



Bodycams: Putting Healthcare Workers in the Picture

Last month [Nursing Times reported](#) that a staggering 93% of nurses and midwives have experienced violence in their workplaces.

Even more shockingly, nearly one in ten reported that they suffer physical abuse daily.

The research, conducted in association with [UNISON](#), found that the violence endured by NHS staff included “being punched, bitten, spat at, choked, headbutted and even stabbed.” A hospital nurse in Northern Ireland even had a gun pulled on her.

Sadly, these survey results are not an outlier.

The [Royal College of Nursing](#) (subscription) recently noted that nursing staff are more than twice as likely to suffer verbal abuse or violence at work than the general working population.

And last year ITV reported that physical assaults on NHS staff had increased by 21 percent since 2019, the annual tally in 2023 hitting 41,226.*

Whilst it's an issue that clearly impacts most those who endure such attacks, there are wider organisational implications in terms of productivity, attendance, retention and overall cost.

Minimising risk and maximising safety in the workplace is a crucial priority. But how? Bodycams are key to the solution.

10 reasons why healthcare managers should deploy body-worn cameras.

1. Prevention

No-one knows better than a healthcare professional that prevention is better than cure.

Stopping a violent incident prevents yet another healthcare worker suffering physical and mental trauma.

As Tegan Jones, a nurse at Nottingham's Queens Medical Centre [told ITV](#), a body-worn camera "definitely acts as a deterrent to some people who might be getting agitated and frustrated and then they see (the bodycam) and they're like 'Oh, OK, I'm going to relax and watch my mouth a little bit.'"

The very sight of a camera and the understanding that actions are being recorded, that evidence is being gathered, can be enough to deter a would-be perpetrator.



2. Protecting lone workers

Lone workers can be particularly vulnerable.

10% of nurses and midwives reported lone working as an aggravating factor in attacks against them.***

Bodycams can address that vulnerability, with latest generation technology empowering staff and their managers to more effectively manage challenging situations

Motorola's newly-released [V200 body camera](#) incorporates a couple of very smart safety features.

Firstly live-streaming allows managers to view an incident as it happens, with video also recorded for evidential purposes.

Better still, a clever GoLive Audio feature connects a vulnerable worker with their supervisor or security advisor at the push of a button. This means they can receive immediate advice on how best to handle an incident as a manager sees it unfold on real-time video.

Physical & verbal abuse of NHS staff

- 41,226 physical assaults in 2023.*
- 14.38% of NHS staff experienced at least one of physical violent incident in the previous 12 months.**
- 61% of nurses and midwives had thought about quitting their jobs due to concerns about violence at work.***
- 25.08% of staff experienced at least one incident of harassment, bullying or abuse in the previous 12 months.**
- 33% of nurses and midwives needed time off work to recover from a violent incident.***
- Nearly 9% of NHS staff reported at least one incident of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature in the previous 12 months.**
- 99% of nurses working in NHS mental health services have experience physical violence.***

3. Staff wellbeing and retention

As has been well documented, the NHS is suffering a recruitment and retention crisis.

Workplace violence creates a vicious cycle. Some 44% of nurses and midwives cited staff shortages as an aggravating factor in attacks against them. At the same time 61% had thought about quitting their jobs due to concerns about violence at work.

NHS England's Violence prevention and reduction standard notes that "creating cultures where colleagues feel safe and supported can lead to higher retention, lower sickness absence rates, enhanced employee experience, and subsequent improvement to patient experience and outcomes. "

Creating safer workplaces and making staff feel safer is therefore vital.

Body-worn cameras, especially those equipped with interventionist innovations like GoLive Audio can greatly assist that aim. They can both deter and detect violent crimes with their application indicating that a trust takes seriously its duty of care.

In February the [Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust confirmed its deployment of bodycams](#) in certain wards "to help staff remain safe during incidents of violence and aggression."

Head of security Paul Phillips noted that: "Body worn cameras are another step forward in the support of our staff as studies have shown their effectiveness specifically in the reduction of violent and aggressive behaviour."



Motorola V200 Bodycam

4. Promoting prosecution

When a healthcare professional is attacked, they want to see action being taken. Between 2019-2014, there was a 142% increase in reports to the police on NHS staff.*

But going from report to arrest, charging, court appearance and sentencing can be fraught with difficulty.

By capturing high-definition video and audio of an incident, as it plays out, bodycams provide a solid evidential base. They act as an independent witness and, with high quality bodycams automatically encrypting and securing footage, it's gold standard evidence.

This makes it easier for the police to pursue a case and for the Crown Prosecution Service to successfully prosecute it.

5. Dispute resolution

When differing versions of events are presented, body worn camera footage cuts to the chase.

It's hard to argue against video and audio evidence. When such arguments do arise, it's often because one party claims something happened before filming started.

Again, the latest generation of bodycams addresses this, with a number of body cameras incorporating pre-event buffering.

For example, the [Motorola VB400](#), which is a popular choice among security and estates staff, has a pre and post-record feature which captures a continuous loop of audio and video before the moment the camera starts recording.

By documenting the lead up to a recorded incident, it provides greater insight into triggers and wider contextual evidence.



6. Informing training

The footage captured by bodycams can be used to inform one-to-one and group training sessions.

They are particularly useful for highlighting triggers for abuse and violence and promoting best practice – and identifying weakness in - de-escalation techniques.

7. Vexatious complaints

Fake and/or vexatious complaints are an irritating part of modern life.

By acting, in effect, as a third-party witness, healthcare bodycams can halt them in their tracks. Pre, post and during incident footage independently verifies the circumstances and actuality of a complaint, helping weed out those of no merit at an early stage.

