



26 February 2021

## PROTECT DUTY CONSULTATION LAUNCH

The first duty of the Government is to protect the public. The terrorist threat we currently face is multifaceted, diverse and continually evolving. The police, security services, and other partners do all they can to combat this threat: since March 2017 UK police and security services have foiled 28 plots, including eight motivated by Right Wing ideologies. The attacks we have seen in the UK, particularly since 2017, have caused deaths and casualties amongst people going about their everyday business, often in open, public places; and have changed the lives of many people.

Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, the Government announced its intention to consult on a 'Protect Duty' to improve security at public venues and spaces. This new duty could compel certain owners and operators of publicly accessible locations to consider the risk from terrorism and take reasonable steps to improve protection and mitigate the impacts of an attack.

I am now extremely pleased to inform you that on the 26 February 2021 we launched the public consultation.

This consultation is open to the public, and is targeted at venues, organisations, businesses, local and public authorities and/or individuals who own or operate at publicly accessible locations, or others that a 'Protect Duty' would potentially affect.

The consultation document covers four main themes; these are:

1. Who (or where) should legislation apply to?
2. What should the requirements be?
3. How should compliance work?
4. How should Government best support and work with partners?

I understand and am sympathetic to the pressure the country, and local authorities, have been under this last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please be assured this is being considered throughout the consultation process, which has been extended to 18 weeks, to allow organisations more time to consider their responses.

The consultation provides some illustrative examples of what would constitute reasonable and proportionate security measures for different types and sizes of organisations. These will for many be simple requirements, for example to incorporate security considerations within organisational assessments of risk, and staff induction and training processes. Detailed guidance would be provided for all in scope

Much excellent work is already done to improve security and preparedness measures by owners and operators, however this is undertaken on a voluntary basis. Legislation would provide for a certainty of responsibility, and a greater consistency of measures and effect.

The Protect Duty is proposed to apply to large organisations, public buildings and spaces, and events. Local authorities will therefore be able to offer considerable insight on the consultation questions, and your views would be hugely beneficial towards developing effective legislation to improve considerations of security and appropriate outcomes.

You can access the full consultation document and methods of responding at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty>. The consultation closes on 2 July.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "S. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford**