

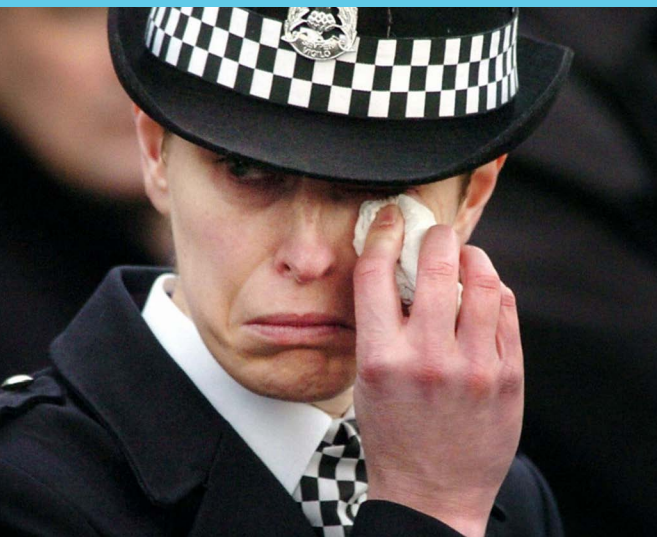


SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION

The Voice of Scotland's Police Service

MANIFESTO

PROGRAMME FOR POLICING: 2016 – 2021





SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION

The Voice of Scotland's Police Service

About the Scottish Police Federation

The Scottish Police Federation is the body representing more than 17,000 police officers in Scotland, covering police constables, sergeants, inspectors, chief inspectors, police cadets and special constables.

We were established in 1919 with a remit to ensure the welfare and efficiency of police officers. We work with government, Police Scotland and other agencies to represent the interests of police officers and to provide officers' perspectives to government on the police, policing and the wider criminal justice system.



Calum Steele

General Secretary
Scottish Police Federation

Introduction

The Scottish Police Federation exists to promote the welfare of police officers and efficiency of the service. In today's economic climate, it has never been more important to ensure that these interests are listened to and acted upon by Scotland's politicians, decision-makers and opinion formers.

This document is the result of the experience and expertise of many of our members and I am grateful for the time and effort our Joint Central Committee devoted to this task. This is a call to action to whoever forms the next Scottish Government - not just in the final, frenetic weeks of an election campaign - but over the lifetime of the next Scottish Parliament.

1

Policing and Government

1.1 Protect Police budgets

Safety and security are the foundations of a thriving and prosperous society and policing lies at its very heart.

In this age of austerity, there is a very real danger in believing that budgets can be cut without any impact on services. This is wrong; shrinking police budgets will see our communities suffer and without safe and secure communities, we all suffer.

Policing is an incredibly diverse and complicated activity. It is continually evolving to meet the needs of communities while adapting to meet the challenges posed by increasingly sophisticated criminal enterprises.

Over the five years of the next Scottish Parliament, the SPF calls on all of Scotland's political parties to ensure that police budgets rise at least in line with inflation.



1.2 Abolish policing targets and reduce red tape

Targets are counter-productive, drive the wrong kinds of behaviours and ultimately, deliver little more than fodder for politicians to argue amongst themselves. In many ways; they can very often distract from the ultimate goal of improving the delivery of services.

This is true not only for policing, but for a whole range of public services.

Removing targets will enable policing to concentrate on what matters; freeing frontline officers to use their professional skill and judgement to deliver the very best for the communities they serve.

At the same time, every hour spent by our members administering unnecessary and burdensome bureaucracy is an hour less spent delivering the services they have been expertly trained to provide.

Trading numbers without context treats us all like fools. It's right we monitor performance, but when many facts and figures are accumulated for their own sake, the exercise becomes meaningless. We all deserve better.

The SPF believes it is time for Scotland to abolish targets, not just in policing but across the wider public sector. No public body, organisation, government or agency should be permitted to publish any statistic without providing both numerical and percentage values, set against longer-term trends.

Policing and Government (cont'd)

1.3 Improving democratic participation for police officers

Scotland has never been more politically active or engaged than it is now, but a large number of public sector workers are unable to contribute to political decision making and opinion forming. Nowhere is that more true than in the case of police officers.

We consider it is appropriate to restrict police officers from taking a partisan role in politics.

However, we believe there is room to consider their participation in other aspects of political life. Police officers have skills, insight and ideas that could enrich our politics and in a modern, progressive and forward thinking country, should have that freedom to be able to contribute.

The SPF calls on the next Scottish Government to commit to the introduction of a Scottish equivalent of the Hatch Act in the United States. An equivalent Act – which states what police officers and federal employees can and can't participate in - would help to address the wholesale restrictions placed on police officers from participating in democratic life.



1.4 Make community planning partnerships work

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) bring together a range of agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services.

While they agree broad objectives, organisations very often end up working against each other in the pursuit of the same outcome. It is time for this stop. Strong, effective and empowered CPPs should be able not only to determine priorities, but to hold services to account for how they deliver them.

Therefore, the SPF believes that CPPs should be given statutory legal powers to demand coordination and encourage cooperation across agencies.



Policing and public safety

2.1 An effective and efficient justice system

Official figures from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) show that as many as 66 per cent of the 300,000 cases reported each year may never see the inside of a court.

All told, this represents a phenomenal bureaucratic burden on our justice system. Even the most inexperienced of officers knows there are many cases they report that will just see the PF “put a pen through it” and take no further action.

We believe this is illogical, inefficient and wasteful.

