

Ref. No: 0622
Date: 23/01/24
Subject: Physical Assaults on Trust Premises

REQUEST

1. Please can you provide the number of physical assaults against hospital staff by patients and members of the public on the Trusts premises for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?
2. How many of these physical assaults were reported to the police for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?
3. If you hold this data, how many had a criminal justice outcome (e.g. cautioned, charged, taken to court) for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?
4. Since 2019 has the Trust introduced any additional measures to try to reduce the number of physical assaults against hospital staff? If so, please specify what measures have been taken e.g. body cameras, CCTV in clinical areas, more security guards etc?

RESPONSE

St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust became a single legal entity known as Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust on 1st July 2023, as such parts of the response may be provided in two sections relating to the hospital sites of each of the legacy organisations.

1. Please can you provide the number of physical assaults against hospital staff by patients and members of the public on the Trusts premises for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?

St Helens and Knowsley:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical abuse, assault or violence	223	122	234	235	239
Assault etc with a weapon	8	8	8	10	11

Southport and Ormskirk:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical abuse / violence – patient on staff	116	107	84	143	140
Physical abuse / violence – visitors / relatives on staff	<5	<5	6	<5	<5

Section 40: personal information

We are unable to provide precise figures when those figures refer to individuals in volumes of 5 or less due to the risk that individuals will be re-identified, as we are required to protect their identity under the General Data Protection Regulations & Data Protection Act 2018. In such circumstances Section 40(2) and Section 40(3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle which states that personal data should be processed “lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner”. It is the lawful aspect of this principle which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure, and in such circumstances, Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure.

2. **How many of these physical assaults were reported to the police for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?**

St Helens and Knowsley:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical abuse, assault or violence	15	12	22	10	24
Assault etc with a weapon	<5	<5	<5	0	<5

Southport and Ormskirk:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical abuse / violence – patient on staff	<5	15	9	9	11
Physical abuse / violence – visitors / relatives on staff	0	0	<5	<5	0

Section 40: personal information

Please note <5 has been added where the number of individuals is 5 or less, this information has been redacted to protect the confidentiality of individuals and to ensure they cannot be identified.

3. **If you hold this data, how many had a criminal justice outcome (e.g. cautioned, charged, taken to court) for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?**

We do not hold this information.

- 4. Since 2019 has the Trust introduced any additional measures to try to reduce the number of physical assaults against hospital staff? If so, please specify what measures have been taken e.g. body cameras, CCTV in clinical areas, more security guards etc?**

The Trust has introduced Conflict Resolution Training in-line with the Restraint Reduction Network, which is aimed specifically at the challenges within the healthcare environment. There is specific E-Learning available for Lone Workers also.

The Trust has established a working relationship with local police to address offences committed against staff under Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018.

In addition, the Trust have appointed a Crime Prevention and Reduction Officer, undertaken work against the NHS Violence Prevention and Reduction Standards, introduced Body Cameras into certain clinical areas, reviewed and increased Lone Worker Devices, and revised Policies as well as introducing Violence Prevention and Reduction Strategy.