1. Do you agree with the proposal in the Bill to repeal the 2012 Act? What are your reasons for coming to this view?

Yes, I believe this is an unjust law which discriminates a particular group of people who would not be considered criminals if it were not for the fact they are football fans. The implementation of this act has created a very hostile relationship between football fans and police. The Act has also caused me great stress over losing my job and damaging my future despite having no other dealings with police or the law.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

No.

3. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute offensive behaviour related to football which leads to public disorder? If so, could you specify the criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 1 risk creating a gap in the criminal law?

Yes, I believe other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute offensive behaviour related to football. Examples of this include Breach of the Peace, Section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003, Section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.

4. Do you have a view on the focus of section 1 of the 2012 Act, which criminalises behaviour surrounding watching, attending or travelling to or from football matches, which may not be criminalised in other settings?

I find this an extremely discriminatory part of the Act and a breach of equal rights. As a football fan, the fact that there is a law purely for people like myself yet not for some of my friends who don’t go to football, I find that this treats me as a potential criminal at all times despite never having an issue away from football.

5. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute threats made with the intent of causing a person or persons fear or alarm or inciting religious hatred? If so, could you specify the criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 6 risk creating a gap in the criminal law?

Yes I believe that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient. I am of the understanding that Section 6 of the act has rarely been used for inciting religious hatred, instead police and prosecutors often use other legislation, for example the Communications Act, 2003.
6. Do you have a view on the proposed transitional arrangements in the Bill: that there should be no further convictions for section 1 and 6 offences from the date on which the repeal of those offences takes effect; and that the police will cease issuing fixed penalty notices at least from the point at which the Bill is passed?

I think this should happen with immediate effect and also for cases that are not concluded to be dropped. Also, previous convictions should be quashed on the basis that the Act has targeted a specific group of society, while at the same time they would not have faced any action for the same behaviour at events outwith football.

7. To what extent do you consider that the 2012 Act has assisted in tackling sectarianism?

I don’t believe the 2012 Act has tackled sectarianism in any way. Instead I think it has targeted many forms of political expression and passed it off as sectarianism. Sectarian behaviour in my view has not reduced since this act has been in place.

17 August 2017