



July 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about protections for retail workers.

Like all MPs I am deeply concerned by cases of violence on the high street, particularly in retail premises. Those who work on the high street should be able to go about their work without fear of abuse and intimidation. Quite simply, retailers should not see abuse as part of the job.

Thus, I believe it was a positive step forward when Ministers announced a call for evidence to provide a greater understanding of the scale of the issue.

In response to the call for evidence, the Government has recognised that there are issues that need to be dealt with, and I am encouraged by the Government's robust response. This includes working with the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) on a best practice guide to support staff in reporting these crimes, strengthening and making full use of existing laws, and improving data sharing between businesses and the police.

I do appreciate the strength of feeling behind the calls for the Government to legislate in this area through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. However, I'm told such a change is not necessary. It is already the case that the Sentencing Council has set out guidelines in which it specifically refers to people such as retail workers in an important public service position, which means that the courts should be increasing sentences and finding aggravating factors where shop workers have been the victims of crime.

More broadly, I understand that police demand is changing and becoming increasingly complex, and it is the first priority of government to protect the public. As such, the Government has a key responsibility to ensure Police and Crime Commissioners have the necessary funding to keep communities safe.

The clear commitment made by the Prime Minister to put more officers back on our streets is an important step forward. Boris Johnson made it clear in his first speech on the steps of Downing Street that making our streets safer is a key priority.

Nearly 9000 police officers have been recruited since the Government launched its 20,000 new officers by March 2023 recruitment drive.

I recognise that the violence and abuse that shop workers can face can have a significant impact, not only physically but mentally and emotionally, and we must ensure that all the action being taken enable shop workers to feel safer.



Chris Heaton-Harris
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Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY