

# 78005934

## 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

-

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?

Partially supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

The only reason I have selected partially supportive is because I feel ALL workers should have specific legal protection against assault while at work.

I would cite emergency service workers; hospital staff; workers in government and council offices. This should of course cover retail staff too.

Going to work is not the most enjoyable experience for many people & a lot of these people work in difficult low paid jobs. The possibility of assault or abuse just make life that much more stressful. It seems right that there should be specific legislation to protect people at work generally.

I know there will be complaints that this is "yet more legislation", but I think it would be a clear signal, after a few prosecutions, that people at work are still people and not some how "fair game" or "asking for it". I suspect a lot of people in "good" well paid jobs have no idea what it's like to be on the receiving end of real abuse from customers.

Special protection for staff enforcing licensing laws seems to me to discount or lessen the offense in other circumstances. A train guard could sustain the same injury after telling someone to keep their feet off a seat as a shop assistant refusing to sell alcohol to people they think are under age.

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**

see previous answer-

Special protection for staff enforcing licensing laws seems to me to discount or lessen the offense in other circumstances. A train guard could sustain the same injury after telling someone to keep their feet off a seat as a shop ass

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**

see previous answer-

Special protection for staff enforcing licensing laws seems to me to discount or lessen the offense in other circumstances. A train guard could sustain the same injury after telling someone to keep their feet off a seat as a shop assistant refusing to sell alcohol to people they think are under age.

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.**

I don't know how effective public awareness campaigns are- perhaps people who would attack a shop assistant or train guard would just laugh at such, or not even register it.

But perhaps if there was a TV & Social Media campaign giving brief accounts of the effects suffered by some people at work this might make some people identify with those workers a bit more. Possibly, this should include accounts of lower level verbal abuse and rudeness too & how this can grind you down over time & lower self esteem & motivation.

Sorry to divert the response from the main point, but I think the problems being addressed here are quite obviously part of wider problems about how we deal with one another and handle conflict.

People have to deal with bizarre mixed messages- on the one hand hypersensitivity in academia and politics to offense and demands to be protected from disagreeable views with encouragement of entitlement in a system that is incapable of delivering it. Then on the other, apparent reward and respect for egotistical bullying and obnoxiousness- see Alan Sugar, Gordon Ramsay, The Duke of Edinburgh (who is apparently hilarious) the continuing poisonous influence of "lad culture" where everything is "just a laugh" or "ironic". A level of public discourse where disagreement escalates into attribution of base motives, extreme stupidity, treason, and hope that the opposition will be raped or murdered- just leaving people angrier and more self righteous.

Perhaps any new legislation could be presented as part of an effort to increase the levels of civility and kindness generally.

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** - Unsure

**Q5.2. (b) Businesses** - Unsure

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

**Please explain the reasons for your responses.**

I don't have any facts to help me speculate about whether costs of enforcing the legislation, publicising it etc would be off set by savings to health services if less people needed treatment or help. I would imagine the costs of investigating a serious assault or a murder are very high- you would have to hope the legislation would reduce the need for these by deterrence, maybe not.

Would businesses need to install CCTV to help enforce the legislation? Perhaps this would need to be subsidised to some extent to ensure everyone had equal protection? On the other hand perhaps there would be less sick absence and a lower staff turnover.

I would hope that if such legislation had some effect then individuals at risk might have fewer days off work- some of these people might still not be getting their statutory rights in terms of sick pay and some staff may have tips as part of their income which they only get while working.

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.**

See previous response

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.**

I'd hope it would be positive in that I would imagine that attacks on all workers often have racist elements. Verbal abuse will often be intended to be as offensive as possible about gender, race, sex or any perceived difference or "weakness". Again, I'd see this in the context of increasing the level of civility and decency in public life.

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

My feeling is that again it needs to be presented in the context of increasing public civility. I'd have some concern that this might be seen as legislation aimed at stereotypical anti social people with low incomes and low levels of education- "who might kick off because they can't buy alcohol". If the legislation covers all workers then it would be seen to include the anti social behaviours of more advantaged members of society who can be equally obnoxious.

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 can't really see any significant environmental impacts from this legislation- see previous answers for other aspects.

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?

*Please see first answer relating this to all workers and concerns about the special case regarding sales of restricted goods.*

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	No
None of the above	Yes

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	No
None of the above	Yes

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)

I have worked for a relatively short time dealing with the public, it can be exasperating and some people can be difficult. I was lucky, I don't really remember any real personal confrontations or abuse.

I have friends who have had verbal trouble from customers & it's dispiriting.

Like most people I've seen people behaving badly towards service staff and it's not OK...





