

Assaults on police have risen this year

The number of police officers and staff violently assaulted in the line of duty has risen this year – with an average of 20 a day coming under attack, according to figures released by Police Scotland.

The national force say there were 1,811 assaults on its officers and staff between April-June, up 67 on the same period last year.

More than one in four of those assaults left an officer or police staff member injured.

The number of assaults represents an increase of 3.8% on the previous year, but remained roughly in line (-0.3%) with the five year average.

A total of 58 officers required hospital treatment as a result of being assaulted during the three month period, which was a decrease of 14 from the previous year.

The latest Police Scotland quarterly performance report shows Dumfries and Galloway emerged as a hotspot with 68 assaults on officers and staff. Assaults increased by 20 compared with the previous year and 22.6 above the five-year mean.

For every 1,000 incidents cops attended in Dumfries and Galloway 12 officers were assaulted – “the highest amongst any

division”.

The main hotspots in the region were in Dumfries and Stranraer.

In Dumfries the greatest rise was in assaults within Dumfries and Galloway “V” Division, increasing by 21. Six of the offenders were aged 18 or under, including one female who committed nine assaults on police over three incidents.

The report states: “May saw Dumfries & Galloway Division above their monthly control limits, and May accounted for 59% of the total assaults in Quarter 1, recording a total of 40 assaults against officers/staff.

“Dumfries area command has seen the greatest rise in assaults within the Division during Quarter 1.”

In comparison, for every 1,000 incidents cops attended in Edinburgh, there were 6.9 assaults on officers. In the Lothians and Scottish Borders the figure was 5.9. However, both of these figures are up on the previous year.

Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs said: “We send a clear and consistent message from police leaders that assaults on police officers and members of police staff are absolutely unacceptable, it is not part of any job to be assaulted and it is important that we report assaults.

“There has been a year on year increase of reported assaults against officers and staff in 2023-24. It is something that we keep under close review, to ensure we are doing all we can to support our people. Overall, assaults remain below the five year average and lower compared to previous years.

“Crucially, the injury rate has seen a consistent decline and the reporting rate has increased, suggesting not only has there been a long-term reduction in assaults, but that we’re also building a culture where people are more likely to

report.

“This allows us to build a more accurate picture of what officers and staff are experiencing, which means we can identify trends and target areas to improve safety.”