

24 April 2018

Our Ref: 814.18

Mr Daniel Johnson MSP
MG.02
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



**T/ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE
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Dear Mr Johnson

Protection of Workers (Scotland) Bill Proposal

I am grateful for the opportunity to respond on behalf of Police Scotland, to your proposal to protect workers from abuse in the workplace. Police Scotland supports your position that everyone deserves a safe environment at work. Unfortunately time has not allowed for a full response to the consultation however I hope you find the following comments and information helpful.

As an organisation Police Scotland remains committed to preventing and reducing violence, disorder and antisocial behaviour, wherever it occurs. This is highlighted as a priority area within our Annual Police Plan 2018/19 and a focus of our 10 year strategy, Serving a Changing Scotland.

Current legislation allows officers to deal with reported complaints of assault, abuse or obstruction and all reports are treated seriously. The legislation most commonly used to deal with such incidents are the common law crimes of Breach of the Peace and Assault and S.38 Criminal Justice & Licensing (Scotland) Act 2012 (Threatening or Abusive Behaviour). Workers can be assured that officers will deal with any incident reported appropriately and robustly therefore should have confidence in reporting such criminality.

In order to deliver on our priorities to reduce and prevent crime, Police Scotland continue to work with numerous public and private sector bodies across Scotland. Particularly relevant to the retail and licensing sectors is our effective working relationships with both the Scottish Business Resilience Centre and Best Bar None Scotland.

The Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC) exist to create an environment where businesses can trade securely, regardless of size and sector.

SBRC initiatives include:

- The Retail Working Group which supports Shopping Centre Managers representing around 500 businesses. The Group is in consultation to deliver prevention messages to Shopping Centre staff on acquisitive crime (shoplifting), fraud, harm prevention and general public safety.
- Retail and Tourism Conference - "Managing the Risk". Attendees learn about current and emerging threats their businesses might be facing and what actions they should take to prevent them. The sessions cover fraudulent transactions, insider threat from staff vulnerability, human trafficking and safe night time economy.
- Support for the Scottish Alcohol Industry Partnership (SAIP) – which delivers projects including Proxy Purchase – where off sales are using 'Challenge 25' and signage to indicate their engagement in schemes to prevent confrontation.
- Engagement with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) which supports staff in the retail sector, large shopping and entertainment centres and night time economy to raise awareness of how to prevent alcohol related crime. Raising standards across the sectors can prevent crime against staff and encourage management within the retail and security sector to accurately record the scale and type of crimes.
- Production of a Crime Prevention Booklet specific to the retail sector.

Best Bar None Scotland, is a unique National accreditation and award scheme aimed at raising standards and rewarding licensed premises who undertake positive management practices in support of a safe night out. Best Bar None initiatives include:

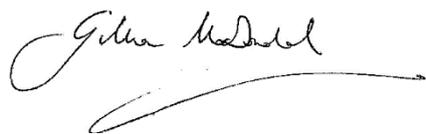
- 430 venues currently accredited by the Best Bar None Scheme with the criteria under the Licensing Objective – "Prevention of Children from Harm" where staff check identification of persons purchasing alcohol under 'Challenge 25' and proof of age schemes.
- Venues, including entertainment venues which are part of larger shopping centres, are asked to record incidents and briefings with security staff to set standards and ensure tolerance of any crime against staff is not acceptable.
- Police Officers within the Best Bar None centre offer business security and crime prevention advice and can advise on architectural impacts to design out crime in and around retail sector and town centre environments.
- Numerous training courses, including: Lone working; Personal Safety; and Incident management.

I trust the foregoing demonstrates Police Scotland's aim to reduce and prevent violence and abuse against staff and to increase awareness and reporting. Through our partnership working we encourage all employers to report incidents and to take all necessary steps to minimise risks in the work place.

Many of the above strategies have been effective in the retail and licensing sectors in supporting the difficult role undertaken by staff when challenging potential perpetrators however, there is always more that can be done.

We will of course monitor the progress of this Bill proposal and consider any organisational requirements as necessary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gillian MacDonald', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gillian MacDonald
T/Assistant Chief Constable
Crime and Protection