



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Criminal Justice Committee

David Malcolm
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29 October 2026

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny and the representation of police staff perspectives.

I appreciate the concerns you have raised, and the time taken by UNISON Police Staff Scotland to engage with the Committee's work. The Committee recognises the important contribution made by police staff and the value of the perspective set out in your written submission.

In planning its pre-budget scrutiny, the Committee sought to hear from a broad range of voices from across the criminal justice sector while working within the practical constraints of a limited evidence programme. The aim was to ensure that members heard from organisations representing different parts of the justice system and the range of pressures facing those services.

As part of its formal scrutiny, the Committee took evidence from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland. In addition, policing issues have featured prominently in the Committee's wider engagement during the course of its pre-budget scrutiny. This has included discussions between me and representatives of the Scottish Police Federation, and I am due to meet the Chief Constable in the coming days. The Committee therefore considers that it has had a number of opportunities to hear and understand policing perspectives as part of this year's scrutiny.

In determining its witness list, the Committee was also mindful that many other parts of the criminal justice system were represented by a single organisation or witness. Members therefore sought to ensure that the oral evidence programme reflected the breadth of the criminal justice sector as a whole and did not give disproportionate weight to any one area of the system. Against that background, the Committee took the view that the available places for oral evidence should be used to maximise the range of perspectives heard rather than increase representation from areas already reflected elsewhere in the Committee's evidence-gathering and engagement.



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That should not be taken as diminishing the importance of the views of police staff. Rather, it reflected the Committee's judgement that it was important to maintain an appropriate balance across the evidence programme while ensuring that policing perspectives were heard alongside those from other parts of the justice system.

I would also emphasise that the Committee does not place greater value on oral evidence than written evidence. Written submissions are considered alongside oral evidence and form an integral part of the Committee's scrutiny. They inform members' understanding of the issues, shape lines of questioning and contribute directly to the conclusions and recommendations contained in Committee reports. The evidence submitted by UNISON Police Staff Scotland will therefore form an important part of the evidence base considered by the Committee as it develops its recommendations.

I recognise the strength of feeling reflected in your correspondence and the importance of ensuring that police staff perspectives are understood. While the Committee's formal evidence-gathering is now largely complete, I would be pleased to meet with representatives of UNISON Police Staff Scotland in the coming weeks to discuss the issues raised in your written evidence and correspondence ahead of the Committee's consideration of its draft pre-budget scrutiny report.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Kind regards,

David Linden MSP
Convener
Criminal Justice Committee