

Joint Emergency Services Group

An All Wales Review of Assaults on Emergency Workers

Biannual Report

Q4 2020-21 | Q1 2021-22

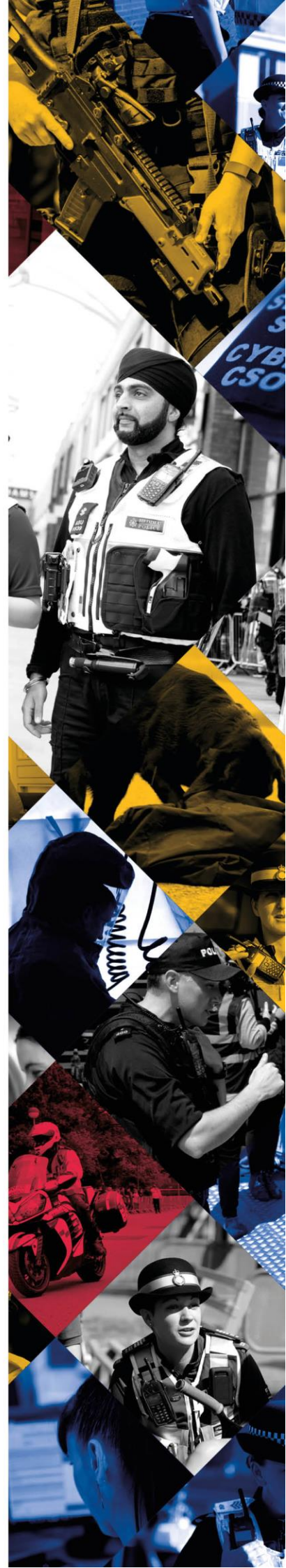


Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Aim	4
Purpose	4
Methodology	4
Key Findings and Analysis	6
Figures	6
Overall	6
Crime Trends	7
Police	8
Medical Workers	9
Fire and Rescue	10
Prison	11
Emerging Trends	12
Location Analysis	13
Location Types	13
Incident Rates	13
Geographical Patterns	14
Hotspot Analysis	16
Incident Circumstances	21
Initial Incident Response	21
Crewing	21
Peak Day and Time Analysis	21
Offender Characteristics	23
Demographics	23
Repeat Offending	24
Nature of Assault	26
Impact Factors	27
Outcomes	28
Recommendations	31



Executive Summary

This report follows the *All Wales Review of Assaults on Emergency Workers*, providing a biannual update of assault on emergency worker incidents taking place from 1st January 2021 to 30th June 2021. 1,365 assaults on emergency workers occurred during this six-month period, 29% (n=400) of which caused injury to the victim. Data has been analysed and compared with a rolling dataset from April 2019 to identify trends, presenting a year-on-year increase of 9%. The monthly average of emergency worker assaults has increased from 210 in the 12 months to June 2020, to 229 in the 12 months to June 2021.

Assaults on police remain high, averaging 152 victims each month in 2021. More assaults against medical workers are identified, with 322 recognised in the past six months, including 60 *Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust* call centre staff. Monthly incident numbers have risen above the average of 39 to 52, potentially influenced from increased reporting and data improvements. Whilst some emergency worker victims remain unidentifiable due to data recording, more worker types have been acknowledged in this biannual update, including prison staff.

Almost half (47%) of emergency worker assaults take place in South East Wales; the most prolific authority areas being Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Bridgend. Merthyr Tydfil has the highest rate of emergency worker assaults at 1.67 per 1,000 population.

46% of offenders are male, 23% are female however the gender is not known in 31% of incidents. Offenders aged 26-35 years old account for the highest portion of offending (24%), followed by 18-25-year-olds at 17%. Alcohol intoxication continues to present as the largest impact factor, applying to a third of incidents.

A small data sample suggests 8% of offenders have gone on to commit another assault against emergency worker(s) offence within six months. Mental health is a known contributing factor in half of these reoffenders.

65% of police assaults occurring in 2021 have already received a positive outcome however this proportion is less for medical workers at 37%. In 20% of medical worker assaults, the victim has withdrawn their support. This is much less for police assaults, accounting for 2% of known outcomes.



Introduction

Aim

The aim of this report is to provide a comprehensive understanding of assaults on emergency workers across Wales.

Purpose

This document was commissioned by Chief Constable Pam Kelly of Gwent Police as part of the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) forum.

An integrated approach through multi-agency data analysis can provide insight of emergency worker assaults that take place across Wales. This aims to identify patterns and emerging trends to assist with forming prevention strategies.

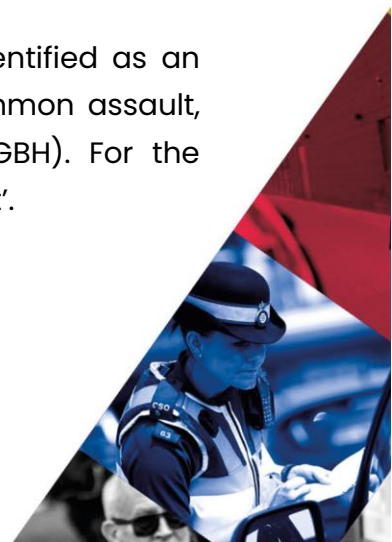
Methodology

In December 2020, Gwent Police produced the report '*An Initial Review of Assaults on Emergency Workers*' which scoped out terms of reference and identified parameters for use in a multi-agency report. The report *An All Wales Review of Assaults on Emergency Workers* was released in February 2021 and updates are provided biannually.

Based on a template developed by Gwent Police, the following partner agencies have supplied datasets: *South Wales Police; Dyfed Powys Police; North Wales Police; British Transport Police; South Wales Fire and Rescue; Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue; North Wales Fire and Rescue; Welsh Ambulance Service*. Police forces have provided recorded crime data of emergency worker assaults, with other agencies supplying incidents recorded internally where a worker has been a victim of assault or abuse.

To understand patterns and trends, a rolling dataset has been developed with data collected from the named partner agencies based on incidents taking place during the period 1st April 2019 to 30th June 2021. To enable analysis, this data has been combined and standardised, with any identifiable duplicates cleansed. Thematic analysis has been utilised to identify patterns when reviewing impact factors and assault types.

All known incidents have been included whereby the victim is identified as an emergency worker and has experienced verbal threat/abuse, common assault, actual bodily harm (ABH) or wounding/grievous bodily harm (GBH). For the purposes of this report, they will be collectively referred to as 'assault'.



The type of emergency worker¹ is defined by the main type of service provided by each employee identified in the dataset and are categorised with influence from the '*Joint Agreement on Offences Against Emergency Workers*' publication²:

Police – Officers (of any rank); custody detention officers; community support officers; special constables; custody nurses

Medical – NHS workers (including but not exclusive to nurses, doctors, consultants, ward managers, porters); Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) staff (including but not exclusive to paramedics, emergency medical technicians [EMTs], ambulance command and control staff, clinical contact centre staff, NHS Direct call handlers); COVID-19 test centre workers; healthcare workers

Fire and Rescue – Fire crew; fire control staff; fire safety staff

Prison – Prison workers including officers and nurses

Emergency Worker (E/W) – Emergency worker(s) undefined by data supplier.

¹ Assault on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018, s.3(1), accessed 17th August 2021, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

² CPS (2020) '*Joint Agreement on Offences Against Emergency Workers*', accessed 27th January 2021, <https://www.cps.gov.uk/>



Key Findings and Analysis

Figures

Overall

In the first six months of 2021, 1,365 known incidents of assault or abuse towards an emergency worker have taken place. Of those incidents identified, 67% (n=915) of victims are police, 24% (n=322) are medical workers, 62 are prison staff and 22 are fire and rescue crews. This includes 60 medical call centre staff identified by *Welsh Ambulance Service* as victims of abuse. More medical workers and prison staff have been determined due to data improvements compared with the previous six months (July to December 2020), whilst the overall total has remained fairly consistent, with only 19 fewer incidents.

The following chart shows the long-term trend and includes data from all Welsh police forces, *British Transport Police*, fire and rescue services and *Welsh Ambulance Service*. A total of 5,887 emergency worker assaults are known to have taken place across Wales over the entire data collection period (April 2019 to July 2021). Of these assaults, known injury was caused in 30% (n=1,751) of cases.

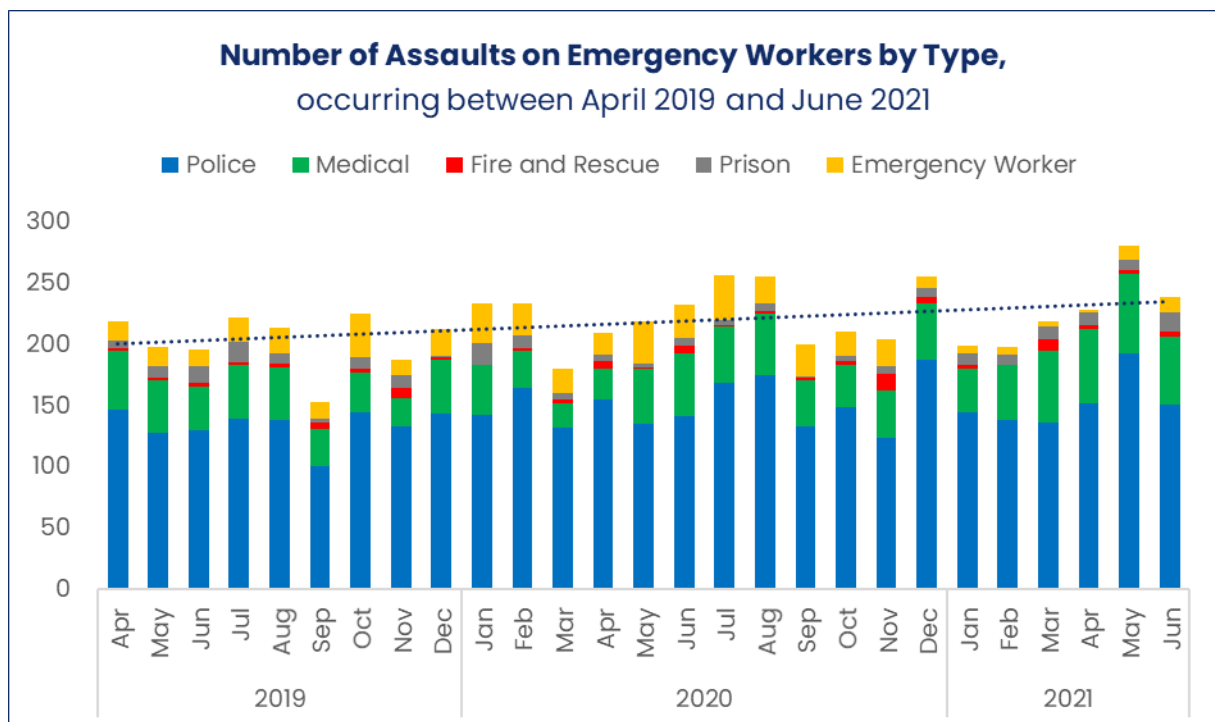
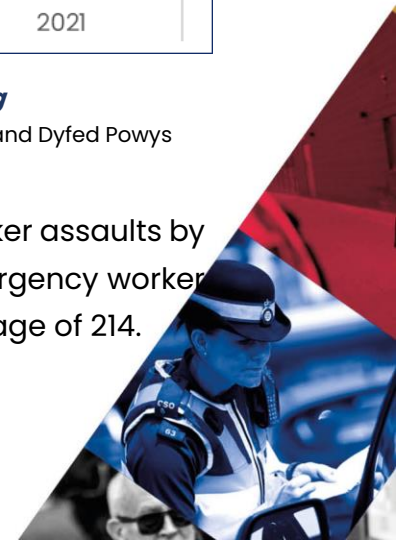


