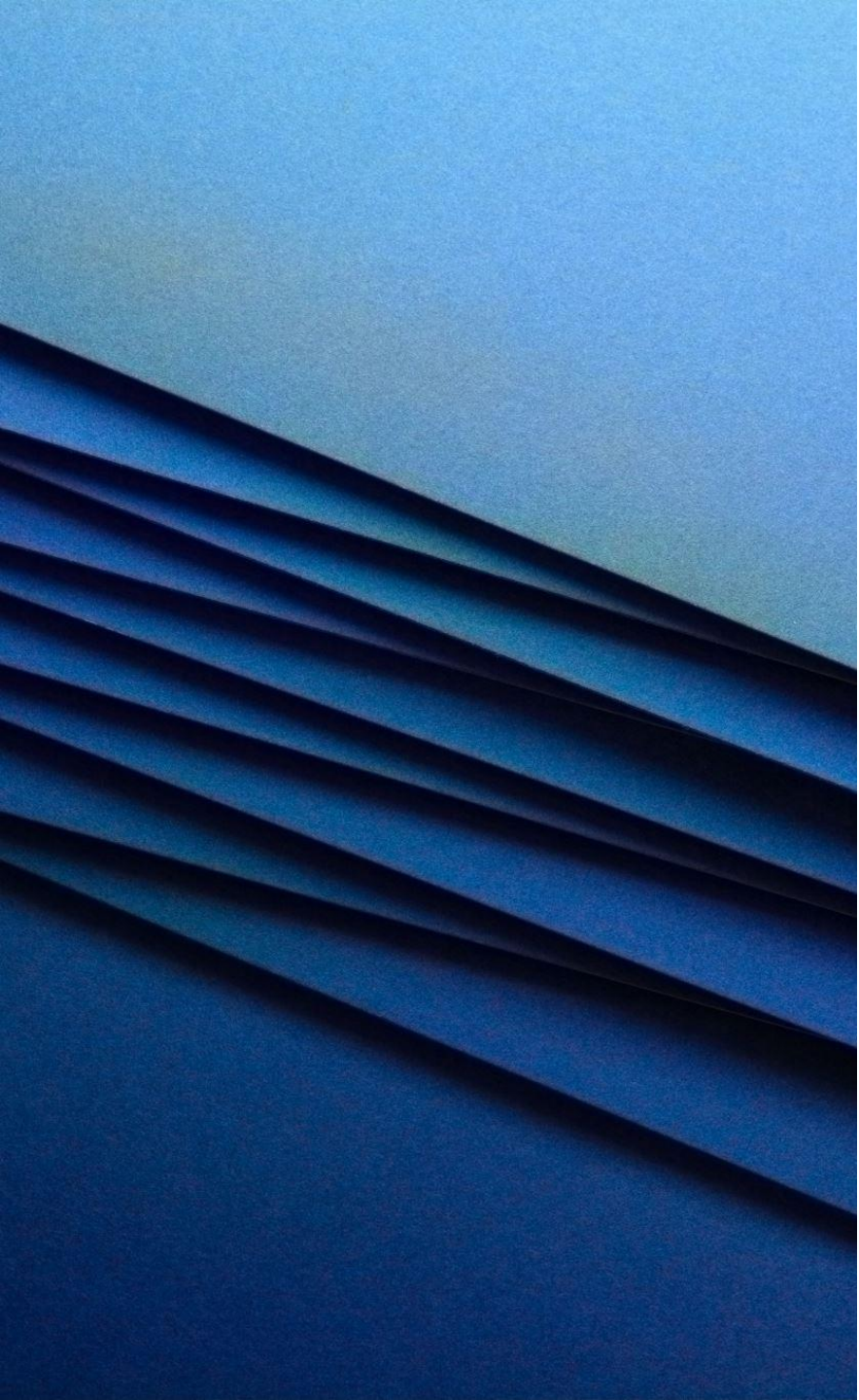


Working with trade unions to prevent and reduce violence and aggression

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Trade union role in the Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard

First published in 2021, the NHS Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard has been updated, and developed in partnership with the Social Partnership Forum (SPF)

SPF Violence Reduction Sub-Group

The strategic role of trade unions at employer, system, regional and national level

Identifying how violence is experienced differently based on protected characteristics

Significant pressure and influence from unions for publication

“The Social Partnership Forum recommends employers to consult with local trade unions on implementation of this second edition of the standard.”

