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**An analysis of the extent of workplace violence in the
Parking Enforcement Sector: A study of violence and
abuse towards Parking Enforcement Staff in
Bournemouth.**



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Abstract

Since 1965, there has been an auxiliary civilian body responsible for enforcing parking restrictions on the streets of the UK. These were initially called Traffic Wardens, and employed by the police. Following legislation in 1991, the responsibility for Parking Enforcement was devolved to Local Authorities and became part of Civil Law. Following further legislation and in particular the traffic management act, 2004, the legal title changed to Civil Enforcement Officer in England and Wales, becoming operational in March 2008..

Those tasked with enforcing parking have often not enjoyed a positive public image and are often subject to abuse and violence. This derives from a number of sources including angry motorists or third parties displaying Anti Social Behaviour. Many of these incidents are of a serious nature including use of weapons, cars being driven directly at staff and serious injury being sustained.

This research has examined the extent of workplace violence towards Parking Enforcement staff in the Borough of Bournemouth, examining quantitative and qualitative data in terms of incident reports and interviews with staff, and additionally assessing management responses. Comparison is also made with other UK Parking operations across the UK. It concludes that the violence and abuse is significant and unpredictable, and suggests a number of

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recommendations in terms of reporting, recording, post incident management and training.

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Forever grateful to Wilf Hashimi who invited me into the world of Parking Consultancy nearly 10 years ago and achieved the impossible in turning a Metropolitan Police Detective into a parking 'anorak'. Thank you also to my colleagues at Government Office for London, Graham Brown, Claire Seed and Peter Hill-Cottingham for proof reading and enduring my constant hypothesising.

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Foreword

Proper and effective parking management is absolutely essential in our crowded island; without it the economic activity of 'UK plc' would be severely compromised as our high streets become even more congested. Almost everyone would be affected and many people could not go about their daily lives. Strange, then, that parking enforcement is seen in such a bad light. Why is this? Probably because no one has any real experience of what it's like without it and therefore doesn't understand its benefits!

Who remembers St Albans when parking enforcement stopped? It wasn't long before people were calling for the 'wardens' to return as daily life ceased to function; deliveries and servicing became ever more difficult and finding somewhere to park almost impossible.

There is a seemingly ever increasing demand to manage more and more of the network's kerb-space to ensure proper provision for the needs of residents, shoppers and commuters plus, of course, servicing and deliveries. Not to mention pedestrians and the over-riding factor of road safety.

Importantly, as parking professionals - and that includes 'traffic wardens' and Civil Enforcement Officers - we all want to do our job well, but we need others to work with us: we cannot do this on our own. We need others to understand what we do and why we do it. We need everyone - government, local councillors, motorists and adjudicators to understand the importance of proper and effective parking management and just how difficult it to please everyone all of the time.

As a public service we are being scrutinised to death by the public, the press and the media – but why? After all, the Chief Adjudicator herself has acknowledged 'it's only a parking ticket!'

This dissertation by Mike Thompson studying the impact of anger and aggression towards civil enforcement officers and their colleagues in parking enforcement is very welcome. It serves to highlight the significant abuse received by a number of people undertaking a role which society inherently knows is valuable and needed but singularly despises nevertheless. It is true that most CEOs go about their work on a daily basis without trouble or hindrance, but for those who suffer abuse, violence, and bullying it is unacceptable.

Mike Thompson's report highlights the issues and concerns of many and the BPA is grateful to him tackling this important and sensitive subject in such a professional manner. I personally have been pleased to support Mike in whatever way I can and he has acknowledged this in his introduction. The BPA would

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welcome the opportunity to extend the knowledge gained from Mike's study and would consider publishing the report in whole or in part in agreement with the relevant copyright holders.

Mike is to be congratulated on this work as are those who have volunteered to support him and share their case studies with him. It cannot be easy when you have suffered violence or aggression in the workplace to share this publicly and all credit is due to those CEOs who are prepared to do this in the hope that things will be better for their colleagues in future. Let's hope that this additional sacrifice that they have made will not be in vain.

Kelvin Reynolds

Director of Operations and Technical Services, BPA
April 2010.

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Glossary of terms

APCOA – A leading UK Parking Contractor. Originally derived from acronym for **Airline Parking Company of America**.

BPA – **British Parking Association**.

PA – **Parking Attendant**. Replaced the title of Traffic Warden under the Road Traffic Act 2001.

PCN – **Penalty Charge Notice**. The Parking Ticket which is either fixed to a vehicle parked in contravention or handed to the driver.

PE – **Parking Enforcement**. Generally devolved to Local Authorities from the police, but some Traffic Wardens still operate in some rural areas under criminal law.

TW – **Traffic Warden**. Previous title of officer enforcing parking misdemeanours.

CEO – **Civil Enforcement Officer**. Current legal title of a parking enforcement officer in England and Wales under the Traffic Management Act 2004

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Parking is the terminal component, or 'mooring', of automobile transport, and is just as vital to mobility as railway stations, airport gates and shipping docks. Without parking, cars would be useless. Automobility promises instant gratification through speed and individual freedom to go wherever or whenever one wants. Such unfettered mobility must also include the unfettered ability to stop and park the car. Parking problems stop or hinder motorists from reaching their destination, and therefore parking space can become a massively desirable resource (Henderson 2009 pp.71 – 72). However, by-products of unregulated and unenforced parking control are acute congestion and a decrease in road safety, and therefore the necessity for Parking Enforcement (PE) will remain and grow, as cities and towns become more congested and there is a continued competition for kerb space.

1.2 Historical and current context

The police service introduced Traffic Wardens in 1965 to deal with dangerous or illegal parking, vehicle excise infringements and a range of other traffic offences. The Road Traffic Act 1991 (RTA) enabled local authorities to take over PE from the police, and the new term 'Parking Attendant' (PA) was established with these agents carrying out PE under the civil law with the range of offences being decriminalised, such as loading and waiting restrictions on yellow lines (Unison 2002 p.1). The Traffic Management act (TMA) 2004 has developed this further

changing the name to 'Civil Enforcement Officer' (CEO), and expanding the role at the discretion of the local authority into other areas of enforcement such as littering, dog fouling and anti social behaviour. The legal term for the parking ticket issued is 'Penalty Charge Notice' (PCN)

The researcher acknowledges the potential confusion that could emanate from the different titles and terminologies that have derived from developing legislation, and a detailed glossary of terms is presented at the front of this dissertation. The general public generally know and refer to those enforcing parking restrictions as Traffic Wardens, but for the purpose of accuracy and authenticity within this primary research, they will be referred to by their current legal title of CEO.

Whilst PE is necessary to ensure road safety and maintain the free flow of traffic (London Assembly Transport Committee 2005 p.9), those enforcing parking on the street suffer from a poor public image and have been subjected to extreme levels of hostility and violence. This is highlighted by a serious and potentially fatal attack on a CEO in Wandsworth, London on 27th June 2007, where he was kicked and struck around the head with a crash helmet (Local Government Chronicle 2007).

The aim of this research is to conduct an analysis of the extent, nature and responses to Workplace Violence (WV) in the Parking Enforcement sector. Its

specific objectives are: 1) To evaluate quantitatively and qualitatively, the statistics of recorded incidents of WV towards PE staff employed by Bournemouth Borough Council; 2) To discuss the impact and reality of WV towards PE staff in Bournemouth derived from primary data gleaned from staff interviews; 3) To present conclusions to assist improvements in training, recording practices, evidence gathering and staff welfare. The study is relevant to the effective planning and implementation of parking enforcement strategy, and to the safety and welfare of staff, including retention and employer's duty of care.

The British Parking Association (BPA) report in their conflict management guidance notes that those tasked with enforcing parking restrictions are considered to be fair game because of what is perceived to be their over zealousness. In fact the job is valuable and essential in keeping highways clear, preventing city centre gridlock, enforcing parking contraventions outside schools for child safety, and generally acting as local authority ambassadors in providing advice, directions and help to those who need it within the community.

Waddington, Badger and Bull (2006 p.3) make the most pertinent analogy to that of the work of an Environmental Health Officer and WV that faces them in having to sometimes correct the unhealthy practices of their clientele. Just because somebody is resistant to having a sanction placed upon them for doing something morally or legally wrong, disagreeing with compliance does not give them licence to use violence towards any agent trusted to impose that sanction.

Unison (2002) recommended that the government should legislate and create an offence of assaulting a public sector worker in the course of their duty, which would cover a wide variety of public sector staff including PE, and it is strange that this has never been pursued, as it has a potential to act as a deterrent where existing legislation currently doesn't deliver. This research therefore provides an opportunity to open a society wide debate on the necessity of PE and the right of its staff not to face violence, but also for the industry to inwardly examine its own procedures and image, through training and transparency of practices.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 moves on to a review of the literature. Very little research has been conducted into WV in PE, and therefore the review examines comparable professions facing similar WV risks such as security guards, social workers, health service workers and the police. The review will then examine some of the key themes that emerge including retaliatory behaviour, WV typologies and applicability to PE, Anti Social Behaviour, the effects of commuter stress and models of management and welfare response.

