

Police officers subjected to more than 100 'Covid assaults'

Scottish Police Federation general secretary Calum Steele has revealed that there have been more than 100 'Covid assaults' where a suspect has attacked, spat, coughed or sneezed at a police officer while claiming to be infected with coronavirus and the "vast majority" of suspects have not been held in custody before appearing in court.

He told BBC Radio Scotland: "These kinds of crimes – spitting in someone's face or in their mouth or in their direction in a deliberate attempt to either infect them with a potentially deadly virus or to cause them such an alarm as to result in mental anguish for a significant period of time – is a reprehensible crime.

"Anyone who argues that such time should not result in appearance before the bench for the earliest opportunity is frankly doing a disservice to the communities of Scotland.



"The custody environment is probably one of the best equipped environments in policing to deal with those that claim to have, or are symptomatic for coronavirus.

"We have a reduced number of custody facilities across Scotland specifically for suspects that fall into that category and the level of PPE and hygiene facilities in those environments are second to none.

"I would argue that it is much safer to keep these people in custody in these environments than let them back out into the general population where they will continue that offending at will."