

Stronger action needed as thousands of emergency workers assaulted



Crown Prosecution Service figures are 'tip of the iceberg'

Ambulance workers' union warns that Crown Prosecution Service figures are 'tip of the iceberg'

GMB, the union for ambulance workers, has responded to new Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) figures on assaults against emergency workers that were linked to COVID-19.



According to new CPS statistics, 1,688 people were charged with assaulting an emergency worker in ways that were linked to COVID-19 in the six months to 30 September last year.

Examples included emergency workers being coughed on or spat at. Assaults on emergency workers was the most common reason that people were charged for offences linked to COVID-19.

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Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer

GMB warned that the true number of assaults will have been much higher as many assailants have not been charged, and that employers could do more to support workers in taking complaints to the police.

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer, said:

“No-one should go to work in fear of being assaulted. Emergency workers’ jobs are extremely challenging at the best of times, and assaults during the pandemic are putting lives at risk.

“It is clear that ambulance workers and others in emergency services need much more protection and support. The law is only as strong as its enforcement, and sadly these figures are just the tip of the iceberg.

“Stronger deterrents are urgently needed to make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice. That is why GMB is campaigning for NHS Trusts to improve their support to workers at risk of assault, and for better working between agencies to ensure that more assailants are held accountable for their actions.”

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