Following the literature review, Chapter 3 will discuss the research methodology. The research design will be outlined and its primary research method justified, with an examination of the advantages and disadvantages of using such methods.

In Chapter 4, the findings of the primary research into the Parking Enforcement Operation at Bournemouth Borough Council will be presented. Quantitative data will be presented and discussed, in terms of the number of reported assaults and other reportable incidents recorded. This will be compared and contrasted against data gleaned from another United Kingdom parking operation. A qualitative assessment will then be made to examine the type, nature and seriousness of the incidents and their impact on staff. Reactive and proactive methods of management will be evaluated and will be assessed on the findings drawn from interviews with staff.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of the research. It will review this research project and highlight its significant findings. It will then make recommendations for future policy and practice based on the research findings.

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to assess WV theory in its widest societal context and then establish how it applies in a more narrow and focused way to the environment of PE. Little academic research has so far been conducted around PE, so literature from other comparable fields will be drawn upon. Reference will be made to a previous empirical study by Unison. It will examine the history of resistance to parking controls and review its current media portrayal. It will then go on to discuss the risks connected to the PE role and how this can be assessed and managed. The typology of WV that impacts on PE will be examined, and specifically the retaliatory nature of society towards such services. It will then assess other aggravating factors and complications aligned to this such as commuter stress and Anti Social Behaviour. It concludes by discussing the acceptance of risk within PE as merely an occupational hazard and discusses ways forward in managing and preventing WV towards PE staff.

2.2 General context of WV

Di Martino (2000) sets the context for the problem and extent of WV by outlining the variety of behaviours which may be covered under the general rubric of violence at work. This range of behaviours is so large, the borderline with acceptable behaviours so vague and the perception in different contexts and cultures of what constitutes violence so diverse, that it becomes a significant

challenge to both describe and define this phenomenon. These behaviours range from homicide and assault, to name calling, innuendo and deliberate silence. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reports that anyone who works directly with the public has an increased risk of violence. The highest risk occupations are workers in the protective services - especially police, security guards (Chappell and Di Martino 2006 p.84) and the fire service, and this must also therefore include those working in PE.

Di Martino (2000) offers the interesting perspective of the "interactive" analysis of both individual and social risk factors. Workplace violence often stems from a combination of causes, including individual behaviour as well as the work environment, the conditions of work, the way in which co-workers interact, the way that customers or clients interact with workers, and the interaction between managers and workers. The cost of violence represents a serious, sometime lethal threat to the efficiency and success of organisations. Nothing is worse for an organisation than to be labelled as violent. The new profile of violence at work which emerges is one which gives equal emphasis to physical and psychological behaviour, and one which gives full recognition to the significance of minor acts of violence. This theory carries particular resonance set against the context of PE.

The recent Channel 4 Despatches documentary 'Confessions of a Traffic Warden' (2009) graphically highlighted some of the unpleasant realities facing a CEO today in carrying out their duties on the streets of Great Britain. In the

featured parking operation in the London Borough of Westminster, CEOs were filmed being abused racially (90% of staff immigrants) and being subjected to overt hostility and aggression with such regular comments as 'Get a fucking real job', 'Do you sleep well at night?', and 'Out working at midnight are you coon?'. The documentary charted the decline in morale of an idealistic young Nepalese man who had taken on the job with a vision to connect with the British people and provide a service driven by discretion, only to become disillusioned and too ashamed to be filmed because of his negative experiences.

2.3 Previous research into violence against PE staff

Unison (2002) examined the extent of WV towards PE staff through a national survey of its PE members. As well as personal details and work locations, members were asked about experiences of violence in the preceding 12 months and their employer's approach to WV. The results revealed some alarming statistics:

- 90% of PE staff had suffered some form of violent incident at work during the previous 12 months
- Almost 20% were attacked or threatened on at least a weekly basis
- Almost one third of respondents had been the victim of an attack involving a vehicle and over 10% had been attacked or threatened with an offensive weapon

- Over 12% received injuries, 7% required medical treatment, 20% reported suffering from shock and 1% suffered a broken bone or limb. 7% had to take time off work following injury resulting from WV
- Less than a third of employers appeared to have risk assessed violence despite the law requiring them to do so
- 62% of respondents reported receiving training on how to deal with WV, but the figures suggest that this was a one off event with no refresher training
- There were patchy responses by employers in providing violence reporting mechanisms or aftercare and support

The Unison report concluded that no one should have to go to work expecting to experience some sort of violent incident and that working within PE was clearly a hazardous job, with staff facing an overwhelming likelihood of being a victim of WV, many on a weekly basis.

Public authorities, workers and employers are increasingly aware of the need to control violence and that all occupations appear affected, although in different ways and depending on circumstances, with PE evidently suffering a disproportionately high degree of WV. This specific analysis of WV in PE connects to wider WV theory in that the workplace can be a generator of violence and where violence is built up elsewhere, it can be triggered by the issue of a parking ticket. (Di Martino 2000)

Current workplace practices, cultural and organisational norms, and social structures continue to place workers lives at risk of victimisation. The absence of formal legislation and in some cases, organisational specific policies to adequately regulate and penalise violent behaviour, together with values that tolerate violent behaviour are contributing factors to WV in the PE sector (Licu and Fisher 2006 p.229).

2.4 History of conflict and current media portrayal

Violence against the authorities that control Britain's roads dates back centuries and continues unabated in the form of clandestine campaigns to destroy speed cameras and assaults against those enforcing parking restrictions. Toll gates became a target of riots and protest during the 18th century after Parliament created the first "turnpike trust" in 1706, which allowed local commissions to demand fees for road users. The money raised was supposed to go towards funding road improvements but frequently became a sore between local authorities and tradesmen, who accused the commissions of corruption. (Times Online, 2007).

The media appears to take an active role in facilitating these attitudes and behaviours, as evidenced by the numerous hostile, and often inaccurate, articles which are published. The plethora of media reporting around alleged corrupt and unfair administration of parking tickets does not give those involved in PE a positive image and adds fuel to the often unhappy relationship between such staff and the general public. This includes the alleged ticketing of an arthritic

pensioner whose disabled badge was obscured by frost, a mother being allegedly ticketed after she pulled over to the side of the road to deal with a choking infant and a motorcyclist, involved in an injury accident, allegedly being ticketed as he was being placed in an ambulance (The Guardian 2005).

This debate has even reached the far media echelons of the New York Times (2004) who describe parking officials as the most reviled workers in Britain according to a survey. It also calls into question the high number of immigrants involved in PE and the role that racism may have in the abuse and violence towards PE staff. The public also see the parking regimes as running revenue collection mills at the expense of fairness and discretion, with councils across London being cited as collecting \$296 in revenue from some 9.6 million tickets in 2003-4. In the context of the rise in attacks on Fire Brigade Services, a so called protective and rescue service (Labour Research department, 2008), and its illustration of unexplainable violence towards such a service, it is clear to see why PE staff face a high level of potential violence where they offer financial sanction to motorists against a backdrop of a PE system that is seen as unfair and officious.

2.5 Risk factors for PE staff

Despite the apparent high level of WV towards PE staff as portrayed in local and national media, there is a surprising dearth of research regarding WV relating to the PE discipline. It is therefore necessary within this literature review to draw out the relevant issues by assessing PE against comparable professions and

mapping similar sets of risk factors. Respass and Payne (2008 p. 132) identify a WV violence arena where PE can be aligned and a set of risk factors that are all evident within it. Contact with the public; exchange of money (in the case of PE, dealing with machine fault queries and emptying cash from parking machines); having a mobile workplace; working alone or in small numbers; working late at night or during early morning hours; working in high crime areas; working in community based settings; and working with unstable or volatile persons in health care, social service or criminal justice settings (PE is comparable in terms of the delivery of Civil enforcement of parking contraventions.) Additionally different levels of risk between such occupations are tied to the location where interactions occur. In a courtroom for example, where a great deal of security is present, violence is rare, however in a community setting where either criminal or civil enforcement is carried out, the risk of violence is higher.

2.6 The typology of External violence and retaliation

Mayhew and Chappell (2007 p.332) additionally identify another set of WV concepts that relevantly impact on PE. The 'External' violence typology is perpetrated by persons from outside the organisation primarily for instrumental gain. This type of violence is also more common in some geographical locations and community violence spills over into businesses and their workforce. Indeed an existing argument is presented that attitudes to violence are inculcated within cultural groups so that for some people, violence becomes a routine way of transacting difficulties and conflicts. PE staff are also subject to 'client initiated violence' in terms of their face to face contact with members of the public and

bystanders and their provision of a service on behalf of their relevant Local Authority. They also face an increased risk as 'off site' workers working in less structured environments, deal with more unpredictable events, assist previously unknown members of the public, and sometimes carry out their job tasks in quite remote places (Mayhew and Chappell 2007 p.333).

