



SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

The Scottish Police Federation represents all police officers in the ranks of constable, sergeant, inspector and chief inspector, police cadets and special constables; over 16,500 people, 98% of all police officers in Scotland.

To: All outlets
Date: 7th November 2023
Subject: Police Budget Cuts

On the eve of the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee police budget scrutiny, David Kennedy, General Secretary of the Scottish Police Federation said,

"Our current funding difficulties started in 2013 when Police Scotland was formed from the previous eight forces. At that time, over £200 million was removed from the annual cost base of policing. That has never been returned so essentially that £200m has been returned to the public purse every year since and this now amounts to around £2 billion.

Over these 10 years, we have seen around 140 police stations closed, and we are now virtually 1000 officers short of our highest ever number of 17,496 which we had in 2013.

We have been asset stripped and basically used as a cash cow.

When the first Minister and others show figures of annual budget increases, they ignore the £2 billion we have lost, and their figures barely cover annual increasing costs. In our assessment, the situation is now critical and public safety and security are at risk.

We have been policing with one hand tied behind our backs and public service is suffering. I don't think you would find many people, whether members of the public or police officers, who would say that Police Scotland has been a success. Undoubtedly, if we had been properly funded we would have done a better job, but I regret to say that right now our budget problems are causing huge difficulties.

Our members report the following:

- Violence
- Lack of back up
- Stress

- Burnout
- Anxiety
- Family disruption
- Poor office accommodation
- Equipment not working or overdue replacement
- Overwork
- Pressure to cut corners
- Dangerously low officer numbers
- Lack of supervision
- Inability to take days off due
- Lack of training
- Deferring calls from the public for days

Operational Base Levels are regularly breached, and this has significant implications for public and police officer safety. If this situation persists it is only a matter of time before a tragedy is caused by this.

A drastically reduced overtime budget can have perverse effects. At the end of shifts enquiries are passed to incoming officers, and this risks mistakes and misunderstandings. It also increases the numbers of police witnesses when it gets to court and this can often lead to increased overtime costs at court. It is a false economy."

Ends