# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Supporting Shopworkers at Christmas** |
| **DATE** | **28 November 2024** |
| **BY** | **Rebecca Evans, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning**  **Jack Sargeant, Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership** |

The retail sector is a core part of our foundational economy, employing around 120,000 people in Wales (2023), and providing a local and convenient shopping experience for Welsh consumers in communities across the nation. Together with hospitality, retailer environments provide a place for people to meet, serve our basic needs with the provision of essential items and - particularly at this time of year - supply the gifts and experiences we may purchase for loved ones that help make the Christmas season special.

The Welsh Government values our established social partnership arrangements between retailers, unions and government. Rising levels of retail crime have been a regular discussion point at our Retail Forum and highlighted when Ministers recently attended a Usdaw drop in event hosted in the Senedd.

In addition, a recent survey by the shopworkers’ union Usdaw revealed that over a twelve-month period almost half of shopworkers had been threatened, and around 7 in 10 had experienced verbal abuse, with the majority of incidents attributed to theft from shops.

The Welsh Government is committed to fair work practices for all workers in Wales and we recognise the seasonal pressures on retail as people across Wales prepare for Christmas.

This is especially the case in a customer focussed industry where face to face engagement between shoppers and retail workers is commonplace. Retail needs customers to thrive, and it is retail workers who serve, sell and supply, their goods and services to customers.

As we approach Christmas, the Welsh Government is fully supporting a joint campaign by the Welsh Retail Consortium and Usdaw encouraging customers to be kind to shopworkers.

The joint campaign is a demonstration of our social partnership way of working in Wales, and it shows the value of the relationships that have been strengthened through our Retail Forum.

Everyone deserves respect, courtesy, and to be safe from violence and abuse.

The Welsh Government and our partners on the Retail Forum are working closely with the Police and Crime Commissioners and Welsh police forces to ensure our shopworkers are safe at work, and able to serve Welsh consumers, free from fear over Christmas and into the New Year.