

Scots police officers '£250,000 better off over their career than in England'



Scotland's eight police forces merge into a new one from the start of April James Glossop

Nick Drainey

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Police officers in Scotland are potentially £250,000 better off over the course of their career than their counterparts south of the Border.

The finding comes as Scotland's new single police force prepares to become operational and after Tom Winsor, the former rail regulator, carried out the widest-ranging review of police pay and conditions for more than 30 years.

Calum Steele, general secretary of the Scottish Police Federation, said that police officers were "delighted the ravages of the Tom Winsor proposals do not extend to the police service in Scotland". He added: "It would be fair to say, however, that that delight is heavily tempered with an enormous sympathy for our colleagues in England and Wales, many of whom now face being deprived of vast sums of money, in addition to facing uncertainty over the future of the career they have chosen."

Mr Steele said that in a 42-year career — stretching from joining the police at 18 to

reaching the pensionable age of 60 — changes implemented as a result of the Winsor review would lead to some officers in England and Wales being £250,000 worse off than those in Scotland.

Theresa May, the Home Secretary, has announced that new police constables in England and Wales can now expect a starting salary of £19,000, a cut of £4,000, while the Holyrood administration has said that their remuneration will stay at about £23,000.

Figures released last week showed that police numbers in England and Wales had dropped to 132,235, a fall of 4,000 in a year and the lowest number for 11 years. Meanwhile, the Scottish government said that numbers were remaining steady north of the Border.

Sandra White, an SNP MSP and a member of the Scottish parliament's Justice Committee, said: "While the Tories believe that cutting police numbers and cutting police pay will lead to an improved service, Scottish officers are being shielded from these dreadful cuts south of the Border."

A spokesman for the Home Office said: "It is impossible to make this calculation because forces in England and Wales have the discretion to pay a starting salary between £19,000 and £22,000 depending on skills and experience, and officers on the new scale will be able to progress up the pay scale more quickly. We are also opening up police recruitment to attract the very best candidates."

Scotland's eight forces merge into the Police Service of Scotland on April 1. Last month MSPs on Holyrood's Justice Committee recommended a sub-committee be set up to monitor the new force. The move followed an eleventh-hour intervention by the Justice Secretary to partially resolve a power struggle at the top of the new service.

Chief Constable Stephen House had been at loggerheads for weeks with Vic Emery, chairman of the Scottish Police Authority, the oversight body, over who should direct the finance and human resources functions of the new force. A public meeting of the SPA in Glasgow was told that Kenny MacAskill had intervened to ask the parties to consider sharing the functions between them. The board members approved the plan but Mr Emery said that there was still "a huge amount of work to be done" before the force goes live.

The Chief Constable and members of the SPA were united in their opinion that the Scottish government should have intervened sooner.

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Ian Whitlock

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The differential treatment in many areas of life between the Welsh and Scots and us poor relations in England is getting damn tiresome. Of course, it is particularly galling that it is the poor relations who getting shafted and are picking up the tab for the feather-bedding of our cousins in Cardiff, Glasgow and elsewhere.

And the Scots will no doubt do the sums and sensibly not vote for devolution as they quite understandably say "Never mind Robert the Bruce and Braveheart, just keep giving us the money."

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