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Protecting Emergency Workers: Private Member's Bill

Thank you for contacting me about protecting emergency service workers.

We owe emergency service workers a huge debt of gratitude for the courage, commitment and dedication they demonstrate in carrying out their duties.

Consequently, the Government is supporting the Private Member's Bill to protect emergency workers.

Attacking a person serving the public is already included as an aggravating factor in sentencing guidelines. This Bill is an advance on the present situation because it would create a specific statutory requirement to consider assaults on emergency workers as aggravated.

This would mean that when a person is convicted of a specific offence the judge would have to consider the fact that it was committed against an emergency worker as an aggravating factor in determining the sentence within the maximum allowed for the particular offence. This would cover assault causing ABH, wounding or inflicting GBH, and manslaughter. Separately, the Bill would create a new aggravated version of the offences of common assault and battery when committed against an emergency worker, for which the maximum allowed for common assault would be increased from six months to 12 months.

The Bill would create the power to take blood samples, with consent, from people who have spat at or bitten emergency workers and exposed them to risk of infection and would create a new offence of failing to provide this blood sample without good cause. It would also enable the taking of non-intimate samples (like saliva) without consent.

The Bill would cover emergency workers who are attacked in the exercise of their duties, namely police, prison officers, custody officers, fire service personnel, search and rescue services and certain healthcare workers including ambulance personnel.

I am delighted that the Government will be working with MPs from all parties to ensure that those who commit violence against emergency workers face the full force of the law.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP