



The Professional Trades Union for Prison,  
Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers

## MEDIA RELEASE

**To: News Editors**  
**Date: 22 June 2020**  
**Subject: Coronavirus Assaults and RIDDOR Reporting**

**The Scottish Police Federation (SPF) represents all police officers in the ranks of constable, sergeant, inspector and chief inspector, police cadets and special constables; over 18,500 people, 98% of all police officers in Scotland.**

**The Prison Officers Association is the largest union in the United Kingdom representing Uniformed Prison Grades and staff working within the field of Secure Forensic Psychiatric Care, with over 35 thousand members in the public and private sectors.**

Speaking in response to discovering that the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) had purposely excluded police, and prison officers who are assaulted by being spat, and coughed at by those who may be contagious with COVID19, from the requirements of RIDDOR reporting,

David Hamilton, Chairman of the Scottish Police Federation (SPF) said;

*"To suggest that deliberately exposing police officers to this lethal virus does not fall within the ambit of RIDDOR is beyond comprehension. This policy, sneaked out without even having the decency to notify police associations, shows the total disinterest and contempt that the HSE have for the safety and rights of police officers.*

*At a time when police officers need their support most, the HSE has walked away and abandoned them. Quite simply, they have lost the confidence of those they are meant to protect."*

Phil Fairlie, Deputy General Secretary of the Prison Officers Association (POA) (Scotland) said;

*"The crucial role of prison officers in the justice system is often overlooked. The job is dangerous and those who perform it are dedicated and courageous. That dedication has been rewarded with a kick in the teeth with this disgusting and disgraceful decision of the HSE. At the same time as our prisons are rightly releasing inmates to protect them from the risks of COVID19, we see those left protecting the remaining prison population being abandoned by the very body charged with looking after the health and safety of workers. The underhand manner in which this decision was sneaked onto the HSE website is the perfect metaphor for how prison officers will feel they are being treated. This decision is shameful."*

Notes for editors;

1. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1998 (RIDDOR) obligates employers to report certain workplace incidents to the enforcing body (HSE) so they can identify where and how risks arise and whether they need to be investigated. This allows the HSE to provide advice to employers on how to avoid work-related deaths, injuries and ill health.
2. The specific exclusion for police and prison officers in the HSE guidance can be found here <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/riddor/riddor-reporting-further-guidance.htm#dangerous-reportable>
3. Neither the POA nor the SPF were consulted by the HSE before this decision was made.
4. Andrew Watterson, Faculty of Health at the University of Stirling published an article on SAGE journals on the 25<sup>th</sup> May which is critical of the failures of the HSE. In his article he states "The HSE ... has simply gone missing on COVID 19." <https://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/default+domain/10.1177%2F1048291120929763A/full>

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