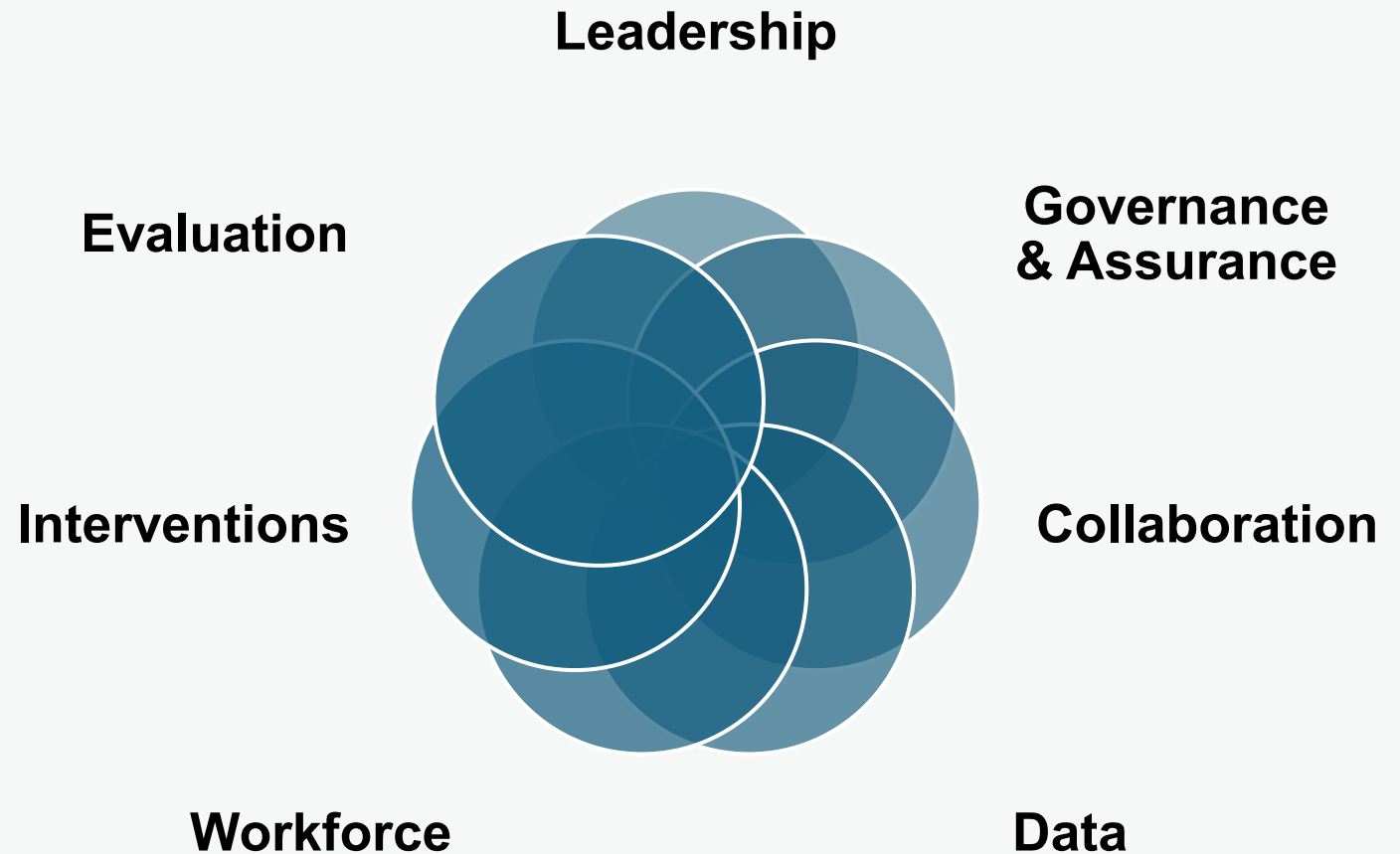
Overview of the standard domains

The standard covers 7 core domains, with 43 supporting elements.

Piloting the implementation of the Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard provided invaluable insights and learning.

On reviewing best practice, case studies and significant engagement with our NHS people, we were able to co-produce a framework.

This framework highlights the following areas to consider when following a systematic approach to violence prevention healthcare settings, from systematic lens.



