

77662392

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

I work in the retail sector in a large supermarket. The surrounding area has a large number of drug and alcohol addicted people.

Whilst not having been a victim of violence myself, I have seen several instances in the store related to drunk or high people becoming aggressive and violent when they are not allowed to buy alcohol either after 10pm or because staff are concerned that they are intoxicated.

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

Assault is assault. Drunkenness or drug-fuelled behaviour is no excuse. These are self-inflicted conditions and they should receive no sympathy for abusing or assaulting somebody just trying to do their job.

A criminal offence allows for them to be taken out of the environment where they are likely to offend again, and offers more protection to staff from reprisals, etc.

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

Same reasons as for the previous question.

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.

Increase the price of alcohol and place far more restrictions on the types of drinks that can be sold and where they can be sold. Drinks such as caffeine-laden 'tonic wines' are a recipe for disaster and completely unnecessary in terms of social drinkers. Cheap vodka and high-alcohol white ciders are just used by people wanting to 'pre-load' with the intention of becoming very drunk later in the evening. Our night shift workers then have to deal with them wanting to purchase alcohol in the small hours of the morning.

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 - Broadly cost neutral

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

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

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

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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.

Not sure of the relevance of this question. Protecting people at work, and reducing damaging behaviour should be goals in themselves, regardless of cost implications.

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?

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

Please explain the reasons for your responses.

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

I don't believe there will be any negative equality issues.

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.

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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?

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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.)	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	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)

Unfortunately the only response available to violence and abuse in the store is to restrain the perpetrators until the police arrive. Staff involved usually have to give statements, endure questioning, etc to justify that the minimum level of violence has been applied to suit the circumstances.

On one occasion it took over five members of staff to restrain one violent individual. He was arrested but was back in the store within days and was posting threats about attacking staff again on social media.

Where a person who demonstrates this sort of threatening behaviour makes repeated threats by any means, the time spent between arrest and trial must be custodial and a custodial sentence must be given.

Stores in an area should be allowed to share data (video, photographic, social media, etc) in order to ensure that these people can be banned from all local shops selling products that may inflame their behaviour. It should also be an offence to buy alcohol for somebody else convicted of an alcohol/drug fuelled attack on retail staff.