Figure 1. Assaults on Emergency Workers, by Type of Worker and Month Occurring

*Emergency Worker (E/W) data has been supplied by South Wales Police, North Wales Police and Dyfed Powys Police where the type of worker cannot be determined

The previous chart (figure 1) presents the number of emergency worker assaults by type of worker and month. May 2021 saw the highest volume of emergency worker assaults with 281, increasing 31% above the previous 24-month average of 214.



Crime Trends

Comparing the most recent 12-month period (July 2020 to June 2021) with the previous 12 months (July 2019 to June 2020) shows the monthly average rose from 210 to 229 (up 9%). This demonstrates an increase in emergency worker assaults taking place and suggests more incidents are being reported.

The year-on-year change has seen an overall 9% rise in incidents. Incidents against medical workers have seen the highest proportion increase (up 35%), however due to data limitations, this only provides a snapshot of the true scale of the problem. Those incidents with police victims have also seen a notable year-on-year rise of 11% (181 additional incidents). A greater number of types of workers have been identified due to improvements in data recording and extraction, highlighted in the decline of those defined as 'emergency worker'.

Table 1. Assaults on Emergency Workers, Year-on-year Change

<i>Type of Worker</i>	July 2019 to June 2020	July 2020 to June 2021	% Change
<i>Police</i>	1,672	1,853	11%
<i>Fire and Rescue</i>	45	49	9%
<i>Medical</i>	428	576	35%
<i>Prison</i>	98	90	-8%
<i>Emergency Worker*</i>	282	181	-36%
Total	2,525	2,749	9%

*Emergency Worker (E/W) data has been supplied by South Wales Police, North Wales Police and Dyfed Powys Police where the type of worker cannot be determined



Police

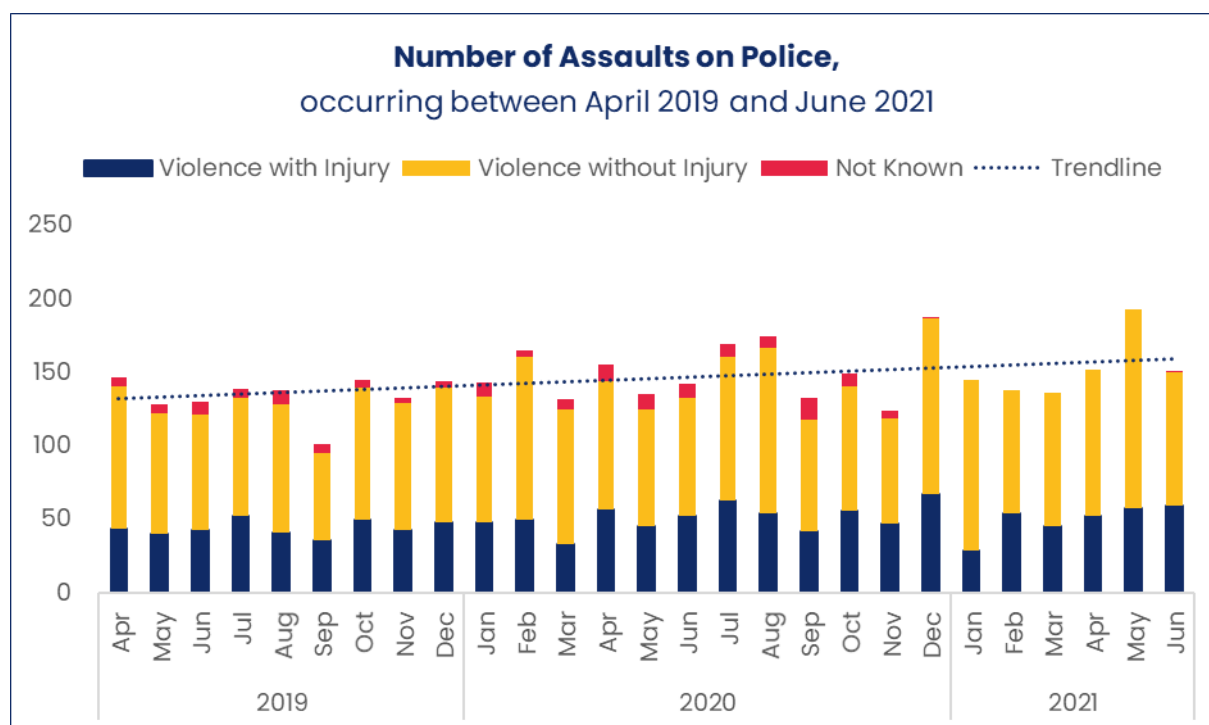


Figure 2. Assaults on Police, by Injury and Month Occurring

A total of 3,930 assaults on police have taken place between April 2019 to June 2021, including 32 instances relating to verbal threat/abuse only. 33% (n=1,308) of assaults resulted in injury of the victim. Comparing data for financial year 2020-21 with 2021 police establishment figures suggests 1 in 5 police in Wales experienced an assault in a 12-month period. This does not consider repeat victims as this is not identifiable in the dataset.

For the entire data collection period (April 2019 to June 2021), the table below provides a breakdown of known police assaults by region and injury level. The proportion of incidents (including where injury level is unknown) is shown to understand the volume of assaults in each region.

Table 2. Assaults on Police, by Region and Injury (April 2019 to June 2021)

Region	Violence with Injury	Violence without Injury	Proportion in Region to Overall Assaults on Police (%)
South East Wales	765	1,357	59%
South West Wales	289	440	19%
Mid Wales	62	195	7%
North Wales	190	473	19%
Outside Wales*	2	5	-

*This includes some incidents against British Transport Police where the force area covers regions beyond the Wales-England border



Medical Workers

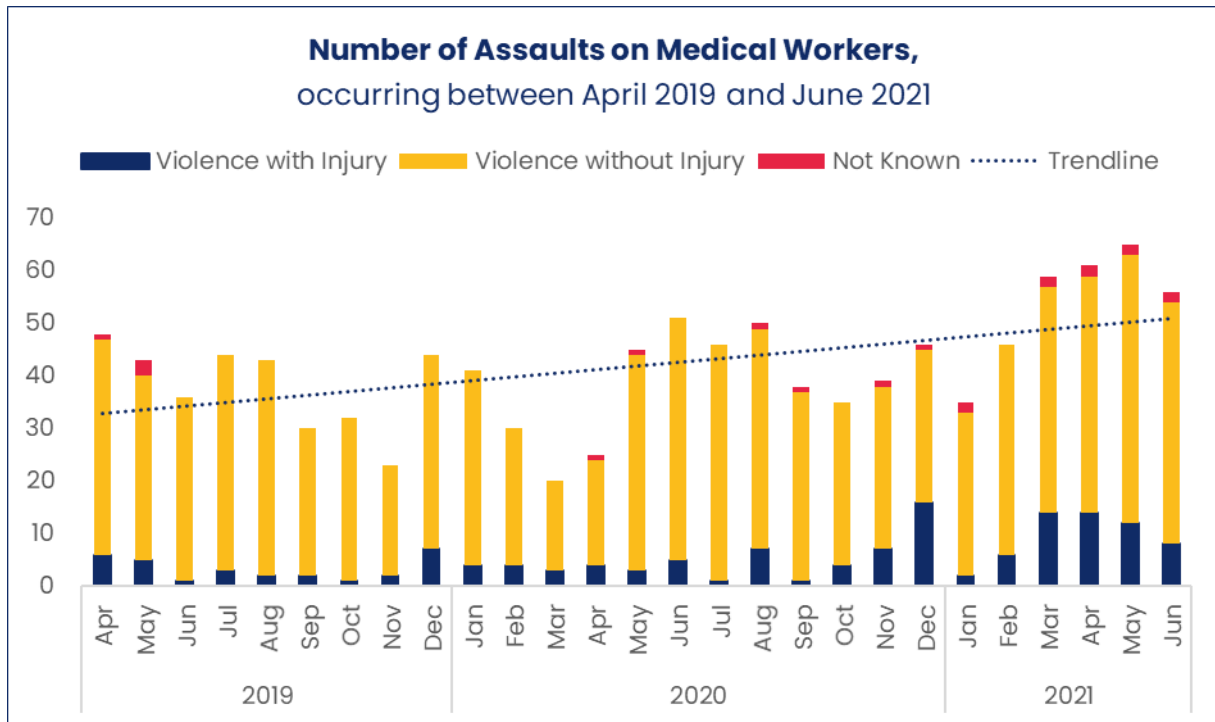


Figure 3. Assaults on Medical Workers, by Injury and Month Occurring

A total of 1,131 instances of assaults on medical staff have been identified between April 2019 and July 2021. This is based on police data where a victim has been identified as a medical worker and from data provided by *Welsh Ambulance Service*. Whilst this will not represent the true number of assaults that take place, it allows patterns and trends to be observed.

