


# Five years of Police Scotland: A thank you

 ***Justice Secretary Michael Matheson reflects on a time of change for the police service.***

I am reminded every day in my role as Justice Secretary of the commitment and dedication of Scotland's police officers and police staff. With crime in Scotland at a record low, and down 43% since 2006, I am confident policing in Scotland is on the right track thanks to the incredible contribution of our police officers to Scottish society.

We can all acknowledge that the move to a single service five years ago has created lots of changes, challenges and lessons learned.

But we also know there have been innovations and successes, and, moreover, a stronger commitment than ever to protecting our communities in Scotland.

The landscape of policing in Scotland has changed significantly since becoming a single service in 2013. As those who prey on our communities have sought to exploit new opportunities, and as the needs and vulnerabilities of our population continues to change, our officers have provided vital and visible protection on our streets.

Moreover, our police go above and beyond what many would consider to be traditional police work, supporting the most vulnerable people. Working with the wider public sector, other partners and communities to strengthen their service and to embed prevention into everything they do has become part of everyday work.



It is not inconceivable to recognise that the policing landscape will continue to change again over the next five years. The new Scottish Crime Campus at Gartcosh has provided a focal point for excellence in intelligence sharing, evidence gathering and forensic science. There is now a need to tackle new and developing threats to the public, including cybercrime. Our police service needs to be increasingly resilient, flexible, responsive and locally-focussed to help keep us safe. It is a challenge, but one I know our police officers and staff can accept and excel at.

Looking ahead, the Policing 2026 strategy includes a commitment to increase frontline capabilities, including new civilian specialists in cyber-crime. We have committed to increasing new civilian specialists in mental health, as outlined by our mental health strategy – something I feel particularly passionate about. Police Scotland is one of the first in the UK to implement mandatory mental health and suicide prevention training for all officers, and now 17,600 of you have completed this training. These aspects are vital to support our police officers and staff to deliver a modern and forward-looking police service in Scotland.

In Scotland, there are also over 1000 more permanent officers than there were in 2007. England and Wales have around 20,000 fewer officers compared to the same period. And while we ask our police service to be more adaptable, this government is committed to protecting the police resource budget for every year of this parliament – a boost of £100 million by 2021.

We have a world class police system in Scotland, supported by a hugely dedicated and professional workforce who work each and every day to secure the safety and wellbeing of people and communities across the country. The next five years will undoubtedly bring their own challenges. But for now, for the past five years, I'd like to thank all our police officers and policing staff for their efforts since 2013.

*This blog was originally published by [Police Oracle](#) on 29 March 2018.*

The post [Five years of Police Scotland: A thank you](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).