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Managing violence and aggression in retail Best practice guidelines

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Section one The challenge

Introduction

Work-related violence and aggression (WVA) has become an escalating challenge within the retail sector, placing frontline colleagues at significant risk of verbal abuse, threats, and physical harm. Recent research highlights the scale of the issue: incidents of violence and abuse have significantly increased, with thousands of instances occurring daily across the retail sector. Such behaviours not only compromise staff safety and wellbeing but also erode morale, retention, and overall organisational performance.

In response, the Retail Trust, in collaboration with Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS),


has produced this best practice guidance as part of the Let's Respect Retail campaign. The guidelines aim to equip retailers with practical strategies and resources to prevent and manage WVA effectively. Drawing on academic research and industry insights, they provide actionable measures to foster safer working environments, support colleagues, and promote a culture of respect across retail settings. While not every recommendation will suit all organisations, these guidelines offer a flexible framework to help businesses safeguard their people and strengthen resilience against workplace violence.

“Creating these best practice guidelines is a vital step towards making retail a safer and more respectful place to work. By equipping organisations with practical tools and evidence-based strategies, we aim to protect colleagues, reduce incidents of violence, and foster a culture where everyone feels valued and secure.”

Cliff Lee,
Director of Wellbeing Services, Retail Trust



1. What's the problem?

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a green apron, is smiling and looking down at a tablet device she is holding. She is standing behind a retail counter. In the background, there are shelves with various products, including a red bag and a yellow bag.

Work-related violence and aggression (WVA) is a growing concern across the retail sector, with frontline staff increasingly exposed to verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, and physical confrontations while at work. A recent survey carried out by Foot Anstey (2025) found that 27% of retail workers have experienced physically aggressive or violent behaviours in their current jobs. Researchers from

Alliance Manchester Business School (2024), in collaboration with the Retail Trust, found that 32.4% of workers were yelled at by customers at least 'sometimes', while 17.2% reported that customers used inappropriate language towards them 'often' or 'very frequently'.

Retail environments often place staff in situations where they must enforce policies (such as returns), manage complaints, or de-escalate tensions.

“Violence and abuse has risen by 50% in the past year [with] over 2,000 incidents every day.”

British Retail Consortium (BRC), 2025 Annual Crime Survey

The rise in WVA not only jeopardises staff safety and wellbeing but also undermines morale, retention, and overall business performance.

2. Brief overview

The managing violence and aggression in retail best practice guidelines are designed to give information and support for retail organisations in relation to WVA. We provide an overview of

WVA in retail by drawing from academic and industry sources. To make things easier, we've included links to external resources you can use straight away.

Not every idea will fit every workplace, so we encourage you to pick the ones that make the most sense for your organisation.

3. How did we get this information?

We used multiple methods to collect data that have ultimately led to our guidelines. Data came from:

Interviews with organisational representatives from the Retail Trust's Let's Respect Retail steering group. These members provided insight on what customer aggression looked like in their workplaces, current measures they have in place to reduce incidents, challenges observed, and current reporting mechanisms.

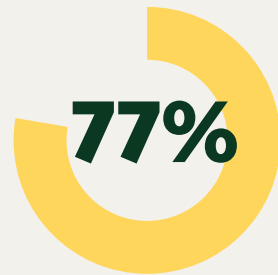
Interviews and focus groups from events held by Violence and Aggression Research Network (VARN). Hosted by the Thomas Ashton Institute, the VARN is a collaboration between the University of Manchester and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE); it aims to create a space for organisational representatives across sectors to discuss best practices in addressing third-party violence and aggression.

Surveys with data from the Retail Trust partners and their colleagues.

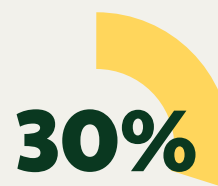
4. Impact on staff

Work-related violence and aggression can have profound and lasting effects on retail staff, both personally and professionally. The consequences extend beyond the immediate incident, influencing mental health, job performance and overall workplace culture.

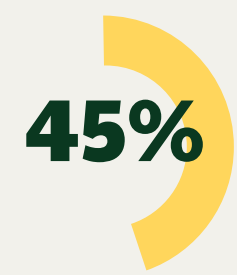
In the Retail Trust's Let's Respect Retail campaign and report of 1,000 workers in 2025, we found that:



Over three-quarters (77%) of shop staff experienced abuse in the last year.



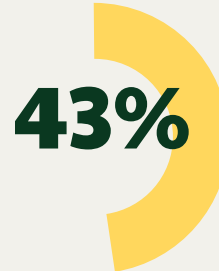
30% of workers said that they or a colleague had been filmed without their consent for someone's social media.