Violence against PE staff is also rooted in a culture of retaliation. PE operates in a slightly skewed position as a service provider in that it is necessary for the free running of traffic through our towns and cities and increases road safety, but its benefits are somewhat intangible in the context of its image as motorist persecution, unjust, and merely government revenue generation. Customers regardless of context or culture will go to extremes to exact a revenge. Acts of anti-consumption and the solicitation of social support are key tools used in retaliation. This behaviour is done by the withholding of consumption, the seeking of unlimited amounts of social support through negative word of mouth and the creation of public displays of protests (Funches, Markley and Davis 2009 p.232). This translates into PE in the manifestation of the public flouting parking contraventions, trivialising it as a discipline and demonising those empowered with enforcing it.

Retaliation typically occurs in response to a perceived injustice. It can be fuelled by a lack of patience, dissatisfaction with the service, discourtesy from the provider and mistakes and promises that are not kept. It is particularly pertinent in

the context of PE that retaliation is not an impulsive act, rather often the outcome of cognitive processing. The first step in the process of retaliation is when customers perceive that the service provider's actions are harmful or wrong, following which the customer assigns them blame which triggers anger and rage, thereby increasing the likelihood of retaliation. The final step in this cognitive process is to select a course of action and who will be the target of it, invariably in this case, a CEO (Funches et al 2009 p.233).

One of the most significant retaliatory responses facing a CEO a motor vehicle being driven at them. Fayard (2008) presents a study of fatalities occurring in American parking lots between 1993 and 2002. Whilst the highest figure relates to assault and violent acts at 47%, parking workers struck by vehicles account for 13% of all fatalities. Additionally 13% of actual homicides in parking lots were those in protective services, including enforcement. In the UK, this is reflected in significant case law – *R v Matthew John Blythe [2009] EWCA Crim 1982 2009 WL 3171801*, *R v Fabian Robert Joseph [2001] EWCA Crim 1195*, *R v Watson [2007] EWCA Crim 1595*, and *R v Charlton [1994] EWCA Crim 703*. In each of these cases, motorists were convicted and sentenced to custodial sentences for deliberately driving a motor vehicle at a traffic warden causing either physical or mental injury.

2.7 Commuter stress

The environment of commuting by car also becomes inextricably linked to parking and its enforcement. Commuter stress is a serious issue that can have

significant physical and psychological consequences. Of particular concern is the fact that it may potentially influence the cognitive processes involved in attention, information processing, and appraisal that are essential to effective coping. Efforts to deal with traffic stress may exhaust coping resources and subsequently increase the possibility of aggressive responses. Such aggression and violence are strongly influenced by immediate contextual factors, such as poor weather, sleep problems or conflicts at home/work, but broader situational factors, such as the need to park and the competition for kerb space, help shape the nature and outcome of these actions, therefore placing somebody charged with enforcing related contraventions at higher risk of aggression (Hennessy 2008, p.2317, 2325.)

Driver stress is related to individual differences in a variety of measures of personality, cognitive appraisal and emotion. General driver stress is associated with higher levels of neuroticism, aggression-hostility, frequency of everyday problems, self-rated poor concentration and absentmindedness, and with stressed mood. This also amplifies general personality characteristics associated with negative interpersonal reactions, such as high neuroticism and psychoticism, and high aggression-hostility. The adverse emotions may be caused by the driver's cognitive appraisal of his or her capacity to deal with the demands of driving and its ancillary issues such as parking (Matthews, Dorn and Glendon 1991 p.548)

2.8 Just an occupational hazard?...so 'get over it'!

Having assessed the risks attached to PE, it is clear that they are many and varied, as would be the case with any protective or enforcing body such as the police. Having a rationale about managing those risks is the next logical step for PE operations. ACPO (2005) provides a simple risk management framework in the form of the RARA model which can aid the formulation of a risk management strategy for PE:

Removing (the risk) -This would involve withdrawing from enforcing parking which is not an option.

Avoiding - Consciously avoiding certain 'hotspots' where for example due to the time of day and where factors such as alcohol consumption by those on the streets, may make PE disproportionate and counterproductive.

Reducing -Enforcement by static camera for certain contraventions is a reduction option. However the removal of the human presence of the CEO takes away important elements of procedural explanation and diffusion.

Accepting - Accepting and managing the risks within PE is inevitable and can be supported by appropriate risk assessment, training, equipment, management support and aftercare.

It is no coincidence that the RARA model is presented in the context of managing Hate Crime (HC). Whilst potentially controversial to make this comparison, it may be considered that violence and aggression towards PE staff shares this context and there are parallels. Defining what actually constitutes HC is complex, but

deconstructing its components reveals relevance and similarities. Such drivers identified by Hall (2005 P. 3) include criminal acts motivated at least in part by the group affiliation of the victim, illegal acts involving intentional selection of a victim based on the perpetrator's bias or prejudice against the actual or perceived status of the victim and violence directed towards groups of people who are not valued by the majority society. This is further compounded by the actual ethnicity, race or apparent sexual orientation of individual CEOs providing a double edged sword of attack.

Button (2007 pp.140 – 146) provides comparable narrative of the everyday experiences of security guards privately policing a shopping centre. Their role and functions are very similar to the generic role of the CEO. Nearly 80% of security staff reported receiving verbal abuse on at least a weekly basis, with this rising to 95% for those performing more 'frontline' roles, comprising closer interaction with the public. Just under half of the 'frontline' officers stated that they received threats of violence on a weekly basis, with 90% stating that such threats were received on a monthly basis. Over 50% stated that they had been assaulted within the last year. However, having identified such risks, there was little evidence of management intervention, complicated by the position of security as serving too many masters, effectively being accountable to both the contractor and the actual site itself, with separate managers having separate and conflicting agendas (Button 2007 p.134).

The variable factor of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) must also be considered in terms of WV towards PE staff. CEOs by nature of their role will by default encounter the typology of ASB outlined by Millie (2009 pp.12-13), including acts directed as people such as intimidation/harassment, environmental damage, misuse of public space and disregard for community and personal well-being. The researcher from his own perspective as a citizen has observed ASB in many forms on a daily basis such as aggressive pedal cycling on pavements, unsolicited hostility, swearing and aggression, and general disregard for order and law. However outside this citizen's anonymity, and charged with carrying out a lawful function and uniform service, a higher ASB risk presents itself to the CEO, with those indulging in ASB having a focus and target.

2.9 Responses to and management of WV

Creating a violence climate is a direct extension of the ideas on creating a safety climate for employees, and is an important consideration for those managing PE. This type of climate refers to employees' perceptions of organisational policies, practices, and procedures regarding the control and elimination of workplace violence and verbal aggression. Kessler, Spector, Chiu-Sang and Parr (2008 p.110) discuss that a positive violence climate is achieved when organisations institute policies and procedures to prevent and manage physical violence and verbal aggression. They also emphasise the important role that supervisors can play in effectively handling interpersonal conflict and modeling civil interaction behaviours for employees. A positive violence climate may not only reduce the occurrence of violence and aggression by employees, but it may also help them

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identify and remove risk factors leading to violence and aggression by others in the workplace.

The supporting of employees is essential in an environment where interpersonal conflicts and other traumatic incidents have the potential to have a profound effect on workers, and this is particularly the case within PE. Within certain comparable working cultures such as the Police, violence, victimisation and abuse can become almost seen as 'part of the job'. Whilst individual incidences of WV may not immediately result in psychological trauma, prolonged exposure and gradual build up of traumatic experiences can lead to a cumulative form of traumatic stress (Tehrani 2002 p.192).

The following chapter will discuss the research methodology, design and methods conducted in the production of this dissertation.

Chapter 3

3. Methodology

The previous chapter evaluated existing WV literature and its applicability to PE. This chapter will assess the adopted strategy for this research and will consider the methods of data collection, the sample selection of interviewees, ethics and any limitations of the research.

Jankowicz (1995 p.174) provides a definition of methodology as ‘the analysis of, and rationale for, the particular method or methods used in a given study, and in that type of study in general.’ The aim of research should be to establish the truth and research design aims to minimise or exclude the threats to the internal validity of the study, for example in the researcher adopting biased and predisposed views (Clancy 2002 p.546). The generally accepted perspective of quantitative research has been subject to some criticism. Lincoln and Guba (1985 p.106) note that there is a danger in concentrating on quantitative methodology in limiting the perspectives of participants and studies seeking to identify an ‘insider perspective’ should be qualitatively grounded, deriving from structural conditions, consequences, deviances, norms, processes, patterns and systems (Strauss and Corbin 1967 P.18).

3.1 Stage 1 – Literature Review

The researcher conducted secondary research and analysis into WV literature to draw out the key themes and issues, and provide a better understanding of the risks facing PE staff and its position in the arena of WV.

