

Scottish Government should be stripped of right to appoint SPA chair

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The next chair of the Scottish Police Authority should be publicly appointed, and not chosen by Scottish Government ministers, it has been argued.

Scottish Conservative MSP Margaret Mitchell said, after current chair Andrew Flanagan announced his departure, it was time for the style of appointment to be changed.

She wants to see the SPA chair chosen in the same way positions like the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman are selected, through a panel chaired by Holyrood's presiding officer involving MSPs from all parties.

She made the comments at today's Scottish Parliament policing sub-committee.

It follows weeks of criticism of the SPA and its senior staff members over a lack of accountability and transparency.

Scottish Conservative MSP Margaret Mitchell, convener of Holyrood's justice committee, said:

"We are now on to our third SPA chair in just over four years.

"It's self-evident that the previous chairs have lacked the necessary skills and experience, on issues like handling the media, to justify their appointment.

"Coupled with this, there has always been a concern about their independence, given they owe their appointment to the Scottish ministers of the day.

"It's now time to review the appointment by ministers and consider appointing the SPA chair in an open and transparent manner."