

Royal Assent for Protect the Protectors law



Shock new figures show why new legislation desperately needed

GMB is celebrating success for its protect the protectors campaign as the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act receives Royal Assent.

Shocking new figures released by the union today reveal the extent of danger facing ambulance workers – and how desperately needed the new legislation is.

The study shows:



- Ambulance employers have placed at least 7,500 active risk flags against addresses because of a potential risk of violence – the true figure is likely to be higher, as not all ambulance employers responded to GMB's Freedom of Information Survey.
- Only one ambulance employer – the Welsh Ambulance Service – was able to say how many of its staff had recently been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), despite 39% of GMB's ambulance members reporting that they have experienced the condition.
- Recorded physical assaults on ambulance workers increased by 34% between 2013/14 and 2016/17, and 72% of GMB's ambulance Trust members say that they have been attacked at some point in their careers.

“ It is difficult to put into words what this will mean for the hundreds of thousands of emergency service workers who have been assaulted in the line of duty.

Action is long overdue. At least eight ambulance workers are attacked every day, and the threat of violence is forcing many experienced professionals out of the NHS. Our members who spoke out and secured this change in the law have demonstrated the very highest standards of bravery.

Today's victory must be followed up with a Government publicity campaign and proper enforcement action to make sure that those who attack emergency workers are brought to justice.

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer

The enactment of the 'protect the protectors' law in England and Wales represents a significant campaigning victory for GMB's members who worked closely with Holly Lynch MP and Chris Bryant MP to introduce and secure cross-party support for the legislation.

“ Success! Today the 'Protect the Protectors' law receives Royal Assent.

This victory must now be followed up with a Government publicity campaign and proper



enforcement action to make sure that those who attack emergency workers are brought to justice. [#ProtectTheProtectors pic.twitter.com/jtDaM5OIOB](https://twitter.com/jtDaM5OIOB)

— GMB UNION (@GMB_union) [September 13, 2018](#)

The union also played an important role in securing an amendment to the legislation to ensure that its scope included sexual assaults against emergency service workers.

“ Today marks the end of a very long road. It was an incredibly difficult decision to talk about my assault publicly but I did it to ensure that people are made aware of the situation ambulance workers are placed in on a daily basis and for a change in the law.

The work must start now with the Government recognising the situation and actively working with ambulance employers and trade unions to better understand what resources are required to prevent these attacks.

I am actively working with my employer to reduce the risk to my colleagues but we have a long way to go. I was incredibly emotional when the bill was passed in Parliament because it highlighted again what I had to endure to achieve it.

The law change is long overdue but I hope we rarely need to use it.

Sarah Kelly, a GMB member and ambulance technician who played a critical role in securing a change to the law after she was assaulted while on duty

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