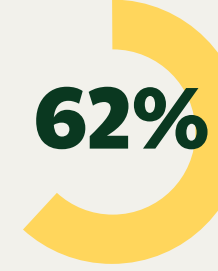
45% felt unsafe at work.



Almost a quarter (23%) were physically assaulted.



Close to half (43%) said they were being abused or attacked every week, a rise of 10 percentage points on the previous year, when 33% said they were experiencing weekly verbal or physical assaults.



Of those experiencing abuse, 62% felt stressed and anxious going into work, and 43% were looking to quit their job or the retail industry altogether as a result.

Emotional and psychological strain

Exposure to aggression, (whether verbal abuse, threats, or physical violence), can lead to anxiety or depression, and exposure to trauma may even result in post-traumatic stress disorder (National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work, 2025). Staff may feel unsafe, undervalued, or unsupported.

“42% of retail workers have experienced stress and anxiety in relation to unacceptable behaviour in their workplace.”

Foot Anstey, 2025

Reduced job satisfaction and morale

Repeated incidents of WVA can erode trust in management and reduce motivation, leading to staff becoming more disengaged and less willing to collaborate.

Impaired performance and customer service

When staff are stressed out and worried, they are less able to focus and are more likely to make mistakes. This means they're not performing at their best, and customer service deteriorates.

Increased absenteeism and turnover

Persistent abuse and fear of physical violence can drive some staff to take more sick leave, change their work schedules, relocate to different stores, or, in the most severe instances, leave their jobs altogether.

“The likelihood of considering leaving a job was consistently high, around a third... but actual departures were more common in hospitality (8%) and retail (8%).”

(Reported by respondents in the SL Trust survey (2025) who had experienced one or more incidents)

Work-home interference

The Retail Trust's research with AMBS found that mistreated retail workers experienced higher levels of burnout and often 'brought work home,' affecting their personal lives.

Creating a safe and respectful work environment is essential, not only for staff wellbeing but also for the sustainability and reputation of the business.

5. Impact on organisations

Work-related violence and aggression doesn't just affect individual staff members; it poses serious risks to the overall health and sustainability of retail businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

Operational disruption

Incidents of WVA can interrupt daily operations, as they require time and resources to manage conflicts, investigate complaints, and support affected staff.

Financial costs

Increased absenteeism, staff turnover, and potential legal liabilities can lead to significant financial strain, particularly for smaller businesses with limited margins.

“Retailers have spent £1.8 billion on crime prevention measures in just one year.”

(BRC, 2025)

Reputation damage

A workplace perceived as unsafe or hostile can put off customers, damage brand reputation, and make recruitment more difficult.

Compliance and liability risks

Proactively managing WVA is not only a duty of care, but a strategic investment in the resilience and reputation of the organisation. Failure to address WVA may result in breaches of health and safety regulations, exposing businesses to fines or legal action.



6. What do we have to do legally?

According to HSE, workplace health and safety laws cover the risks posed by work-related violence in the same way it covers other workplace hazards. The main pieces of UK legislation and the actions required in relation to WVA are:

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA)

As an employer, you have a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. This includes the protection from the threat of work-related violence and abuse. This means implementing proportionate control measures such as environmental or security adjustments, safe systems of work, lone-worker protocols, and training. Investigate incidents,

take disciplinary or employment action where appropriate, and provide support to victims (such as sick pay, counselling).

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

You have a duty to carry out and record risk assessments specifically covering violence and aggression. This means appointing competent persons, putting emergency procedures in place, and providing relevant information and training. The HSE provides information

on how to conduct risk assessments.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

You have a duty to report violent incidents that meet RIDDOR criteria to the relevant authorities.

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

These acts require you to consult with trade union

safety representatives or directly with employees about health and safety measures and incident responses.

Equality Act 2010

Take proactive steps to prevent harassment (amended recently to include sexual harassment in **The Worker Protection Act 2023**) and ensure fair treatment of all employees. This means training managers on their responsibilities and proactively creating an environment where employees feel safe to report incidents.

7. What can we do to reduce work-related violence and aggression?

Our work identified challenges in understanding and reducing incidents:

Encouraging reporting

The main challenge facing managers is to establish, and promote, a simple internal reporting system that is easily accessible to everyone, which captures all WVA, not just incidents, in line with RIDDOR criteria.

Research with AMBS and the Retail Trust found that over half (55%) of retail workers never report WVA to their managers or employers.

“I’ve found that the longer it takes an incident to be reported, other than for the most severe, where they expect follow-up, the less likely it is to be reported.”

