

Football act's conviction rate slumps to 3-year low

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The conviction rate of the SNP's hated Offensive Behaviour at Football legislation has fallen to its lowest in three years – with a third of cases collapsing.

New figures have revealed that, of the 229 cases brought to court last year, just 157 resulted in a conviction.

That means the controversial Offensive Behaviour at Football (Scotland) Act had a conviction rate of 68.5 per cent in 2016/17.

It compares to 75.6 per cent in 2015/16, and 84.4 per cent the year before that.

The Scottish Conservatives said the slump in conviction rates was more proof that the act had to be scrapped, ahead of a Stage Three debate on the issue next week.

Shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said it was clear sheriffs weren't convinced by the legislation, the introduction of which the Scottish Conservatives have opposed from the outset.

Of all parties at Holyrood, only the SNP wants to see the act continue, despite widespread criticism from the judiciary and football supporters.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"The fact the conviction rate with this act has slumped to a new low shows again why it has to be dropped.

"Clearly the courts don't have faith in it as a piece of legislation, and football fans are sick of being victimised in this way.

"The Scottish Conservatives argued from the start that this was a needless move by the SNP, yet still the nationalists are sticking to their guns on this hated law.

"No-one, with the exception of the blinkered SNP, thinks this legislation is fair or reasonable, and it should be axed immediately."