

20:20 - FEDERATION MATTERS



ACCOUNTABILITY

- Police forces have robust professional standards departments set up precisely to investigate internal matters. The primary function of these departments is to identify and deal with misconduct and where necessary, corruption
- The Federation is concerned about the length of time some investigations take, for instance incidents when armed officers have discharged their weapons. At present many officers are prevented from returning to work until they are exonerated; leaving their career in a state of flux, creating intense pressure for the officer and their family

BUSINESS INTERESTS & ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

- Officers are entitled to apply for business interests or additional occupations as long as they do not conflict with the work of the police and will not adversely affect the reputation of the officer, his or her force, or the wider police service
- Business interests or additional occupations must be authorised by the officer's Chief Constable so a rigorous checking procedure is already in place to ensure there is no conflict with their role as a police officer
- The Federation has serious concerns about the suggestion that officers are forced to publicly declare their business interest or additional occupation which has already been subject to a vetting procedure and agreed by his or her chief officer before such authorisation

COMPULSORY SEVERANCE

- A power to make police officers redundant would be in direct conflict with the status of the Office of Constable, set up to ensure that any police officer is entirely accountable for their actions and will be held to the law and the law alone, which in turn gives officers a significant degree of legal authority and discretionary power in order to do their job properly
- Police officers are subject to and accept a number of restrictions in upholding the Office of Constable and protection against redundancy is a complementary feature of these restrictions
- Officers are empowered to resist unlawful orders and undue political pressure. If they are to carry out their duties for the benefit of the public and free from compromise they must be sure their actions could not be held against them and mark them for redundancy in the future

CRIME RECORDING

- Crime recording is complex and figures are always open to interpretation. Crime recording itself has changed twice in recent times and this makes comparisons nigh on impossible
- One of the effects of reduced officer numbers is that there are fewer officers on the streets to carry out preventative policing, and therefore fewer crimes are recorded. The closure of police stations may have also meant that the public could be finding it more difficult to report crime
- In times of reduced officer numbers, officers have to deal with crimes in different ways, for example, that may mean opting to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for minor disorder rather than making an arrest so they can get back on the streets more quickly

DANGEROUS DOGS

- The Federation supports moves to tighten laws on dangerous dogs and bring in Dog Control Orders as an early intervention measure, changing the law to cover incidents which happen on private property and micro-chipping dogs to ensure owners are responsible
- Following Federation partnership with other organisations including the RSPCA and ACPO, new draft legislation is in place to cover dog attacks on private property such as homes and gardens and owners will have to microchip their dogs from 2016
- A central database is needed to ensure police can keep track of incidents in different areas

FIREARMS

- Chief officers are obligated to carry out on behalf of their force strategic threat and risk assessments when deciding how many officers should be trained as Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs)
- Resilience among forces is being stretched and more are looking towards collaborative projects with neighbouring forces to fulfil firearms arrangements
- There is no excuse for the dropping of AFO training to basic levels, especially in forces with a higher than average proportion of firearms related offences. This places both the officer and the public at risk. This is not an area where savings should be made by reduction in training standards
- The Federation support the wider rollout of Taser to more frontline 24/7 officers who need the proper equipment to protect themselves and the public

FITNESS

- Fitness standards should be appropriate and necessary to do the job
- The fitness test should be the same for the various roles across the country as per the ACPO guidance agreed by the Police Advisory Board
- The tests developed by the ACPO Fitness Test Working Group, which includes input from the Federation, provide that levels of fitness are relevant and which can be justified as being a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim for policing roles

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There is no legal reason or excuse for police officers to be treated differently from employees in any other organisation. Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act states that it is the central duty of the employer to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees
- Proper observance of health, safety and welfare enhances the effectiveness of policing. In the hazardous police environment, the legislation strives to create work surroundings, which are free, as far as is reasonably practicable, from risk, so everyone is working in situations that are as healthy and safe as possible
- Workplace health and safety representatives operating in partnership with management are important elements in an organisation obtaining the greatest health and safety benefits

MENTAL HEALTH

- Police custody suites should not be used as places of safety for people with mental health issues
- Police officers need adequate training so that when they do come across individuals with mental health issues or learning difficulties they can ensure they are treated appropriately and they can get the correct professional help
- This level of basic training does not replace nor should replace the need for properly trained mental health professionals to be taking on this role wherever possible
- If officers are not getting proper and effective training that equips them with the necessary skills then they are being set up to fail and a member of the public is also put at unnecessary risk – they need the support and advice from a fully qualified professional