The following data of relevance was collected:

- Academic theory relating to WV applicable to PE
- Previous research project by the union Unison investigating violence towards PE staff
- Open source media relating to PE
- The following sources were used to track relevant literature:
 - Google Scholar
 - CSA Illumina
 - Westlaw UK
 - Internet Open Source
 - University Reading lists
 - Searching of member's library catalogues, including Portsmouth and Kingston Universities, The National Police Library Bramshill and The Metropolitan Police Peel Centre library

Search terms deployed were: "Workplace Violence", "Traffic" and/or "Warden (s)", "Civil Enforcement", "Parking", "Pluralisation"

3.2 Stage 2 – Engagement with the British Parking Association (BPA) and Bournemouth Borough Council

The BPA were contacted regarding the research as a courtesy and also to elicit assistance. The aspirations of the research were publicised in a national BPA newsletter to members inviting comment. As a result, the researcher received a number of personal communications from PE managers which have assisted the research. The BPA also facilitated a meeting with one of the UK's leading parking contractors APCOA (Airport Parking Company of America)

Denscombe (2003 pp.131-134) outlines the research approach of triangulation. Seeing things from a different perspective and the opportunity to corroborate findings can enhance the validity of the data, providing some confidence that the meaning of the data has some consistency across methods and that the findings are not too closely tied up with a particular data collection method. The analogy of *triangulation* is used to explain this, where the true position is located by referring to two or more co-ordinates relying on the known properties of triangles (angles, length of sides and ratios), a discipline borrowed from maritime navigation. However in adopting this method I will recognise that the notion of single social reality is controversial and therefore will adopt a cautious approach in its use, and while different research methods may point in a similar direction, they are unlikely to meet at a precise, unequivocal point of reality. There will also be no assumption that this method can prove that data or analyses are absolutely correct.

This research method will be reinforced by the data collection of both quantitative (e.g. number of incidents, number of assaults, incidence of police involvement) and qualitative (primary data from interviews and observation) nature (Bertrand and Hughes 2005 pp.85-91). The researcher interviewed 15 members of PE staff including the Parking Operations Manager, and 2 supervisors and deployed a simple structure in terms of the interview questions as follows:

Have you been assaulted in the course of your PE duties?

Have you been verbally abused?

What have been your feelings as a result of this?

How could the situation be improved?

What is your management support like?

Do you feel your training has been adequate?

The Researcher overtly patrolled with a CEO to observe frequency, duration and time of any WV activity. The dangers of fieldwork as outlined by Denscombe (2005 pp.207-8) were noted by the Researcher and a full risk assessment was conducted. The Researcher is a serving police officer, and remains so 24/7 and is therefore trained and obliged to intervene in the event of criminal activity, subject to correct dynamic risk assessment. Healey (1999 p.1) describes research as any process by which information is systematically and carefully gathered for the purpose of answering questions, examining ideas, or testing theories. A theory is an explanation of the relationship between phenomena and

is stated in terms case to case (Healey 1999 pp.2-3). Data derived from the research variables will be presented in suitable chart form to support the theories (Healey 1999 pp.30-31). Statistics between each authority will be compared and contrasted to provide analysis of WV prevalence, preventative and reactive strategies, staff wastage/turnover and training effectiveness.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

The primary research was conducted on a purely voluntary basis with the interviewee retaining the right to withdraw from the study any time prior to publication. The researcher was mindful of the sensitive nature of the subject matter and of the importance of establishing a relationship close enough to allow the discussion of sensitive, personal and potentially embarrassing issues. It was also important to be specific in the relationship in terms of boundaries i.e. that this was research and not a form of therapy or friendship (Flick 2007 p. 83).

At the time of the interview, the participant was provided with an information sheet (Appendix A) which explained the purpose of the study, the type of questions they were going to be asked, issues of confidentiality, and reassurance that all personal information would be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1998. The participants were also asked to sign a consent form prior to the interview (Appendix B). Patton (2002 p.380) states that “a good tape recorder is indispensable to fine field work’ and recording interviews provides improved opportunities for subsequent analysis. Each participant consented to

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their interview being recorded and these were subsequently evaluated and transposed by the researcher.

3.4 Research Limitations

A number of research lines were pursued, which would have added value to this research, but the repeated requests for the information were not replied to. Specifically I requested data from Bournemouth Council's Health and Safety Manager as to the prevalence of reported incidents of violence towards other council employees, such as Environmental Health Officers. I also requested data from the training centre at City and Guilds regarding training commissions received from local authorities across the UK. This information would certainly have added to the perspectives within this research.

In Chapter four, I will present the research data collected and lay out the findings.

Chapter Four

4. Research findings and discussion

The previous chapter discussed the methodology used in this study to explore the opinions, views and experiences of CEOs and Supervisors employed in PE in the Borough of Bournemouth in Dorset. The literature review identified that there has been little study into the extent and nature of WV towards those employed in PE, despite the fact that it is evident from the media that this is a significant issue. This chapter seeks to address this by examining primary data collected from a study involving the collation of reported incidents of WV towards Bournemouth's PE staff and also personal experience and opinion gleaned directly from face to face interviews. This will be compared and contrasted with the experience of those engaged in PE in other areas of the UK from information gleaned from personal communications with other parking practitioners. The results of this primary research will be summarised and then discussed in the context of the findings of the earlier literature review.

The research findings will be summarised under 3 key themes:

1. Quantitatively in terms of how many reported incidents
2. Qualitatively in terms of the nature and seriousness of the incidents
3. How the incidents are managed and responded to

4.1 Parking Enforcement – Bournemouth Borough Council

The council took over responsibility for decriminalised parking from the police in 2001. The PE operations employ 28 CEOs and 4 Supervisors. Bournemouth has a big night time economy and CEOs are deployed in shifts: 8am – 430pm, 930am – 6pm and 1230pm – 9pm. A positive working relationship has been established with the local police, including joint patrolling and every Friday morning outside Bournemouth’s Mosque, there is a joint police/council initiative to oversee management of parking contraventions and engage the community.

4.2 Reported Incidents

The examination of the nature of this issue starts with the actual number of reported incidents by staff in Bournemouth on the frontline of PE. Figure 1 provides the baseline data of what staff have reported in terms of abuse and assaults from 2003 up to the period of the research in May 2009.

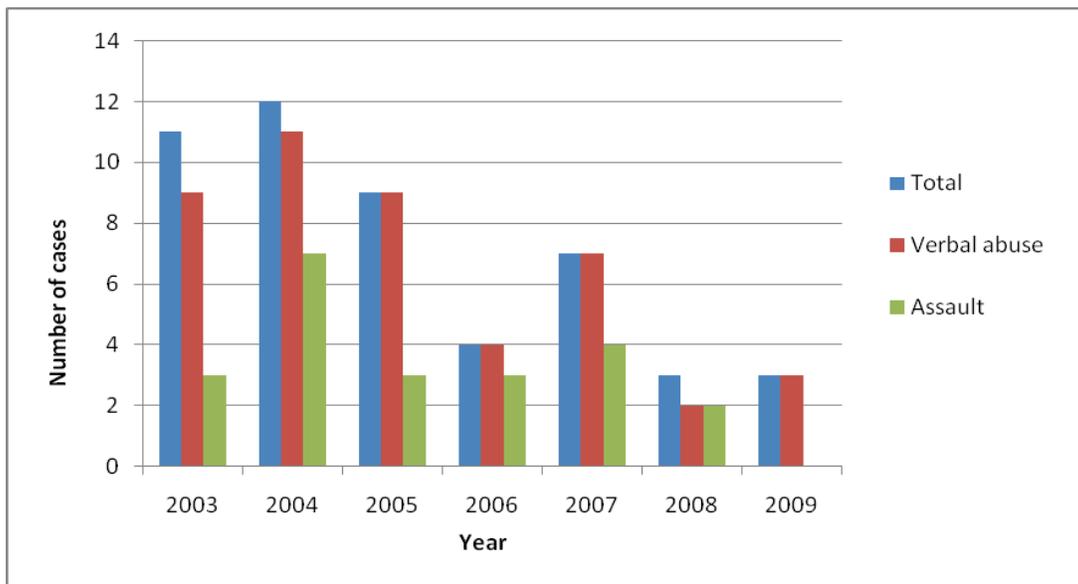


Figure 1 Total incidents and actual number of cases involving assault or verbal abuse - Bournemouth Borough Council

The peak year for reported incidents was 2004 with 12 reports. 11 of these involved verbal abuse to staff and there were 7 assaults. 2008 showed the least number of reported incidents with 3, of which 2 involved both assault and verbal abuse. To the date of the research in May 2009, there had been 3 reported incidents all involving verbal abuse, but no assaults.

A national contractor APCOA also provided assistance with the research and provided figures of reported incidents by PE enforcement staff in 2008 which are presented at figure 2. It useful to compare and contrast the figures in terms of triangulation and consistency.

