

## **The Hazards Campaign's position on work-related violence**

### **Core Position**

The Hazards Campaign treats work-related violence as a serious, preventable health and safety issue, not just a behavioural or criminal problem.

Hazards argue that violence at work:

- Is rooted in workplace conditions and employer decisions
- Should be regulated, prevented, and enforced like any other hazard
- Disproportionately affects low-paid, insecure, and frontline workers

### **How Hazards define the problem**

Although the manifesto doesn't isolate violence as a standalone section, it clearly places it within broader workplace risks:

Violence is part of "work-related harm" alongside injury, illness, stress, harassment (inc sexual) and exploitation. It is linked to:

- Poor management
- Understaffing
- Long hours and fatigue
- Lack of training or safeguards

It often overlaps with:

- Stress and mental ill-health
- Bullying and harassment
- Precarious employment

The campaign emphasises: these are systemic risks, not isolated incidents.

### **Key causes identified**

From the manifesto's framework, work-related violence arises from:

1. Weak regulation and enforcement. Reduced inspections mean unsafe environments go unchallenged. Many "low-risk" sectors (retail, care, hospitality) are actually high-risk for violence
2. Precarious and low-paid work. Workers in insecure jobs are:
  - More exposed to public-facing roles
  - Less able to report violence
  - Fear of losing work discourages reporting
3. Lack of worker voice. A Decline in trade unions reduces:
  - Reporting of risks
  - Preventative action

Unionised workplaces are safer overall, including from violence [*Hazards Manifesto 2019*]

#### 4. Poor job design

Lone working, understaffing, and customer pressure increase risk. Employers often fail to assess violence as a hazard

#### **Hazards Campaign solutions**

1. Treat violence as a preventable hazard. Include violence explicitly in risk assessments. Apply the 'Prevention principle' (remove risks before harm occurs)

'Precautionary principle' (act even if risk isn't fully proven)

2. Stronger enforcement. More inspections in sectors with high violence risk. End the idea that some workplaces are "low risk". Use enforcement notices and prosecutions as deterrents against unsafe practices.

3. Empower workers and unions. Give workers rights to, report violence safely and refuse dangerous work. Strengthen role of safety reps to identify and act on violence risks. Introduce rights like: "Stop the job" in unsafe situations.

4. Address root causes. Improve working conditions: staffing levels, pay and job security, working hours. Recognise links between: Violence, stress, and exploitation

5. Protect vulnerable workers. Focus on sectors most affected:

- Care work
- Retail
- Transport
- Gig economy

Ensure enforceable rights from day one, regardless of contract type.

#### **Wider perspective**

The Hazards Campaign places work-related violence within a broader argument - it is part of structural inequality at work. Lower-status workers face: higher exposure to violence, fewer protections therefore, tackling violence requires: Stronger labour rights, reduced inequality, greater unionisation.

In summary the Hazards Campaign view is that work-related violence is not inevitable it is caused by unsafe systems and employer decisions. It can be prevented through regulation, enforcement, and worker empowerment.