



Bill takes policing back decades

UNISON argues the Police and Fire Reform Bill takes Scottish policing back decades in [evidence](#) to parliamentary committees scrutinising the Bill. There are three main areas of concern:

- This is a centralising reorganisation contrary to the principles of public service reform set out by the Christie Commission - undermining local democratic accountability.
- The financial provisions are unrealistic, based on savings targets rather than service need. The VAT requirement adds a further financial burden that could be resolved by a national joint board.
- The police staff transfer provisions are inadequate and other clauses treat police staff as second class workers.

UNISON's main message is that the new Scottish Police Authority should be able to decide on a balanced staffing structure free of outdated and cosmetic political targets for police officer numbers. Savings targets and 17,234 officers means almost all cuts fall on police staff who only make up 15% of the budget. 1000 police staff posts have already been lost and ACPOS estimates indicate a further 2000 will have to go. This increases to over 3000 when VAT and other cuts are applied.

As a consequence the proportion of police staff will fall from 28% to around 15% - half the level in England. That takes policing in Scotland almost back to pre-civilianisation levels. As UNISON's Dave Watson said to the Justice Committee "We enjoy repeats of 'The Sweeney', but didn't think this would be the model for a modern police force!"

Job substitution

Cuts at this level can only result in the mass replacement of police staffs by police officers. UNISON's interim police staffs survey indicates that 53% of the jobs lost last year were replaced in whole or in part by police officers. That's 500 police taken off the street to do jobs they are not best qualified to do at huge additional cost. If the new plans are implemented that could result in up to 1500 more taken off operational roles. This is economic and operational madness, contrary to the Best Value duty in the Bill.

Campaign

The next stage of UNISON's police staffs campaign is being launched at the Police Staffs seminar on 13 March. There will be posters, leaflets and other materials. Members will also be asked to write to their MSP in support of UNISON's parliamentary campaign. Watch the Police Staffs [webpage](#) for details

Useful UNISON police staff links

- [UNISON Scotland police staffs webpage](#)
- [Briefing on Police Reform Bill](#)
- [Evidence to Justice Committee](#)
- [Stewart Report on Civilianisation](#)

UNISON Scotland's key campaigns

- [Public Works](#)
- [Protect Our Pensions](#)
- [UNISON Scotland website](#)

For more information contact Bargaining and Campaigns team on 0141 342 2811, or email [Dave Watson](#) Scottish Organiser, or [Gerry Crawley](#) Regional Organiser.



Follow us on





Life on Mars pic: Mark Campbell / Rex Features

Don't take policing back to the 1970s

The government's Bill to create a single Scottish police force could have a very damaging effect on law and order if it signals a fresh round of cuts to police staff.

Police staff work in a variety of roles from 999 call handler to forensic technicians, from detention officers to crime and incident advisors. All play a vital role in cutting crime as part of a modern, balanced police force.

The new Scottish Police Authority will be expected to achieve savings of between £88m and £151m per year. It is also under the government's political constraint of maintaining police officer numbers at 17,234. This means up to three thousand more police staff jobs are now under threat – even though a thousand staff posts have already been cut.

Audit Scotland has warned of the potential impact of 'reverse civilianisation' which could divert resources away from front-line policing. Cutting police staff makes no economic or policing sense. It simply means that important support and expert jobs are increasingly done by police officers – taking more than a thousand officers off the streets.

Cutting thousands of police staff would take policing in Scotland back to the 1970s. It would be like *Life on Mars*, a cop show set in a timewarp – but in fact, not in TV fiction.

UNISON
Scotland

UNISON: the union for Scottish police staff
www.unison-scotland.org.uk

**PUBLIC
WORKS:**