The evidence they provide enables HR to swiftly respond to and resolve complaints made internally and, where negligent or criminal behaviour is alleged, speed external investigations.

8. Enhancing patient trust and satisfaction

Judicious use of body-worn cameras in healthcare settings can enhance the trust patients have in the NHS professionals treating them.

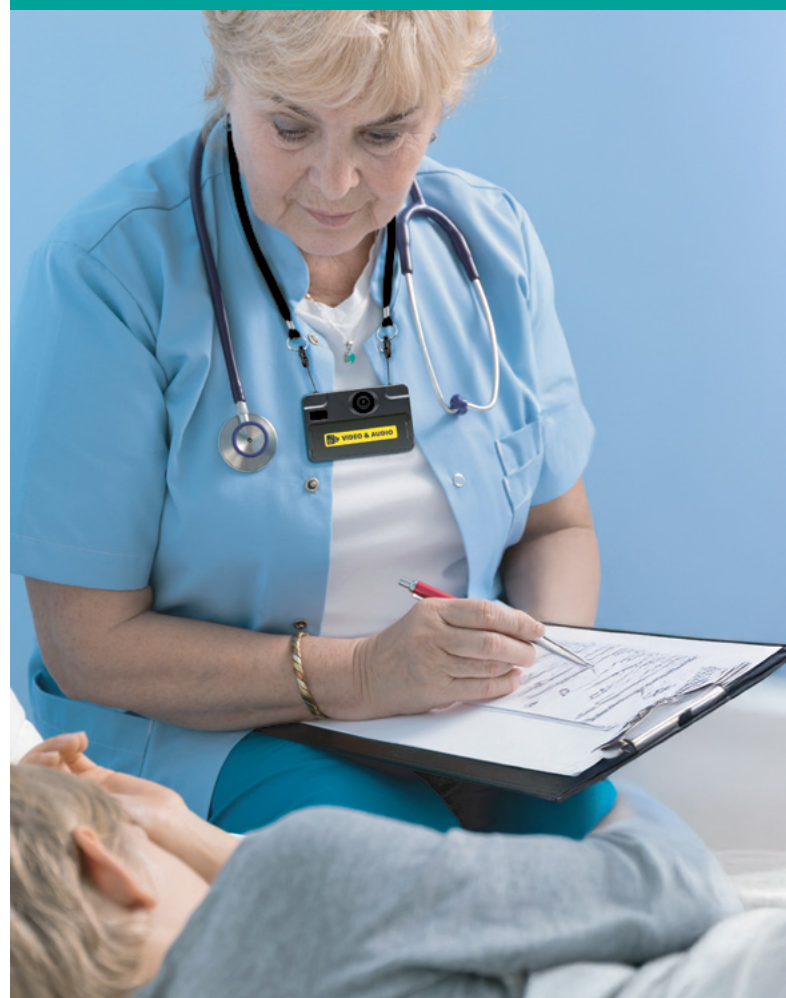
Their deployment communicates that clinical and security staff are being held to account and that trusts are actively promoting the safety and welfare of patients.

Walsall nurse Kazeema Afzal was treating a patient in his room when he tried to strangle her using the string from his hoodie. The tightness of that string meant she could not call for help.

“I kept looking at the door thinking ‘OK someone could come in, I can’t scream’. I just couldn’t, I couldn’t even swallow.” The perpetrator was subsequently found guilty of attempted murder.

That uncertainty – the could in Kazeema’s testimony to ITV News – can be addressed by a body camera. Live streamed video transmitted by WiFi to a control room, allows an immediate assessment of risk and determination of an appropriate response.

Whilst help is on its way, Motorola’s GoLive audio feature means advice may be given in the here-and-now. This can empower a victim – or potential victim – to de-escalate an incident and better protect their own safety.



9. Improving wider on-site security

Body cameras complement fixed site CCTV security cameras. They reach the parts of a hospital that CCTV cannot reach, providing high-definition video within appropriate clinical settings and across the estate - corridors, lifts, car parks and elsewhere.

Implementation of a Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) means video captured by clinical, security and facilities staff can be collated and securely stored on a single platform. DEMS is a sophisticated platform incorporating end-to-end traceability, retention and automatic deletion policies. It also supports enhanced features such as video redaction and incident creation.



Clinical lead Zoya Madar reports that attacks are a daily occurrence for mental health nurses.

She has “advocated for some nursing staff to wear cameras, having seen a marked reduction in violence after they were introduced at an urgent care unit at which she used to work.”***

10. Cost

As we’ve noted, it’s staff on the front line who pay the highest price from workplace violence.

But the financial costs borne by trusts are also considerable. Data from the [British Medical Journal and Guardian newspaper](#) (PDF) shows that between 2017 and 2022 the legal bill for cases of physical and sexual abuse on NHS premises in England alone was £83m.

But that’s just one element of the financial equation. When examining the cost of workplace assaults and abuse, NHS managers need also take into account days lost through injury and the impact on retention figures.

It’s worth repeating that the Nursing Times/Unison survey found that 61% of nurses and midwives had thought about quitting their jobs due to concerns about violence at work.

Losing staff means losing experience – and therefore productivity and expertise – and gaining cost through the requirement to recruit and train.

By preventing or de-escalating incidents, as well as providing solid evidence to support and accelerate successful prosecutions when they do occur, bodycams can benefit stretched budgets.

Sources: * ITV News, 01 May 2024. ** NHS Staff Survey 2024. Data refers to acts by patients/service users/relatives/public. *** Nursing Times/Unison 04 March 2025



For more insights into the latest safety trends and solutions in healthcare, get in touch and book your free consultation.

Book a free consultation



info@avoira.com



0333 001 5151



avoira.com

