

MPs back tougher measures in Protect the Protectors Bill



Emergency services staff one step closer to protection they need

GMB, the union for NHS workers, is celebrating a double victory for members after the 'protect the protectors' Bill won cross-party support from MPs today – with new measures to punish sexual attacks on emergency workers included.

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Bill, backed by GMB and passed by MPs introduces a new offence of common assault against an emergency worker and require courts to treat attacks on emergency workers as an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes.



Initially sexual assaults were not covered by the Bill – until a GMB investigation this week revealed reported sexual assaults and other sexually abusive incidents increased by 211 per cent between 2012/13 and 2016/17.

Further GMB research released in the run up to the vote showed that:

- The number of violent attacks on ambulance workers in the UK increased by 34 per cent between 2012/13 and 2016/17.
- A total of 14,441 physical assaults were recorded against ambulance workers between 2012/13 and January 2018.
- There are on average more than eight recorded attacks (8.2) on ambulance workers every single day.

Examples of violent attacks reported by GMB members include: being bitten, stabbed, having blood spat at them by intravenous drug users, having bones broken, attempts to hit them with cars, and racist and sexual abuse.

“ This is a Bill rooted in the real lives of ambulance staff up and down the country. It's been inspired by GMB members who have had truly harrowing experiences just going about their jobs, helping people.

Our emergency service workers are there to save lives. In the line of duty they have to put up with being bitten, kicked, punched and even sexually assaulted. That cannot be allowed to continue.

No one should have to expect that as part of their job and thanks to this campaign, our frontline workers are one step closer to getting the protection they need and deserve at work.

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary

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