The below table provides a breakdown of assaults on medical workers based on whether injury was caused or not. This table does not include *Welsh Ambulance Service* call centre staff.

Table 3. Assaults on Medical Workers, by Region and Injury (April 2019 to June 2021)

Region	Violence with Injury	Violence without Injury	Proportion in Region to Overall Assaults on Medical Workers (%)
South East Wales	88	350	47%
South West Wales	17	161	20%
Mid Wales	-	26	3%
Mid and South West Wales*	3	76	8%
North Wales	34	175	22%

*Based on incidents in Hywel Dda health board area and no further location data provided so it is not possible to determine the specific region i.e. South West Wales or Mid Wales

Fire and Rescue

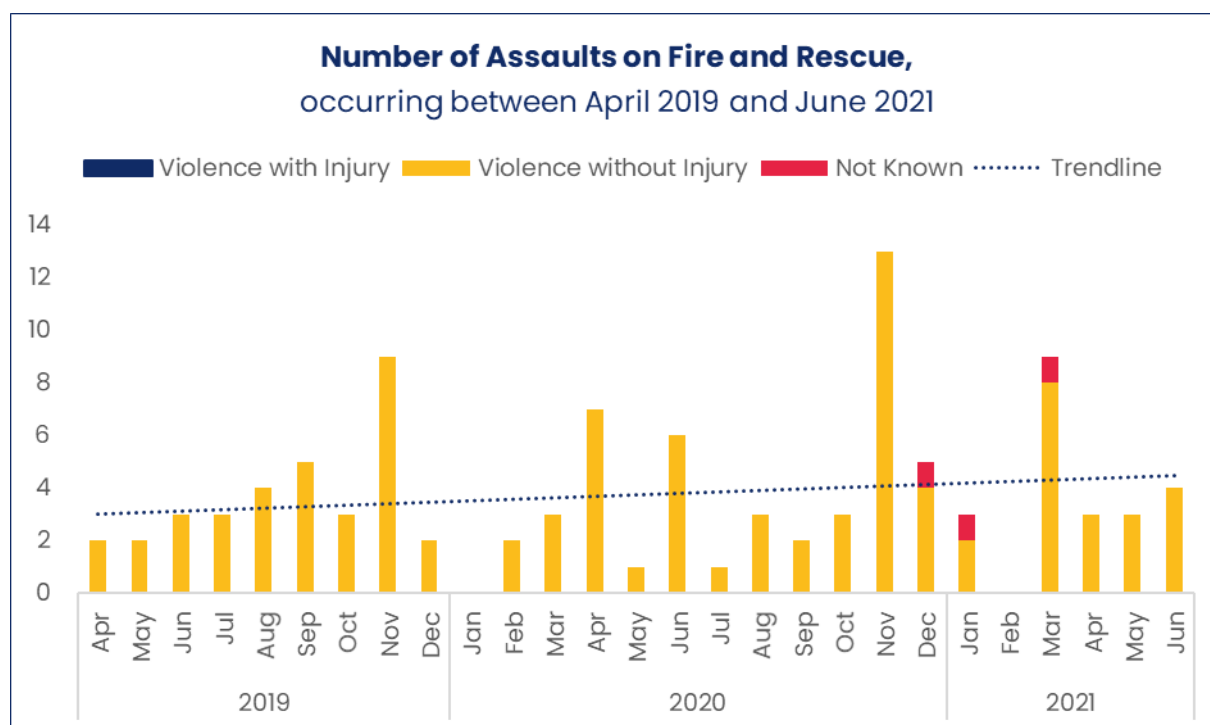


Figure 4. Assaults on Fire and Rescue, by Injury and Month Occurring

101 incidents of assault against fire and rescue workers have been identified between April 2019 and June 2021, showing seasonality in November. March 2021 saw an unexplained rise in South East and South West Wales. No instances of assault causing injury to a fire and rescue worker have been identified, however in three cases the injury to the victim is not known.

The following table breaks down the number of incidents by region.

Table 4. Assaults on Fire and Rescue, by Region and Injury (April 2019 to June 2021)

<i>Region</i>	Violence without Injury	Proportion in Region to Overall Assaults on Fire and Rescue (%)
<i>South East Wales</i>	48	48%
<i>South West Wales</i>	24	24%
<i>Mid Wales</i>	4	4%
<i>North Wales</i>	22	22%



Prison

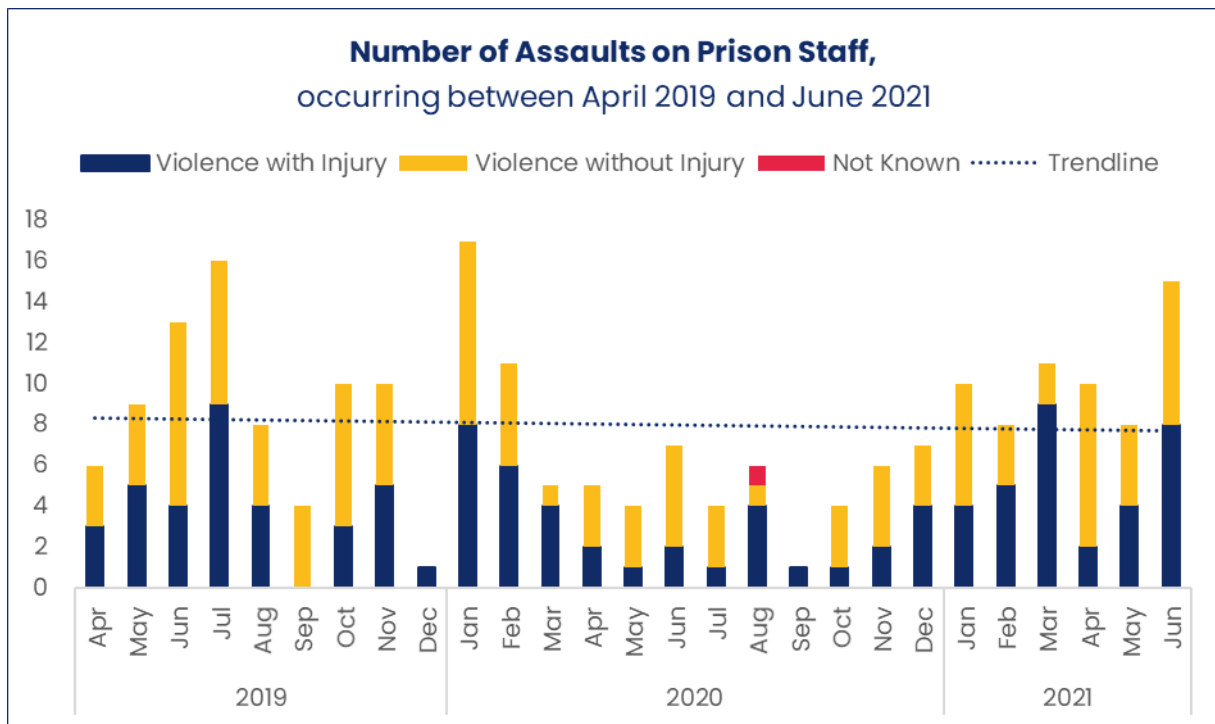


Figure 5. Assaults on Prison Staff, by Injury and Month Occurring

Police data has enabled the identity of some emergency worker victims to be recognised as prison staff. From April 2019 to June 2021, 216 incidents of assault against prison workers have been identified. Nearly half of all incidents (n=102 or 47%) were known to cause injury to the victim.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of known assaults on prison staff by region and whether injury was caused.

Table 5. Assaults on Prison staff, by Region and Injury (April 2019 to June 2021)

Region	Violence with Injury	Violence without Injury	Proportion in Region to Overall Assaults on Prison staff (%)
South East Wales	87	92	83%
South West Wales	12	21	15%
North Wales	3	0	1%



Emerging Trends

There has been a year-on-year increase in assaults on emergency workers as demonstrated in the overall figures. Recorded assaults on police continue to increase, with a year-on-year rise of 11% (up 181). December 2020 and May 2021 saw the highest volume of assaults on police. Previously assaults on medical workers remained consistent, however these now demonstrate a long-term rise when comparing the 12 months to June 2020 with the 12 months to June 2021. Incidents have increased by 35% (up 148) from 428 to 576, with April and May 2021 demonstrating the highest levels seen in the previous two years. Known assaults against fire and rescue crews and prison staff have remained consistent.

Incidents of assaults on emergency workers continue to rise during the COVID-19 pandemic where many other crimes saw a decline. Of data from Welsh police forces (excluding *South Wales Police*) and British Transport Police, there has been 69 known instances of assault on police following a COVID-19 breach. Comparing the nature of recorded assaults from financial year 2019-20 to 2020-21 shows a 13% increase in offences where an emergency worker has been spat at. There have also been 36 instances where an emergency worker has deliberately been coughed at; whilst it is not known if these were executed with the intention of spreading infection, it carries significant risk to victims.



Location Analysis

Location Types

Locations have been themed by type to generate an understanding of where assaults on emergency workers are most likely to take place. Of the 1,365 incidents taking place in 2021 (January to June), the top ten known location types are:

- Dwelling (n=341 or 25%)
- Street/public place (n=319 or 23%)
- Hospital (102 or 8%) and Mental Health Hospital/Unit (n=21)
- Police Station (n=99 or 7%)
- Prison (n=66 or 5%)
- Welsh Ambulance Call Centre (n=60 or 4% - verbal abuse only)
- Other Medical Setting (n=42 or 3%)
- Ambulance (n=28 or 2%)
- Retail (n=28 or 2%)
- Railway Station (n=21)

Comparing location types with the previous six months (July to December 2020) and the same period last year (January to June 2020) has shown a shift in incidents recorded at hospital premises, from 3% to 8% of all occurrences.

Incident Rates

In 2020-21, Merthyr Tydfil demonstrated the highest incident rate for emergency worker assaults at 1.67 per 1,000 population, a notable rise from 2019-20 at 1.04. Other areas above one are Cardiff (1.14 per 1,000 population) and Newport (1.07 per 1,000 population). The following table demonstrates the incident rate in each local authority area based on data available.