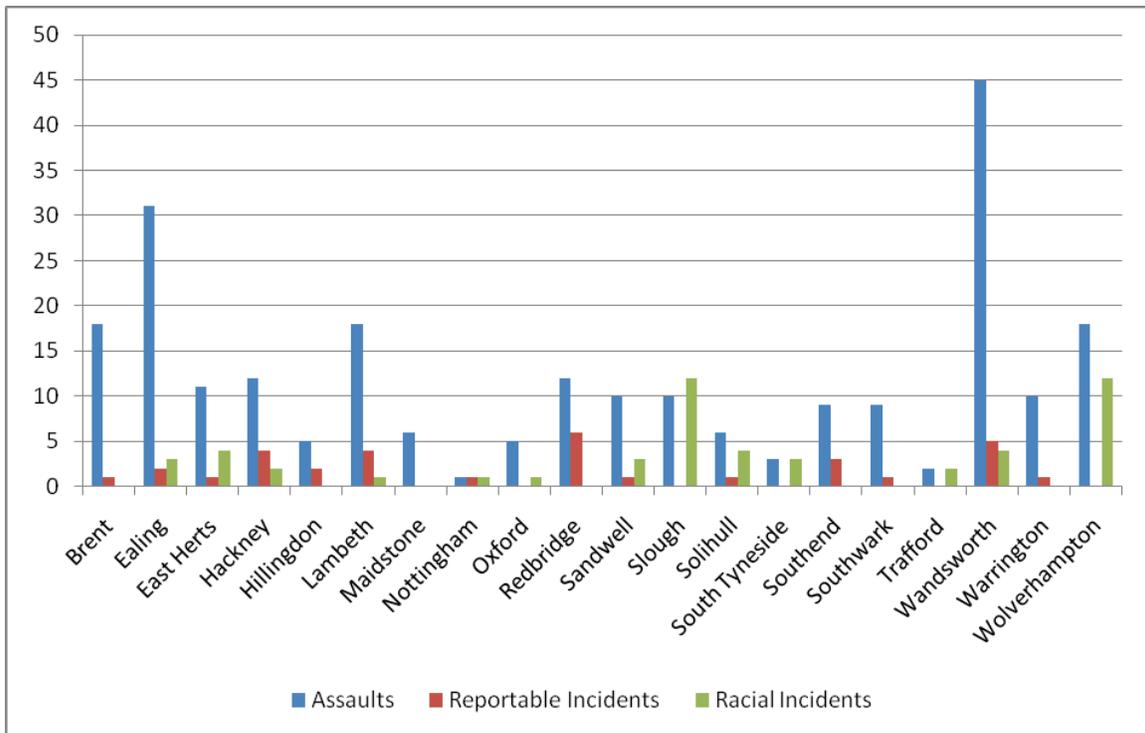


Figure 2 Reported Incidents by APCOA Parking Enforcement Staff 2008

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Whilst Wandsworth and Ealing Boroughs in London display high levels of assault in 2008, generally the levels of reported incidents and assaults are similar to the peaks and troughs of Bournemouth's reporting history with South Tyneside recording three incidents in 2008 comparable to Bournemouth's figures. APCOA record details of racial incidents which is good practice and dictated by the diversity of their national demographics, including London and other ethnically mixed areas.

Some perspective on the rationale for reporting incidents is provided from staff interviews:

'We tolerate and put up with too much. There is a variance among staff as to what they report due to different levels of tolerance. I've been called... "a fat dyke." There is a case for underreporting –. There is more abuse than violence.'

In the past 12 months I have not been assaulted but have been subjected to lots of verbal abuse swearing and threats. You don't get as much respect as police officers. Public have a low view of parking enforcement. Much depends on how you approach the situation. I try not to take it personally. People shouldn't be able to intimidate you into getting out of it.'

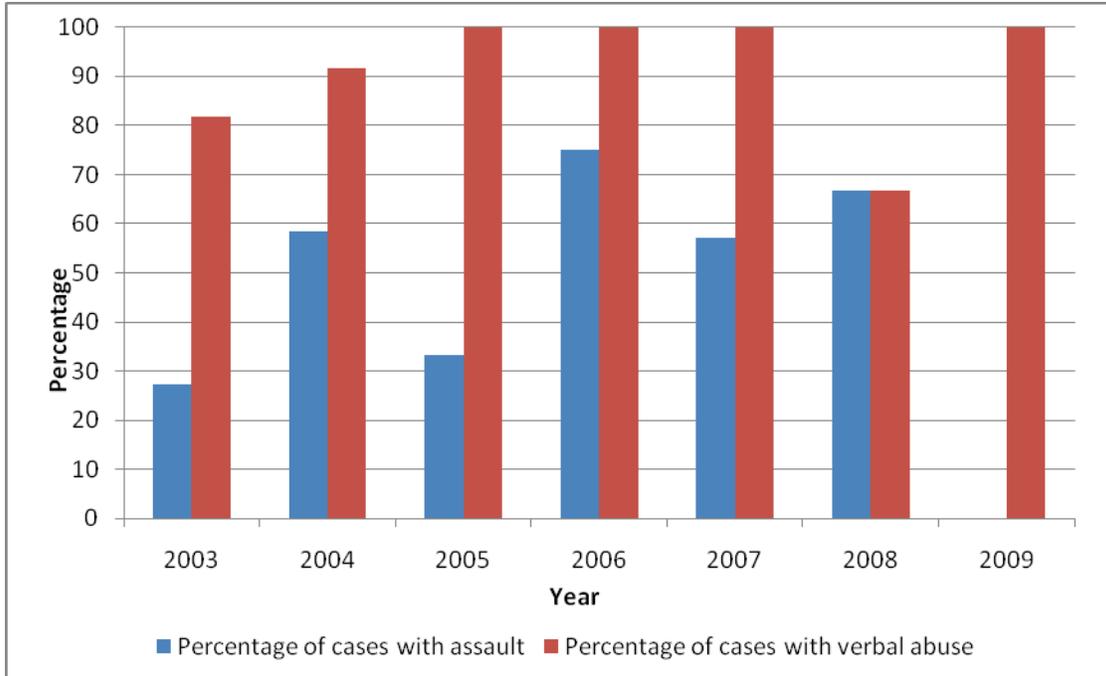


Figure 3 Percentage of cases involving assault or verbal abuse

Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of all incidents as assaults and verbal abuse.

In 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009, all reported incidents involved verbal abuse.

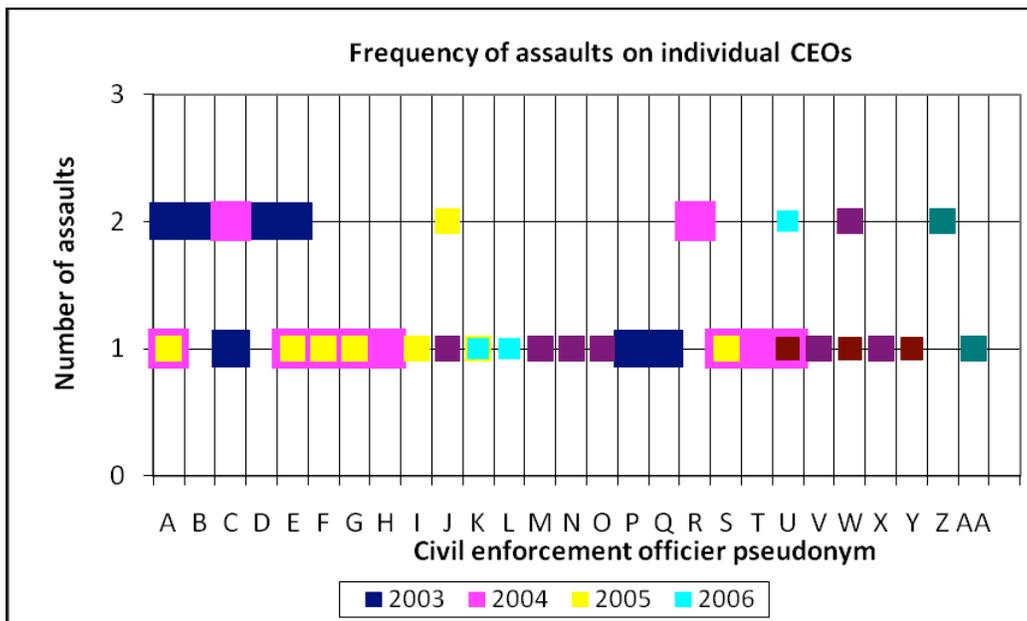


Figure 4 Frequency of incidents reported by individual CEOs

Figure 4 outlines the frequency that individual CEOs have been involved in reportable incidents involving abuse, assault or both. To protect identities they have been anonymised and coded with a letter. Within the legend, years are colour coded and where two colours are presented this indicates incidents affecting CEOs across multiple reporting years. For example, CEO 'A' has reported one incident in both 2004 and 2005, and two incidents in 2003. There is an even spread across the workforce of being affected by such incidents. It is acknowledged from the interviews that there is a variation of experience, maturity and skill amongst staff and this may be a factor where staff have experienced more abuse than others, although it is evident that there is very much a random nature to events unfolding during enforcement patrols.

'I used to feel bad about coming into work due to the abuse, but the situation has improved as I have got my confidence. I try to change the way I talk to people. It's difficult around clubs when people have been drinking.'

'We know we'll take some stick just for doing what we do. But there is a line to be drawn when I'm not going to accept that. Everybody's got a different tolerance. Responses will be dictated by risks.'

4.3 The nature of WV violence towards PE staff

Quantitatively, to the outside observer, the figures may not at face value present what could be called a significant problem. For example, for Bournemouth to have had only four reported incidents for the whole year in 2006, considering this

as a problem to be addressed may be considered disproportionate. However the qualitative picture in terms of the gravity of some of the incidents, and the cumulative effect of abuse, transcends mere quantitative data.