Customer experience director, retail

Improving responses to WVA

According to an Usdaw report (2020), 38% of staff want more management support to respond to WVA from their employers. Retailers only report 32% of incidents of violence and abuse to the police (BRC, 2025), with 61% of retailers rating the police response to retail crime overall as poor or very poor.

“A distinct lack of consequences for offenders means shoplifters have no fear of repercussions.”

Udaw

Accepting the unacceptable

WVA can become embedded in organisational culture when staff feel discouraged from reporting incidents. This silence is often driven by a lack of trust in support systems or a belief that no meaningful action will follow. According to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust survey (2025), 32% of workers chose not to report incidents at all, and among those who did, 18% felt unsupported and saw no action taken.

Routine practices and attitudes in some organisations, can inadvertently normalise WVA. Low-level abuse may be dismissed as

just part of the job or typical behaviour from certain customers. The pervasive 'customer's always right' mindset can further marginalise staff experiences, making their concerns seem insignificant or unworthy of response.

Male-dominated sectors can normalise aggression and be reluctant to admit to incidents or adopt preventative measures.

Verbal abuse is likely normalised and not seen as worth reporting by many retail workers. While people are more likely to report physical WVA incidents.

“[I] believe verbal abuse has the most negative impact. When physical abuse happens, the police get involved and are more likely to take action, but not for verbal insults, and no one can see the damage that is felt.”

HR Manager, retail

Insufficient resources

A significant challenge that organisations face in addressing WVA is limited budgets which restrict investment in tools such as body-worn cameras and training programs. Plus, tight schedules often stop employees from getting the training they need, making it harder to implement effective safety measures. However, training can increase perceptions of support and help with employee retention.

“Narrow margins in retail means it is difficult to afford changes. HR, health and safety and security teams have to battle to get investment, as it's difficult to get evidence to prove the ROI.”

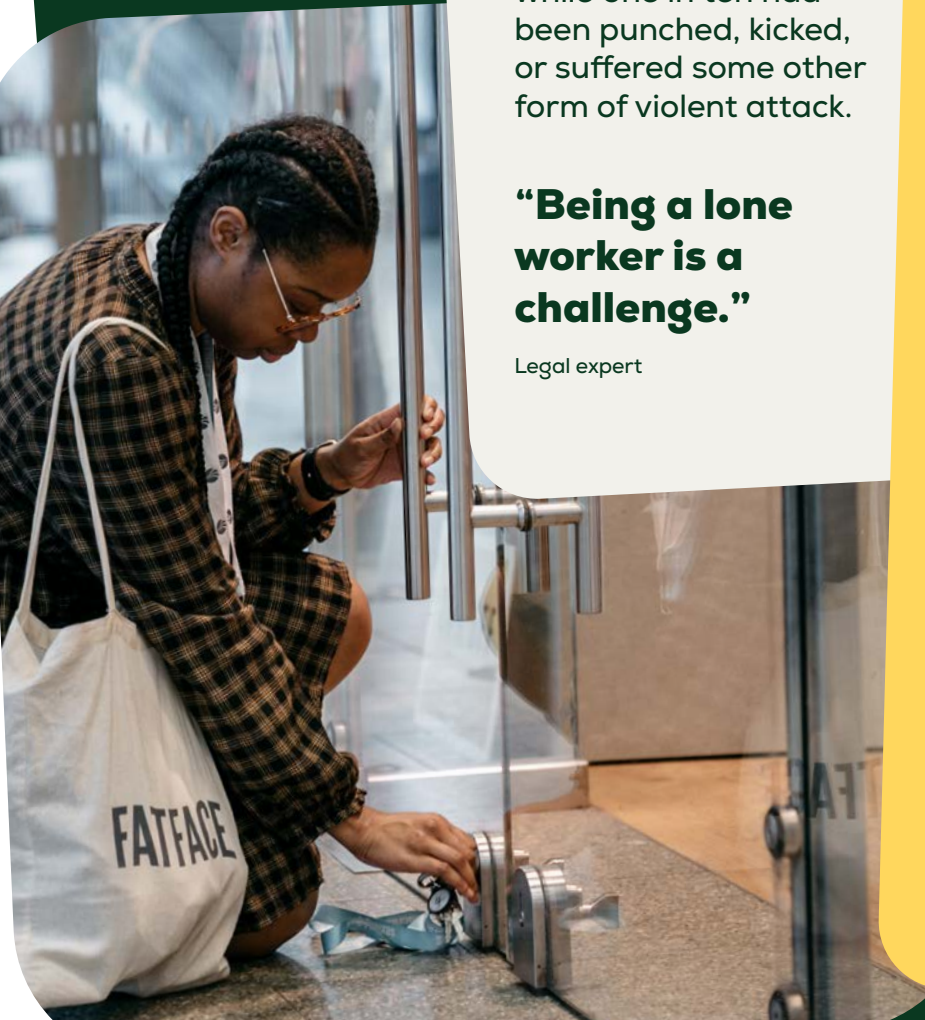
Legal expert

The Retail Trust's own research has identified that only 16% of colleagues who receive WVA training are looking to quit their job or the retail sector, compared to 43% among the general worker population.

