

Government publishes Protect Duty consultation findings

Today (10 January), the government has published its response to the Protect Duty public consultation, which ran from 26 February to 2 July 2021.

The Protect Duty has been championed by victims' groups, including the Martyn's Law campaign, which was established by Figen Murray following the tragic loss of her son, Martyn, in the Manchester Arena attack in 2017.

2,755 responses were received from a variety of organisations, sectors and campaigners, with the majority supporting the government's proposals to introduce stronger measures, including a legal requirement for some public places to ensure preparedness for and protection from terrorist attacks.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

My number one priority is keeping the people of the UK safe.

Following the tragic attack at the Manchester Arena, we have worked closely with Figen Murray, victims' groups and partners to develop proposals to improve protective security around the country. I am grateful for their tireless commitment to the duty and those who responded to the consultation; the majority of whom agreed tougher measures are needed to protect the public from harm.

We will never allow terrorists to restrict our freedoms and way of life, which is why we are committed to bringing forward legislation this year, that will strike the right balance between public safety, whilst not placing excessive burden on small businesses.

There is currently no legislative requirement for organisations or venues to consider or employ security measures at the vast majority of public places. The consultation sought views from private and public sector partners on a requirement for certain publicly accessible locations to implement security measures, without placing undue burden on smaller businesses, and what support would be required from government.

To further support the public and private sector, the Home Office is collaborating with the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTS0) and Pool Reinsurance to develop a new interactive online platform, due to launch publicly this year.

The site is currently undergoing user testing ahead of its formal launch. The platform will provide a central digital location for advice, guidance, e-learning and other helpful content. It will provide support for all organisations, not just those captured by the Protect Duty.

7 in 10 respondents agreed that those responsible for publicly accessible locations should take appropriate and proportionate measures to protect the public from attacks. This included ensuring staff were trained to respond appropriately.

There was also agreement that venue capacity should determine when the duty applies. Most felt that larger organisations should be taking proportionate action to ensure people are protected. There was an understanding that small and medium sized enterprises should not face the same requirements as larger venues and that all measures should be proportionate to the size of each organisation.

Very strong views were expressed regarding the need for accountability, such as the need for clear roles and responsibilities, particularly amongst event organisers, and those at senior level within venues and organisations.

Half the respondents were in favour of an inspectorate that would identify key vulnerabilities and areas for improvement, as well as share best practice. There was also an even split of those who were supportive of the use of civil penalties to ensure compliance to the duty.

The government continues to engage with a range of stakeholders and other government departments as well as using the feedback from the consultation to further develop the legislation, which will be introduced to Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

[See the government's response to the consultation.](#)