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Our Reference: 201900001793

20 June 2019

Dear Mr Watt,

Thank you for your correspondence sent on 23 May 2019, regarding police officer numbers.

During the parliamentary business referred to in your correspondence, the First Minister and Minister for Community Safety both highlighted that there are currently a higher number of police officers in post in Scotland compared to when the SNP took office in 2007.

There were 17,251 police officers in Scotland as of 31 March 2019, which is an increase of 1,017 officers since 2007. This contrasts with a decrease of 19,587 officers from March 2007 to September 2018 in England and Wales. Indeed, in September 2018, there were around 32 officers per 10,000 population in Scotland, compared to around 21 officers per 10,000 population in England and Wales.

On 16 May 2019, the Minister for Community Safety received questions on local policing where she presented figures published by Police Scotland. The Minister then highlighted that the core compliment of officers, dedicated locally to community and response policing, can draw on specialist expertise and resources to support local policing. These Divisional, Regional and National officers ensure that Police Scotland has access to the appropriate resources to keep people safe and meet our communities' needs.

You may wish to see the Official Report of the Parliamentary business that you refer to through the following links:

[http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?
r=12102&i=109504&c=2176207#ScotParlOR](http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12102&i=109504&c=2176207#ScotParlOR)

[http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?
r=12117&i=109601&c=2178455#ScotParlOR](http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12117&i=109601&c=2178455#ScotParlOR)

Yours sincerely

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