Table 6. Emergency Worker Assaults Incident Rates per 1,000 population, by Local Authority Area

Region and Local Authority Area	2019–20 Incident Rate (per 1,000 population³)	2020–21 Incident Rate (per 1,000 population⁴)	Year-on-year Increase ▲ /▼ Decrease
South East Wales			
<i>Blaenau Gwent</i>	0.44	0.57	▲ 0.13
<i>Bridgend</i>	0.94	0.91	▼ 0.03
<i>Caerphilly</i>	0.71	0.86	▲ 0.15
<i>Cardiff</i>	1.03	1.14	▲ 0.11
<i>Merthyr Tydfil</i>	1.04	1.67	▲ 0.63
<i>Monmouthshire</i>	0.43	0.18	▼ 0.25
<i>Newport</i>	1.13	1.07	▼ 0.06
<i>Rhondda Cynon Taff</i>	0.69	0.86	▲ 0.17
<i>Torfaen</i>	0.69	0.78	▲ 0.09
<i>Vale of Glamorgan</i>	0.79	0.55	▼ 0.24
South West Wales			
<i>Carmarthenshire</i>	0.54	0.72	▲ 0.18
<i>Neath Port Talbot</i>	0.44	0.51	▲ 0.07
<i>Pembrokeshire</i>	0.56	0.65	▲ 0.09
<i>Swansea</i>	0.62	0.63	▲ 0.01
Mid Wales			
<i>Ceredigion</i>	0.73	0.45	▼ 0.28
<i>Powys</i>	0.56	0.51	▼ 0.05
North Wales			
<i>Anglesey</i>	0.34	0.31	▼ 0.03
<i>Conwy</i>	0.37	0.51	▲ 0.14
<i>Denbighshire</i>	0.72	0.61	▼ 0.11
<i>Flintshire</i>	0.26	0.38	▲ 0.12
<i>Gwynedd</i>	0.51	0.54	▲ 0.03
<i>Wrexham</i>	0.55	0.55	No Change

Geographical Patterns

Cardiff continues to see the highest number of emergency worker assaults with 183 recorded from January to June 2021, accounting for 13% of all incidents, followed by Swansea (n=92 or 7%) and Rhondda Cynon Taff (n=91 or 7%), all of which are located in South East Wales. When compared with the same period in 2020⁴, the most incidents occurred in Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taff. However, there has been a shift as the second highest number of assaults were previously recorded in Newport.

The following table provides a breakdown of all identified assault on emergency worker incidents occurring in 2021⁵, by region and local authority area. The percentage against each local authority area is based on the total number of

³ Based on 2020 mid-year population estimate from Stats Wales (2021) Population estimates by local authority and year, accessed 18th August 2021, <https://statswales.gov.wales/>

⁴ 1st January to 30th June



assaults committed against the type of worker: police, medical, fire and rescue, prison, or emergency worker.

Table 7. Assaults on Emergency Workers, by Area and Type of Worker (January to June 2021)

Region and Local Authority Area	Police	Medical	Fire & Rescue	Prison	E/W*
South East Wales	413	130	12	53	34
<i>Blaenau Gwent</i>	1%	0.3%			
<i>Bridgend</i>	3%	2%		76%	9%
<i>Caerphilly</i>	7%	2%	14%		
<i>Cardiff</i>	15%	7%	9%	10%	36%
<i>Merthyr Tydfil</i>	2%	1%			
<i>Monmouthshire</i>	1%	0.3%			
<i>Newport</i>	5%	1%	9%		
<i>Rhondda Cynon Taff</i>	7%	3%	14%		23%
<i>Torfaen</i>	2%	1%	5%		
<i>Vale of Glamorgan</i>	1%	3%	5%		5%
<i>Unidentifiable LA</i>	0.1%	19%			5%
South West Wales	168	70	8	7	7
<i>Carmarthenshire</i>	5%	5%			
<i>Neath Port Talbot</i>	3%	2%	9%		
<i>Pembrokeshire</i>	4%	3%			
<i>Swansea</i>	7%	2%	27%	11%	16%
<i>Unidentifiable LA</i>		9%			
Mid Wales	71	8	1	-	-
<i>Ceredigion</i>	3%	0%			
<i>Powys</i>	5%	0%	5%		
<i>Unidentifiable LA</i>		2%			
Mid and South West Wales**	-	22	-	-	-
<i>Unidentifiable LA</i>		7%			
North Wales	256	50	1	2	3
<i>Anglesey</i>	2%	1%			
<i>Conwy</i>	4%	0.3%			
<i>Denbighshire</i>	6%	2%	5%		5%
<i>Flintshire</i>	5%				
<i>Gwynedd</i>	7%	1%			
<i>Wrexham</i>	5%	2%		3%	2%
<i>Unidentifiable LA</i>		10%			
Call Centre	-	42	-	-	-
<i>Unidentifiable LA</i>		13%			

*Emergency Worker (E/W) data has been supplied where the type of worker cannot be defined

**Based on incidents in Hywel Dda health board area and no further location data provided so it is not possible to determine the specific region i.e. South West Wales or Mid Wales



Hotspot Analysis

Location data (where available) has been mapped to identify hotspot areas where more than one assault on emergency worker incident has taken place between January and June 2021. The below map highlights the areas with the highest number of assaults on emergency workers.

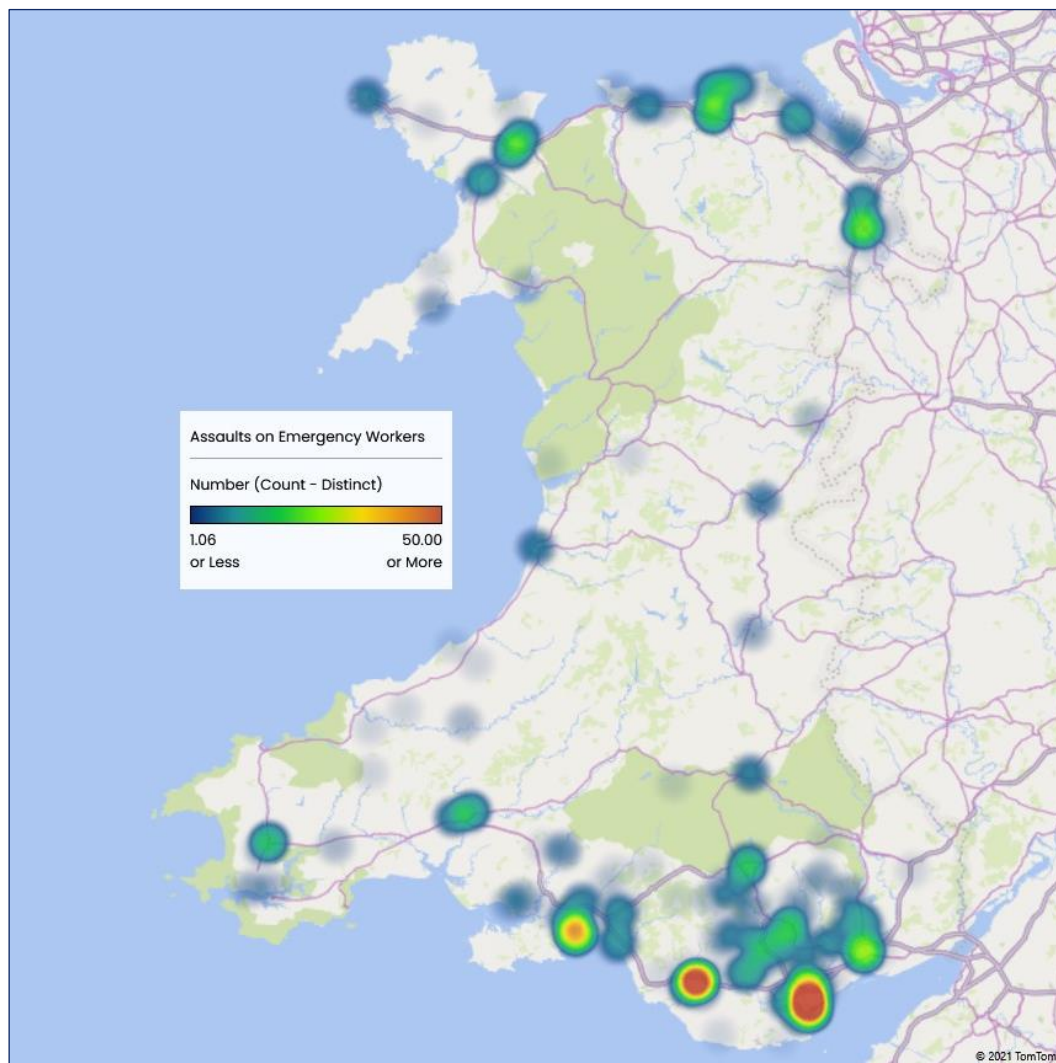


Figure 6. Hotspot Map: Assaults on Emergency Workers

The top three locations for emergency worker assaults are:

- **HMP & YOI Parc, Bridgend, South East Wales**
47 occurrences recorded at this location, all victims are prison staff
- **Cardiff Bay Police Station, Cardiff, South East Wales**
32 occurrences recorded at this location with 28 victims recorded as police, one custody detention officer, two custody nurses and one not known
- **University Hospital Wales, Cardiff, South East Wales**
23 occurrences recorded at this location. 17 victims are medical staff and six are police constables.



Police

The following heatmap shows the frequency of localities where police assaults took place between January and June 2021.

