Justice Committee

Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from Anonymous 51

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. The act is a complete waste of tax payers money, abused by police Scotland as a tool for harassment on those who attend football across the country. I have unfortunately been arrested at a football match by the FoCus unit, left in the back of a police van for an hour and then released as they got the wrong person but promised to "get me". The overall psychological impact this had was and still is damaging as it has made me completely mistrust Police Scotland and the SNP as a whole.

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 a breach of the peace would suffice.

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 law shouldn't apply to anyone in society as it is completely ill thought out. It's also extremely worrying knowing that attending a football match means you're at risk of being arrested under this ill thought out act.

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?

Again breach of the peace is sufficient enough.

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?

The act should be terminated with immediate and all ongoing trials dropped. Furthermore I think anyone charged under the act should have their convictions quashed.

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

The act, in my opinion has done absolutely nothing, It has merely given Police Scotland the power to wrongly harass members of the public attending a sporting event.

17 August 2017