16%
with
training

43%
without
training

Colleagues looking to
leave retail



Lone workers

According to a survey conducted for Suzy Lamplugh Trust (2017), 81% of lone workers are concerned about violence and aggression, while one in ten had been punched, kicked, or suffered some other form of violent attack.

“Being a lone worker is a challenge.”

Legal expert

Identifying violence and aggression hotspots

According to the National Business Crime Centre (2025), the main hotspots for WVA are: challenging customers for shoplifting or for ID when selling age-restricted products; when customers are under the influence of drink or drugs; and when enforcing organisational rules such as goods returns policies.

Identifying hotspots will become more important for organisations when the Employment Rights Bill (2024) comes into force. This bill will hold employers liable for third-party harassment and accountable if they fail to take ‘all reasonable steps’ to prevent it.

“The abuse ... depends on what you sell and the demographics, and also how easy and frictionless to a degree your customer experience is.”

Customer experience director, retail

Don't let uncertainty lead to inaction

Although the actions to take on tackling WVA can sometimes feel confusing or overwhelming, the most important principle is clear: don't do nothing.

Taking visible steps, no matter how small, shows staff that their safety and wellbeing are being taken seriously.

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Section two Retail tips

Retail tips

We have taken the advice and experience gathered from our research to pull together a collection of practical tips for employers to address work-related violence and aggression. The tips are structured under a simple-to-recall framework: **RETAIL**.

- R** **Report**
gather information to understand the prevalence of WVA
- E** **Engage**
interact with managers, staff and customers about WVA
- T** **Tackle**
deal with WVA and provide solutions
- A** **Assist**
be there to help after WVA incidents
- I** **Inform**
share what works openly with others
- L** **Learn**
constantly review all WVA experiences

Although this research was conducted with large retail organisations, we acknowledge that SMEs may not have the same resources to implement every recommendation. Many of these tips, however, can be scaled down or adapted to suit smaller budgets and business contexts. You may already be taking some of these actions, and you should understand the issues relating to WVA that could be impacting your staff. We recommend, therefore that you

review these tips and select and implement the actions you think are achievable and will have the most impact. The following list is not comprehensive; you don't have to do everything, just start with one actionable step to begin the process.

R

E

T

A

I

L

Report

You can't solve what you don't understand. Reporting incidents helps an organisation to understand the challenges, how prevalent work-related violence and aggression is, and where to get the best return in investments.

“We [management] only know what you tell us.” Customer experience director, retail

You can improve reporting by:

Putting simple, accessible, consistent reporting measures in place. Some organisations offer multisource systems with options for reporting incidents by telephone, paper forms, mobile app, face-to-face, or online. Avoid duplication of work (such as managers entering paper reports into an online database) or relying on technology unfamiliar to some workers.

“We use technology, a web-based portal accessible through any device, for people to report it on. It needs to be quick and easy and sufficient to triage, not too detailed.”

Customer experience director, retail

Involving both HR and health and safety together, as the reports of WVA are filed, works to provide a useful insight into, and a record of, any incidents.

Helping staff to familiarise themselves with reporting systems and technologies, in particular, part-time and temporary staff.

Encouraging staff to report incidents straight away while the memory is accurate.

Giving staff the time to make the report during work and allowing them to use workplace IT equipment, where appropriate.

Using apps that offer staff an anonymous reporting tool.

Having an emergency number available 24 hours a day for severe incidents.

Implementing simple systems, such as a 24-hour WhatsApp group (particularly useful for lone workers).

Capturing incidents on CCTV or body-worn cameras (BWCs).

Providing regular reminders about the importance of reporting. Newsletter, emails and bulletins can work, but only if the message is memorable.

R E T A I L

Engage

Take a holistic approach to ensure that everyone helps to reduce work-related violence and aggression.

Interact with managers, staff and customers by:

Communicating visibly and regularly to reinforce the non-tolerance of work-related abuse.

Placing signs at the front of each store and by the till is a suggestion, depending on the risk level. TV screens can also be used to display messages.

Reminding customers that retail staff have feelings. Start the message with positive recognition and consider using existing resources, such as from the Retail Trust's Let's Respect Retail campaign.

Fostering a culture whereby discussing WVA is acceptable. Provide regular internal meetings about WVA to engage managers and staff and maintain open communication.

“encourage speaking up and to make sure ... (employees) are feeling safe and secure, whether that’s from other employees or from ...external customers.”

Legal expert

Maintaining consistent communication through regular conference calls and operational updates for managers. This is

especially important for high-risk stores. Deliver regular newsletters directly to the store with a focus on health and safety features.

Telling stories about staff experiences to gain senior management commitment to address the issue. Video stories from staff are suggested as a good way of communicating the human impact of WVA to senior leaders.

Delivering an authentic and honest message from senior leaders that WVA is not just a 'part of the job'.

“As a HR function, we brand ourselves as the people team... Culturally, I think that makes us more approachable.”

HR manager

Tailoring your message to your audience. Some stores may respond better to social media and QR codes, while others prefer posters or direct links. Involve staff in developing and improving prevention measures.

RETAIL

Tackle

Deal with work-related violence and aggression and provide solutions by:

Carrying out risk assessments to mitigate incidences (HSE). For example, Foot Anstey provide legal advice and support to retailers through their Retailers Against Harassment certification.

“Establishing and maintaining a strong bond of trust between a retailer and employees is a central pillar of combating the problem of abuse and violence in the workplace.”

Legal expert

Developing a comprehensive violence prevention plan. A framework for employers can be downloaded here: <https://nbcc.police.uk/crime-prevention/shopworker-safety/framework-for-employers>

Having HR protocols in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, such as Retail Trust’s colleague incident pathway.

Implementing visible security measures such as personal alarms, CCTV, headsets, body-worn cameras (BWCs), security guards, and facial recognition technologies. Even if

introducing BWCs doesn’t reduce WVA incidents, they can make staff and customers feel safer and provide evidence to support prosecutions of offenders.

46% of consumers support use of BWCs to reduce unacceptable behaviour.

“We’ve changed the opening times so we are closed when the more antisocial behaviour was happening.”

HR manager

“In one store we were seeing 20 to 30 incidents of antisocial behaviour (from verbal abuse, physical abuse to shoplifting) a month and off the back of that we then put a security guard in there and overnight we went to 0.”

HR Manager

R E T A I L

Engaging staff early when introducing BWCs, so they are not seen as an intrusive 'big brother' tool. Some research suggests that BWCs can be viewed negatively if staff feel they will be monitored by them.

“Tools don’t seem to reduce crime but make the workers feel safe.”

Customer experience director, retail

Prioritising vulnerable staff, such as lone workers by creating a protocol, for example, partnering with a 'buddy' (a team member or other local shop workers close by), to keep in regular close contact. An alarm can be raised by using a code word agreed with others close by.

Using lone worker devices, such as the 'SoloProtect' range that includes an ID badge device, and ensures staff are always connected to help.

“Employees in high-risk stores [have] a SoloProtect device, you just wear it around your neck, and you can press a button if you need support. We refer to it as a personal safety device. And we’ve said it needs to be worn by somebody at all times, primarily the person that is on the till.”

Customer experience director, retail

Prioritising BWCs in stores with the greatest risks. If full-scale roll-out of BWCs is not wanted or feasible, mandate them for vulnerable or lone working, to make best use of limited resources.

Considering the customer experience and reduce potential frustrations by taking additional measures to prevent long queues and waiting times during the busiest periods.

Assigning age-restricted product sales to staff trained and confident in handling challenging customer interactions.

Thinking about the background music, the lighting and the whole ambience. Draw from staff experience to inform where redesigns may be beneficial, as they will have direct knowledge of the store and customers.

“Make the environment a happy customer journey.”

Legal expert

RETAIL

Assist

Be there to help after work-related violence and aggression incidents by:

Ensuring that staff know where to find help.

Provide signposts directly to counselling and support services such as employee assistance programmes. You may want to create dedicated support for specific cohorts, such as managers who have different needs from other colleagues. The Retail Trust provides incident pathways to find the training, tools and support to help people cope with challenging situations.

Call the Retail Trust wellbeing helpline on 0808 801 0808.

Checking in with your team at the end of each shift, ensuring staff feel supported – especially those who have recently faced a difficult situation.

Providing access

to trained wellbeing or harassment champions - colleagues trained to offer support - gives staff who've faced repeated abuse someone safe to talk to.

Fostering an open and supportive work environment.

For example, completing reports can be stressful, so acknowledging receipt, taking complaints seriously, showing empathy, and demonstrating a willingness to act can make a real difference.

Offering a place where staff feel safe to discuss their experiences or take a break if they need time out to recover from an incident.

“Knowing that you care and that it’s authentic and it’s genuine and providing aftercare resonates and starts to help with getting it [the message] out there.”