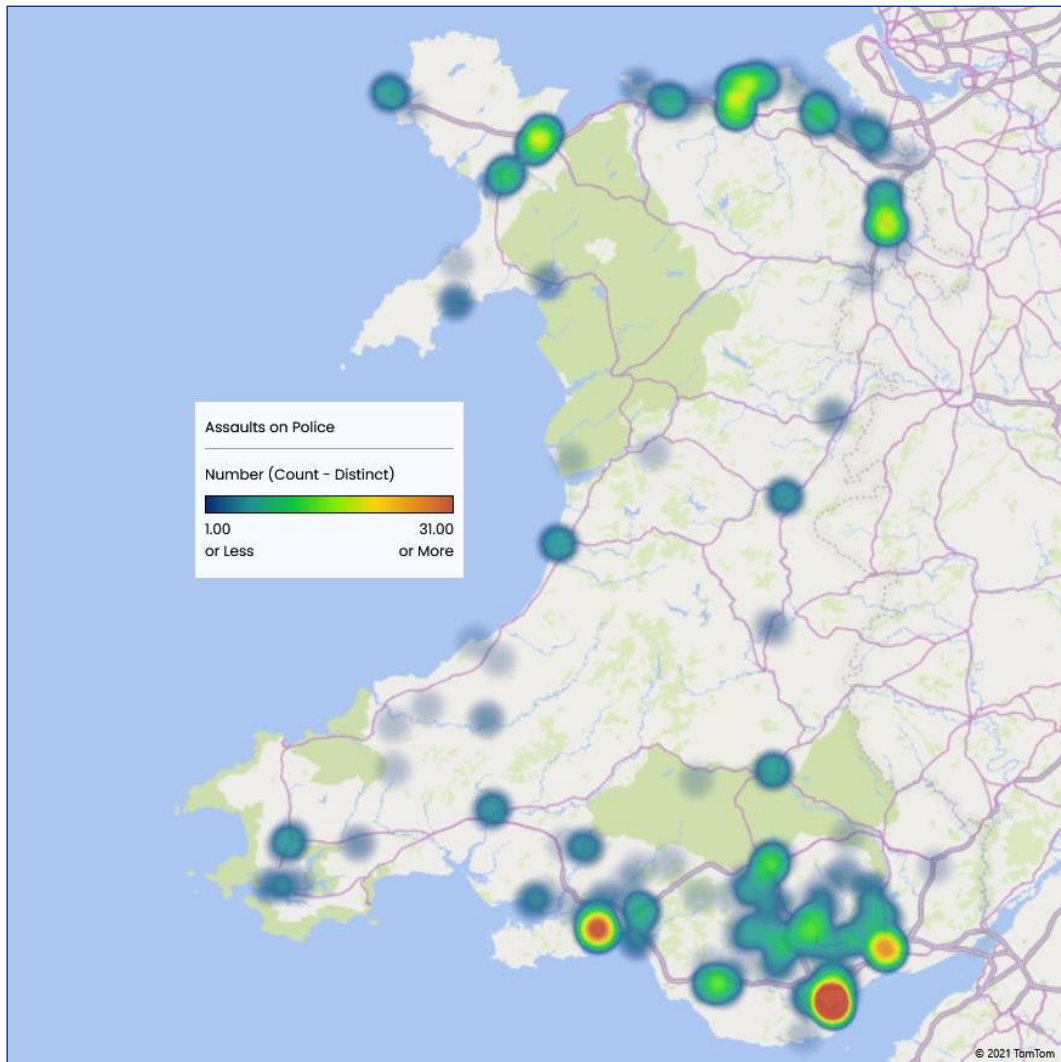


Figure 7. Hotspot Map: Assaults on Police

The locations with the highest recorded police assaults are:

- **Cardiff Bay Police Station, Cardiff**, South East Wales
31 occurrences (injury caused in six)
- **Swansea Central Police Station, Swansea**, South West Wales
14 occurrences (injury caused in three)
- **Ystrad Mynach Police Station, Caerphilly**, South East Wales
10 occurrences (injury caused in one)

Medical Workers

The following heatmap demonstrates locations where more than one medical worker assault has taken place. This only includes medical workers identified by the data provider(s) and does not include occurrences provided by *Welsh Ambulance Service* as location data was not supplied.

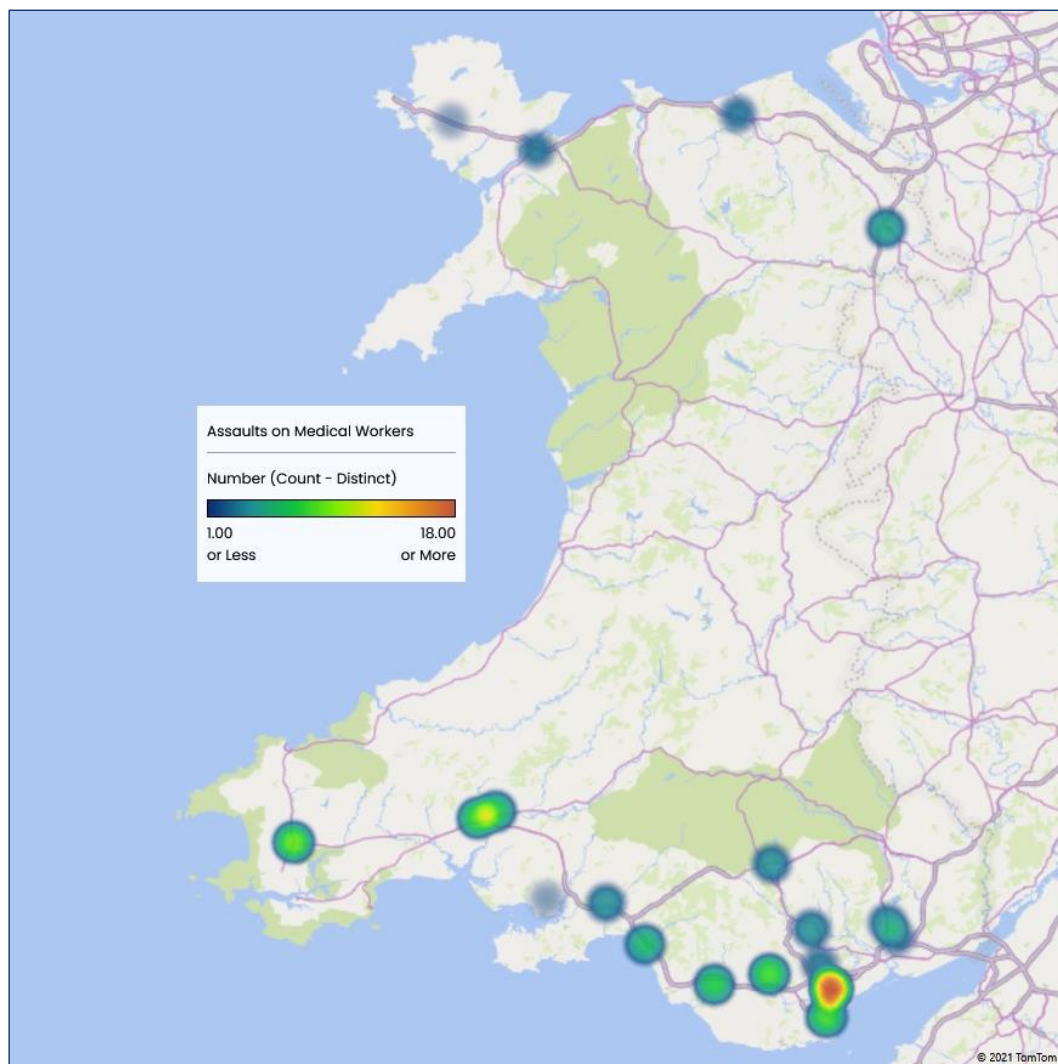


Figure 8. Hotspot Map: Assaults on Medical Workers

The locations with the highest number of assaults on medical workers are all hospitals:

- **University Hospital Wales, Cardiff**, South East Wales
17 occurrences (injury caused in six)
- **University Hospital Llandough, Penarth**, South East Wales
Eight occurrences (injury caused in six)
- **St David’s Hospital, Carmarthen**, South West Wales
Eight occurrences (no known injury caused)



Fire and Rescue

There are no known sites where there has been more than one assault on fire and rescue crews between January and June 2021. However, four occurrences have taken place in the Portmead district, Swansea, as shown in the below map:

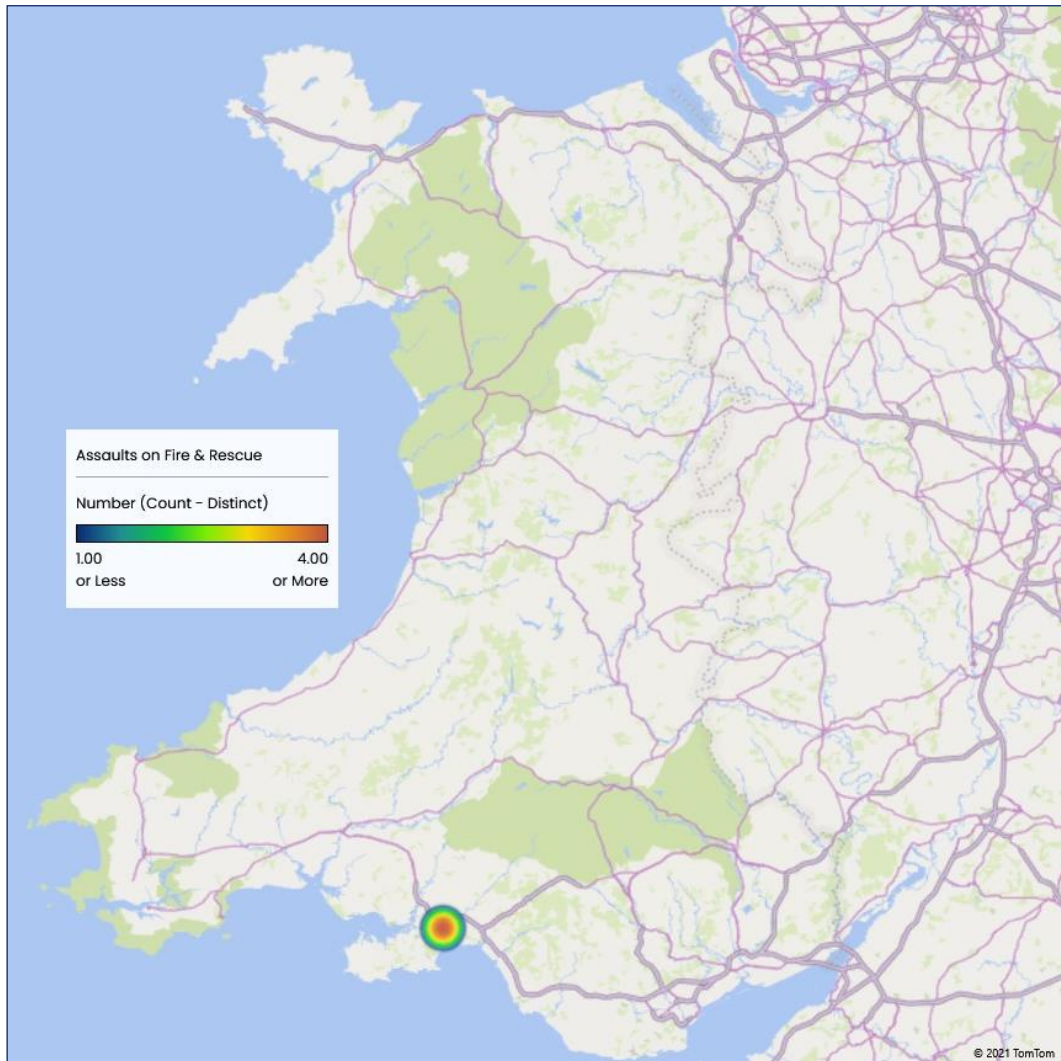


Figure 9. Hotspot Map: Assaults on Fire and Rescue



Prison Staff

This heatmap demonstrates locations in where more than one assault on prison staff has taken place, the majority of which are identified in South East Wales.

