying the prevalence rates by the number of working adults in the population.

### **Risks of violence at work**

Although the estimated total number of incidents and victims seems high, the estimated risk of a worker being victimised in a given year is relatively low. The BCS estimates that 2.5% of working adults had been the victim of at least one violent incident at work in 1999; 1.2% had been physically assaulted by a member of the public while they were working, and 1.4% had been threatened.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 2.3 shows the trend in the prevalence risk since 1991 (i.e., the percentage of workers who are victimised once or more each year). The risk of being a victim of assault at work has remained relatively stable throughout the 1990s, while the risk of being threatened on at least one occasion gradually increased between 1991 and 1997, but has since fallen somewhat.

<sup>4</sup> The prevalence risk for violence at work does not equal the addition of the risks of assaults and threats as some victims will have experienced both assaults and threats in a year.



**Figure 2.3 Risks of violence at work, 1991 to 1997 (based on working adults of working age)**



The report *Violence at Work: Findings from the British Crime Survey* examined the risks of violence at work for different occupational groups. The results show that risks vary considerably, ranging from 0.1% among finance professionals to 11.4% among those in security and protective services. Appendix B details the broad occupational groups identified as being at particularly high risk. More detailed occupational analysis is given in Budd, 1999.

## Summary

The Health and Safety Commission is committed to reducing the incidence of violence at work. The results from the 2000 BCS indicate that the number of incidents of violence at work increased by 5% between 1997 and 1999. The pattern for threats and assaults differs. The number of assaults increased by 21%, while the number of threats fell by 7%. However, neither change was statistically significant.

It is difficult to detect statistically significant changes year-on-year because of the relative rarity of incidents of violence at work. However, the BCS from 2001 is moving to an enlarged continuous survey with 40,000 respondents being interviewed each year. This will improve the chances of detecting significant changes over time.

### 3 Concern about violence at work

The 2000 British Crime Survey included some new questions on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive to examine:

- ❖ how concerned workers are about violence in the workplace
- ❖ the provision of training to workers to enable them to avoid or defuse violent situations.

The questions are given in Appendix D. All of the results presented in this chapter are estimates based on those in work prior to the week of interview<sup>1</sup> who were of working age.<sup>2</sup>

#### Worry about violence at work

The BCS asked those in work how worried they were about (a) being threatened, whether by telephone, in writing or in person and (b) being physically attacked by a member of the public while they were at work.

Among all those in work, only 3% said they were very worried about being threatened by a member of the public while at work. A further 12% said they were fairly worried. The figures were similar for physical assaults at work, with 2% saying they were very worried and 10% fairly worried. Table 3.1 gives the full results.

**Table 3.1 Worry about violence at work among workers (2000 BCS)**

<i>Percentages</i>	Threatened at work	Assaulted at work
Very worried	3	2
Fairly worried	12	10
Not very worried	29	27
Not at all worried	43	45
Never have contact with members of the public	13	16
<i>Unweighted N</i>	10,154	10,156

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Estimates based on all those in work (employed, self-employed, on government training scheme or doing unpaid work in own/relative's business) of working age in the week prior to interview.

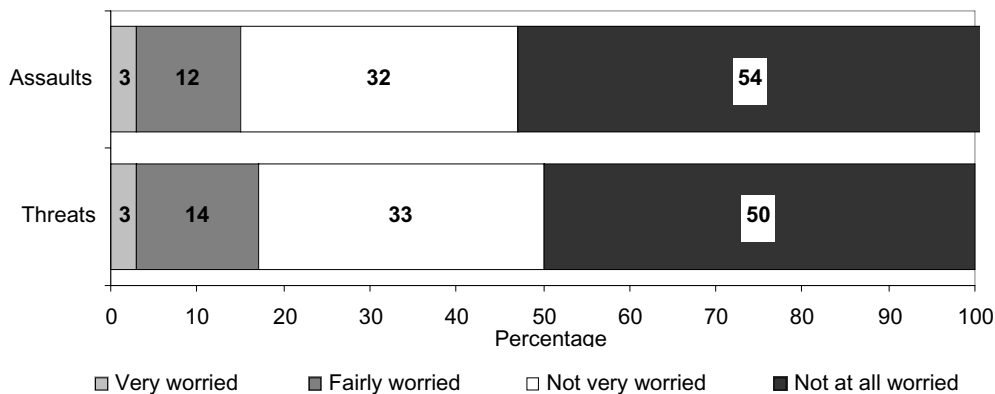
The figures in Table 3.1 are based on all those in work, including those who did not have contact with members of the public in their occupation.<sup>3</sup> An alternative way to look at the figures is to restrict the analysis to workers who had contact with members of the public and were therefore potentially at risk. Restricting the analysis in this way has very little impact on the results; 17% of workers who had some form of contact with members of the public were very or fairly worried about being threatened and 14% of those who had personal contact were worried about being assaulted (Figure 3.1).

<sup>1</sup> Includes those who were in paid work, either as an employee or self-employed, on a government scheme for employment training or doing unpaid work in their own or a relative's business (unless otherwise stated).

<sup>2</sup> Aged 16 to 59 for women and 16 to 64 for men.

<sup>3</sup> 13% of workers did not have any form of contact with members of the public. 2% only had indirect contact (i.e., no face to face contact).

**Figure 3.1 Worry about violence at work among workers at potential risk (2000 BCS)**



### Who worries?

The remainder of this section looks at whether levels of concern about violence at work vary by type of occupation and the characteristics of the worker. The figures given below are based only on those workers who were potentially at risk of violence at work. The results were very similar when based on all workers. Tables A3.1 to A3.3 in Appendix A present the figures on both bases.

#### ❖ *Occupational group*

Levels of concern about violence at work vary considerably across occupations. Box 3.1 below lists occupational groups with particularly high levels of worry. Table A3.1 in Appendix A gives the figures for all occupations considered. Not surprisingly, levels of concern tend to be higher for those occupations where the actual risk of victimisation is high (see Appendix B for risk estimates). The exception to this is the relatively high levels of concern among those in the secretarial group despite apparent low risk levels. This may be because women, who disproportionately fall into the secretarial group, are generally more concerned about violence at work than men (see below).

### Box 3.1 Occupations with high levels of worry about violence at work (2000 BCS)

#### High worry occupations (*percent very or fairly worried*)

- ❖ Public transport workers (*47% worried about threats; 46% about assaults*)
- ❖ Nurses (*46%; 42%*)
- ❖ Retail sales (*29%; 24%*)
- ❖ Other health professionals (*29%; 19%*)
- ❖ Cashiers/bank managers/money lenders (*24%; 17%*)
- ❖ Security and protective services (*23%; 27%*)
- ❖ Catering/hotels/restaurants (*22%; 20%*)
- ❖ Care workers (*21%; 20%*)
- ❖ Teachers (*20%; 13%*)
- ❖ Other education and welfare (*19%; 16%*)
- ❖ Secretarial (*21%; 15%*)

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey. Weighted data.
2. Results based on workers at potential risk.

❖ **Other occupational factors**

Other occupational factors were also associated with levels of concern.<sup>4</sup> Employees were slightly more concerned than those who were self-employed. Those working in small organisations were most worried (20% being very or fairly worried about threats and 17% about assaults). Part-time workers were more likely to be worried than those working full-time; 21% of part-time workers said they were worried about threats; 18% were worried about assaults. The respective figures for full-time workers were 16% and 13%. This finding is somewhat surprising given that full-time workers are at greater risk (Budd, 1999). However, it may be that part-time workers are at greater risk once time at work is accounted for. Also women, who are more likely to work part-time than men, tend to be more concerned about violence at work.

❖ **Age and sex**

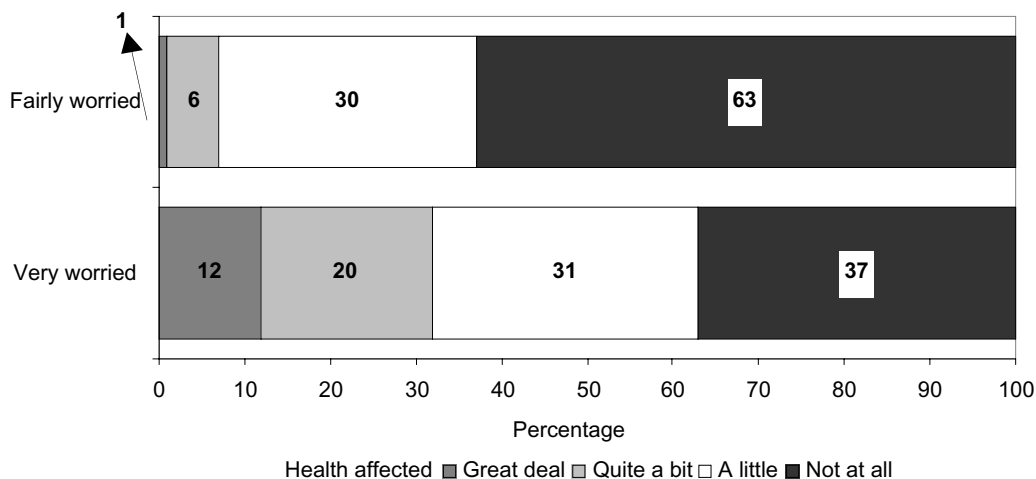
Overall, women were more concerned about violence at work than men. Around a fifth of women were very or fairly worried about being assaulted at work, compared to about a tenth of men. Women under the age of 45 were most concerned. The results were similar when considering threats at work.

**Impact of worry on health**

Workers who were very or fairly worried about being either threatened or assaulted at work by a member of the public were asked if worrying about this had a detrimental impact on their health. Among those who were worried, 4% said that this had affected their health a great deal and 9% quite a bit. Those who were very worried about physical assaults or threats were more likely to report that this impacted on their health than those who were only fairly worried (Figure 3.2).

Overall then, 2% of all workers said that worry about violence at work affected their health a great deal or quite a lot.

**Figure 3.2 Impact of worry about violence at work on health (2000 BCS)**

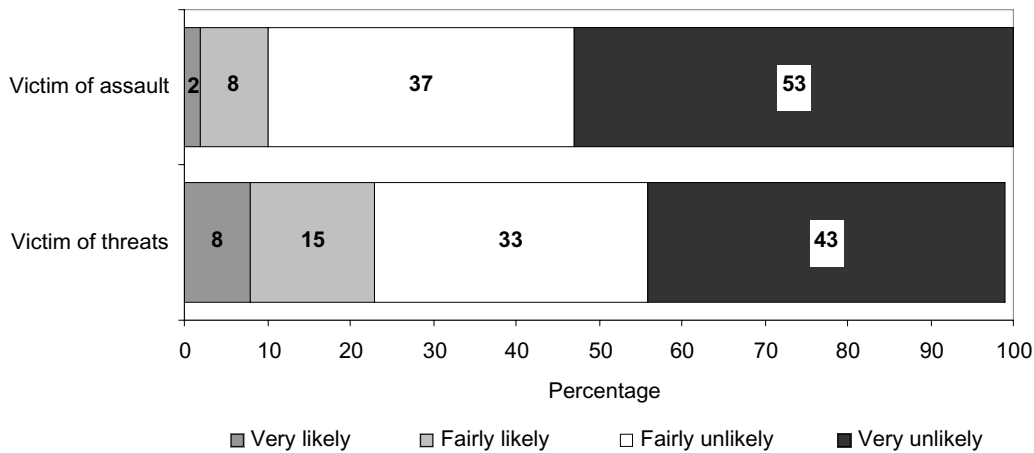


<sup>4</sup> Analysis only based on those in employment or self-employed.

## Perceptions of risk

The 2000 BCS asked workers who had contact with members of the public to assess the likelihood that they would be threatened or assaulted while they were at work during the following year. Figure 3.3 shows that 23% of workers who had contact with the public said they were very or fairly likely to be threatened in the next year, while 10% of those with face-to-face contact said it was likely they would be assaulted.

**Figure 3.3 Perceptions of risk (2000 BCS)**



Note: Based on workers at potential risk.

Tables A3.4 to A3.6 in Appendix A show how perceptions of risk vary by occupational characteristics, age and sex. The main findings are:

### ❖ **Occupational group**

Perceptions of risk vary considerably across occupations and are to some degree linked to actual levels of risk. For example, around a half of those in security or protective services, nursing or public transport said it was very or fairly likely that they would be threatened at work in the following year (between three and four in ten said that it was likely they would be assaulted).

### ❖ **Other occupational factors**

Other occupational characteristics are not strongly associated with perceptions of risk, though employees are more concerned than the self-employed, with those in supervisory roles being most likely to consider themselves at risk.

### ❖ **Age and sex**

Just over a quarter of women said it was very or fairly likely they would be threatened at work compared with a fifth of men. Women under the age of 45 were most concerned. The pattern for assaults differed, with around a tenth of both men and women saying they were likely to be assaulted.

## Training and advice

Overall 18% of all workers said they had received formal training in their current job about how to deal with violent or threatening behaviour and 10% said they had received informal advice from colleagues or managers. Three-quarters (72%) had received neither formal training nor informal advice. Table 3.2 shows how levels of training varied depending on the contact workers had with members of the public. A fifth of those who had face-to-face contact had received formal training.

**Table 3.2 Percentage receiving training or advice about violence at work by type of contact with the public**

	No contact with the public	Contact but not face to face	Face to face contact with the public
Formal training	7	17	20
Informal advice	5	11	11
No training/advice	88	72	70
<i>Unweighted N</i>	1,391	247	8,517

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Estimates based on all those in work (employed, self-employed, on government training scheme or doing unpaid work in own/relative's business) of working age in the week prior to interview.

The provision of training did vary across occupational groups, with workers in high-risk occupations being most likely to receive formal training. However, even among high-risk groups the level of provision did not exceed 50%, with the exception of those in security and protective services. Occupations with relatively high levels of formal training are listed below:

- ❖ Security and protective services (71% received formal training)
- ❖ Nurses (47%)
- ❖ Care workers (42%)
- ❖ Other education and welfare (33%)
- ❖ Cashiers/bank managers/money lenders (29%)
- ❖ Other health professionals (27%)
- ❖ Public transport (25%).

The full results are in Table A3.7.

## Summary

Nationally, levels of worry about violence at work are low, relative to worry about other crimes. For example, 18% of all respondents were very worried about being attacked by a stranger in 2000 (Kershaw et al., 2000). This compares with 2% of workers being concerned about being assaulted at work. However, worry about violence at work is very high among those in high-risk occupations. The BCS suggests that even for high-risk occupations the provision of formal training to assist staff in dealing with violent situations is rather patchy.



# Appendix A Additional Tables

**Table A2.1 Estimated number of incidents of violence at work in England and Wales in 1999 (based on workers of working age)**

<i>Number of incidents</i>	Best estimate	Lower estimate	Higher estimate
All violence at work	1,288,000	1,037,000 (1,078,000)	1,539,000 (1,498,000)
Assaults	634,000	455,000 (485,000)	813,000 (784,000)
Threats	654,000	491,000 (518,000)	817,000 (790,000)

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data. Estimates based on working age adults in work.
2. The number of incidents is derived by multiplying offence rates by the number of working adults in the population in 1999 (source: Labour Force Survey, summer 1999 estimates).
3. Lower and higher estimates are for the 95% confidence interval. Figures in brackets on the 90% confidence interval.

**Table A2.2 Number of BCS incidents of violence at work (in thousands), 1991 to 1999 (based on workers of working age)**

<i>Number of incidents (in thousands)</i>	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	% change 1991 to 1999	% change 1995 to 1999	% change 1997 to 1999
All violence at work	947	1,275	1,507	1,226	1,288	36	-15	5
Assaults	451	652	729	523	634	40	-13	21
Threats	495	607	779	703	654	32	-16	-7

Notes:

1. Source: 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 BCS. Weighted data. Estimates based on working age adults in work.
2. The number of incidents is derived by multiplying offence rates by the number of working adults in the population.

**Table A2.3 Statistical significance of change in BCS rates of victimisation (based on workers of working age)**

<i>Rates per 10,000 workers of working age</i>	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	% change 1991 to 1999	% change 1995 to 1999	% change 1997 to 1999
All violence at work	409	565	664	523	523	28	-21	0
Assaults	195	293	321	223	257	32	-20	15
Threats	214	273	343	300	265	24	-23	-12

Notes:

1. Source: 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 BCS. Weighted data. Rates are quoted per 10,000 working age adults in work.
2. None of the changes is statistically significant at the 10% level (two-tailed).



**Table A3.1 Percent very or fairly worried about violence at work, by occupation**

<i>% of workers worried about (figures in parentheses based on workers at potential risk):</i>	Threats at work	Assaults at work
Public transport	46 (47)	45 (46)
Nurses	46 (46)	42 (42)
Other health professionals	28 (29)	19 (19)
Retail sales	28 (29)	23 (24)
Security and protective services	22 (23)	26 (27)
Catering/hotels/restaurants	21 (22)	18 (20)
Cashiers/bank managers/money lenders	21 (24)	14 (17)
Care workers	20 (21)	19 (20)
Teachers	20 (20)	13 (13)
Other education and welfare	19 (19)	16 (16)
Secretarial	19 (21)	13 (15)
Leisure/service providers	17 (18)	13 (14)
Management/personnel	15 (17)	8 (10)
Clerical	12 (14)	7 (10)
Stores and despatch	11 (14)	10 (13)
Other transport and related	10 (11)	12 (13)
Cleaners	10 (12)	15 (18)
Professionals/associate professionals	9 (10)	8 (9)
Other sales professionals	8 (10)	6 (7)
Construction	8 (9)	5 (6)
Skilled engineering	8 (11)	6 (8)
Farming, fishing and forestry	7 (9)	6 (8)
Industrial and machine plant operators	5 (10)	4 (8)
Other skilled trades	5 (6)	5 (6)
Science and engineering	4 (6)	2 (3)
Finance professionals	3 (4)	4 (5)
<b>All</b>	<b>15 (17)</b>	<b>12 (14)</b>

## Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Figures based on all those of working age in work (employed, self-employed, on government training scheme or doing unpaid work in own/relative's business) in the week prior to interview. Figures in parentheses based on workers who were at potential risk — i.e., had contact with members of the public.
3. A full listing of the occupations which constitute each occupational group are given in Budd, 1999 - Appendix E.

**Table A3.2 Percent very or fairly worried about violence at work, by occupational factors**

<i>% of workers worried about (figures in parentheses based on workers at potential risk):</i>	Threats at work	Assaults at work
<b>Hours of work</b>		
Full-time	14 (16)	11 (13)
Part-time	19 (21)	16 (18)
<b>Employment status</b>		
Employee	15 (18)	12 (15)
Manager	15 (17)	11 (13)
Foreman/supervisor	17 (19)	13 (15)
Other employee	15 (18)	13 (15)
Self-employed	13 (14)	10 (12)
<b>Size of employer<sup>3</sup></b>		
Fewer than 25 employees	18 (20)	15 (17)
25 to 499 employees	14 (16)	11 (14)
500 or more employees	14 (17)	10 (14)
<b>Size of business — number of employees<sup>4</sup></b>		
None	10 (12)	9 (10)
Some	19 (19)	15 (15)
<b>All</b>	<b>15 (17)</b>	<b>12 (14)</b>

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Figures based on all those of working age in work (employed or self-employed only) in the week prior to interview. Figures in parentheses based on workers who were at potential risk — i.e., had contact with members of the public.
3. Based on those in employment, excluding the self-employed.
4. Number of employees working for the self-employed.

**Table A3.3 Percent very or fairly worried about violence at work, by age & sex**

<i>% of workers worried about (figures in parentheses based on workers at potential risk):</i>	Threats at work	Assaults at work
<b>Men</b>	<b>11 (13)</b>	<b>9 (11)</b>
16-24	12 (14)	9 (11)
25-34	11 (14)	9 (11)
35-44	10 (12)	8 (10)
45-64	10 (12)	10 (12)
<b>Women</b>	<b>20 (22)</b>	<b>16 (18)</b>
16-24	22 (24)	16 (19)
25-34	21 (24)	17 (20)
35-44	21 (24)	16 (18)
45-64	17 (19)	14 (16)
<b>All</b>	<b>15 (17)</b>	<b>12 (14)</b>
16-24	17 (19)	13 (15)
25-34	16 (19)	13 (16)
35-44	16 (18)	12 (14)
45-64	13 (15)	12 (14)

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted percentages.
2. Figures based on all those of working age in work (employed, self-employed, on government training scheme or doing unpaid work in own/relative's business) in the week prior to interview. Figures in parentheses based on workers who were at potential risk — i.e., had contact with members of the public.

