



# Brighton & Hove City Council

## VIOLENCE AT WORK

### Guidance for businesses In Brighton & Hove



Provided by Brighton & Hove City Council's  
Health and Safety Team

## **The Councils Environmental Health, Health & Safety Team**

The Health & Safety Team is the enforcing authority for health and safety in more than 9,000 city businesses. These include shops, hotels, offices, catering, (including pubs, clubs and restaurants) and sports and leisure facilities.

The team spends a considerable amount of time working with small and medium sized businesses providing advice and guidance promoting sensible risk management. The team can provide help with risk assessments, working from height, manual handling, lone working, slips trips and falls, preventing violence at work, asbestos, hazardous substances, noise and vibration.

Brighton & Hove is a safe place to visit by day and night and earlier this year the city council was awarded Beacon Status by the Government as a national centre of excellence for managing the night time economy.

The council is always looking to build on these achievements and the latest initiative is one of a package of measures to keep the city safe and welcoming at night.

# Is violence a problem for businesses in Brighton?

Although Brighton & Hove is a safe place to work and visit, the following are ACTUAL newspaper headlines for incidents that happened in Brighton & Hove during 2008/9:

ARMED ROBBERY AT BRIGHTON PUB

HOODED RAIDERS TARGET BRIGHTON JEWELLERS

RAIDER SHOT HOVE SHOPKEEPER

KNIFEPOINT ROBBERY AT BUREAU DE CHANGE

MASKED RAIDERS THREATEN OFF LICENCE SHOPKEEPER

KNIFE WIELDING MOTORCYCLE RAIDERS HIT BUILDING  
SOCIETY CASH DELIVERY

DOUBLE ARMED ROBBERY ORDEAL AT BETTING SHOP

SMASH AND GRAB ROBBERY AT OFF LICENCE

VIOLENT ASSAULT ON PUB STAFF

# Is violence a problem in your workplace?

Have your staff ever been affected by the following forms of violence at work?

## Verbal Abuse

Intimidation

Harassment

Physical Assault

Spitting

Robbery

Threats

Unruly Behaviour

Lack of Respect



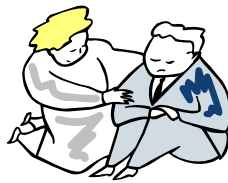
# Who is most at risk?

Employees whose role involves dealing directly with members of the public can be at risk from workplace violence.

Employees that carry out the following roles are most at risk:



Delivering



Caring



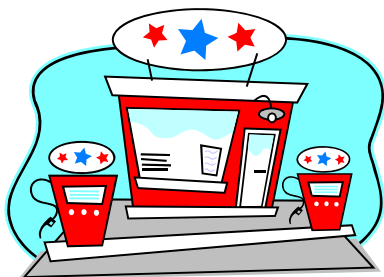
Handling Cash



Position of Authority



Providing a service



Working at Night



Working alone

# Who can cause violence in a workplace?

The following groups of people can pose a particular hazard to front line employees



Disgruntled customers/members of the Public



People with mental health problems

People under the influence of drugs and alcohol



Young people, particularly in groups



Thieves either carrying out opportunistic or planned robberies/burglaries

# What do you need to do to protect your staff?

Under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, employers have a legal duty to protect the **health, safety and welfare** of their employees. This includes protecting them from the threat of violence while at work.

- Find out whether your staff are at risk from violence at work by carrying out a risk assessment.
- Implement the necessary control measures - eliminate the hazard if possible, if not possible reduce the risk, i.e. CCTV, panic alarms, security mirrors etc.
- Train staff - staff should be equipped to prevent violence as well as deal with it, i.e. wherever possible, do not touch or remove items after a robbery until police arrive and advise you further.
- Contact your local Police Station, The Business Crime Reduction Partnership Officers and/or local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who can provide advice and visit you regularly to discourage anti-social behaviour.
- Get advice from other business or industry support groups who may be able to recommend control measures tailored to the nature of your business.



# What Control Measures should you consider?

## Visibility

Staff should know their customers and be aware of what they are doing at all times. Customers may feel less confident about committing a crime if they feel openly visible.



- Eliminate blind spots/concealed areas
- Ensure customers can be seen entering and exiting the premises
- Use mirrors and CCTV to monitor areas if necessary
- Keep large displays at minimum height

## Lighting

It is important to find the right balance so as to allow staff sufficient visibility while not upsetting the mood of customers.



## Protect Staff

Reduce the risk of physical violence to staff by preventing customer access.

- Use plastic screens
- Install high and wide counters
- Remove gaps in counters
- Make staff only areas inaccessible to customers





## Customer Service

Good service can eliminate the risk from disgruntled customers. Train staff to defuse potentially volatile situations.