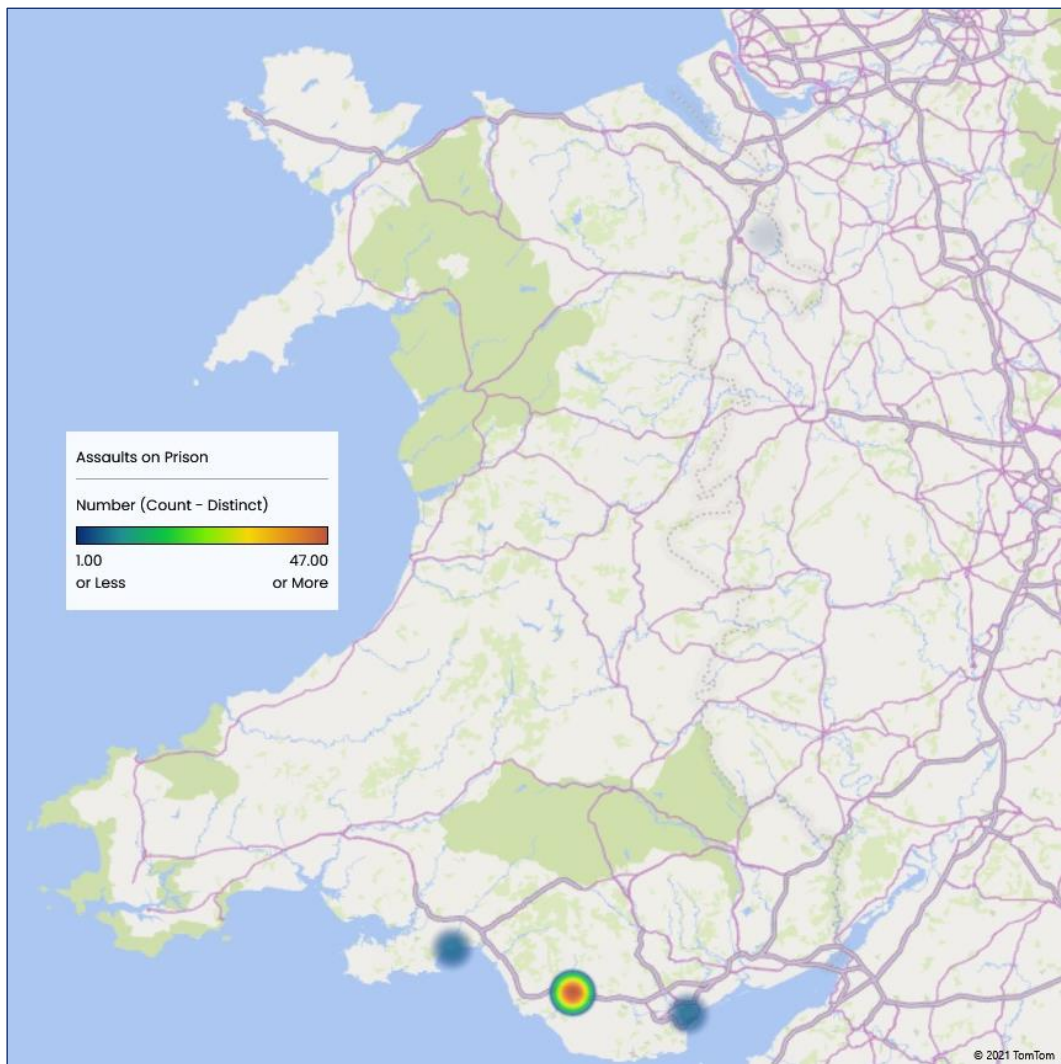


Figure 10. Hotspot Map: Assaults on Prison Staff

- **HMP & YOI Parc, Bridgend**, South East Wales
47 occurrences (injury caused in 23)
- **HMP Swansea**, South West Wales
Six occurrences (injury caused in two)
- **HMP Cardiff**, South East Wales
Six occurrences (injury caused in four)



Incident Circumstances

Initial Incident Response

Crewing

Reports⁵ suggest there is concern that single crewing (solo deployment) or lone working may present as a risk factor for emergency workers. A study by Elliott-Davies *et al.*⁶ posed the notion that double crewing may even act as defence against violence to police officers. GMB Union⁷ state that lone working presents an 'unnecessarily elevated risk' to ambulance workers.

Deployment history is known for 316 incidents that took place from January to June 2021, 285 (90%) were double crewed, fully crewed (i.e. fire and rescue), or assisted at the scene. Injury was caused in 32% (n=100). 31 individuals were identified as single crewed by *British Transport Police*, *Gwent Police* and *South Wales Police*, 13 of which resulted in injury to the victims.

As previously reported, data findings present no known correlation between single crewing and whether this has been a greater risk factor to emergency workers. However, this is based on a small sample due to data limitations.

Peak Day and Time Analysis

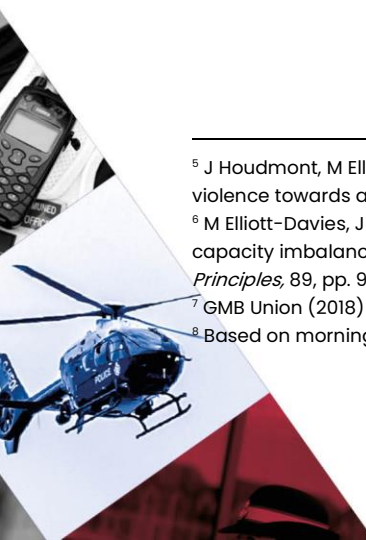
The following graph (figure 11) demonstrates the most frequent days and times⁸ when emergency worker assaults occur, broken down by violence with or without injury. The solid lines depict the pattern in 2021 (January to June) whilst the dashed line presents the same six-month period in 2020.

⁵ J Houdmont, M Elliott-Davies & J Donnelly (2019) 'Single crewing in English and Welsh policing: frequency and associations with violence towards and injuries in officers', *Policing and Society*, 29(7), pp. 820-833

⁶ M Elliott-Davies, J Donnelly, F Boag-Munroe, D Van Mechelen (2016) 'Getting a battering: The perceived impact of demand and capacity imbalance within the Police Service of England & Wales: A qualitative review', *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 89, pp. 93-116

⁷ GMB Union (2018) 'In Harm's Way', accessed 08/02/2021, <https://www.gmb.org.uk/>

⁸ Based on morning (04:00-11:59); afternoon (12:00-19:59); night (20:00-03:59)



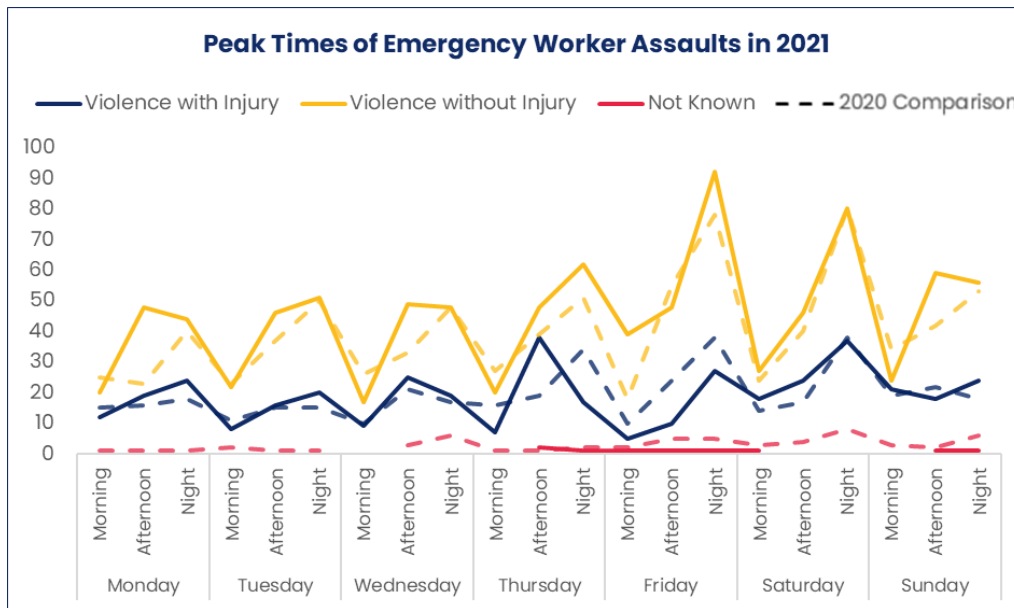


Figure 11. Emergency Worker Assaults, by Time and Day of Week

Comparing January to June 2021 with the same period in 2020 follows a similar pattern, with Friday and Saturday nights consistently presenting the highest number of emergency worker assaults, accounting for 18% of incidents. Alcohol is a significant influence for assaults occurring on Friday and Saturday nights, identified as an impact factor in 50% (n=119) of these incidents.

Peak times demonstrate variance by type of emergency worker. Assaults on police occur most frequently at night, with the highest number of offences committed at weekends. Previously, assaults on medical staff had a consistent daily average. In 2021, this has shifted to more assaults occurring at weekends, accounting for 41% of all assaults on medical workers (n=133). Assaults on prison staff do not present any identifiable patterns based on day of the week, however most incidents occur during the afternoon and early evening (between 12:00-19:59), accounting for 76% (n=44) of occurrences. There are no identifiable peak times for fire and rescue worker victims of assault.



Offender Characteristics

Demographics

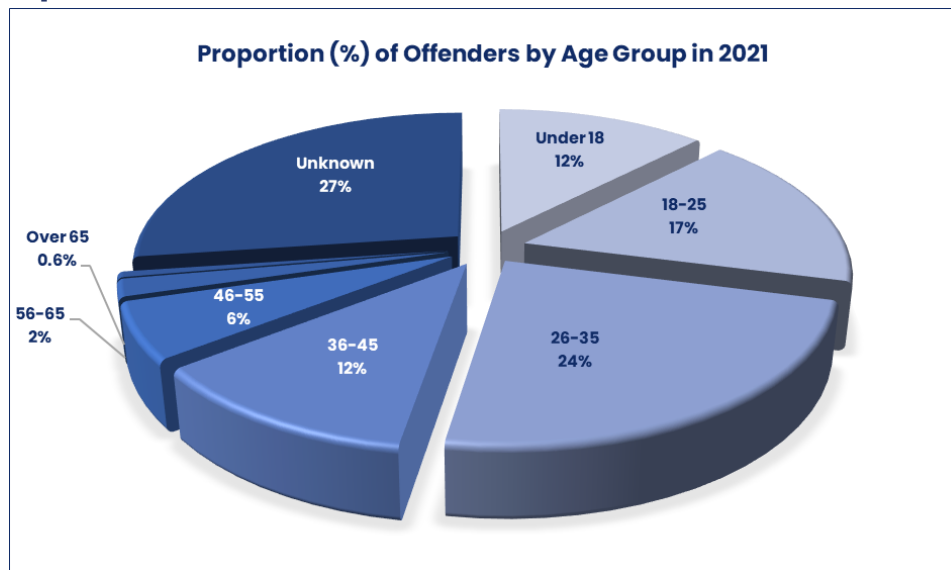


Figure 12. Offenders by Age Group (January to June 2021)

Based on 2021 data⁹, the most prolific offenders of all identified emergency worker assaults are those aged 26-35 years old, accounting for 24% (n=322). This is followed by the 18-25 years old age group, making up 17% (n=228) of assaults. This demonstrates a change from the same six-month period in 2020, which saw 24% (n=308) emergency worker assaults committed by 18-25-year-olds. This shift may be influenced by the 27% (n=371) of incidents that did not record an offender age or was not supplied by the data provider, an increase from 18% (230 incidents) in 2020¹⁰. Where the offender age group is known, the proportion difference between those where injury was or was not caused has been reviewed in table 8.

Table 8. Offenders, by Age Group and Injury (January to June 2021)

Age Group	Violence with Injury	Proportion (%)	Violence without Injury	Proportion (%)
Under 18	48	14%	115	18%
18-25	79	23%	147	23%
26-35	106	31%	212	33%
36-45	70	21%	92	14%
46-55	29	9%	52	8%
56-65	7	2%	18	3%
Over 65	2	1%	6	1%
Not Provided/Unknown	59	-	310	-

*13 incidents could not be determined as violence with or without injury and have not been included in the above table.

⁹ 1st January to 30th June

2021 presented a lower proportion of 18-25-year-olds and 26-35-year-olds known to cause injury as a result of an assault on emergency worker, however those under 18 years old rose from a proportion of 9% to 14% (up 14 incidents).

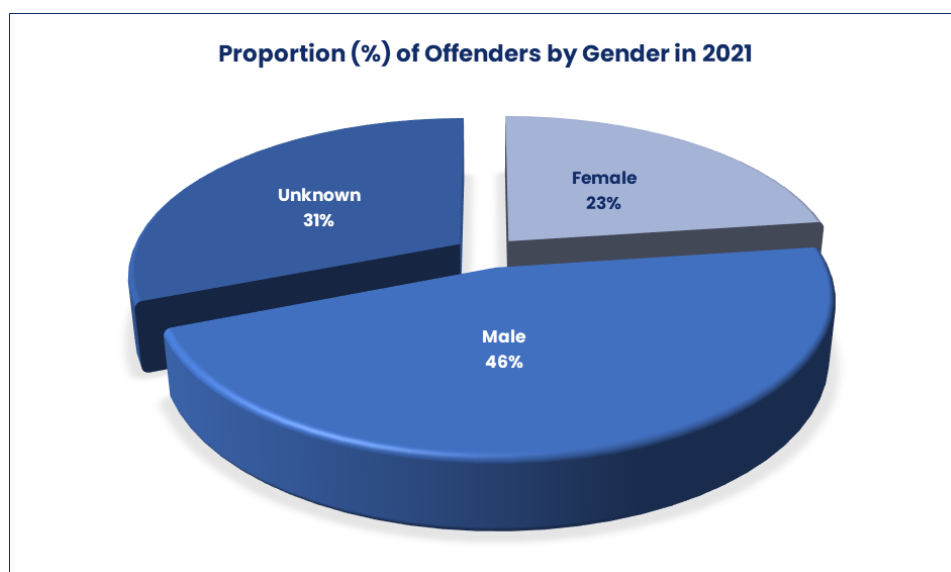


Figure 13. Offenders by Gender (January to June 2021)

The above chart shows the proportion of offenders by gender. 31% (n=423) of emergency worker assaults have not recorded an offender’s gender or this has not been supplied by the data provider, a higher proportion to the same period in 2020 at 17%.

There are slight proportional variances in offender gender when comparing whether injury was caused to the victim. Where the offender’s gender is known and injury was caused to the victim, 31% (n=100) are female and 69% (n=224) male. Where no physical injury was caused, 34% (n=210) of offenders are female and 66% (n=403) are male.

Repeat Offending

Data from January to June 2021 has been provided by *Gwent Police* and *South Wales Police* to identify repeat offending of emergency worker assaults. Whilst this is a small sample and does not represent Wales as a whole, it provides an indication of repeat offender characteristics.

South Wales Police recorded 344 unique offenders for a total of 475 offences occurring between January and June 2021, including 97 offenders who assaulted more than one emergency worker victim, which can include those taking place at the same incident.



Further analysis shows 29 offenders have gone on to commit more than one emergency worker assault offence on separate occasions within the previous six months, accounting for 8% of offenders. Mental health is a known factor in half (n=14) of these repeat offenders. Similarly, alcohol is a contributing factor for half of offenders (n=14), four of which also have a mental health condition. Table 9 shows a breakdown of demographics for these repeat offenders.

Table 9. Repeat Offending Demographics, South Wales data (January to June 2021)

Age Group	Female	Male
<i>Under 18</i>	1	3
<i>18-25</i>	3	9
<i>26-35</i>	2	7
<i>36-45</i>	0	2
<i>46-55</i>	1	1

One individual (female, under 18 years old) committed four offences against emergency workers on four separate occasions in the past six months. Mental health is a known impact factor and injury was caused to victims on two occasions.

Gwent Police recorded 110 unique offenders for a total of 158 offences occurring between January and June 2021. This includes 35 offenders who assaulted more than one emergency worker victim, which can include those offences occurring at the same incident.

Findings show that nine offenders have committed assault against emergency workers on more than one occasion over the past six months. Whilst lower in volume, as with data from *South Wales Police* incidents, these repeats account for 8% of offenders. Mental health is a contributing factor for five of the nine offenders and alcohol in one.

The following table presents the demographics of these repeat offenders.

Table 10. Repeat Offending Demographics, South Wales data (January to June 2021)

Age Group	Female	Male
<i>Under 18</i>	2	0
<i>18-25</i>	0	3
<i>26-35</i>	0	3
<i>36-45</i>	0	0
<i>46-55</i>	1	0

Similarly, to the findings from *South Wales Police* data, the repeat offender in Gwent committing the highest frequency of emergency worker assaults in the previous six months is an under 18-year-old female. However, mental health is not known to be a contributing factor.

Nature of Assault

There are varying degrees of assault committed against emergency workers, from common assault (i.e. verbal threat, spitting, shoving), ABH, to extremely serious, premediated or inflicting attacks involving GBH (i.e. stabbing).

Descriptions of assaults from partner agencies have been themed in the following categories: kicked; pushed; punched; elbowed; kneed; slapped; hit; headbutted; grabbed; thrown to floor; bitten; scratched; coughed at; spat at; used object/thrown object at; driven at; use of/threat of weapon; verbal threat/abuse; and, other. In 2021, 487 incidents supplied did not provide information on the nature of assault and therefore cannot be included within this section.

Over the previous six months (January to June 2021), the top five most common types of assault committed on emergency workers are kicking (n=193), verbal abuse (n=190), spitting (n=130), punching (n=118) and pushing/shoving (n=87). This follows the same trend as the previous year, except for biting which was the fifth most prevalent type of assault recorded. 131 (of 1,365) incidents recorded more than one type of assault on the victim.

The type of assaults causing injury continues along the same trend as last year. Of the 400 known assaults where injury was caused to the victim (January to June 2021), the highest numbers come from kicking (n=60), punching (n=37), biting (n=34) and pushing/shoving (n=34).

21 incidents have been identified where a weapon has been used or threatened to be used, four of which caused injury to the victim.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, 36 known incidents have been observed where an emergency worker has deliberately been coughed at, risking transmission of the disease.



Impact Factors

Contributing factors to assaults on emergency workers can impact on the nature and level of the assault. Key findings from incidents occurring from January to June 2021 have been detailed in the following subsections:

Alcohol

Alcohol is the largest known contributing factor of assaults on emergency workers. 445 incidents in 2021 (January to June) are known to relate to alcohol intoxication, a slight decline from the same period in 2020, down 7% or 31 less incidents. Known injury was caused to the victim in 27% (n=120) of these incidents.

There is a proportional difference when reviewing alcohol as a factor by type of emergency worker. Of 915 known assaults on police in 2021, 38% (n=348) regard alcohol as a factor (*Gwent Police* = 63; *South Wales Police* = 92; *Dyfed Powys Police* = 85; *North Wales Police* = 103; *British Transport Police* = 5). Nearly a third (30% or 104 incidents) of alcohol-related assaults on police have resulted in injury to the victim. 28% (n=91) of assaults on medical workers identified alcohol as an issue, more than half (62% or 56 incidents) of which injury was caused as a result of the assault. Information of contributing factors to assaults on fire and rescue service workers is limited, with no known incidents relating to alcohol in 2021.

