

No Tolerance of Violence

Get it Right - RIGHT WORK PLACE

updated 2009

The September 2005 Wales Audit Office Report Protecting NHS Trust staff from violence and aggression found that NHS Trust staff reported around 8,000 incidents of violence and aggression, the equivalent of 22 incidents occurring each day somewhere in Wales. Three-quarters of these incidents were against nurses, midwives and health visitors.

Violence attacks on NHS staff are a crime. Responsibility for pursuing this crime should be removed from the individual nurse and placed on the Employer. England has a National Unit (Security Management Services) dedicated to raising the number of successful prosecutions against those who are violent to NHS staff. Wales needs to follow this approach. Prosecution rates should be monitored as an indicator of progress. This will send a strong message of encouragement to the public who support nurses and other NHS staff, of deterrence to potential offenders and of support to front-line nurses and staff who consistently report feeling that the Government does not take this seriously.

Investment in training is needed including auditing compliance with passport scheme and developing guidance and training for staff that need to use

restrictive physical interventions. Support for staff who have been attacked is still lacking in many areas. There needs to be fast tracking for those with either a physical or psychological injury following an incident.

In May 2008 the Welsh Assembly Government launched the Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Violence and Aggression in NHS (Wales). The report made a number of recommendations covering the areas of concern to RCN Wales. Progress on the implementation of the report should be assessed. In July 2009 the Audit Committee of the National Assembly for Wales described the implementation process of these recommendations as suffering from 'a general lack of urgency' with progress being 'limited' in nature. This is clearly disappointing to record and RCN Wales calls for urgent action on implementation.

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KEY POLICY ACTIONS

- The Welsh Assembly Government should create a special national unit whose responsibility should be to increase the number of successful prosecutions against those who commit acts of violence against NHS staff.
- The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure the regular review of the compliance of NHS Employers with statutory guidance and their progress in implementing the Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Violence and Aggression in NHS (Wales).
 - The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure an increased presence of security staff, community safety officers and police officers in NHS premises.
 - The Welsh Assembly Government should promote a national awareness campaign to show that violence against nurses will not be tolerated in Wales.
 - The Welsh Assembly Government should take steps to increase compliance by health organisations with guidance on offering support to victims of violence.
 - The Welsh Assembly Government should agree a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with the Association of Chief Police Officers.
 - The Welsh Assembly Government should consider on an All-Wales basis how to develop facilities and provide trained staff to receive patients who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol and require immediate healthcare – particularly those who are aggressive.
 - The Welsh Assembly Government should consider measures to improve the safety of those healthcare staff working in the community including the development of lone worker polices and alert systems.