**Table A3.4 Percentage saying very or fairly likely to be victim of violence at work, by occupation (based on workers at potential risk)**

% saying very or fairly likely they will be victim in next year:	Threats at work			Assaults at work		
	Very	Fairly	Very or fairly	Very	Fairly	Very or fairly
Security and protective services	34	23	57	15	25	40
Nurses	19	34	54	9	21	31
Public transport	26	24	50	12	23	35
Retail sales	9	24	33	2	12	14
Other health professionals	9	22	31	2	9	11
Catering/hotels/restaurants	10	19	29	3	12	16
Cashiers/bank managers/money lenders	9	20	29	2	7	9
Clerical	11	16	27	1	4	6
Other education and welfare	7	20	27	3	10	13
Secretarial	11	16	26	2	5	6
Management/personnel	8	17	26	2	5	7
Leisure/service providers	10	14	24	1	7	7
Care workers	9	16	24	4	12	16
Teachers	6	18	24	1	7	9
Other transport and related	5	17	22	<1	8	8
Professionals/associate professionals	6	13	19	1	3	4
Construction	5	9	14	2	3	5
Finance professionals	4	10	14	1	2	4
Skilled engineering	3	12	14	1	5	6
Cleaners	3	10	13	1	7	8
Other sales professionals	2	11	13	1	4	5
Stores and despatch	5	6	11	3	2	5
Farming, fishing and forestry	2	8	10	-	4	4
Other skilled trades	2	6	8	<1	4	4
Science and engineering	2	5	7	1	1	2
Industrial and machine plant operators	1	5	6	1	2	3
<b>All</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Estimates based on all those of working age in work (employed, self-employed, on government training scheme or doing unpaid work in own/relative's business) in the week prior to interview who had contact with members of the public.
3. A full listing of the occupations which constitute each occupational group is in Budd, 1999 - Appendix E.

**Table A3.5 Percentage saying very or fairly likely to be victims of violence at work, by occupational factors (based on workers at potential risk)**

% saying very or fairly likely they will be victim in next year:	Threats at work			Assaults at work		
	Very	Fairly	Very or fairly	Very	Fairly	Very or fairly
<b>Hours of work</b>						
Full-time	8	15	23	3	7	10
Part-time	8	18	25	2	9	10
<b>Employment status</b>						
Employee	8	16	25	2	8	10
Manager	9	16	25	3	7	10
Foreman/supervisor	10	19	29	2	10	12
Other employee	7	16	23	2	8	10
Self-employed	5	10	15	2	6	8
<b>Size of employer<sup>3</sup></b>						
Fewer than 25 employees	7	18	25	2	8	10
25 to 499 employees	9	15	23	2	8	10
500 or more employees	11	16	27	4	7	11
<b>Size of business — no. of employees<sup>4</sup></b>						
None	4	9	13	2	5	7
Some	7	12	19	2	8	10
<b>All</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Figures based on all those of working age in work (employed or self-employed) in the week prior to interview who had contact with members of the public.
3. Based on those in employment, excluding the self-employed.
4. Number of employees working for the self-employed.

**Table A3.6 Percentage saying very or fairly likely to be victims of violence at work, by age and sex (based on workers at potential risk)**

% saying very or fairly likely will be victim in next year:	Threat at work			Assault at work		
	Very	Fairly	Very or fairly	Very	Fairly	Very or fairly
<b>Men</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
16-24	8	14	22	2	6	8
25-34	8	14	22	3	7	10
35-44	7	11	18	2	7	9
45-64	6	12	18	3	6	9
<b>Women</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>
16-24	10	22	31	1	8	8
25-34	11	21	32	2	11	14
35-44	9	19	28	2	8	11
45-64	7	15	22	2	7	10
<b>All</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
16-24	9	18	27	1	7	8
25-34	9	18	27	3	9	11
35-44	8	15	23	2	8	10
45-64	6	13	20	3	7	9

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Figures based on all those of working age in work (employed, self-employed, on government training scheme or doing unpaid work in own/relative's business) in the week prior to interview who had contact with members of the public.

**Table A3.7 Provision of training to deal with violence at work, by occupation**

<i>% saying received:</i>	Formal training	Informal training
Security and protective services	71 (72)	13 (13)
Nurses	47 (47)	23 (23)
Care workers	42 (44)	16 (16)
Other education and welfare	33 (34)	19 (19)
Cashiers/bank managers/money lenders	29 (30)	14 (12)
Other health professionals	27 (27)	16 (16)
Public transport	25 (24)	4 (4)
Management/personnel	24 (24)	10 (10)
Teachers	23 (22)	16 (16)
Clerical	23 (26)	9 (10)
Retail sales	19 (19)	18 (18)
Secretarial	18 (19)	12 (12)
Leisure/service providers	15 (15)	9 (9)
Catering/hotels/restaurants	12 (12)	15 (14)
Stores and despatch	12 (13)	10 (11)
Science and engineering	11 (12)	6 (6)
Other transport and related	10 (10)	7 (7)
Professionals/associate professionals	10 (11)	7 (8)
Skilled engineering	10 (12)	6 (7)
Finance professionals	10 (9)	6 (8)
Other sales professionals	9 (10)	6 (7)
Farming, fishing and forestry	8 (10)	3 (3)
Cleaners	8 (9)	7 (8)
Industrial and machine plant operators	7 (9)	3 (2)
Construction	6 (6)	5 (5)
Other skilled trades	4 (5)	4 (4)

## Notes:

1. Source: 2000 BCS. Weighted data.
2. Figures based on all those of working age in work (employed, self-employed, on government training scheme or doing unpaid work in own/relative's business) in the week prior to interview. Figures in parentheses based on workers who were at potential risk — i.e., had contact with members of the public.
3. A full listing of the occupations which constitute each occupational group is in Budd, 1999 - Appendix E.