Dip sample of incidents in Bournemouth from each reporting year:

2003 – Vehicle mounted the pavement and drove at the CEO, who had to jump out of the way and narrowly escaped being run over.

2004 – Racial attack – CEO head butted by an Asian male who referred to him as a ‘white dickhead’.

2005 – CEO seriously assaulted and hospitalised. Has since resigned from the job.

2006 – CEO on patrol banged into by pedestrian not connected to the issue of a PCN. Called a ‘wanker’ and a ‘cunt’. Very shaken up.

2007 – CEO in a liveried PE Council vehicle chased by a motorist in a road rage attack. Perpetrator made threats and banged aggressively on the windscreen of the vehicle.

2008 – A vehicle again mounted the pavement and attempted to run down CEO.

2009 – Abused by motorist ‘Don’t you Nazis ever have a day off? I hope your children die a long painful death.’

All staff had been subjected to violence and abuse in some form and to varying degrees. This was often random and unexpected, and contained some alarming elements such as vehicles being driven at staff, being threatened with weapons and spat at.

I've been assaulted several times. Been involved in parking for 30 years – in off street car parks. I was attacked with a knife many years ago. Also robbed at knifepoint of car park takings. Broken ribs/driven at/punched/lost fillings/ spat at/ pushed around. Abuse is general, not from any specific age or gender. Lots of ancillary abuse from passers-by. When I was younger I would have stood up for myself, but I'm now less likely to engage.

Very unpleasant personal abuse is commonly delivered by the public such as 'I hope your family gets cancer'. The general consensus among the interviewees was that they appear to be considered 'fair game' by the public in terms of abuse being delivered.

'Most of it is general abuse. I depersonalise it. It is just the uniform. I try build up a rapport on a daily basis with those around me. The worst thing you can do is lecture the motorist.'

'I was attacked while taking a tea break by a drunk girl who thought we were the police. Tried to swipe us with a broken vodka bottle and flicked blood at us. My coping strategy is to adopt 10% empathy and 90% acting skills. I ensure that I leave it planted in their head that they can appeal against the ticket and that it has been recorded in my notebook. They often shout at you because they're mad at themselves'

Many of the incidents derive from third parties – not the motorist being issued with a PCN but passersby or groups of youths. Things get thrown at them from passing vehicles. The CEOs found this difficult to manage, compared to a face to face conversation with the motorist to whom they were issuing, where they could explain the appeals process as a mechanism to defuse the situation.

'I can leave things behind me when I go home. People I have most problems with don't even have a car. They're just trouble anyway. Problem is young males 17-24 age range. They know that we won't retaliate. It can sometimes get to you. There is lots of jeering late at night when alcohol has been taken.'

Staff considered their management support to be excellent. Incidents were taken seriously and followed up with appropriate police intervention. Staff welfare was monitored and related sickness acknowledged and addressed.

'Stress is cumulative. As time goes by on a regular basis it builds up. It can affect your self esteem. Some individuals cope better than others.'

Training is considered to be excellent and staff feel that they have been well prepared for the role. Bournemouth sets good professional standards in terms of discretion, observation periods and explaining the appeals process.

'Problem is that different Local Authorities appear to have different rules. There should be a level playing field across the board. I average 5 or 6 PCNs a day (sometimes 10 or more).'

There is a robust reporting procedure for assaults and incidents but there is potentially an under reporting of incidents as CEOs become desensitised to abuse. Significant danger presents itself from moving vehicles, and evidence emerges of vehicles being deliberately driven at CEOs.

'I have been spat at and called a 'Fat cow'. I had only been in the job 4 months. I didn't know what to do and I called a Supervisor. All I could smell was the fried breakfast tainting the spit on my face and glasses. It took a while to get over it. Excellent intervention from the management who got the police involved. Went to court – 18 months suspended, fine £150, £50 compensation. Sent him on an anger management course. Police response was positive – I was evidentially swabbed and a statement taken.'

I have been spat at again, but I didn't report it. You never really know what will happen from day to day. I try and treat the public with respect. We are human beings. Perception is that PE just a revenue generator. But if you were to pull all the CEOs off the streets for a day...see what happens and the carnage that will ensue. Joe Public watches you and tries to find things you're doing wrong and keen to dob us in. You have to be professional. Despite all this, I quite enjoy the job. I like talking to people.'

'I had 23 years as a bus driver/ supervisor and have been a CEO for 6. On the buses I was spat at, kicked and punched – mainly late at night and drink related. One incident as a CEO was outside a school where I was enforcing the Zig Zag Lines for child safety. A male motorist approached me holding a tyre wrench which he was slapping in the palm of his hand. He was very aggressive and swearing, saying he was going to hit me. It really shook me up. I walked away but he followed me – it was very scary. The police were called and they found the tyre wrench in the front of his vehicle, and arrested him. The court case was a very intense experience and I was cross examined. He was fined and his punishment was mitigated by mental health issues he put before the court. I felt he got away quite lightly in terms of what he did. He had a lot of previous convictions. I honestly believed that he would have used the wrench on me, particularly if I had stood my ground and not walked away.'

The researcher conducted one foot patrol with a CEO for a four hour period in Bournemouth town centre. This was an attempt to gain more direct insight and triangulate findings from the data research as outlined within the research methodology. However during this period, no violence or abuse was encountered, and there was no time to run further patrols.

4.4 Management of incidents

The interviewed staff were unanimous in commenting favourably on the management responses and systems which addressed violence and abuse, and the Bournemouth model is useful as an excellent example of addressing the unpleasant and unavoidable WV experienced by PE staff.

The Parking Operations Manager in Bournemouth is responsible for the day to day running of operations. She ensures staff are appropriately equipped and appointed, including the correct uniform and training. It was apparent that she took pride in the positive ongoing relationship with the police and it appeared that this derived from her previous service with the police and direct personal relationships she had made and fostered:

'I advise my staff to hit the emergency button on their radio if they are concerned and take no chances. If a member of staff is assaulted I ensure it is written up and taken to the police by me personally. 'I don't understand why other councils don't have a good relationship with the police. We always have representation at community meetings and believe in a multi agency, joined- up approach.'

Figures 5 and 6 reflect the management commitment in notifying the police and involving them where appropriate, including instigating prosecutions or officially warning perpetrators regarding their behaviour. 2004 shows the greatest number

of recorded assaults with 7, also showed the biggest number of injuries with 3. No injuries to staff were recorded in 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009. Police involvement across all incidents was constant as a result of the close relationship with the council, with 2007 recording the highest number with 5.

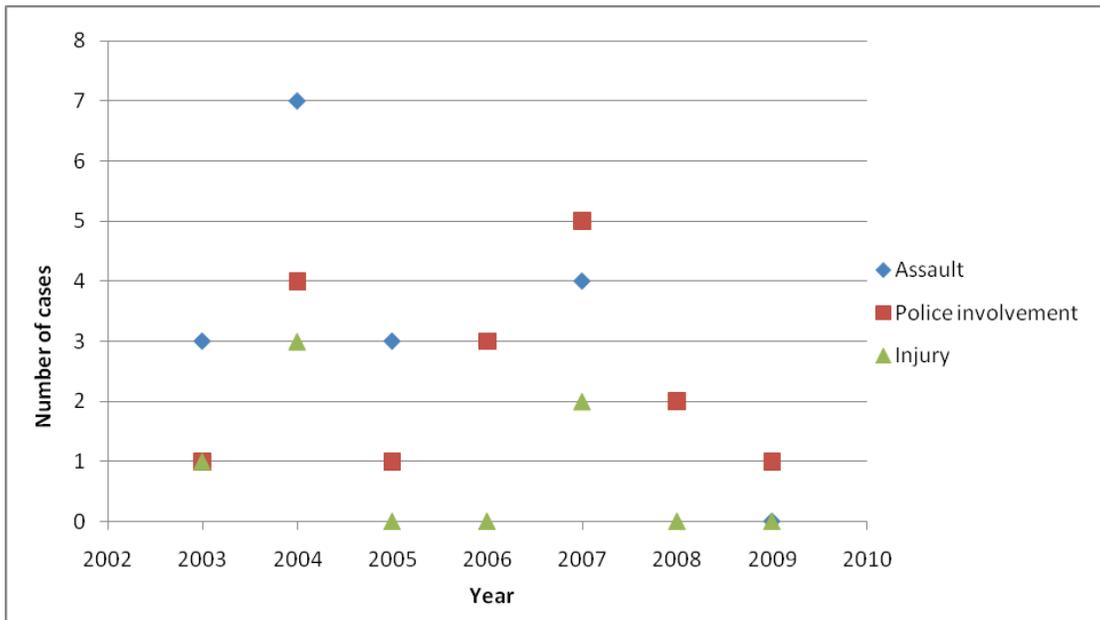


Figure 5 Correlation between total assault cases and those that also involved either police involvement or injury - Bournemouth Borough Council

