

Concerns that transport police won't have employment representation

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Concerns that transport police won't have employment representation

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The SNP has been criticised for failing to provide guarantees that transport police officers will have employment representation when their contracts are transferred to Police Scotland.

The single force will take on responsibility for the British Transport Police next year, after nationalist parties controversially forced the move through in the summer.

But, as it stands, no details have been provided about which union body will look after the welfare and interests of current BTP staff north of the border.

Those officers are currently represented by the BTP Federation, but those links will be severed when the move goes ahead.

But experts have said it's also unlikely the Scottish Police Federation – who help Police Scotland staff – will be able to step in.

And now committee convener, Scottish Conservative MSP Margaret Mitchell, has sought clarification from the SNP over the confusion.

It is the latest problem to beset the swallowing up of BTP duties by Police Scotland, a move which has been severely criticised by officers.

Critics have also pointed out it's the worst time for a crisis-hit single force to be taking on additional responsibilities.

Scottish Conservative Central Scotland MSP Margaret Mitchell said:

“The current situation is BTP officers who transfer won't be represented by the BTP Federation, and it remains unclear if they'll be looked after by the Scottish Police Federation.

“That's an utterly unacceptable state of affairs.

“There are clearly consequences of BTP officers being merged with Police Scotland

“One of the possible consequences could be these hard-working and vitally important staff won't have the representation everyone is entitled to.

“Given this major change has been imposed on these officers against their will, the least they should expect is for this to be sorted out as a matter of urgency.”

To see a copy of Margaret Mitchell’s letter, visit:

http://www.parliament.scot/S5_JusticeCommittee/Inquiries/20171107MMtoMinisterforTransport.pdf

The controversial move to transfer BTP officers to Police Scotland was forced through earlier this year:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-40404532>

The strategy has been consistently criticised by the Scottish Conservatives:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/09/merger-of-british-transport-police-and-police-scotland-should-be-put-on-hold/>

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/03/btp-outlines-extraordinary-risks-of-merging-force-with-police-scotland/>