

Prison Officers Association (Scotland) conference

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf has thanked prison staff for their commitment and highlighted the recent “well-deserved” Scottish Prison Service pay agreement.

Mr Yousaf has been addressing members of the Prison Officers Association (Scotland) at the union’s annual conference in Peebles today and took questions from prison officers as part of a panel session.

Dedicated prison officers and staff

Speaking ahead of the event, Mr Yousaf reflected on the dedication of prison officers and staff who work hard to manage and support the rehabilitation of those in their care. He hailed the recent pay deal, which amounts to an increase of up to 15% over three years for the lowest paid officers.

He said:

“While crime has fallen considerably in the last decade, the nature of the offending being prosecuted in Scotland’s courts has also changed. We have seen, for example, a greater focus on serious organised crime and sexual offending, including historical cases and those committed online, as well as longer sentences being imposed.

“The result has been an unprecedented growth in the number of people in prison – many of whom have complex needs – and this presents daily challenges for frontline staff.

“Despite these pressures, Scotland’s prisons are stable, safe and well run. That is to the credit of the prison officers and staff across the country and I am very grateful for their unwavering dedication and commitment.

Pay agreement

Mr Yousaf continued: “The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) pay agreement for 2019-2022 reflects the important contribution made by all staff in our prisons. It rightly sees the lowest paid staff in our prisons receive a pay increase of up to 6% in its first year and up to 15% over three years. This is a well-deserved increase and compares very well with the equivalent in England and Wales.

“We are working closely with the SPS to manage the rising population. We have already made additional financial provision available to help meet cost pressures and we will keep the budget position under review.

“At the same time, we must build on the consensus around our evidence-based approach to penal policy and preventing reoffending – continuing to work constructively to respond to the growth in prisoner numbers and maintain

recent reductions in the reconviction rate to a 20-year low.

“I welcome the opportunity to hear directly from members of the POA(S) about their experiences.”

The post [Prison Officers Association \(Scotland\) conference](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).