Customer experience director, retail

Recognising the harmful effects that witnesses or bystanders of aggression may also suffer.

Providing opportunities for staff who have experienced abuse to move to another role or store where possible.

Using existing operational tools, such as headsets as supportive tools to help in challenging situations with customers. For example, headsets are usually used to check on stock levels between shop floor and stock room, but they can also be used to communicate any escalating situations to other team members.

Inform

Share what works and learn from others by:

Collaborating with police, businesses, and other retailers through local partnerships and forums to share intelligence, discuss effective practices, and understand crime tactics. For example Project Pegasus, the business and police partnership or local crime partnerships such as The National Association of Business Crime Partnerships (NABCP).

Understanding The Retail Action Crime Plan, which offers guidance and support to help retailers and police work together.

Encouraging police presence, via hospitality incentives where café facilities are available.

Holding quarterly area meetings with store managers to share training, discuss key topics, and gather feedback.

Arranging 'colleague forums' within an organisation to listen, gather feedback, and provide support in high-impact stores.

Displaying posters in staff areas with the message 'please do speak up' and information on how to do so.

Providing regular training on safety protocols and emergency procedures. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust (2025) suggests:

“Specialist training was seen as valuable, with 13% supporting personal safety and lone working training, 8% calling for specific training on sexual harassment, and 15% identifying bystander training as helpful.”

Customer experience director, retail

RETAIL

Integrating training on handling difficult customers into staff induction and providing annual refreshers for all staff.

Training managers and staff together to build soft skills for conflict resolution and de-escalation. Joint training helps to establish group norms, supports incident management, and encourages workers to confide in their line managers.

Attending training courses available through the Retail Trust.

“De-escalation training makes the biggest difference.”

Customer experience director, retail

Using a ‘huddle sheet’ to train staff on handling tough situations. Start each huddle by presenting a challenge, then let managers and their team discuss what’s not working and brainstorm improvements together.

Providing information for managers about ‘leading wellbeing’. The NHS has a number of useful resources for managers such as this link has two sections: ‘Your health and wellbeing’ and ‘Leading for health and wellbeing’.

Raising awareness about the signs of potential violence, such as customers under

the influence of alcohol or drugs; increased customer waiting times; making policy changes (returns, payments, discounts); introducing new security or theft prevention measures; rearranging store layouts; introducing self-checkouts.

Reaffirming safety boundaries, confirming that no one is expected to physically intervene.

Ensuring all staff are up to date with any policy changes in advance and staff are given time to support customers through any changes.

R E T A I L

Learn

Reflect on work-related violence and aggression by:

Evaluating incidents, their impact, and the follow-up actions to identify opportunities for further improvements. Solutions can be developed with staff through working groups.

Collecting data on all aspects of abuse (verbal, physical and sexual): time, trends, locations.

Keeping track of the data so you can spot the stores with the biggest problems and try out solutions there first. Piloting changes in high-risk locations makes it easier to show what works and build the case for wider investment.

Encouraging feedback, for example, through annual engagement surveys. Monitor response scores at store level to identify problem areas.

Here are some questions you could ask when evaluating the effectiveness of approaches:

Has the number of reported incidents increased or decreased? It's normal to experience an increase in numbers when encouraging reporting, which doesn't necessarily mean more incidents are happening, just that you are finding out about more! Monitoring trends over time is helpful.

Has the type of reported incidents changed?

Are staff members feeling safer at work?

Do they feel the approach is working?

Have customer complaints about staff interactions changed?

What metrics are being used to track success?

Were all staff trained in the new procedures? Are they using the tools and procedures provided?

How frequently is the data reviewed?

Have any adjustments been made following feedback?

Is there a plan for ongoing support or training?

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Section three Resources

Here are some trusted places you can turn to for support and further information.

UK legislation and regulation

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents?view=plain>

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This legislation details the employer's duty to assess and control risks

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/contents/made>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

HSE is the primary source for law and practical expertise in Great Britain.

Below are the relevant links:

- Violence and aggression at work.

This is the main link to the resources described below:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/index.htm>

- How employers can protect workers from violence at work.

This printable guide describes categories of work-related violence and aggression and how employers can protect workers, aimed at safety representatives; explains the legal requirements; and what to do if an incident occurs:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/employer/index.htm>

Violence at Work

A guide for employers providing practical advice, which should also interest staff and safety representatives. It will help to identify if violence is a problem and what you can do to deal with it:

<https://books.hse.gov.uk/gempdf/indg69.pdf>

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

This document contains the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, together with an Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and additional guidance:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf>

Risk assessment

Managing risks and risk assessment at work.

