



Home Office

Victoria Atkins MP  
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David Hanson MP  
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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January in which you request an update on the measures we announced on 21 January to strengthen the response to violence and abuse toward shop workers.

You query the timescale for the launch and response to the call for evidence. As you know, I chaired a meeting of the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) on 12 February which focused exclusively on the issue of violence and abuse toward shop workers. That meeting included a productive discussion on the scope and direction of the call for evidence which we are in the process of finalising, taking into account the NRCSG's feedback. We intend to launch it shortly, before the Offensive Weapons Bill completes its passage through Parliament, and we will ensure that interested parties have sufficient time to consider and submit their views. The timing of our response will in part depend on the extent of the feedback we receive, but we will ensure that we strike the right balance between carefully considering responses and maintaining momentum.

You also request an update on the work being taken forward by the police on this issue. The National Policing Lead for Business Crime, Commissioner Ian Dyson, is a member of the NRCSG and February's meeting included a useful discussion on how the police response could be strengthened. In addition to work already in train, including the guidance to support retailers in reporting incidents to the police, Commissioner Dyson confirmed that he is exploring options for encouraging a consistent police response. This includes looking at ways of improving data recording and the potential for strengthening guidance in this area. I enclose a copy of the minutes from the NRCSG meeting with this letter for your information.


In addition, as I highlighted in my letter of 21 January, I am prepared to ask HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to carry out an inspection on this issue should this prove necessary, although this would need to be balanced against other priorities. As you know, HMICFRS are independent of Government - you may wish to note that they are currently consulting on their proposed inspection programme for 2019-20. The consultation is open to all interested parties and closes on the 11 March.

Finally, you requested an update on plans for the targeted communications activity I announced in January. I can confirm that we intend to provide £50,000 of funding for this work, which will involve a sector-led campaign to raise awareness of this issue. We are currently in discussions with key partners about the delivery of this campaign, and I expect to be in a position to provide further detail shortly.

I note that you wrote to the Home Secretary on the 29 June 2018 and did not receive a response, this was due to an administrative error. Please accept my apologies for this - I hope that our subsequent discussions have addressed the points you raised in that letter.

I would like to reiterate my commitment to working closely with partners to ensure we do all we can to tackle this issue and drive improvements in the response. I will provide you with further updates as this work develops.

I will arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the House library.

*Yours ever,*  


**Victoria Atkins MP**