Full police reports should only be necessary in cases where court action may be considered likely. While the police service will have to account for events leading to arrests or charges being laid, we see inherent logic in abandoning a system built on reporting for its own sake.

Freed from bureaucracy, fiscals would have more time to prepare for prosecutions and police would have more time for the prevention and detection of crime. Greater consideration in advance of prosecution would lead to more efficient court proceedings and fewer witness citations and adjournments.

The SPF is calling for a new era of even greater cooperation between Police Scotland and the COPFS. A more direct system of engagement with the fiscal's office at the time of arrest – possibly with PFs located within police stations – can deliver speedy, effective and informed justice.

2.2 Stop criminalising mental health

Police cells should not be considered as appropriate places for people waiting to be assessed under the Mental Health (Scotland) Act.

It is increasingly common for individuals suffering from psychotic, depressive or manic episodes to find themselves in cells or some other form of custody pending assessment.

While officers are increasingly adept at identifying those in need of help, this does not make them experts in mental health. Nor does it detract from the stigma of being taken away by the police in handcuffs. This only adds to their distress and is no way to treat some of our most vulnerable citizens.

The SPF recommends that health professionals should assume responsibility for finding places of safety and ensuring that those awaiting mental health assessments are cared for in facilities other than police cells.



2.3 Tackling drug and alcohol misuse

Scotland has had a long, turbulent relationship with alcohol and drugs. But decades of arresting and prosecuting those with dependency problems has failed to tackle the root cause.

There will always be those who end up in the criminal justice system as a consequence of their actions. Where prosecutions are necessary, the punishment should be swift and decisive.

The SPF is not advocating the legalisation or decriminalising of drugs, but efforts should be better directed in trying to help those with problems overcome addictions.

Courts should be free to impose disposals that mandate participation in health and education programmes, with traditional criminal sanctions preserved for those preying on the vulnerable and peddling misery.

The SPF believes it is time to stop persecuting users and start concentrating on the dealers. Working in collaboration, the SPF believes that health, education and justice services stand a better chance of ending cycles of offending.

While intoxication is not a medical emergency, the consequences can be. Locking up drunk people in cells is no longer an acceptable way to manage that risk.

The SPF believes that safe, secure facilities should be created to manage those who present themselves as intoxicated and avoid the need to shuttle people between police cells and hospitals. Such facilities should be managed by skilled personnel from across the police, health and social care services, charities and other appropriately skilled personnel.

2.4 Social responsibility levy

In Scotland today, some industries have an unintentionally disproportionate impact on local communities as a result of their activities.

We believe that if you are happy to enjoy the cause, then you should be willing to pay for the effect.

We believe that the introduction of a levy that can be applied to any commercial activity or industry whose activities have a disproportionate impact on local communities or services should be considered. Such levies can be used to improve communities and mitigate against the problems caused by anti-social behaviour.

The Scottish Police Federation believes that a social responsibility levy should be introduced during the lifetime of the next Parliament to tackle the problems caused by anti-social behaviour.



Policing and innovation

3.1 Invest in a Scottish cyber security agency

Scotland has the potential to be a global leader in cyber-crime and cyber-security and we have shown that when we invest, we deliver the best.

A 2014 survey for McAfee estimated that, worldwide, cyber-crime cost businesses close to £300 billion.

The Scottish Crime Campus at Gartcosh is a world-leading facility demonstrating the benefits a multi-agency approach can bring in developing effective and feared capabilities to detect and disrupt criminal activity.

Using these skills and experiences, Scotland should seek to position itself as a global leader in cyber security. The benefits of this investment are much wider than just crime and justice. The provision of highly skilled, well-paid jobs in this sector will provide much needed expertise that can help to boost economic growth.

The SPF believes the creation of a Scottish Cyber Security Agency can help ensure our citizens, business and services have the best possible response to the ever growing cyber threat while providing a boost to the wider Scottish economy.

3.2 Meeting our maritime responsibilities

Scotland is a maritime nation with more than 6,000 miles of coastline used for leisure, business and commerce. Our seas cover a greater territorial area than all our land mass added together yet these go largely unpoliced.

A Scottish maritime police service would ensure we adhere to environmental legislation, discourage crime, protect our fisheries and provide reassurance to those using our waters for fun. We believe opportunities exist to share vessels and work with other agencies, protecting our coastline and preserving our maritime assets for future generations.

The SPF believes that the time has come for Scotland to have an enhanced and dedicated maritime policing capability, with opportunities to deliver integrated services and make full use of our maritime assets.



3.3 Making better use of community buildings

Across Scotland, a range of community buildings are opening up to help improve the delivery of local services.

Currently the capital receipts from the sale of most public buildings goes direct to the Scottish Government and future capital funding is simply allocated in budgets. This can mean local areas lose out over “organisational priorities”.

The SPF believes that in future the capital receipts from the sale of a local police station should be retained and pooled with capital receipts from other public buildings in that locale, to enable a pot of cash to grow for building modern multi use public buildings in the local area in future. The creation of a trust would / should encourage more cohesive estate strategies.



3.4 Discounted public transport for essential workers

Almost all forms of transport are subsidised in some way or another by government and in many instances, can result in under-occupied vehicles and vessels.

Essential workers have seen their take home pay suffer significant real terms reductions over the last 5 plus years. Discounted travel would assist in making up some of that shortfall, help to encourage greater use of the public transport network for travelling to and from work, while also helping to reduce carbon emissions.

The SPF considers that essential workers – including police officers – should be offered discounts to encourage greater use of our public transport network.



Scottish Police Federation
5 Woodside Place,
Glasgow, G3 7QF
Scotland UK
Tel: 0300 303 0027

