



Response Date:21/09/2026

2026/956 - Abuse aimed at referees

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

1 – The number of people who have been formally questioned regarding direct physical or verbal abuse aimed at referees or other match officials in amateur or semi-professional football. In seasons '20/'21 through to '24/'25.

Please break those figures down, season by season.

2 – The number of people who have been charged with an offence relating to direct physical or verbal abuse aimed at referees or other match officials in amateur or semi-professional football. In seasons '20/'21 through to '24/'25.

Please break those figures down season by season.

3 – The number of professional referees or match officials in your force area, operating in the top four men's leagues (Premier League, Championship, Leagues 1 and 2) that have experienced threats at any level which required police action, this includes registering a complaint or concern.

Please provide figures from the '20/'21 season through to '24/'25.

4 - Where a formal complaint was registered. Has any individual been charged, or has any referee or match official been offered police protection? Please break those figures down season by season starting in '20/'21 and ending '24/'25 and differentiate between amateur and professional football.

5 – Has any of the above (1,2 or 3) resulted in a successful prosecution – including online abuse aimed at match officials. If so, what are the detailed statistics behind successful or unsuccessful prosecutions.

Also please state how many cases have been referred to a different force area or body to deal with, for example the National Police Football Unit.

**Yn gwneud Gogledd Cymru'r lle mwyaf diogel i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld yn y DU
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Search Criteria - Crime Occurrences reported (01/07/2020 to 30/06/2025) where "referee" is recorded in the occurrence summary.

Reported Date	HO Code	HO Description	Arrest/ Voluntary Attendance Y/N	Outcome	Summary
Sept-2021	105/01	Common assault and battery (Violence without injury)	N	16. Victim Declines / Withdraws Support - Named Suspect Identified	WHILST IP WAS WATCHING A FOOTBALL MATCH, THE REFEREE HAS ASSAULTED HIM BY POKING HIM TO THE CHEST WITH A FLAG AND PUSHING HIM.
Jan-2022	105/01	Common assault and battery (Violence without injury)	N	16. Victim Declines / Withdraws Support - Named Suspect Identified	Victim was a referee at a children's football match. During this a parent of one of the children has approached the victim during the match and assaulted him,
Jan-2022	125/11	Fear or provocation of violence (Sec 4)	N	16. Victim Declines / Withdraws Support - Named Suspect Identified	Inft is a match official for FAW football and was working at HAWARDEN when an EX referee has made threats
Apr-2022	008/06A	Sec 47. Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	N	08. Community Resolution / Youth Restorative Disposal	IP IS REFEREE AND AFTER GIVING A PLAYER A RED CARD THE SUSPECT HAS APPROACHED HIM ON PITCH AND PUNCHED HIM TO THE FACE ,
Nov-2022	125/11	Fear or provocation of violence (Sec 4)	N	16. Victim Declines / Withdraws Support - Named Suspect Identified	DURING FOOTBALL GAME A MALE HAS BEEN SENT OFF BY THE IP (REFEREE) THIS HAS ANGERED THE TEAM AND THEY HAVE THEN BEEN ABUSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE TOWARDS THE IP ON THE PITCH AND THEN FOLLOWED HIM TO THE CHANGING ROOMS
Oct-2023	125/09	Causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress (Sec 4A)	N	18. Investigation Complete No Suspect Identified	Referee at a football match reporting that one of the players has been particularly abusive toward him during the match, causing harassment, alarm and distress.
Oct-2023	125/09	Causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress (Sec 4A)	N	18. Investigation Complete No Suspect Identified	IP is reporting a hate crime where a spectator has approached the IP and has made hate related comments aggressively towards the IP whilst he was refereeing a rugby game.
Apr-2025	105/01	Common assault and battery (Violence without injury)	Y	08. Community Resolution / Youth Restorative Disposal	IP reporting that he was refereeing a game when named male suspect who was playing football has head butted IP, no injuries disclosed.

Crime Occurrences July 2020 to June 2025 (excluding those in the previous list) where the victim has had an employment type "sports official" recorded on our system.

Reported Date	HO Code	HO Description	Arrest/ Voluntary Attendance	Outcome	Summary	Victim Occupation
Aug-22	125/11	Fear or provocation of violence (Sec 4)	N	16. Victim Declines / Withdraws Support - Named Suspect Identified	Known suspect has raised his fist to the IP and threatened to 'batter him'. Public order incident between a match official and manager. No witnesses. Matter is being dealt with by FAW. No formal complaint forthcoming.	Sports official
Nov-23	008/06A	Sec 47. Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	N	15. Police Named Suspect, Victim Supports but Evidential Difficulties	IP has disclosed being manhandled and assaulted at the location.	Sports official

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 16/09/2026