Enhancements in the 2nd edition

Refreshed guidance

informed by the HSE inspection on workplace violence 2022 e.g. more frequent reviews

Enhanced framework co-developed with partners

RAG rating, to improve reporting, gap analysis and support continuous improvement

New assessment and improvement action plan tool to support continuous improvement, and simple self-assessment template for primary care

1. Leadership and accountability					
The Board (*) is accountable for violence prevention and reduction and as such approves resources allocated to violence, prevention and reduction					
*For primary care or smaller healthcare organisations, 'Board' can be replaced with 'Senior Responsible Manager' or 'senior leadership team'. The work of the violence prevention and reduction lead can be taken on as an additional responsibility to an existing role.					
Ref.	Indicator	Explanatory notes and considerations	R	A	G
1.1	The Board is accountable for the violence prevention and reduction strategy and policy	- Who is responsible for developing the violence prevention and reduction strategy and policy? - Who at board level is responsible for the strategy and policy? - Who at board level is accountable for the strategy and policy? - Is there a named person(s) who has responsibility and accountability – what are their experiences, skills and knowledge – is this an 'add-on' to someone's existing role(s)? - How will that person be responsible and accountable and to whom? - Has the Board stated its commitment to minimising incidents and addressing their impact on staff? - Does the Board fully understand its own responsibilities in endorsing the			

Violence Prevention Reduction Standard: High-level assessment and improvement action plan

1. Summary of review against VPR standard domains and indicators

Following review against each domain and all supporting indicators within the VPR standard, use this section to summarise evidence for how you are meeting the standard, improvements identified, and an overarching RAG rating for each domain (Red: Low confidence | Amber: Working toward | Green: Fully meeting)

Domain	Overall RAG	Evidence of meeting standard	Improvements identified
1. Leadership and accountability			
2. Governance and assurance			
3. Collaboration			
4. Data			
5. Workforce			
6. Interventions			
7. Evaluation			

2. VPR improvement action plan

Use this section to translate the review against the standard into improvement objectives, actions, how they will be measured, and to record progress updates

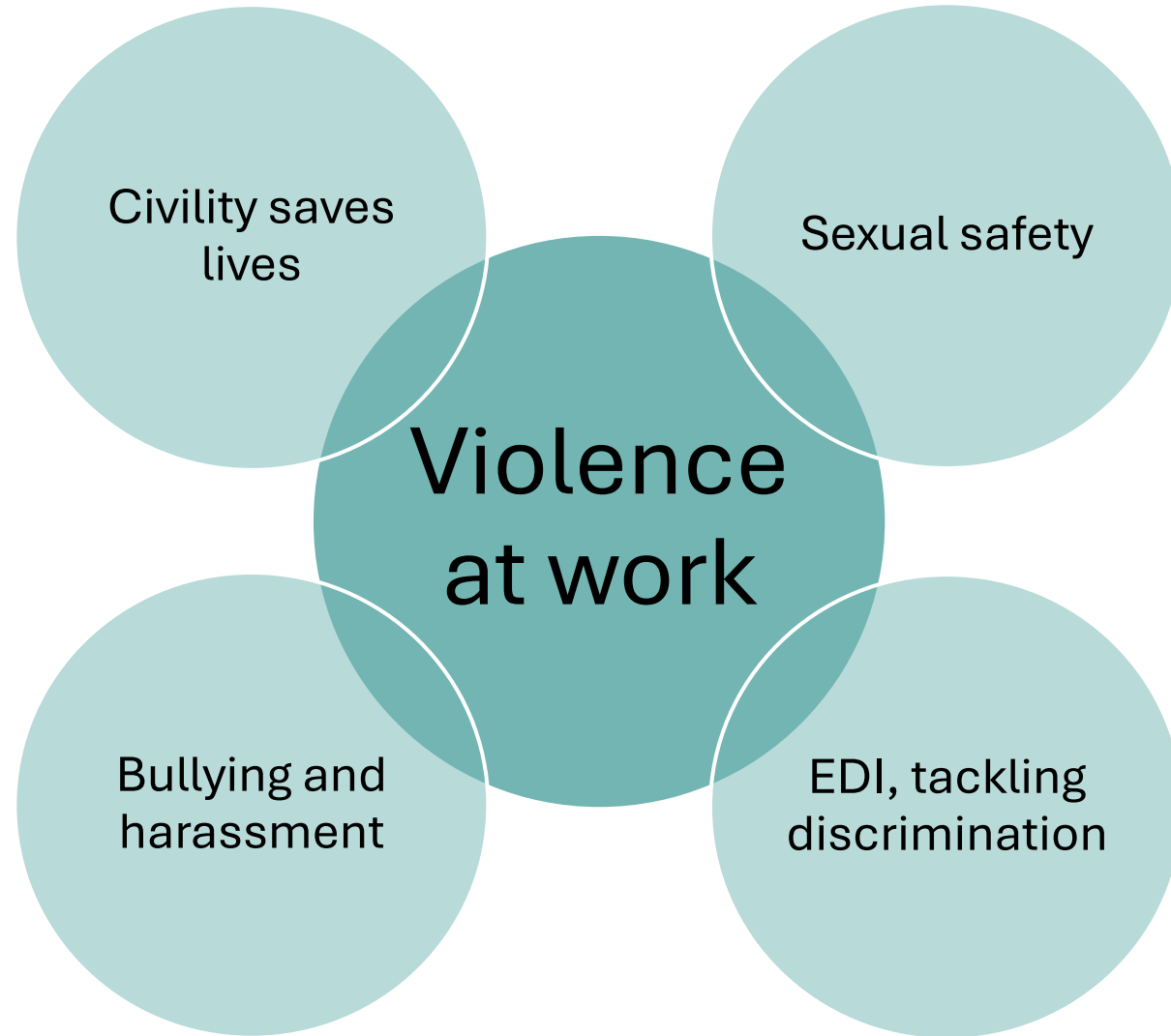
Improvement objective	Actions	Outcome measures	Target date	Progress update