# Appendix B

## Violence at Work: Findings from the British Crime Survey

The Home Office and Health and Safety Executive published a comprehensive report on violence at work in October 1999. A summary of the report is given below. Copies of the full report can be obtained from:

Home Office  
Research, Development and Statistics Directorate  
Communications Development Unit  
Room 201, Home Office  
50 Queen Anne s Gate  
London  
SW1H 9AT  
*Telephone:* 020 7273 2084  
*Facsimile:* 020 7222 0211  
*E-mail:* [publications.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:publications.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

For general information about the BCS email [bcinfo.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bcinfo.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

### Summary

The report *Violence at Work: Findings from the British Crime Survey* presents the findings from the 1992, 1994, 1996 and 1998 sweeps of the British Crime Survey. The report:

- ❖ provides the most reliable findings to date on the extent of violence at work in England and Wales in the 1990s;
- ❖ shows how risks of victimisation vary across different occupational groups;
- ❖ identifies those most at risk of violence while working;
- ❖ sheds light on the nature of violence at work, in particular the impact upon victims and the types of help they would have found useful.

The definition of violence at work used in the report is as follows:

**All assaults or threats which occurred while the victim was working and were perpetrated by members of the public.**

## The extent of violence at work in 1997

- ❖ The 1998 BCS estimated that there were just over 1.2 million *incidents* of violence at work in England and Wales in 1997. This overall figure comprises 523,000 physical assaults and 703,000 threats perpetrated by a member of the public against someone while they were working.
- ❖ In terms of the number of *victims*, the BCS estimates that 649,000 workers in England and Wales experienced at least one violent incident while working in 1997: 275,000 workers were assaulted and 395,000 threatened.
- ❖ These figures equate to 2.8% of working adults being victims of at least one violent incident at work in 1997; 1.2% of working adults were physically assaulted by a member of the public while they were working; 1.7% were threatened.

## Trends in violence at work

- ❖ The BCS suggests that the number of incidents of violence at work increased significantly between 1991 and 1995, but then fell between 1995 and 1997. This pattern held for both assaults and threats.

## Who is at risk

- ❖ The risk of violence at work varies considerably for workers with different occupational characteristics. Table B.1 lists the occupational groups with above average risks of assaults and above average risks of threats, in descending order.

**Table B.1 Occupations with above average risks of violence while working, 1994/1996/1998 BCS (based on working adults of working age)**

High risk of assaults Average risk = 1.2%	High risk of threats Average risk = 1.5%
➤ Security and protective services (11.4%)	➤ Public transport (5.6%)
➤ Nurses (5.0%)	➤ Security and protective services (5.3%)
➤ Care workers (2.8%)	➤ Other health professionals (4.0%)
➤ Public transport (2.8%)	➤ Retail sales (3.5%)
➤ Catering/hotels/restaurants (2.6%)	➤ Nurses (3.1%)
➤ Other education and welfare (2.6%)	➤ Management and personnel (2.6%)
➤ Teachers (1.8%)	➤ Other education and welfare (2.3%)
➤ Retail sales (1.8%)	➤ Catering/hotels/restaurants (2.0%)
➤ Management and personnel (1.7%)	➤ Teachers (2.0%)
➤ Leisure/service providers (1.7%)	➤ Cashiers, bank managers, and money lenders (2.0%)
➤ Other health professionals (1.4%)	➤ Leisure/service providers (1.9%)

Notes:

1. Source: Combined 1994, 1996 and 1998 sweeps of the BCS. Weighted data.
2. Measures risks of violence at work in 1993, 1995 and 1997.

- ❖ The BCS also indicates that full-time workers, employees with managerial responsibilities, employees in smaller organisations and the self-employed are at high risk of violence while at work.
- ❖ Multivariate analysis confirms that occupational factors are significantly associated with risks of violence at work.

## **The nature of violent incidents**

- ❖ Almost a half of assaults at work and a third of threats happened after 6 p.m. Given that for most, the working day does not extend past 6 p.m. these results suggest that the risks of violence are higher for those working during the late evening or night.
- ❖ A sixth (16%) of physical assaults at work involved offenders under the age of 16. Young offenders were less often mentioned in threats (8%). Most incidents involving young people were against teachers and other education and welfare workers, though many were against those in the security and protective services.
- ❖ Victims of violence at work have a high risk of repeat victimisation.

