# Surge in Hate Crime Allegations Strains Police Scotland Resources



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Police Scotland has faced an influx of hate crime allegations since the implementation of new legislation on April 1, 2023. This law, introduced by the Scottish National Party (SNP), created an offense of "stirring up hatred" based on protected characteristics, including age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and transgender identity.

Chief Superintendent Rob Hay, President of the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents (ASPS), highlighted that these complaints have created a "toxic" and "divisive" atmosphere. Around 90% of the 10,000 complaints received were deemed vexatious, significantly diverting police resources.

Mr. Hay emphasized that police should avoid engaging in "petty political point-scoring" and the ongoing "culture war." He made these remarks during his speech at the ASPS centenary conference held in Peebles, emphasizing that police resources are already stretched too thin.

Police Scotland currently operates with officer numbers at a 16-year low, down to 16,356 full-time equivalents by the end of March. Chief Constable Jo Farrell also expressed concerns about the lack of focus on frontline policing, citing the diversion of officers to mental health incidents and court duties.

Justice Secretary Angela Constance and Scottish Tory justice spokesman Russell Findlay both acknowledged the strains, with the latter calling for the scrapping of the legislation. Meanwhile, the Scottish Police Federation reported that many officers are quitting to work in less stressful jobs, such as train driving, due to the increasing demands and deteriorating work-life balance.