

Justice Committee

Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2016-17

Supplementary written submission from Police Scotland

During my appearance at the Justice Committee on 1 December 2015, I undertook to write to the Committee with further information on two points, namely:

- Statistics in relation to staff sickness; and
- Has the number of police officers at football matches decreased.

In relation to statistical information for staff sickness, the full publicly reported staff attendance figures are published in the public papers of the Scottish Police Authority Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (HRRC).

In short the overall Police Officer attendance shows a broadly similar attendance figure, moving down from 4.15% working days lost from April to November 2014 to 4.13% in the same period for 2015. The report also highlights that overall Police Staff attendance shows an increase from 4.49% to 4.79% in the same period.

Movements in attendance figures are small and trends are continually monitored. Long Term Absence generally associated with more significant matters make up the majority of both Police Officer and Police Staff absence at 2.6% and 2.86% respectively. Police Scotland engage with an Occupational Health provider in order to ensure that relevant support can be offered to individuals to maximise the potential of a successful return to work, where possible.

Short Term Absence makes up 1.53% of absence for Police Officers and 1.93% of Police Staff Absence.

Police Staff absence is higher than Police Officer absence, and this trend is not only a current but also an historical trend. There are many potential factors that may influence this – the most obvious difference at present being the potential impact of redundancy on staff, which does not impact Police Officers. The organisation engages with an Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) in order to offer any support to individuals impacted by change and compulsory redundancy commitments are in place currently which also may assist in reducing the impact on individuals.

In response to the number of police officers at football matches, I can confirm that the numbers of police officers in attendance at football matches has decreased since the previous year. I should highlight that the figures are not static and do fluctuate across areas which is dependant on fixture classification. These fluctuations are due to a number of factors including available intelligence and a dynamic assessment of risk for each fixture.

Police Scotland and football clubs meet locally before the start of each season to agree an initial match risk categorisation and the associated police resource levels for each fixture.

Any decision to decrease or increase the number of officers deployed is made in consultation with the club who are charged in line with the national agreement for the provision of police services.

I hope that you will find the foregoing information of use to you.

Neil Richardson OBE QPM
Deputy Chief Constable Designate
11 December 2015