



**Criminal Law Solicitors' Association**

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**CLSA response to:**

**Assault PC revised and updated guideline Consultation –  
response 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026**

The Criminal Law Solicitors' Association is the only national association entirely committed to professionals working in the field of criminal law. The CLSA represents criminal practitioners throughout England and Wales and membership of the Association is open to any solicitor - prosecution or defence - and to legal advisers, qualified or trainee - involved with, or interested in, the practice of criminal law. The CLSA is responding to the consultation on behalf of its members.

**Question 1:** Do you have any comments on the proposed culpability factors (including from the perspective of equality and diversity)?

We agree with the removal of 'victim obviously vulnerable due to age, characteristics or circumstances and the substitution of 'Offender acted under genuine belief that they were required to use force to defend themselves or another'. These more accurately reflect the circumstances under which an assault PC arises.

**Question 2:** Do you have any comments on the proposed sentences?

No. This proposal seems sensible and is in line with the assault guidelines, reflecting the increase for an emergency worker.

**Question 3:** Do you have any comments on the proposed aggravating factors?

We do not agree with the aggravating factor: 'Police officer particularly vulnerable due to physical characteristics or specific circumstances of offence'. This is a specific guideline for an assault against a police officer. The starting points, as discussed at question 2, have been increased above those for simple assault to account for this. We struggle to see the necessity for this feature and fear it could be used to 'double count' the fact that this is an assault on a police officer.

The examples given were a lone officer subjected to a group assault. In this instance, the Crown have wider ranging options such as charging with affray, if appropriate. The other example given is that an officer is assaulted by an individual of substantially greater strength and size. One would expect in such a scenario the result would be greater harm and therefore dealt with at categorisation stage, or injuries which would result in a more serious charge. This aggravating feature is too wide-ranging and we anticipate will result in an upscaling of sentences where not really appropriate.

**Question 4:** Do you have any comments on equality and diversity issues relating to the proposed guideline?

No

**Question 5:** Do you have any other comments on the proposed guideline for Assault PC offences?

No