MUTUAL AID

- Officers should not be asked to carry out duties for which they are not properly trained
- Officers working on mutual aid operations must be properly remunerated and paid the appropriate allowances, and receive all the protections (e.g. insurance) that they would if serving in their own force areas
- Mutual aid operations are necessary to assist forces during large scale events or incidents e.g. the Olympics and riots

OVERTIME

- The Police Federation is opposed to officers working excessive overtime. Requirements for excessive overtime, outside of crisis situations suggests that resourcing levels may be incorrect and therefore unsafe
- Many officers are often not given a choice as to whether or not they do overtime and do not want to work excessively long hours. This impacts negatively on their work-life balance and could also have a negative impact on their professional judgement which puts them and others at risk
- Officers may often be required to work additional hours to meet the added demand on forces created by the loss of officer as the impact of the budget cuts take hold

PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS

- The role of a police officer is a challenging one which carries a significant risk of injury. We accept this risk is part of the job but it is only right that police officers should have the same protection as any employee or member of the public who may suffer injury
- PFEW has a duty to represent injured officers in any way it can, which includes providing details of a service that allows members access to legal advice on personal injury claims
- Many officers find themselves unable to work through injury and often pay for their own medical treatment so they can get back into service as quickly as possible. Like any other employee, they should have the opportunity to recoup any lost earnings and the current system represents the only means of doing so

POLICE PROMOTION

- Police officers should have every opportunity to move up the ranks should they so choose but there have been fewer promotions in recent years as a result of cuts to the police service
- The Federation has concerns about the College of Policing's recently adopted National Police Promotions Framework, which will replace the Ospre Part II promotions exams. These concerns primarily relate to consistency and a potential impact on equality and diversity however we are seeking to influence and change this through official negotiation channels

PROTECTING THE POLICE

- The Police Federation is urging politicians to pressurise police forces that have been slow to roll out protective vests to all operational officers
- The most valuable policing resources, the officers themselves, must receive the very best protection available
- Concerns have been raised by the Police Federation over officer safety training. All officers need proper and comprehensive training and regular refresher courses

REPRESENTATION

- The Federation is committed to the elimination of unfair discrimination and the promotion of equality and diversity for all throughout the police service
- We have some concerns that while initial recruitment figures for women look representative, the lack of flexible working practices as they continue throughout their career has led to a higher number than should be expected leaving the service
- The Police Federation does not support positive discrimination and believes that jobs should go to the most suitable and best-qualified applicant, regardless of their ethnicity or gender

ROADS POLICING

- We strongly advocate national standards and consistency in order to deliver a professional roads policing service throughout England and Wales
- We support force collaboration in making best use of resources to deliver a first class service which has a positive impact on people's lives locally, regionally and nationally
- There should be a central procurement framework for the standardisation of police vehicles and technology, rather than 43 variations. This will reduce spending across the board ensuring more money can be spent on giving the public the officer levels they deserve

STOP AND SEARCH

- Stop and search remains an effective tool to fight crime and provides reassurance to the public that the streets are being properly policed. Many communities want a visible police presence, particularly those that may have high levels of crime and or a gang, gun and knife culture
- It is extremely important that police officers use discretion when using the powers afforded to them. There must be sufficient grounds to exercise a stop and search and officers are accountable for the decisions they make
- We have a principle in this country of 'policing by consent' and in the past this has very much been the desire of the general public. If this is no longer the case, the government must engage with the public and the police to determine what model of policing they wish to see in its place

STRESS

- Officers are facing increased pressures as a result of cuts to resources and we believe this is resulting in an increase in cases of stress-related issues
- PFEW has worked closely with ACPO and now the College of Policing, as well as outside organisations such as the Samaritans, on measures to combat officer stress and support the toolkit now available on the College of Policing website
- PFEW is looking at further ways in which members and representatives can better manage stress

TRAINING

- Police training has been the first casualty of police budget cuts. The risks are particularly high in the areas of officer safety and emergency life support. Forces must preserve their training regimes to ensure our officers are properly equipped to do their roles
- We are entering a new era with the College of Policing. Delivery of training looks to be outsourced in ever greater quantity. Also, accreditation of officers looks likely. There are opportunities for officers as we 'professionalise' the service but we must be wary of attempts to limit pay or development for our members
- Training is all about quality. We can utilise new technology and outside assistance but it must not be done on the cheap. Real time training with real people must not be removed and replaced with sole reliance on online tools

UNIFORMS

- Warranted police officers should be easily distinguished from other uniformed officials including PCSOs and council workers
- A uniformed presence of police officers on the streets brings reassurance and prevents crime in a way that cannot be quantified by statistics
- Uniforms should be designed to meet the practicalities of the job and the standards must remain regularly under review with the Federation fully involved in the consultation process