

77702356 - Andrew Doctor

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".)

Member of the public

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Andrew Doctor

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

Having spent four years working in retail, and a year previous to that in hospitality, I am aware of the hostility which can occasionally be directed towards retail workers. Indeed, I have known of retail workers who have been assaulted at work. For example, an old colleague of mine was spat on. Other colleagues and myself consistently bore

the brunt of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour. This behaviour is totally immoral and has no place in anyone's workplace. When retail workers go to their work, the last thing they should have to expect is to be assaulted.

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

A new statutory offence

Please explain the reasons for your response

Retail workers must not be punished by the public for simply doing their jobs and upholding the law. The strongest possible action must be taken against those who assault workers for these reasons.

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?

A new statutory offence (for all these types of behaviour)

Please explain the reasons for your response

The introduction of a statutory offence for this would serve to remind the public how important it is to treat retail workers as equals, and not as subordinate servants. While retail workers are there to provide a service, they are not there to be abused whenever the perpetrator sees fit. Consequently, there must be a clear means in place in order to demonstrate how immoral the assault of retail workers is.

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?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response.

In addition to a change in the law, more must be done in terms of advertising and education to highlight the immorality and cowardliness of acts of violence and assault against workers. Furthermore, the use of testimonies of workers who have been assaulted on the job could play its part in encouraging the public to empathise with and respect workers.

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 - Some increase in cost

Q5.3. (c) Individuals - Broadly cost neutral

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

The only increases in cost should relate to the implementation and enforcement of the law. Additionally, there may be some advertising costs, especially if other complementary initiatives are to be introduced.

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

No

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

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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.

The bill would have a positive effect on equality as it should lead to less aggressive behaviour towards workers of all stripes and help foster respect for those working hard for an honest living.

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

No real negative impact springs to mind here.

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.

Undoubtedly. All impacts should be broadly positive.

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?

NHS workers, however perhaps that would require separate legislation.

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	Yes
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)

In my retail experience, I have been sworn at so many times I have lost count. Additionally, I have been the victim of sexism in the workplace, with customers expecting me (a man) to lift heavy objects for them; not even thinking that a woman is every bit as capable.

