

'Serious assault' at Manchester HWRC prompts warning

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has highlighted the dangers its staff face at recycling centres following a "serious assault" last month which left an employee with a broken jaw.

According to a statement from the GMCA, the incident occurred on 19 December at the Longley Lane Recycling Centre following a routine check on a member of the public's waste to establish its type.

The assault resulted in the victim's jaw being broken in two places. Hospital treatment was required and surgery may still be needed, but the member of staff has now been able to return home to recover.

Greater Manchester's 20 HWRCs are operated by SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK on behalf of the GMCA.

Threats

After the incident, the Authority highlighted the "regular threats of violence and verbal abuse workers suffer across Greater Manchester's household recycling facilities."

Councillor Andrew Western, the green city region lead for the GMCA, said: "Staff across Greater Manchester's HWRCs carry out a vital role in managing thousands of tonnes of our waste and helping residents make sure recycling is deposited correctly and responsibly.

"However, these hard-working people doing a difficult job regularly experience verbal abuse and threats of physical violence from members of the public. It is appalling that, sadly, hundreds of these incidents occur every year at our HWRCs. This type of behaviour is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated, with legal action enforced if needs be."

Mr Western added that there are people who use waste recycling centres illegally, "when they are designed specifically for Greater Manchester residents to dispose solely of domestic waste."

He said that illegal use by traders is reducing recycling rates and pushing up running costs of HWRCs.

Changes

In September 2019, the council announced a raft of changes to its recycling centres in order to clamp down on trade waste "abuse" (see [letsrecycle.com story](https://letsrecycle.com/story)).

This included a system from February 2020 which will see staff log and record vehicles entering the site and "link the registration number to a register of the delivered loads."

Staff will also engage in meet and greets which will include random checks on entry.

Investigation

A spokesperson for SUEZ said: "SUEZ is working closely with Greater Manchester Police and the victim of the assault to ensure the incident is fully investigated. Our staff perform a vital job for local residents and communities across Greater Manchester, and this type of incident is completely unacceptable. We will continue to work closely with the police, GMCA and other agencies to identify illegal or anti-social behaviour at the HWRCs and won't hesitate to take action against those responsible."



The Longley Lane Recycling Centre in South Manchester, where the attack took place