

Midlothian Council

Labour Group

Midlothian Council
Tuesday 18 December 2018

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Item No 7.7

Notice of Motion

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

This Council notes

1. That Usdaw (Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers) runs an annual Respect For Shopworkers Week as part of their Freedom From Fear campaign.
2. That this is held in the build-up to Christmas, during which events are put on to engage with the public around the theme 'Keep Your Cool at Christmas'.
3. The campaign as a whole seeks to highlight the abuse that workers suffer whilst simply going about their jobs.
4. That as part of this campaign Usdaw also surveys their 430,000 members in an annual Freedom From Fear Survey.
5. This survey shows that during 2018 6 in 10 shopworkers experienced verbal abuse, 37% were threatened by a customer and over 230 shopworkers were assaulted every day.
6. The British Retail Consortium and the Association of Convenience Stores have both also noted rising abuse, threats and violence against shopworkers.

This Council believes:

1. Violent crime, threats and abuse are very real hazards for retail workers and the harassment of staff by customers is an all too common event.
2. Abuse is not part of the job. Workers should never have to face abuse, threats or violence when doing their jobs
3. Employers have a legal and moral obligation to make the working environment as safe as possible for employees and staff should be given appropriate training on how to deal with certain situations.
4. Failure to take the necessary steps to protect staff from harassment could result in the company being open to prosecution under health and safety laws and complaints of harassment should always be taken seriously.
5. Good trade union organisation reduces the risk of bad work practices.

This Council resolves:

1. To publicly support Usdaw's campaign and shop workers in the area with a statement of support and by posting on Council social media platforms using the hashtags #RespectShopworkers and to encourage individual councillors to do the same.
2. To encourage individual councillors to engage with retail stores in their ward, talk to shopworkers and listen to their experiences.
3. To use links with local police to ensure retail crime is always treated seriously and the often severe impact on victims is appropriately acknowledged.
4. To use links with local business and retail stores to make sure proper workplace procedures are in place and that front-line staff are appropriately supported.

Moved:



Councillor John Hackett

Seconded:



Councillor Derek Milligan