## Cash Handling

Staff handling and transporting cash can be vulnerable targets for thieves



- Reduce cash handled especially in front of customers
- If possible use cheques, credit cards or tokens
- Locate tills out of sight and reach of customers
- If possible arrange for cash to be collected from the workplace
- Ensure staff banking cash vary their route/routines
- Ask staff to either remove or cover uniform to prevent them being identified as a potential target

## Staff levels

It is important to ensure staff are supported by colleagues at vulnerable times either to prevent or handle a violent situation that may arise. Ensure you have enough staff to:

- Meet customer demand
- Provide sufficient cover at peak times
- Avoid staff working alone or being isolated for long periods, particularly at night
- Ensure at least two people can be present during opening and closing times



## Outside workplace

A well maintained secure looking exterior may deter thieves



- Eliminate assailant hiding places
- Lock access doors but don't lock fire exit doors to ensure integrity of fire escape routes
- Prevent access to roof - remove any climbing aids
- Install shutters/security fencing/ anti climb paint
- Ensure good lighting

## Surveillance and Security

Security devices can act as a deterrent and the CCTV may be used to provide evidence if a crime is committed.



- CCTV - real or dummy. Check they are working and recording
- Alarms
- Locks - Use combination locks so no keys necessary
- Security personnel - must have correct training to take appropriate action
- New measures like Smart Water or red dye
- Regular visits from Police Community Support Officers

## Intoxicated customers



Intoxicated customers can be volatile and unpredictable as well as posing a risk to staff. Staff need to be vigilant and trained to defuse situations before they get out of hand.

## Unusual / late opening hours



Consider that staff can be vulnerable outside of work as well as inside work

- Increase staff/security provisions
- Ensure staff who work away from their workplace have a method of keeping in touch
- Consider staff safety when leaving work

## Do's and Don'ts for staff during and after a robbery

- Stay calm and passive - DO NOT CHALLENGE A ROBBER!
- Comply with instructions but do no more than asked e.g. don't volunteer concealed cash or security processes
- If possible try to preserve evidence, e.g. hand cash to the robber in a different bag to the one given. The robber's bag may give vital clues about his details including DNA.
- Secure the shop immediately after the incident
- Prevent access by members of the public but do not usher out any witnesses to the robbery
- Preserve the scene to protect any evidence - do not move or touch anything
- Keep anything left by the robber, i.e. bags, notes
- Preserve but do not touch anything the robber may have dropped outside the premises, e.g. cigarettes, chocolate wrapper

## Further Information

In the pack given to you with this handout there are a number of leaflets that can provide you with more detailed information on the subject of violence at work.



If however you wish to contact a member of the Health and Safety Team, our details are as follows:

Address: The Health and Safety Team  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Bartholomew House  
Bartholomew Square  
Brighton  
BN1 1JP

Tel: 01273 294429

Email: [Ehl.safety@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Ehl.safety@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Other useful organisations to contact are as follows:

**Sussex Police Licensing, Hove Police Station** 01273 665523  
[www.sussex.police.uk](http://www.sussex.police.uk)

**Business Crime Reduction Partnership** 01273 733393  
Including - Night Safe Scheme. [www.brightonbusiness.co.uk](http://www.brightonbusiness.co.uk)

**Business Improvement District Security Staff** 07917 848375

**Partnership Community Safety Team / Hate Crime** 01273  
292735/ 01273 294638 [www.safeinthecity.info](http://www.safeinthecity.info)

**Safe Space - Gemma Doughty**

077932 52012

















The Safe Space project providing support, first aid services and a place of safety to people in the town centre who have become vulnerable, injured or distressed.

Experienced staff from Hove YMCA and British Red Cross volunteers are on hand at St Paul's Church in West Street from 10.30pm to 2.30am on Friday and Saturday nights.

**Acknowledgements:**

We would like to acknowledge the work of Leicester City Council in the production of this leaflet

## Your Checklist!

Measure:	Action:	In Place?
	Sufficient lighting in all areas?	
	CCTV working and recording?	
	No blind spots or concealed areas?	
	Customers can be seen entering / leaving?	
	Staff only barriers and signs in place?	
	No cash handling in front of customers?	
	Tills out-of-sight and out of reach?	
	Staff who do banking are fully trained?	
	Do staff know regular customers by name?	
	Do staff know how to deal with difficult customers?	
	Are staff supported at all opening times?	
	Staff not made to work alone at nights for long periods?	
	At least 2 staff when opening / closing?	
	Premises secure and maintained?	
	Do PCSO's/security staff visit you regularly	
	Anything else?	