

NHS England Statement Issued on 7th January 2020

Following the enactment of the [Assaults on Emergency Workers \(Offences\) Act 2018 \(the 2018 Act\)](#) on 13th November 2018. Data provided by the Crown Prosecution shows that they prosecuted more than 50 assaults a day in the first year of legislation, making attacks on emergency workers a specific offence, new figures show.

Between November 2018 and 2019, almost 20,000 offences were charged under the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act – three-quarters of which were assault by beating.

The CPS data is based on the number of offences charged, rather than individual defendants. Ministry of Justice figures for 2018, based on the first cases to go through the courts, show a conviction rate of 90 per cent.

Following a series of high-profile assaults last summer, the Director of Public Prosecutions met with police colleagues to discuss their concerns about rising levels of violence towards officers.

In response, the CPS led the development of the Joint Agreement On Offences Against Emergency Workers (the Joint Agreement). NHS England & NHS Improvement represented the NHS and collaborated with stakeholders to produce the agreement.

The Joint Agreement (available [here](#)) provides a framework to ensure more effective investigations and prosecution of cases, where emergency workers are the victim of a crime, particularly in applying the provisions of the Act 2018 and sets out the standards which victims of these crimes can expect. Equally it underpins the provisions outlined within the [\(the 2018 Act\)](#).

The definition of an emergency worker in the 2018 Act, goes beyond specific titles and jobs, and extends to persons whose roles brings them within the definition, for the NHS this is:

- A person employed for the purposes of providing or engaged to provide NHS health services – and whose general activities in doing so involve face to face interaction with (i) individuals receiving the services or (ii) with other members of the public
- A person employed for the purposes of providing or engaged to provide services in the support of the provision of NHS health services – and whose general activities in doing so involve face to face interaction with (i) individuals receiving the services or (ii) with other members of the public.

The Joint Agreement is an intrinsic part of the Violence Reduction Strategy which is embedded within the forthcoming NHS People Plan. In January 2019, the Long-Term Plan commitments were outlined that as part of our action on violence in the NHS, we will pilot and evaluate the use of body worn cameras by paramedics. We will not tolerate violence against NHS staff and, where justified, will always seek to prosecute incidents of verbal and physical abuse. We will invest up to £2 million a year from 2019/20 in these programmes to reduce violence, bullying and harassment for our staff. We will invest a further £8 million by 2023/24 to pilot the use of body cameras to keep our staff safe.

The Joint Agreement officially launched on Monday 6th January 2020.