

Open Letter

14 November 2023

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Recording Assaults on Public Service Workers in Official Crime Statistics

Further to the response given by Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire, Chris Philp MP, on 1 September 2023, regarding the question tabled to parliament on whether the Government will take steps to categorise assaults on public service workers distinctly in the police recorded crime and outcomes statistics, we want to emphasise the urgency on taking action to address the status quo.

Mr Philp's reply noted that currently, only assaults on Police and Emergency Workers have a separate classification within Home Office recorded crime statistics. However, we also note that retail thefts are recorded as well. Given the challenging climate the nation's frontline workers currently face, there is a pressing need to record data relating to the abuse of other public service workers. These workers are providing vital services to society, but since the introduction of the Sentencing Act which, in part, makes assaults on public service workers an aggravated offence, abuse of workers is sadly continuing. Retail staff, hospitality workers, call centre agents, infrastructure installers, delivery drivers, banking staff, and many others who interact with the public on a daily basis need to know the Government is continuing to ensure it is driving down abuse of workers in their workplaces.

While it's encouraging that Mr Philp's response noted an ongoing review of the rules governing police-recorded crime in England and Wales, there is an urgent need to expedite this aspect of the review. Our data, corroborated by various other studies, highlights that over one third of public-facing workers have faced some form of hostility in the past six months. This impacts their productivity, leads to an increased number of sick days, resignations, and a consequent decline in the quality of public services and economic output of businesses big and small.

Understanding the scale and nature of this problem is a vital step toward mitigating it. With the right data, the police, businesses, and policymakers can better allocate resources, develop and evolve informed policies, and protect these essential workers.

We, along with a diverse coalition of business leaders and cross-party Parliamentarians, urge the Government to prioritise collecting and reporting on the number of incidents separately, along with their consequent prosecution outcomes. This will serve as a deterrent against assaulting public service workers by empowering victims to report incidents, confident that incidents they are involved in are officially recorded and acted upon.

Public service workers are the pillars of our society, often performing thankless tasks that are essential for community well-being. Let's ensure their safety is a matter of national importance, beginning with its proper recognition in crime statistics.

Yours faithfully,

Jo Causon, CEO, Institute of Customer Service

List of co-signatories overleaf

Co-signatories (Business Leaders):

Name	Position	Organisation
Simon Roberts	CEO	Sainsbury's
Tom Athron	CEO	Fortnum & Mason
Chris Pitt	CEO	first direct
Giles Hurley	CEO (UK & Ireland)	Aldi
David Wood	CEO	Wickes
Nick Read	CEO	Post Office
Andy Wood OBE DL	CEO	Adnams Brewery
Paul Philpott	CEO	Kia
Graham Edwards OBE	CEO	Wales and West Utilities
Liv Garfield	CEO	Severn Trent
Ant Middle	CEO	Ageas
Giles Hawke	CEO	Celebrity Cruises
Louise Beardmore	CEO	United Utilities
Basil Scarsella	CEO	UK Power Networks
Heidi Mottram	CEO	Northumbrian Water
Jacqueline Starr	CEO	Rail Delivery Group
Neil Jones	CEO	Bobst
Jonathan Cowie	CEO	Plymouth Community Homes
Oke Eleazu	CEO	ManyPets
Rosemary Du Rose	CEO	Beyond Housing
Ruth Cooke	CEO	Green Square Accord
Pat McDonagh	CEO	Clarity
Lawrence Gosden	CEO	Southern Water
Angela Lockwood	CEO	North Star
Jeremy Hyams	Founder & Executive Chair	Claims Consortium Group
Steve Holiday	Chairman	CityFibre
Richard Pash	Chief Customer Officer	Zurich
David MacLeod OBE	Co-Founder	Engage for Success
Guy Jefferson	COO	Scottish Power Energy Networks
Jane Porter	COO	Optivo
Trafford Wilson	Executive Director of Customer Service	The Guinness Partnership
Andy Pymer	Executive Director, Finance & Regulation	Wessex Water
Eva Eisenschimmel	Group Chief Risk, Rep. & Sustainability Officer	Lowell Group
David Roberts	MD	NuHeat
Eric Leenders	MD	UK Finance
Jo Upward	MD	Platform Group
Paul Harris	MD	Curo
Chris Wright	MD	Nottingham Trams
Carla Thomas	Customer Experience Director	Openreach
Kathryn O'Brien	Customer Experience Director	TransPennine Express
Martyn Oakley	Customer Experience Director	Laithwaites Wine
Nigel Purveur	Director	NJP Management
Dr Peter Carter OBE	Director	Independent Healthcare Consultant
Fran Rea	Director Customer of Service	NewDay
Catherine Rutter	Director Group Customer Inclusion	Lloyds Banking Group
John Ashmore	Director of Claims	Direct Line Group
Rebecca Clapham	Director Sales and Service	Direct Line Group
Nikki Juniper	Head of Security & Shrinkage	John Lewis Partnership

Co-signatories (Parliamentarians):

Philip Davies MP (Con)
Esther McVey MP (Con)
Baroness Bennett (Green)
Olivia Blake MP (Lab)
Steven Bonnar MP (SNP)
Wera Hobhouse MP (Lib)
Ian Paisely MP (DUP)
Mohammad Yasin MP (Lab)
Martyn Day MP (SNP)
Charlotte Nichols MP (Lab)
Grahame Morris MP (Lab)