## **The impact of violence at work**

- ❖ Just under a half (46%) of assaults at work resulted in some type of injury to the victim and in almost one in ten incidents of physical assault the victim saw a doctor as a result of the incident.
- ❖ Almost three-quarters of victims of violence while working said they had been emotionally affected by the incident. The most common reactions were anger, shock and fear. Victims of threats were if anything slightly more affected than victims of assaults. Those who had been threatened were particularly likely to say they felt frightened.
- ❖ The 1998 BCS estimates that 3.3 million work hours were lost due to violence at work in 1997 and the compensation victims would have liked for the upset and inconvenience totalled £180 million.
- ❖ More than a half of those who had been assaulted or threatened while at work said they wanted some type of help following the incident. The most frequent source of help for victims was their employer. A third of victims said they had sought or received help from their employer.
- ❖ More than a half (55%) of assaults at work and a third (37%) of threats were reported to the police. The majority of victims were satisfied with the police response.





# Appendix C The British Crime Survey

The British Crime Survey (BCS) is a large, nationally representative household survey which measures the extent and nature of criminal victimisation against people living in private households in England and Wales.<sup>1</sup> To date the survey has been conducted eight times (1982, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000). Each sweep of the survey asks respondents about their experiences of victimisation in the previous year.

The 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 sweeps of the survey have been used in this report.<sup>2</sup>

## The BCS definition of violence at work

The British Crime Survey measures many offence types, including physical assaults and threats. Detailed information is collected from victims about the incidents they experienced. This allows the derivation of particular types of crime depending on the exact circumstances. For the purpose of this report the crime of interest is violence at work. This is defined upon the basis of (a) the type of offence (assaults or threats); (b) what the victim was doing at the time of the incident (at work or working); and (c) the relationship between victim and offender. The definition of violence at work is as follows:

**All assaults or threats which occurred while the victim was working and were perpetrated by members of the public.**

Physical assaults include the offences of common assault, wounding, robbery and snatch theft. Threats include both verbal threats, made to or against the respondent, and non-verbal intimidation. These are mainly threats to assault the victim, though some threats relate to damaging property. The term violence is used to refer to both assaults and threats.

Members of the public include clients or customers previously known to the victim, people the victim did not know before the incident (usually customers or clients), friends, neighbours and local children.

Excluded from the BCS definition are violent incidents in which there was a domestic relationship between the victim and offender (partners, ex-partners, relatives or household members).<sup>3</sup> Also excluded are incidents in which the offender was a work colleague. Violence between colleagues has been excluded because it is likely to have a very different nature and pattern to violence involving members of the public. The policies required to address intra-colleague violence are also likely to differ.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. The BCS not only measures violence but a range of other offences including burglary, vehicle-related thefts and vandalism. For the most recent findings see Kershaw et al., 2000 .

<sup>2</sup>. Earlier sweeps of the survey cannot provide a comparable definition of violence at work.

<sup>3</sup>. Domestic violence is not included because it differs considerably to other forms of violence. For recent BCS findings on domestic violence see Kershaw et al., 2000 and Mirrlees-Black, 1999.

<sup>4</sup>. The number of incidents of intra-colleague violence counted in the BCS is too small to allow separate analysis. The 1998 BCS estimates that only 0.1% of working adults had been assaulted by a colleague while working in 1997. 0.2% had been threatened by a colleague.

The BCS definition of violence at work does not distinguish between incidents which directly arose from the nature of the work and those which incidentally happened while the victim was working.<sup>5</sup> Some incidents included in this report will therefore not be directly attributable to the victim's work.

## The BCS sample

Estimates of the incidence and prevalence of violence at work reported in Chapter 2 are based on adults of working age (16 to 64 for men; 16 to 59 for women) who said they were in work, either as an employee or self-employed, in the week prior to interview. The base is restricted to workers of working age so that the risk estimates provided are those for workers.<sup>6</sup> If those not in work were included in the base the risk of violence while working would be lower simply because non-workers can not experience an incident.<sup>7</sup> Table C.1 shows number of working adults of working age in each sweep.

**Table C.1 BCS sample size**

	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
<b>Respondents</b>					
Achieved sample (core sample)	10,059	14,617	16,348	14,947	19,411
Number of working adults of working age	4,959	6,953	7,984	7,410	10,121
<b>Number of incidents</b>					
Violence at work	121	281	347	302	389
Assaults	59	137	169	138	177
Threats	62	144	178	164	212

Notes: All analysis in this report is based on the core sample. The core sample is representative of the adult population in England and Wales. In the 1992, 1994, 1996 and 2000 sweeps there was also a booster sample of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans to allow separate analysis of these groups.

The questions on concern about violence in the workplace were asked of all those in work in the last week (employed or self-employed) or on a government training scheme or working unpaid in their own or a relative's business. The results reported in Chapter 3 are based on those of working age (Unweighted N=10,186).

As a sample survey the BCS estimates are subject to sampling error and a range of other methodological limitations. These methodological issues are discussed in detail in the report *Violence at Work: Findings from the British Crime Survey* (Budd, 1999). Key points are below:

- ❖ **Sampling error** - As only a sample of the population is questioned, findings are subject to sampling error.

<sup>5.</sup> Respondents were asked 'What were you doing at the time it happened?'. In 1992, 1994, and 1996 one option was 'at work'. In 1998 and 2000 options included 'at work or working (not at home)' and 'working at home'. Only the 1988 BCS asked whether victims felt the incident happened because of the nature of their work (Mayhew et al., 1989).