Violence is a priority area

Tackling violence and aggression:

“the government will ask the existing groups established in the NHS Social Partnership Forum working on violence reduction to work with the health and wellbeing group of the NHS Staff Council to identify ways to tackle and reduce violence against NHS staff.”





SPF report on
ways to tackle
and reduce
violence against
NHS staff

Making work and workplaces safer

Leadership

Data driven decision making and supporting a reporting culture

Risk assessment training and support

The role of partnership working

Ministerial statement - 23 April 2025

“The NHS should always be a great place to work, regardless of job role or location. Staff should be free from fear of violence, aggression or discrimination and I know that Minister Smyth looks forward to working closely with colleagues in the Social Partnership Forum (SPF) to implement all the recommendations to better protect staff from the risk of violent behaviour. This includes encouraging a reporting culture where all incidents of violence and aggression are reported, the consistent collection of data, and developing a standard approach to post-incident support for all staff that are impacted.”

Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

Where TUs can add value

- **VPR Standard** – critical friend and support for implementation
- **Culture** – seeking improvements that focus on staff health, safety and wellbeing
- **Leadership** – seeking organisational support, commitment and resources for VPR
- **Training** – ensuring staff have the right VPR training
- **Inspections** – H&S reps highlighting and investigating risk factors
- **Staffing levels** – how to address the risk created by unsafe staffing levels
- **Reporting** – working with the employer to encourage staff to report all incidents and near misses
- **Data** – sharing of data to track incidents and take preventative steps
- **Learning** – learning lessons from each incident to help prevent them reoccurring

What's in the TU toolbox?

- Unions have legal rights to be consulted
- Training and development for union reps
- Expertise and knowledge
- We can invest in, and support, campaigns
- Influence at local, regional and national levels



Health and safety reps

- Roles
 - Investigate potential hazards
 - Consult members on working conditions
 - Lobby employers to improve safety
 - Support members with complaints about safety
- Legal rights of Health and Safety reps
 - Paid time off
 - Approved training
 - Facilities



Summary

- NHS staff should not accept violence or aggression as ‘part of the job’ and should be encouraged to report all incidents and near misses.
- NHS staff experience violence differently linked to their protected characteristics.
- The NHS needs a more consistent approach, focussed on prevention, high quality risk management, effective use of data, a reporting culture, and collaborative working to provide safer workplaces.
- Union reps are strategic partners in the implementation and review of the VPR Standard
- Unions have a role in highlighting violence as a work-related issue and campaigning and organising to reduce it.
- Plenty of tools and campaigns are available.