

Framework for Employers:

Preventing Violence and Abuse Within Retail Settings



This framework signposts sources of guidance and advice for how retail employers can help to prevent violence and abuse in retail settings and protect the wellbeing of their employees. Employers are encouraged to use this to demonstrate their commitment to support their employees.



Undertake risk assessments

For each store, in particular giving consideration to lone workers and any specific circumstances relevant to locations and staff.

- Refer to the [HSE risk assessment](#) guidance.
- Consider providing personal safety devices for staff, as appropriate.



Provide support for employees who are victims of violence and abuse at work:

Have clear company policies and make sure staff know what support is available and how to access it.

- Refer to the [Victims' Code](#).
- Access HSE mental health and wellbeing resources via the [HSE webpage](#).
- Have an anonymous 'Speak-up/Whistleblowing' system.
- Provide access to support services e.g. counselling.



Follow Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance

- Employers should protect the health, safety and welfare of employees.
- For information, refer to HSE guidance on [Managing work-related violence in retail premises](#).



Offer training to staff

On how to manage situations that may lead to violence and abuse, including for example de-escalation training.

- Refer to the training videos available on the [National Business Crime Centre \(NBCC\) website](#).
- Refer to the Suzy Lamplugh [de-escalation video](#) on the British Retail Consortium website.



Consider membership of a crime reduction partnership

For example a Business Improvement District or a Business Crime Reduction Partnership, to work with local businesses and the police to reduce crime.

- Check whether a BCRP is set up in your area by contacting the [National Association of Business Crime Partnerships \(NABCP\)](#).



Foster a workplace safety culture, where violence and abuse is not acceptable.

The [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) guidance for employers and employees to stay safe at work includes information on;

- Embedding a workplace safety culture.
- Implementing risk assessments.
- Personal safety training.



Report incidents internally, and if appropriate to police.

- Have a robust process for staff to report incidents and raise concerns.
- Gather and retain evidence of assaults, for example CCTV and statements from employees. For guidance on how to share information with other businesses or law enforcement agencies, refer to the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) data sharing hub](#).
- Encourage staff to make a Victim Impact Statement and make a [Business Impact Statement](#).



Post-incident support process:

A guide to assist employers with supporting their employees after they have been affected by violence or abuse in the workplace.



1. Report incidents and identify violence and abuse

Have a clear and simple internal reporting process to capture the incident and the details within it. Identify and flag those that contain violence or abuse.

- Do you have an internal reporting system?
- How accessible and easy is it to use?
- Do employees use it? If not, what are the barriers?
- Is there a way to highlight and identify incidents involving risk — specifically violence and abuse?
- Can you identify who needs support? It may be more than one employee that needs support and it may be wider than the direct victim of the incident.
- Do you have processes in place to report crimes involving violence and abuse to police?



2. Triage and escalate

Assess the nature of the incident, classify it and grade its severity based on threat, harm and risk. Use the assessment to escalate the incident proportionately. High risk incidents should be escalated immediately.

- Do you have a process to review incidents involving violence and abuse?
- What process do you use?
- Have you identified the cause of the incident or contributing factors?
- How do you measure the severity? E.g. Red, amber, green (RAG) rating?
- Can you escalate violence and abusive incidents quickly? From the time of the incident, up to the point of contact with the employee and offer of support, needs to be timely.



3. Nominated staff member to take ownership

Escalate the incident to the appropriately trained and specifically nominated person. They should take overall ownership of the incident and responsibility to support the employee.

- Do you have suitably trained staff or roles in your business to take ownership and manage the welfare of an employee who has been a victim of violence or abuse?
- What training do you provide for these staff members? Is it sufficient/current?
- Does the staff member have the necessary support and authorisation from the business to make decisions to support the employee? E.g. implement new processes in store, authorise time off work for the employee, pay the employee to attend court if on a non-working day etc.
- Is the nominated person suitable and appropriate to perform the role? Consider individual needs of the employee.
- Can you ensure all staff and departments within the business that need to be aware of the incident, are made aware?





4. Support

Contact the employee as soon as practicable after the incident. Focus on the employee's needs and feelings and adjust contact appropriately. Provide the necessary support for the employee.

- Can you make contact with the employee and offer support soon after the incident?
- Can you ensure the communication is reliable, consistent and in line with employee expectations and needs?
- Do you have access to specialist personnel if required?
- Can you signpost and offer support services, both internal and external?
- Confidentiality- the employee may need specialist support or convey personal thoughts in confidence.
- Consider a 'buddy system' to offer support.
- Have you created a support plan?
- Do you offer counselling (trauma informed)?



5. Review triggers and implement preventative response

Discuss and evaluate why incident occurred and what action can be taken to prevent it happening again. Focus on welfare and safety of employee and colleagues.

- Use all the information you have gathered about the incident to implement a response.
- Ensure response is realistic, achievable, proportionate and justifiable.
- Possible response options: additional staff training, increased management support, target hardening, technological support (increased CCTV, Body Worn Video, integrated into central Security Operating Centre), guarding, banning notice.



6. Record, monitor and review

Record all actions and interactions, monitor your response and review whether it is working.

- Maintain professionalism and integrity at all times.
- Monitor the situation. Has it changed? Do you need to take further action?
- What lessons have been learnt? Have lessons been shared?
- Have you communicated and explained your decisions and actions to employees?
- Actively seek feedback from all those involved in the process, especially the employee.



7. Continued Support

Depending on the nature of the incident and the individual employee, the effects may manifest in different ways and varying timeframes. Ensure ongoing communication and support plan for the employee is suitable.

- Review your support plan. Agree frequency and method of communication and support with the employee.
- Remember that everybody reacts differently — each support plan and response should be bespoke to the individual employee and incident.
- If support is rejected by the employee, explain it is not a one-time offer and can be taken up at any point. Some may experience a delayed reaction.

For more information and resources about preventing violence and abuse within retail settings please visit the NBCC website. <https://nbcc.police.uk>

Appendix

- 1 HSE risk assessment
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/riskassessment.htm>
- 2 Victims' Code
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974377/victims-code-rights.pdf
- 3 HSE webpage
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm>
- 4 Managing work-related violence in retail premises
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg423.pdf>
- 5 Training videos on the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) website
<https://nbcc.police.uk/business-support/shopworker-videos>
- 6 De-escalation video
<https://brc.org.uk/nrcsg-against-shop-worker-abuse-and-violence/de-escalation-training/>
- 7 National Association of Business Crime Partnerships
<https://www.nabcp.com>
- 8 Suzy Lamplugh Trust
<https://www.suzylamplugh.org/suzys-charter-for-workplace-safety>
- 9 Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) data sharing hub
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations>
- 10 Business Impact Statement
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-statements-for-business/impact-statements-for-business-guidance>