HSE offers printable guidance including risk assessment templates and examples: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

Healthy Working Lives (Public Health Scotland) provides information on how to assess the risk of violence in the workplace and actions that can be taken to reduce the risk: <https://healthyworkinglives.scot/how-to-keep-your-workplace-safe/violence-and-aggression-in-the-workplace/assessing-risk-of-violence-and-aggression-in-the-workplace/violence-and-aggression-risk-assessment/>

Violence and aggression in the retail sector. A self-assessment tool provided by SafeWork NSW: https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1332285/Violence-and-Aggression-in-the-retail-sector.pdf

A sample Violence and Aggression Risk Assessment procedure from Tess, ESK and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust <https://www.tewv.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Violence-and-Aggression-Risk-Assessment-Procedure.pdf>

HR and reporting actions

RIDDOR

Employers, certain self-employed people and those in control of work premises must report certain workplace injuries, dangerous occurrences and occupational diseases to HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). This is the link to more details about HSE Reportable Incidents: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm>

Supporting mental health at work: practical guidance. Information and advice to improve support for those experiencing stress and mental health conditions, and to help prevent poor wellbeing: <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/mental-health-support-guide/>

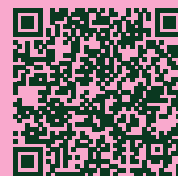
Retail Trust

The charity has a host of materials on their website.

Dedicated colleague incident pathway:



Learning and resources:



Suzy Lamplugh Trust

A very useful resource for risk assessments, personal safety, including lone workers' safety; and how to provide aftercare following a WVA incident is: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-leaflets>

Suzy's Charter for Workplace Safety provides a personal safety framework for organisations to adopt: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/suzys-charter-for-workplace-safety-training>

National business crime centre

A strategy uniting police, retailers and partners to combat retail crime offences from the National Business Crime Centre: <https://tacklingretailcrime.co.uk>

Additional resources

Retail Trust

The Retail Trust offers a range of resources for employers including:

Let's Respect Retail campaign

<https://www.retailtrust.org.uk/helping-your-business/customer-resources/respect-retail>

Health of retail report 2025

<https://www.retailtrust.org.uk/helping-your-business/customer-resources/health-of-retail-report-2025>

Foot Anstey

<https://www.retailtrust.org.uk/helping-your-business/customer-resources/retailers-against-harassment-campaign>

Usdaw

Here are some relevant resources from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

• **Abuse is not part of the job for retail workers:** <https://usdawlive.b-cdn.net/live/media/pufopkht/retail-workers-abuse-leaflet-429.pdf>

• **Abuse is not part of the job for delivery drivers:**

<https://usdawlive.b-cdn.net/live/media/stopfflg/delivery-drivers-abuse-leaflet-430.pdf>

• **While you're looking after the shop:**

<https://usdawlive.b-cdn.net/live/media/qcmo5zhk/fff-looking-after-you-leaflet-362.pdf>

• **Late-night working:** <https://usdawlive.b-cdn.net/live/media/iomhlzal/late-night-working-lft-294.pdf>

• **Preventing under-age sales:** <https://usdawlive.b-cdn.net/live/media/gqdp4nch/preventing-under-age-sales-lft-351.pdf>

• **Tips for a safer workplace:** <https://www.usdaw.org.uk/campaigns/freedom-from-fear/tips-for-a-safer-workplace/>

Suzy Lamplugh Trust:

<https://www.suzylamplugh.org/soloprotect>

The Complete Guide to Health and Safety Legislation by WorkSafe UK,

who provides nationwide health and safety training and assessments: <https://www.worksafe.uk.com/health-and-safety-law/the-complete-guide-to-health-and-safety-legislation/>

Association of Convenience Stores:

the network provides tips and information about handling violence and abuse and anti-social behaviour: <https://www.acs.org.uk/crime-report/violence-abuse-and-asb>

National Association of Business Crime Partnerships

provides practical support, expert guidance, and a unified voice to help businesses prevent crime, share intelligence, and shape safer high streets and communities: <https://www.nabcp.com/>

National Business Crime Centre

provide information to retailers to help them identify the key drivers of violence against staff and how to prevent or mitigate the threat of violence and abuse: https://nbcc.police.uk/images/Reducing_Violence_Against_Staff_Online.pdf

NHS England

provides a number of resources:

• 'Looking after your team's health and wellbeing guide'. It is focused on a health and care environment, but many initiatives are relevant to other environments: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/looking-after-your-teams-health-and-wellbeing-guide/>

• This link has more general resources and is divided into two sections: <https://senioronboarding.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/creating-compassionate-and-inclusive-cultures/health-and-well-being-resource/>

