

77867322

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 would like this response to be anonymous (the response may be published, but no name)

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

The retail sector generally does not prepare or equip employees for - nor significantly protect them from - situations of violence, abuse or harassment.

The sector employs a lot of young people and women. Perpetrators of violence, abuse or harassment may see them as less powerful and softer targets for their rage and other anti-social behaviours.

I am more aware of this, having two daughters in their 20s who generally work in restaurants and retail.

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

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

I'm inclined towards making assaults - including verbal and harassment behaviour - a separate offence. But happy for whatever achieves the outcome most efficiently.

If the problem behaviour can be prosecuted as an offence under any existing law, then th

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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

Together with assaults, I'm inclined towards making abuse, harassment, threatening or obstructive behaviour a separate offence. But happy for whatever achieves the outcome most efficiently.

If the problem behaviour can be prosecuted as an offence under any existing law, then the Bill might allow for greater penalties where the targeted worker is in a service role. That could be like Hate Crime legislation, where an offence is punished more severely if motivated by a prejudice.

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.

Any move should be accompanied with a significant publicity campaign, e.g. with repeated slogan "not part of the job" and hashtag - #notpartofthejob - aiming to raise awareness and shift the public's understanding of and response to the various unacceptable abuses of workers in the service sector.

Employers should be required to formally inform staff of their rights to work in safety, and the relevant employer's policies to protect them.

Government could produce guidance for employers and for staff about dealing with potential threats.

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 reduction in cost

Q5.2. (b) Businesses - Some reduction in cost

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

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

Business could retain staff better if feeling safer, protected and valued at work. There may be fewer instances of staff sickness. These benefits should more than justify the small suggested increase in business responsibility to provide information, promote staff rights and provide a safe working environment.

The harmful effects on service staff of the various unacceptable behaviours should be reduced. This will reduce workers' - and NHS - health-related costs and their costs of financial insecurity from leaving jobs as a result of being abused or feeling unsafe at work.

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.

The problem behaviours are expensive to the public sector, to business and to individuals. Preventing these behaviours therefore creates savings.

The behaviours can only be prevented or reduced by informing and to some extent changing public attitudes.

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 people most disadvantaged by unacceptable behaviour tend to be the least empowered groups. This Bill and accompanying campaign should reduce the harmful effects of prejudice, as well as growing a better informed, more respectful public and safer commu

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

An energetic and positive campaign that celebrates our service workforce and a modern diverse and tolerant society.

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.

With the appropriate campaign and public messages, the Bill has potential to increase social cohesion, reduce crime and reduce costs to public and private sectors and individuals.

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?

The service sector in general tend to have similar vulnerabilities, so I would include restaurant, café, hotel, catering and tourism staff. as well.

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) | No |
| Working in premises selling other age-restricted products (e.g. tobacco, knives etc.) | No |
| 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 | No |
| 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)

Shop and restaurant staff have been verbally abused, intimidated, threatened and stalked on various occasions in my own and my family's experience over many years.

