

Employers must pay to send their night shift staff home

Edinburgh employers should cover the cost of safe transport home for staff working late night shifts, a councillor has said.

A proposal for changes to the city's licensing policies to ensure shift workers can get home safely without facing "financial penalties" will be the focus of a City Chambers debate on Thursday.

Cllr Alys Mumford, who represents Portobello and Craigmillar, said people in jobs that often entail working into the night are "increasingly worried" about their safety when travelling home.

And she said sectors where late finishes are common such as hospitality, cleaning and health and social care "predominantly employ women," adding the council has a "duty of care" towards workers in the capital.

Cllr Mumford, who is co-convener of the Green Group, is calling on the authority to adopt a new policy which would require businesses seeking late night licenses to agree to fund safe transport home for their shift workers.

It is one of a range of measures being proposed in support of the 'Get Me Home Safely' campaign launched by Unite the Union.

A similar move by East Dunbartonshire Council last year means hospitality venues operating in the region now risk losing their license if they don't have measures in place to ensure

employees can safely get to work and back at night.

If voted through by councillors this week, a motion being tabled by Cllr Mumford will also look to mobilise council officers across departments to bolster safeguarding for staff working late.

Part of the action plan will see officials engage with Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams to discuss providing “better night-time public transport services which links with the needs of shift workers”.

Cllr Mumford said: “I hope all parties will vote for this motion and show our unanimous support for backing the workers who keep our city running throughout the night, and keeping them safe while travelling home.

“Many industries which make Edinburgh thrive – including hospitality, health & social care, and cleaning – depend on shift work which can entail late-night working, and are sectors which predominantly employ women. Workers are increasingly worried about their safety travelling home.

“I believe the council has a duty of care towards workers in Edinburgh, which does not end when an employee finishes their shift but needs to take into consideration journeys home, especially during unsocial hours.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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