

78782070 - Michael Gordon

Proposed Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-Restricted Sales etc.) (Scotland) Bill

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Professional with experience in a relevant subject

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

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Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be attributed to me or my organisation

Please insert your name or the name of your organisation. If you choose the first option above, this should be the name as you wish it to be published. If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Michael Gordon

Q1. Which of the following expresses your view of creating a new offence of assault against a worker in the retail sector?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

During my retail career I have seen the devastating impact that violence can have on a member of a retail team. Confidence shattered and the onset of anxiety can be evident. We all have varying levels of resilience to being placed in a confrontational situation, we all react differently. As a minimum many people who have been threatened

verbally or worse still physically assaulted become apprehensive in any situation which shows the least sign of being confrontational. At worst there are people who have felt they had to give up their job because of a violent experience. It is intolerable that the victim should bear a price for a crime which is in excess of that experienced by the perpetrator/s.

Q2. Which of the following would you support as a way to respond to assaults on workers upholding statutory age-restrictions?

Either

Please explain the reasons for your response

While preferable to have a new statutory offence it is undeniable that the requirement to apply statutory age-restriction disciplines places retail colleagues in a situation where the person being asked for proof of age, or indeed are being refused a sale, addresses any anger to the sales assistant as opposed to the role they have. The increasing level of legislative issues that have to be managed means that there has been an escalation of the number of transactions which require some form of intervention. As this is one, but one, of the triggers of abuse, threats or violence then perhaps this is the point of entry for new legislation.

Q3. Which of the following would you support as a way to respond to abuse, harassment, threatening or obstruction of workers upholding statutory age-restrictions?

Either

Please explain the reasons for your response

As per Question 2.

The key required outcome is that there is reciprocity and that there is a protection in law for retail colleagues who experience any of the listed intolerable behaviours

Q4. Do you think that there are other steps which could be taken (either instead of, or in addition to, legislation) to achieve the aims of the proposal?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response.

In an environment where there is evidence that shop workers feel it is not worthwhile reporting incidents to Police Scotland it is clear that it will take a significant action to bring through a societal change.

Q5. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

Q5.1. (a) Government and the public sector - Some increase in cost

Q5.2. (b) Businesses - Broadly cost neutral

Q5.3. (c) Individuals - Some reduction in cost

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

a) There will be set up costs, communication costs, administration cost and policing cost. This will be partly be offset by a lessening of costs driven through health issues, or through the cost of supporting the victims.

b) There will be some increase in cost through the time taken to process and follow through on cases of crime. This will be offset by the creation of safer, secure and more respected retail roles.

c) If less retail colleagues are subjected to unpleasant situations then it follows that less will give up their jobs and therefore there would be some benefits.

Q6. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

As the overall cost to society is not accurately known the concentration should be on getting a fit for purpose Bill. There are not obvious ways to cut costs. The way to bring about increased savings will be to deliver robust and effective legislation.

Q7. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected groups (under the Equality Act 2010): race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

It should act as a further enabling force to expose situations where there is evidence of intolerance and poor behaviours against protected groups.

Q8. In what ways could any negative impact of the proposed Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

Ensure that all communication and publicity during the glide path to legislation and to the launch of the new legislation include statements on the importance of equality.

Q9. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

I would rather accentuate the opposite. The Bill should be regarded as one of the antidotes to disproportionate economic, social and environmental impacts. It certainly will not be the cause of any.

Q10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal, for example, other trigger points for violence and abuse, and other workers who should be covered?

I am content that the Bill can hang on a specific situation as this gives focus and clarity.

Q11. Which of the following describes your retail-sector experience (please tick all that apply)?

Working in premises selling alcohol for consumption on the premises (e.g. pub)	No
Working in premises selling alcohol for consumption off the premises (e.g. shop)	Yes
Working in premises selling other age-restricted products (e.g. tobacco, knives etc.)	Yes
Working in other retail premises	Yes
None of the above	No

Q12. Which of the following describes your experience of violence or verbal abuse in the retail sector (please tick all that apply)?

I have been the victim of physical violence	No
I have been the victim of verbal abuse	No
I have witnessed colleagues being subjected to physical violence	Yes
I have witnessed colleagues being subjected to verbal abuse	Yes
None of the above	No

Q13. Please give details of any personal experience that you would wish to share. (Please avoid naming any other person or giving information that would allow another person to be identified)

