

# GMB'S AIRPORT WORKERS AGAINST ABUSE CHARTER

## We call on airport authorities & employers to:

- Provide body-worn cameras to all airport workers
- Provide in-depth mandatory training on conflict de-escalation to all airport workers
- Increase visible security with regular patrols in all areas of the airport
- Mandate and train managers to carry out walkabouts of passenger-facing areas
- Introduce an "airport watch" scheme across all workplaces in the airport with a radio network and a rapid response & monitoring system
- Remove and bar abusive passengers on the spot

## We call on government & politicians to:

- Introduce a specific offence of assaulting an airport worker
- Legislate that being on airport land is treated in law and security/policing as being inside an aircraft
- Launch a public awareness campaign with border security adverts on zero-tolerance of violence & abuse in airports
- Require that all airports have a local campaign against violence & abuse
- Introduce a robust "banning order" scheme in law to penalise abusive passengers
- Mandate the collection of data on violence and abuse by each airport
- Legislate for proper regulation of airport ground handling operations to improve standards

## We call on airlines to:

- Ensure all charges & fees are clearly visible at all times from the point of booking to boarding
- Add to flight terms & conditions that passengers explicitly agree not to physically or verbally abuse airport workers and set out clear consequences if they do
- Take greater responsibility for the situation on the ground in airports



AIRPORT  
WORKERS  
AGAINST  
ABUSE

**GMB**

UNION



In 2024, GMB Union Aviation Sector carried out an extensive nationwide survey which found that 72% of airport workers have felt unsafe going into work due to abuse or aggressive behaviour from passengers.

61% have considered leaving the industry due to the abuse they have faced, and only 12% of workers said they have not had any adverse effect on their health and wellbeing from the abuse in airports.

It is clear to us that this is a real and growing problem. This is why we have started this broad and inclusive campaign – AIRPORT WORKERS AGAINST ABUSE – where we will work collaboratively across the sector to raise awareness and achieve measures that will reduce the abuse and protect the dignity of those working in our airports.

As part of the survey, there was an open option for respondents to write about their experiences. This booklet contains a selection of those responses, providing a snapshot at a point in time into the abuse faced by our airport workers.

Please be aware that these comments include language and events that some readers may find shocking and offensive.



[gmb.org.uk](https://gmb.org.uk)

**“**  
**It can be almost like a war zone.**  
**”**

On various occasions within a forty-year service period I've been threatened punched, spat at and verbally abused just for doing my job.

So many different instances revolving around service.

**“**  
**I was told to go back to where I came from**  
**”**

**“**  
The passenger demanded my name while running after me and swearing.

He pulled out his mobile phone and proceeded to make a video of me up close, intimidating me and invading my personal space.

I then attempted to stop him from recording by covering the phone.

The passenger then grabbed me by my collar and grappled me for a second or two.

**”**

**“**  
Customers try to come into the lounge with extra guests.

You're trying to explain to them while they shout at you.

Then the manager lets them into the lounge.

You get no support. **”**

**“**  
**I was called a cow and a “fucking bitch”.**  
**”**