Mental Health

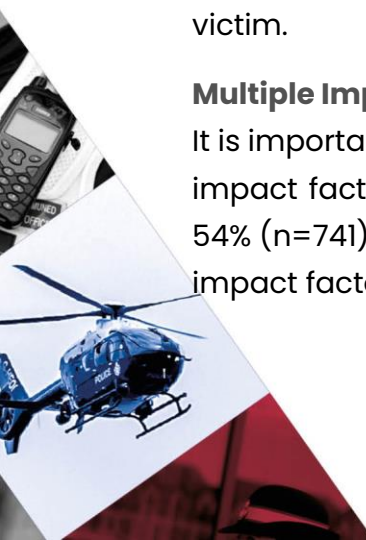
Mental health/psychological disorders are known to be a contributing factor in 15% (n=204) of emergency worker assaults, consistent with the previous year. The proportion is much higher for medical workers, with 33% (n=105) of these assaults noting mental health as a factor, 32 of which resulted in injury. 10% (n=93) of assaults on police recorded mental health as an impact factor, with 26 resulting in injury to the victim.

Drugs

Offenders are believed to be under the influence of drugs in 9% (n=122) of emergency worker assaults, the same figure seen last year. This is a known factor in 16% (n=52) of assaults on medical workers, four of which resulted in injury. Drugs are a known factor in 8% (n=69) of police assaults, with 20 resulting in injury to the victim.

Multiple Impact Factors

It is important to consider that 13% (n=183) of incidents in 2021 have more than one impact factor which demonstrates the challenges faced by emergency workers. 54% (n=741) of instances of emergency worker assault either do not have a known impact factor or this has not been supplied by the data provider.



Outcomes

50% (n=676) of emergency worker assaults occurring between January and June 2021 have already resulted in a positive¹⁰ outcome. 4% (n=54) have a neutral/other¹¹ outcome and 7% (n=94) led to a negative/other¹² outcome. The following table presents this by outcome type:

Table 11. Outcomes by Type, for offences committed January to June 2021

Outcome Type	Total
01. Charged/Summoned/Postal Requisition	601
02. Youth Caution	3
03. Adult Caution	37
05. Offender has died	2
08. Community Resolution/Youth Restorative Disposal	33
10. Police - formal action not in public interest	6
11. Prosecution prevented - suspect under age	1
12. Named suspect too ill to prosecute	13
15. Police - named suspect, victim supports but evidential difficulties	51
16. Victim declines/withdraws support - named suspect identified.	54
18. Investigation complete no suspect identified	2
20. Further action by other body/agency	8
21. Police - named suspect, investigation not in the public interest	6
22. Diversionary, educational or intervention activity, not in public interest to take further	6
New/Under Investigation	314
Cancelled/Transferred	16

*Outcome data is correct as of July 2021. A total of 212 incidents have not been counted in the above table as the outcome is not known or were not reported as a crime

When reviewing outcomes by worker, there is a shift in the proportion of positive outcomes.

¹⁰ Positive/Criminal Justice outcome: charge/summons, caution, community resolution, restorative disposal

¹¹ Neutral/Other outcome: 16. Victim declines/withdraws support – named suspect identified

¹² Negative/Other outcome: Outcomes 10–22, excluding outcome 16



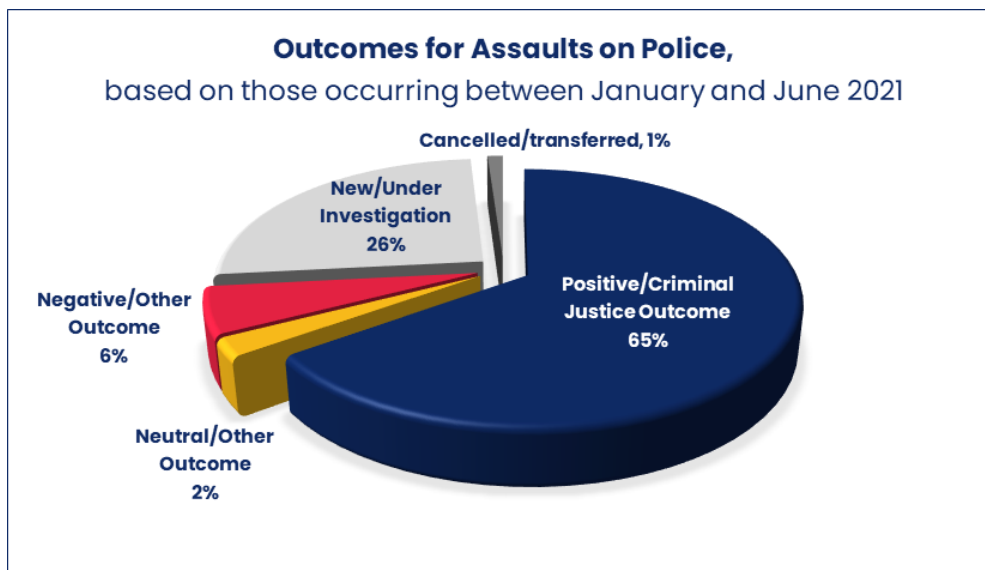


Figure 14. Outcomes for Assaults on Police (January to June 2021)

Based on incidents with a known outcome, 65% (n=596) of assaults on police result in a positive outcome, whilst 37% (n=51) of assaults on medical workers led to a positive outcome. There is also a contrast on the proportion of incidents where the victim has withdrawn their support (neutral/other outcome), as can be seen in figure 15. This is the case in 21% (n=29) of medical worker assaults with a known outcome, compared to 2% (n=21) of police assaults.

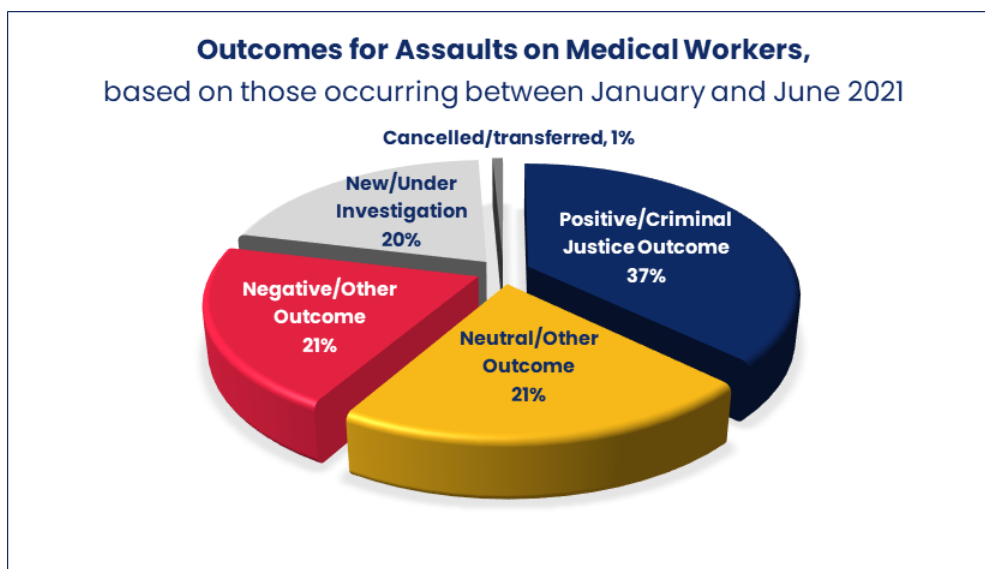


Figure 15. Outcomes for Assaults on Medical Workers (January to June 2021)



Of 62 assaults on prison staff between January and June 2021, 17 have already led to a positive outcome and half (n=30) remain under investigation. The following pie chart in figure 16 shows each proportion.

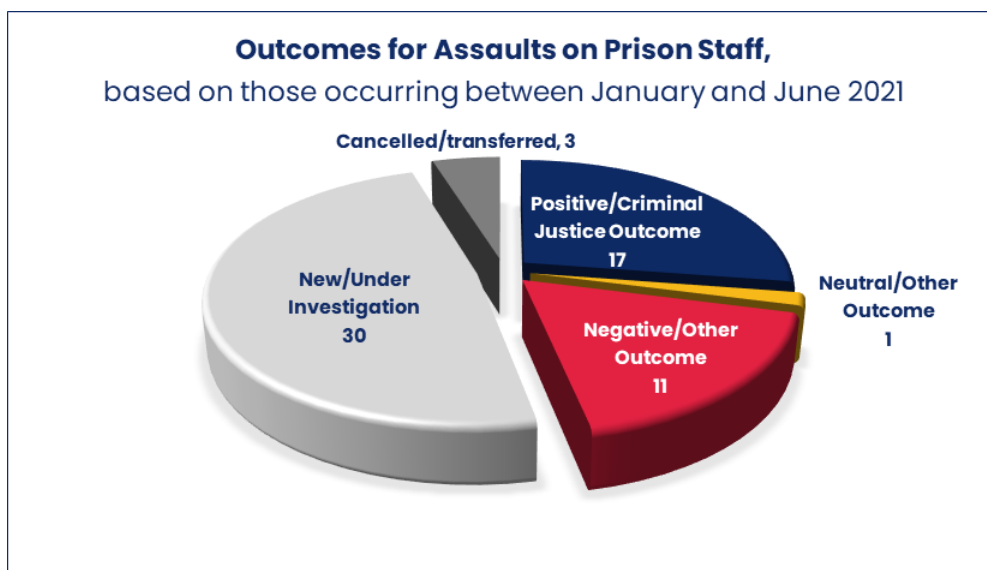


Figure 16. Outcomes for Assaults on Prison Staff (January to June 2021)

There are no known outcomes for assaults on fire and rescue crews in 2021.



Recommendations

Underreporting and inconsistent recording of emergency worker assaults continues to be an issue as it means the true scale of this problem remains unknown. This includes verbal abuse and the impact of this on victims, as this often goes unreported. It is also known that some emergency worker assaults are recorded as general assault offences meaning they are challenging to capture. Improvements in crime recording could reduce this risk.

As there is less information known about certain emergency workers, including but not limited to *NHS Trust, HM Prison Service, Ministry of Defence* and *Maritime and Coastguard Agency*, collaboration with further partner agencies will be considered for future reports to generate a better understanding of victims.