<sup>6.</sup> As the BCS sample is of adults living in private households, it does not provide complete coverage of all workers. Most notably, those who reside in communal establishments will be excluded. This is likely to affect some occupational groups, such as nurses and care workers, more than others. However, because the number of workers excluded is likely to be relatively small this should not have a significant impact on estimates.

<sup>7.</sup> It should be noted that those in work in the week preceding the interview may not have been working for the entire calendar year over which risks are measured.

- ❖ **Non-response** - Not all those who are selected to participate actually do so, either because they cannot be contacted during the fieldwork period, they refuse to take part or they are unable to do so, for example due to ill-health. The BCS may under-represent people in certain occupations, either because they are rarely at home due to long working hours or because they refuse to participate for the same reason. It may be particularly problematic to locate and interview shift-workers or those who spend lengthy periods away from their home due to their occupation.
- ❖ **Coverage** - The BCS only covers adults resident in private households. It excludes people whose main residence is a communal establishment. This is likely to be more relevant for some occupational groups, such as those in nursing and care professions, than others. It also excludes those under the age of 16.
- ❖ **Recall errors** - The BCS asks respondents to recall their experiences of crime since January 1 of the preceding year — a period of about 14 months. The BCS crime measure is thus dependent on respondents' ability to accurately remember their experiences in the reference period.
- ❖ **Definitions of crime** —Crimes may not be reported to the survey if the respondent does not view them as such.<sup>8</sup> Evidence suggests that better educated respondents tend to apply a lower threshold of tolerance and therefore are more likely to perceive relatively minor incidents as crimes. In addition, some victims may not regard the incidents they experienced as crimes either because they accept them as part of the job or they feel that there were mitigating circumstances. This definitional problem may be greater for threats than physical assaults because there is likely to be less consensus among the public about whether threats constitute a crime.

## Weighting

Estimates presented in this report are based on weighted data. The data has been weighted in a number of ways to correct for imbalances in the sample design. The weights correct for: the differential selection probabilities for different police force areas (the sample design ensured a minimum of 300 interviews per police force area); differential non-response in inner city areas; differential selection probabilities for dwelling units (at addresses with more than one dwelling unit); and differential selection probabilities of individuals (at dwelling units with more than one adult present). The unweighted Ns are the actual number of respondents interviewed upon which the estimates are based.

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<sup>8.</sup> In an attempt to overcome this problem the BCS screener questions ask whether the respondent has experienced certain types of event and do not use legal terminology or refer to specific offences.



# Appendix D 2000 British Crime Survey questions

The next few questions are about violent or threatening behaviour by members of the public, including children, at your workplace.

*[ASK IF RESPONDENT IN WORK IN THE LAST WEEK, ON A GOVERNMENT TRAINING SCHEME OR WORKING UNPAID]*

How worried are you about being threatened by a member of the public while you are at work? Please include threat by telephone, in writing or in person.

1. Very worried
2. Fairly worried
3. Not very worried
4. Not at all worried
5. Never have contact with members of the public at work

*[ASK IF RESPONSE CODES 1 TO 4, DON T KNOW OR REFUSAL AT THE PREVIOUS QUESTION]*

How worried are you about being physically attacked by a member of the public while you are at work?

1. Very worried
2. Fairly worried
3. Not very worried
4. Not at all worried
5. Never have face-to-face contact with members of the public at work

*[ASK IF VERY OR FAIRLY WORRIED AT EITHER OF THE PREVIOUS TWO QUESTIONS]*

How much does worrying about being attacked/threatened/attacked or threatened at work affect your health?

1. A great deal
2. Quite a bit
3. A little
4. Not at all

*[ASK IF RESPONSE 1 TO 4, DON T KNOW OR REFUSED AT WORRY ABOUT THREATS QUESTION]*

And how likely do you think you are to be threatened by a member of the public while you are at work in the next year, whether over the telephone, in writing or in person?

1. Very likely
2. Fairly likely
3. Fairly unlikely
4. Very unlikely

*[ASK IF RESPONSE 1 TO 4, DON T KNOW OR REFUSAL AT WORRY ABOUT ASSAULT QUESTION]*

How likely do you think you are to be physically attacked by a member of the public while you are at work in the next year?

1. Very likely
2. Fairly likely
3. Fairly unlikely
4. Very unlikely

*[ASK IF RESPONDENT IN WORK IN THE LAST WEEK, ON A GOVERNMENT TRAINING SCHEME OR WORKING UNPAID]*

In your current job, have you received any advice or training about how to deal with violent or threatening behaviour in the workplace? PROBE: Was that formal training or advice. Code all that apply.

1. Yes — formal training
2. Yes — informal advice from colleagues/managers
3. No training or advice

# References

**Budd, T. (1999)** *Violence at work: findings from the British Crime Survey*. Home Office Occasional Paper. London: Home Office.

**Kershaw, C., Budd, T., Kinshott, G., Mattinson, J., Mayhew, P., and Myhill, A. (2000)** *The 2000 British Crime Survey: England and Wales*. Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/00. London: Home Office.

**Mayhew, P., Elliot, D, and Dowds, L (1989)** *The 1988 British Crime Survey*. Home Office Research Study No. 111. London: HMSO.

**Mirrlees-Black, C. (1999)** *Domestic violence: findings from a new British Crime Survey self-completion questionnaire*. Home Office Research Study No. 191. London: Home Office.