

SNP 'complacent' on serious organised crime

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The Scottish Conservatives have accused the SNP of complacency in the face of a rising threat of organised crime in Scotland.

Three Scottish Parliamentary written answers have highlighted the SNP's current lack of activity on tackling organised crime.

The answers show that last year only 79 charges were reported to the Crown Office for involvement in or failure to report organised crime, down from a high of 212 in 2014-15. In addition, only 4 people were convicted last year under the same sections.

At the same time, a report from the National Crime Agency and Police Scotland has said that the threat of organised crime is increasing, with 164 known organised crime groups (OCGs) comprising 3,282 members under investigation.

The answers also highlight that over the last 4 years there have only been 14 specific training sessions on anti-money laundering delivered to 6 credit unions, which brings the total 'trained' credit unions to only 38 out of 110 total. This is despite a pledge to roll out this training to all credit unions.

Lastly, the Scottish Government has failed to publish an annual report on its serious organised crime strategy since 2016.

Liam Kerr, Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary said:

"These answers highlight the SNP's utter complacency on organised crime.

"We know that the number of criminals involved in this kind of activity is in the thousands, so this level of SNP inaction is baffling.

"It beggars belief that while gangs are operating at this level, the number of charges and convictions is going down.

"The SNP's failure to ensure Police Scotland has enough frontline officers clearly has a negative effect on their ability to catch and prosecute these highly organised criminals.

"These answers totally undermine any SNP claim that they are taking this threat seriously."