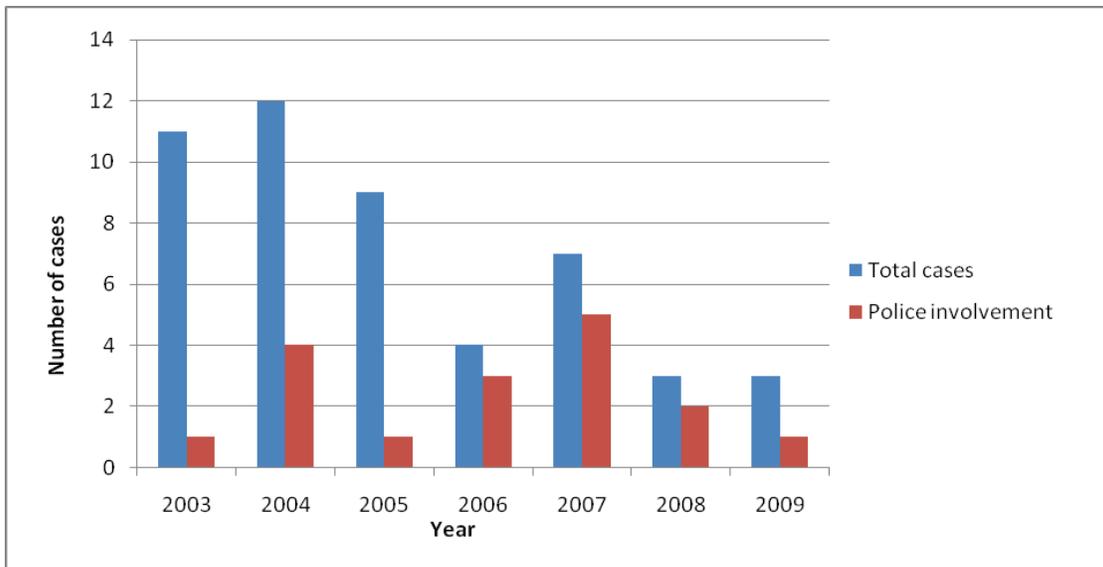


Figure 6 Number of cases with police involvement Bournemouth Borough Council

A private City and Guilds accredited company is employed to train staff on legislation and procedure, and this also includes techniques on conflict resolution, customer service and managing aggression through a number of standard conflict resolution models and psychological disciplines. In addition, they are trained in police accredited personal protection and break away techniques:

'The way staff deal with people is vitally important. Aggression is not personal; it is just directed at the uniform.'

A Supervisor - 'To a certain extent you have to accept and manage the problem. It is very difficult to control the abuse not connected to issue of the PCN. Personal Protection training is useful, but tends to cast the motorist as 'the bad guy. It is much better to defuse the situation by speaking to the motorist properly. One member of staff had a very gung ho attitude and used to become involved in vendettas. He became embroiled in a vicious circle and made enemies. He had a lot of time off sick and has since left the job to become an undertaker. It takes a certain person to successfully be a traffic warden and retain their sanity.'

Often complaints are made against the same CEOs indicating a potential attitude problem. Like any other organisation she is mindful of the varying professional standards, attitudes and abilities across her staff. She terminated the employment of a CEO who was a former white South African police officer due to

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his attitude on the street. Cultural attitudes and behaviours from staff can contribute towards violence towards them.

She also sets a high professional standard in terms of uniform and appearance. A substantial investment is made in uniform and therefore the CEO must be appropriately dressed with their hat on, anorak zipped up or they must comply with shirt sleeve order:

'I think appearance has a bearing on effectiveness and professionalism'

A robust incident reporting system is in place and staff are encouraged to report incidents of violence and abuse towards them, and there is a bespoke incident reporting form (Appendix C) and a Health and Safety Record (Appendix D). Staff are empowered with discretion around their enforcement decisions, in either issuing PCNs to or Verbally Warning motorists committing contraventions, but it is essential that they keep up to date and accurate records in their notebooks. If a CEO is assaulted, management procedure is that police will take the witness statement. Following incidents, the Manager will personally debrief the CEO:

'Sitting the member of staff down and letting them get things off their chest is important .Very nasty things are said and this can have a cumulative effect.'

Sickness is monitored emerging patterns assessed. CEOs go sick when assigned to certain areas with this information often coming out on return to work

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interviews. 3 people have had to be re-deployed elsewhere within the council because they couldn't face the job any more.

It is clear that there are differences of opinion on issues such as doubling up on patrols and other innovations such as head cameras.

'I believe that violence will be reduced if we doubled up on patrols.'

'Don't think that being paired up is a good idea. It becomes a classic case of mob handedness. I think innovations such as head cams and mobile CCTV are good deterrents.'

Similar issues arose within APCOA to those outlined at Bournemouth. Levels of police support vary across the country. They are a large organisation and there is a large turnover of staff. Many CEOs have been arrested for assault themselves as a result of cross allegations being made by other parties in an incident and the organisation supports them by providing a solicitor under legal aid where necessary. Staff are now issued with Global Positioning System (GPS) radios so that their whereabouts can be tracked and monitored. The researcher was allowed access to the control room for Southwark's parking operations and this tracking on a big screen is extremely good practice in terms of staff health and safety.

A member of staff was stabbed in the chest in Brent, and APCOA have developed a contingency plan for a death of a CEO on duty. With APCOA's parking operations stretching across a number of ethnically diverse locations, they monitor and record racial incidents suffered by staff (Figure 6). Additionally, records are kept of calls for assistance by staff with code reds being 'urgent' assistance and code yellows being more routine (Figure 7). This is good practice in shaping risk assessments and providing information on 'hot spots' of dangerousness. The Bournemouth Supervisors monitor calls from PE staff on the ground and this is adequate in meeting their needs, but recording calls for assistance may additionally identify staff training needs in being able to manage conflict on the street.

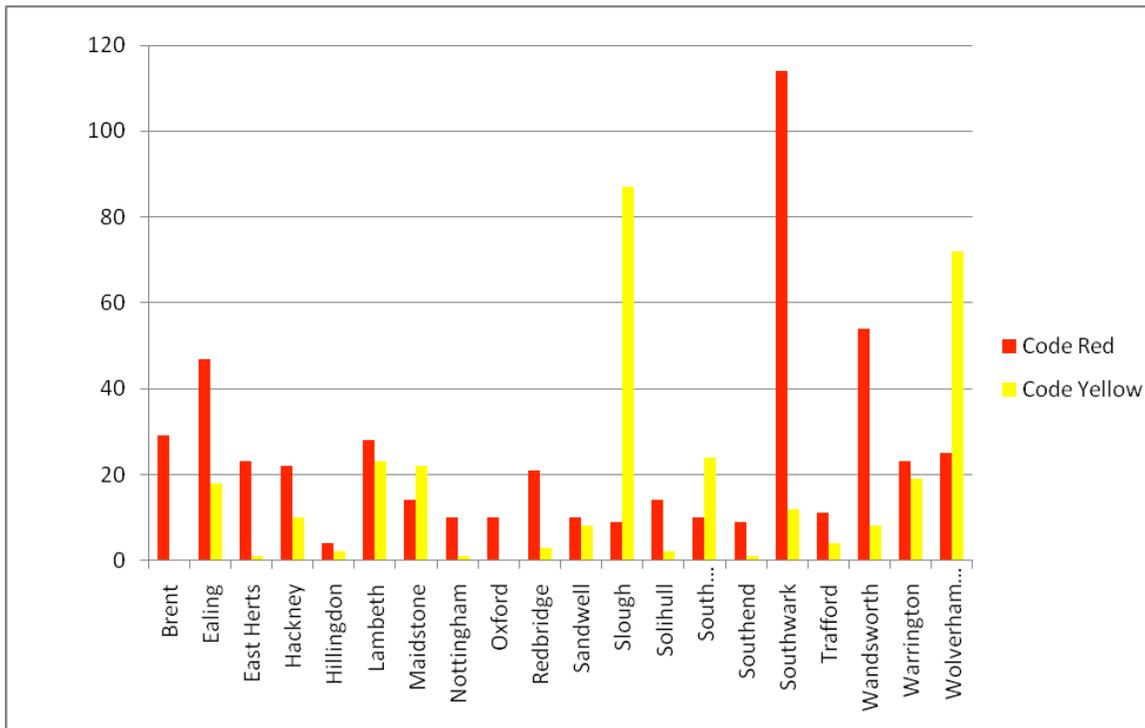


Figure 7 Calls for assistance 2008 by APCOA Parking Enforcement Staff

It is often a struggle to recruit high quality candidates to the role. Some cultural differences have an impact. The company employs numerous staff from Nigeria where uniformed enforcement is held in higher status and they have a reputation of being less discretionary or flexible in their administration of enforcement. Whilst efficient, this can have the outcome of intimidating motorists with a perceived higher level of officiousness and zealously.

Reporting and debriefing is currently carried out in hard copy, the same as Bournemouth, but it will be moving to an electronic on-line system. The researcher had some difficulty in assessing Bournemouth's hard copy reports, and it was only when the data was inputted into electronic spreadsheet form that it could properly be interrogated and evaluated. Electronic reporting is good practice and aids future policy and strategy on WV.

