

Labour MSP slams Scottish Government over police officer numbers

Lothians MSP Sarah Boyack says Edinburgh left “less safe” by police cuts

The Labour MSP for Lothians, Sarah Boyack, slammed the Scottish Government over plummeting numbers of police officers in the capital.

Ms Boyack pointed to [figures](#) from Police Scotland which showed the total police officer numbers available in Edinburgh at the end of 2023 were 338 fewer than at the same time in 2020, falling from 3894 to 3556.

This fall in police officer numbers is largely due to a drop in the specialists at regional and national level available to provide support to the Edinburgh City team. The police officers serving under the local commander (which includes community policing, response policing and divisional road policing) rose by 61, from 1118 to 1179. However, the number of regional officers available in the city – providing specialist support such as Major Investigation Teams and Armed Policing Units – fell by 157, from 931 to 774, while national specialist crime resources available (such as the National Rape Investigation Unit and Human Trafficking Unit) fell by 242 from 1845 to 1603.

This comes as the Police Scotland [recently finished consultations](#) on the possible closure of 29 police stations, including five in the city: Balerno, Portobello, Leith, West

End and Fettes.

Over the same period, Edinburgh has also seen a rise of over 1,000 crimes or offences [recorded](#), rising from 12,987 in 2020/21 to 14,017 in 2022/23.

COMMENTING ON THE FIGURES, MS BOYACK SAID:

“This fall in police officers is deeply distressing and leaving Edinburgh’s streets less safe.

“Edinburgh’s police force does a great job to keep us safe, but the Scottish Government is making them do it with one hand tied behind their back.

“Closing police stations and cutting officers are not going to help us lower Edinburgh’s crime rate.

“The Scottish Government need to reassess their plans and ensure that Edinburgh’s police force has the resources to do its job.”



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