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

I am 100% in support of the proposal to repeal the OFBA. I am against such an unjust act, which deliberately victimises football fans. Before the act was introduced there were sufficient laws in place to tackle criminal and hateful behaviour at football matches. This act is confusing and over the top due to it allowing anyone, anywhere to complain about something at the football, which the police can arrest you for, even when such an act would not be a criminal offence if it took place outside of the context of a football match. Police Scotland have acted aggressively and vindictively, treating fans with a heavy handed approach and the culture of policing has become poisoned by this legislation.

Police Scotland, even struggle themselves to understand how to implement the law, and are often left to interpret something as subjective as offensiveness themselves which can have dire and traumatic consequences for the fans on the blunt end of the hammer which is being used to crack the walnut. Police Scotland however seem unmoved by the human cost of this law, and sadly so do the Scottish Government. The longer this act is on the statute books, the most lives will be ruined.

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, as mentioned above, there were adequate laws in place to tackle potential criminal and hateful activity by football fans such as Breach of the peace, Section 38 of the criminal justice and licencing act. By and large football fans in Scotland are very well behaved. There was no need to create new laws which are very, very severe laws which only serve to criminalise football fans.

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?
The act which only targets football fans in my eyes bordering on fascism due to the way that it by definition discriminates against one sector of society. The act allows any individual the opportunity to raise a complaint about the most insignificant behaviours, even if the person who feels aggrieved was perhaps not even at the match. This gives the police and other fans a chance to target rival fans, and this pettiness is fuelled by the culture that the act creates. The result if normal people who follow their team being subjected to dawn raids for behaviour which is not sectarian, not racist and not hateful. This simply cannot be justified. Fans do not lose their basic rights with the purchase of a match ticket.

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?

From my research and discussing the act with friends, it seems to me that section 6 has rarely been used since it was introduced. The communications act of 2003 was already in place, thus no new law was required.

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 wish for the act to be scrapped at the earliest opportunity. The chaos this law has caused to football fans is sickening. Lives have been turned upside down due to police having a free for all to target any fans the like for almost any reason at all. All convictions under this terrible law should be scrapped. This act has been a shambles from the very start. Clubs like Celtic wish for the act to be scrapped as do lawyers, judges, academics, every single mainstream political party in Scotland bar one and most importantly football fans themselves have opposed this since its inception. The law is not fit for purpose.

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

None whatsoever. Every case I have heard of or encountered has been for embarrassingly trivial reasons and not for hate crime.

The act was rushed in and the SNP abused their power and the absolute majority that they had. The laws in place were more than strong enough to tackle any crimes
at football. The Scottish Government have acted disgracefully in refusing to engage with fans in any meaningful way and it is time for this mistake to be fixed.

It strikes me as being one of the most appalling abuses of power in living memory, implementing such a draconian law which allows football fans to be treated like scum purely to score political points. The act has failed. It is time to bin it, immediately. As a football fan I have felt continually intimidated since it came in to law, and having seen my friends being arrested without cause or reason, I am always worried that this may happen to me or other people I know.

18 August 2017