

Ambulance workers suffer at least 9,500 violent attacks



Ambulance workers been subject to at least 9,500 violent attacks in the line of duty over the last five years, a GMB investigation has revealed.

Attacks, which saw blue light crews bitten, head-butted, spat at and struck with weapons, took place more than 9,565 times from the financial year 2017/18 to 21/22. [1]

A total of 1,248 of these were sexual assaults.

The true numbers of assaults are likely to be far higher as only eight out of 13 ambulance trusts across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland responded to GMB's Freedom of Information Act request.



Ambulance workers will take to the stage at GMB's annual congress in Brighton today [Sunday] to discuss the attacks they face daily, as well as the national NHS strikes they took part in and much needed reform to ambulance worker retirement age.

GMB's ambulance members **successfully changed the law in 2018 when the Assaults Against Emergency Workers (Offences) Act made assaults on ambulance workers an aggravating factor for sentencing.**

Ambulance service	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	Total
Total	1,597	1,924	1,871	2,141	2,032	9,565

*SWAST provided figures per calendar year, rather than financial year

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Secretary, said:

"Ambulance workers go to work every day to save lives.

"Despite this, thousands of them are bitten, attacked, spat at and even sexually assaulted.

"No one should have to put up with that, least of all those who are there to protect us.

"GMB members helped change the law but more needs to be done.

"We demand full enforcement of the Protect the Protectors legislation, investment in better systems to flag offenders, and much better support for the victims of violence."

Press office

079859 1525698

press.office@gmb.org.uk

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Click to contact your local GMB Region

info@gmb.org.uk