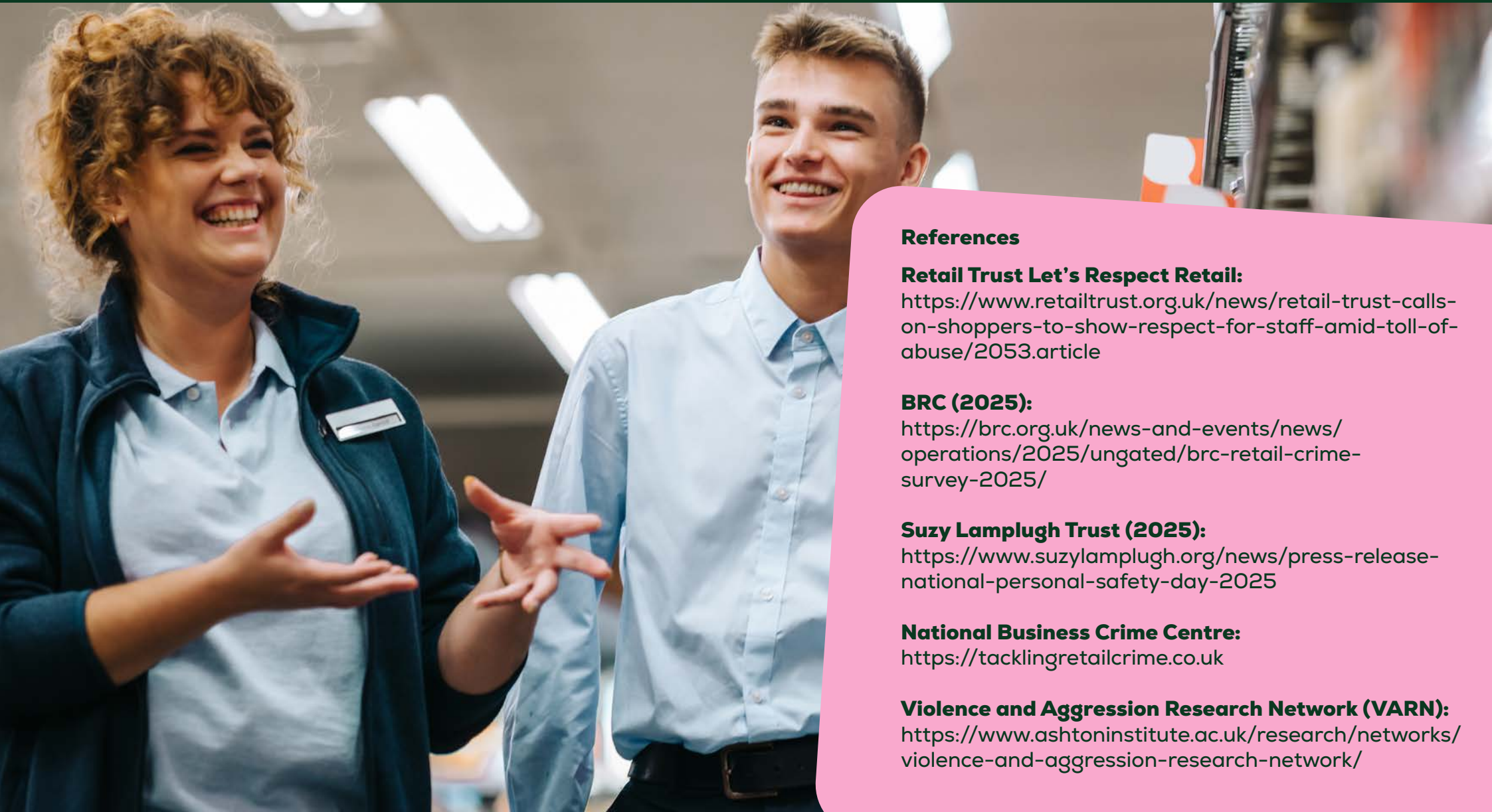
If you need further support implementing the advice in this guide,
please contact Cliff Lee
clee@retailtrust.org.uk

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References

Retail Trust Let's Respect Retail:

<https://www.retailtrust.org.uk/news/retail-trust-calls-on-shoppers-to-show-respect-for-staff-amid-toll-of-abuse/2053.article>

BRC (2025):

<https://brc.org.uk/news-and-events/news/operations/2025/ungated/brc-retail-crime-survey-2025/>

Suzy Lamplugh Trust (2025):

<https://www.suzylamplugh.org/news/press-release-national-personal-safety-day-2025>

National Business Crime Centre:

<https://tacklingretailcrime.co.uk>

Violence and Aggression Research Network (VARN):

<https://www.ashtoninstitute.ac.uk/research/networks/violence-and-aggression-research-network/>