ACPOA consider staff to be their major asset and there are substantial cost savings in retaining them. 80% of all costs revolve around payroll. In Southwark, for example, 142 staff are employed in PE, with 80 of them being CEOs. There is always an immediate drop in staff morale following a serious incident, but it is accepted that on a busy central London such as Southwark violence and abuse towards staff is common, including towards lollipop ladies on school crossings. Bournemouth reports little staff wastage and this is generally reflected in the opinion of staff that they receive good management support and supervisory response.

Patrolling in pairs is a good strategy but not achievable due to staff resources. Don't think staff wastage is particularly an issue – we don't have many staff leaving here in Bournemouth.

A parking Manager in Haringey described his experience of partnership working with the police and its tangible benefits. Bournemouth have established a good working protocol with the police and don't appear to have some of the more difficult challenges faced by Haringey. He captures some sensible and adoptable good practice for other PE regimes:

'I have regular meetings with the local Old Bill. This is a symbiotic relationship, so that I can develop the relationship between CEOs and the local constabulary. The numbers of instances of violence have not significantly reduced, but we have increased joint activities and a better confidence in the police. We carry out joint Disabled Badge misuse operations, they share information on local crimes and stolen vehicles, and I brief the trainee police officers when they join the Borough

Some of my staff (100% of whom are non-white) have a deep-seated wariness of the police. I saw a trend of CEOs being racially abused and assaulted on-street, but who were unwilling to report the crimes. I arranged for the Chief Inspector Partnerships to come and talk with my staff. This visit changed the previous reserved attitude, to the police;

Through funding from the police, we introduced the Scenesafe 'DNA/Saliva Recovery Kits'. The supervisors here, now carry these and if a CEO is spat upon, the supervisor promptly attends the scene and collects the spit in these kits. S/he then places it in the evidence bag and goes to the Station, with the CEO. The local police are sometimes too busy to attend, before he victim wants to wipe his/her face.

In respect of CCTV, I attend the fortnightly police Tasking meetings. I have recently managed to get an officer seconded to the CCTV Centre, which again increases police/Council partnerships, with the hoped-for, knock-on effect that the local police will temper their attitude, towards the dreaded 'Traffic Wardens';

Police Trainers attend my Base and give instruction on Officer Safety Training and Life Saving, to all my staff. I have even managed to get the Health and Safety trainer, to give risk assessment training to my supervisors. This training gives a great boost in morale, to an oft maligned service.'

It is clear that PE is a complex and unwieldy entity with there being many dynamics impacting both at delivery and management levels. The final chapter will highlight the key points of the research, discuss good practice and draw

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conclusions from the research findings. It will also propose a number of recommendations as to future WV approaches.

Chapter 5

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The last chapter assessed the qualitative and quantitative nature of violence towards PE staff. It clearly emerged that there were peaks and troughs in terms of volume of reported incidents and that the main focus of the research in Bournemouth was comparable to other parts of the UK. However it was also clear that the ferocity and dangerousness of some of the incidents encountered are extremely alarming and pose a number of challenges for those engaged in PE. This final chapter will draw together the main conclusions and provide recommendations that will be of assistance in developing future WV strategy in the PE sector.

5.1 The nature and unpredictability of violence

Many of the events of violence encountered by PE staff were random and unpredictable, often emerging out of the blue during the middle of the issue of a PCN, and often involving third parties unconnected to it. Particularly disturbing, is the documented use of motor vehicles being driven at CEOs. Douglas, Kiewitz, Martinko, Harvey, Kim and Chun (2008 pp 425 – 431) capture this concept and its unpredictability. The relationship between a trigger event and an aggressive act cannot be explained without giving consideration to the event's context, which in turn involves individual, situational, organisational and environmental characteristics. It is therefore important when shaping responses to violence within this sector that it is acknowledged that aggressors have formed biases in

their iterative processing of events which facilitate the escalation of aggression and leads to violent behaviour (Ibid). This potential violence deriving and fuelled by stereotyping, normalisation and irrational behaviour is impossible for the industry to eradicate, and therefore in accepting and managing the risk a number of options present themselves.

5.2 Reporting and recording standards

APCOA maintain records of calls for assistance from CEOs, particularly those of an urgent nature. Bournemouth operate their own system whereby Supervisors monitor radio traffic and respond when requested. These responses are good practice in identifying trends and 'hotspots' which can then shape reactive strategy, which may include doubling up patrols, deploying protective equipment, obtaining police assistance or making informed decisions not to enforce at a particular time in terms of proportionality, discretion and safety.

PE operations such as Bournemouth could benefit from electronically recording recorded incidents similar to APCOA, which enables data to be interrogated and interpreted in a more efficient fashion to inform responses. However the qualitative data within the Bournemouth incident reports was detailed and of a high standard, appropriate to subsequent disclosure in legal proceedings, and it is important that this high standard is maintained and not compromised. It is important to capture as wide a picture of all the elements within a reported incident. Many non-fatal incidents simply go unreported partly because no co-ordinated surveillance system exists to collect information (Merchant and Lundell

2000 p.136). Indeed, Kling, Yassi, Smailes, Lovato and Koehorn (2009 p. 1662) recommend a national surveillance system within healthcare settings which could provide a greater understanding and draw together existing comparable systems, building on learning and informing risk assessment and prevention efforts. Good practice, ideally through the BPA, would be to develop a national definition of what is a 'reportable incident' and additionally adopt common data collection and evaluation standards, including racial and homophobic abuse. This will address potential issues of desensitisation and tendency to under report.

5.2 Post incident staff welfare, monitoring and debrief

It is clear that due to the severity of some of the incidents, staff are adversely affected mentally, with Bournemouth losing a member of staff after he resigned following an assault, and APCOA generally having a retention problem. Staff in Bournemouth commented favourably on management responses and it is evident that there is little staff wastage due to this personal approach. Brough and Williams (2007 p.564 - 565) endorse this response in that development of occupational stress interventions for high risk occupations tend to be more successful when local job characteristics are taken into consideration instead of purely relying on 'off the shelf' solutions. The importance of supervisor support is outlined, with it being a strong direct predictor of both job satisfaction and work related psychological well being. Additionally, this support rather than job control was demonstrated to moderate the relationship between job demands and job satisfaction (Ibid). Support within teams buffers the negative outcomes of WV and while it is usually difficult for organisations to change an environment and

reduce violence completely, the problem is ameliorated by creating a supportive environment (Emmerik, Euwema and Bakker 2007 p.171). It is again important that a national standard be developed and any generic post incident procedures deployed across the UK PE industry should take these factors into account.

5.3 PE and its relationship within the 'extended police family'

PE is a uniformed enforcement service, deployed on behalf of local authorities to carry out a legal process underpinned by UK legislation. CEOs have a constant visible presence on the streets of our towns and cities and are often the first link through to a wider law enforcement response, should a member of public require assistance. Good practice emerges from Bournemouth's engagement with the police locally and also the protocols developed in Haringey to improve the trust and confidence between the two agencies. Indeed it is not just PE that benefits from this relationship, with the police being able to access information and intelligence across PE databases to assist criminal investigations. Where local authorities, contractors and the police operate in silos and don't have formal links and protocols, there is a danger that mutually supportive information will be missed.

5.4 Training and Professional Standards

Chappell and Di Martino (2006 p.199) outline a premium model for training to combat WV violence and may involve instilling interpersonal and communication skills which defuse potentially threatening situations, developing competence in professional functions, improving workers' ability to identify potentially violent

situations and people, and planning emergency scenarios and the use of procedures and equipment such as radios. City and Guilds provide two nationally recognised accredited qualifications, 1889 (Parking Enforcement and Procedure) and 1884 (Conflict Management and resolution) based on the parking control national occupational standards and provide an independently-assessed national benchmark. The statutory guidance of the Traffic Management Act 2004 is very clear in its message in that those undertaking this role must be appropriately trained to manage conflict when faced with it. Although Bournemouth have not adopted the City and Guilds option, due to their staff being trained to a recognised accredited acceptable standard prior to the legislative change, the primary research revealed the essential nature of quality training in managing WV, particularly in the fair and equitable delivery of the enforcement, and also the correct explanation of the appeals process which is an effective tool for defusing conflict. PE regimes throughout the UK should review the training provision to staff regularly to ensure its fitness for purpose and consider raising professional standards by adopting formal qualifications

In conclusion, those engaged in PE face and have to accept a level of risk in order to carry out their necessary and important task. However it is essential that the risks are ameliorated through good management practice and strategy, being constantly mindful of the changing dynamics and attitudes within society. It is not just a matter of issuing a uniform and a capability to issue a parking ticket to an individual. An important service is being provided by a human being in difficult

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circumstances and this should be acknowledged in its widest sense. (10,768 words)

Appendix A – Participant Information Sheet

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Appendix B – Consent Form

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Appendix C – Civil Enforcement Officer Report Template

Student no 379000

Appendix D – Violent Incident/ Occurrence Report (Health and safety Requirement)

Student no 379000

Student no 379000

Appendix E – Civil Enforcement Officer's Notebook

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Appendix F – Civil Enforcement Officer Aide Memoire

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