

National-PCSOs

what does the Police Federation say about PCSOs?

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this is from the November issue of 'Police'

If you want to know the time - ask a cso!

The old music hall song; 'Ask a policeman!' has entered folklore as a tribute to the helpful Victorian bobby on the beat. It came to my mind when I read about the unfortunate CSOs in Manchester who were accused of not going to the assistance of a drowning child because, as the force explained, it would have contravened health and safety instructions. I was also reminded of a plaque on the sea front at Blackpool, which commemorates the heroism of three young constables who were drowned whilst rescuing a man who had jumped into the raging sea to save his dog. But that was before the Health and Safety Executive dragged self-sacrifice into the realms of criminality.

I sympathise with these CSOs, but the outcry following the tragedy underlines a growing suspicion that the public's honeymoon with CSOs is nearing its end.

Several newspapers have drawn attention to basic tasks that they do not undertake, asking the obvious question; "What purpose do they serve?"

When 'Blunkett's Bobbies' first took to the streets, there was a general welcome amongst the law-abiding public for what was perceived to be an increased visible police presence. They wore all the trappings of the modern constable except batons and helmets.

On the streets where a lone patrolling PC had not been seen for years, suddenly there were two uniformed representatives of law and order, and with time to chat. During the daylight hours, at least, they would, with measured tread, spread the gospel of public reassurance.

Doubtless the CSOs get on well with that part of the public that still regards the police as their friends and protectors, but what do they actually do? Let us remember that two CSOs working in tandem are far more costly than a fully empowered and trained constable. Are they an effective crime prevention tool, in comparison, say, with CCTV? How often do they exercise their limited powers to detain suspects until the arrival of a constable? After the novelty of having any kind of police presence, are they calming the trouble spots in urban areas?

On a value for money basis, is this the most effective use of resources that will be sharply reduced over the coming years? Nationally, the target numbers for CSOs have been reduced drastically, no doubt because central government largesse is running out, but should the public be happy to know that cash-strapped chief officers, at the bidding of their police authorities, are going slow on recruiting constables, and even cutting their numbers, whilst advertising for more CSOs?

If the government's new found eagerness to listen to the people is genuine, will these forums be asked whether they want

their local police to spend money on CSOs or fully fledged constables?

I think it's time that ACPO came clean with the public, and the service, as to the relationship between CSOs and police numbers. The thread that runs all through the current police reform project is the steady erosion of the Office of Constable. From the outset, the architects of this new police edifice have written off the career constable. There is, I acknowledge, a small number of chief officers who deplore this wholesale destruction of tried and trusted principles of policing. One or two have spoken out.

We need more to join in a chorus of disapproval. [this is from the November \(07\) issue of 'Police'](#)

Tony Judge has been involved with the Police Federation for 50 years.

He was the youngest police officer on the Joint Central Committee and founded *Police* magazine in 1968.



Boy's drowning prompts call to scrap PCSOs

By [Martin Beckford](#)

Last Updated: 12:59am BST 23/09/2007

A police leader has called community support officers a "failed experiment" which should be abandoned, after it emerged that two PCSOs stood by as a boy drowned because they were not trained to carry out water rescues.

Paul Kelly, the chairman of Manchester's Police Federation, which represents rank-and-file officers, said the public was being "fooled" into thinking that PCSOs could tackle emergencies.

He said forces should be investing in fully trained police officers instead of PCSOs, who have no powers of arrest and who solve on average one crime every six years.

Mr Kelly spoke out after an inquest heard two PCSOs had stood at the water's edge while 10-year-old Jordan Lyon drowned in a pond after he tried to save his stepsister.

As The Daily Telegraph reported, the officers arrived at the scene of the emergency in Wigan, Greater Manchester, but did not attempt to rescue the boy and instead called for assistance from regular police officers.

Greater Manchester Police defended the PCSOs' decision not to jump in the water because they were not trained in such incidents.

But Mr Kelly said: "The public are being fooled. We are sending people out there who are dressed as police officers. Every single police officer that went to training school with me 30 years ago left with a life-saving certificate of some sort.

"I don't know in this case if the two PCSOs could not swim but not swimming was not an option in our training. We've got to be able to deal with all types of situations.

"We should do away with PCSOs because they are a failed experiment."

In Greater Manchester we have taken on up to 400 PCSOs in the last 18 months but in the same period have reduced the number of police officers by more than 200.

"We should be investing in more police officers."

Jordon's mother, Tracy Lyon, wants the PCSOs involved to be sacked. They have not been named and did not give evidence at the inquest into her son's death.

Jordon jumped into the water to save his eight-year-old stepsister at a local beauty spot in May this year.

Mrs Lyon said: "If you're walking down the street and you see a child drowning, you automatically go in that water.

"You don't care if you're going to lose your job or not.

"I want them to be named. I want to know why they weren't at the inquest when I had to turn up there and go through the pain of it all."

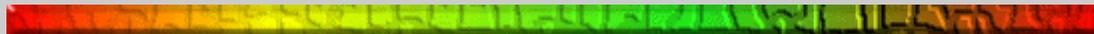
DCI Phil Owen, of Wigan CID, insisted after the inquest: "PCSOs are not trained to deal with major incidents such as this ... It would have been inappropriate for PCSOs, who are not trained in water rescue, to enter the pond."

PCSOs, first introduced in 2002 by the then Home Secretary David Blunkett, cannot arrest suspects or interview prisoners.

Earlier this year, figures showed PCSOs solve on average one crime every six years, and hand out fines at a rate of one every four months.

Police forces argue that the visible presence of the more than 14,000 PCSOs on the streets deters criminals.

[full article here](#)



[read the latest issue of POLICE MAGAZINE](#)

Special PCSOs?

So, with the autumn political party conferences almost upon us who will be ensuring the smooth passage, security and protection of our 647 MPs to Brighton, Blackpool and Bournemouth?

You would assume it would be fully sworn police officers, busy fighting for a fair pay deal, as well as fighting the threat of possible terrorist attacks or disorder when Westminster's finest gather for their yearly chin wag. But recent newspaper revelations suggest there's every chance that the local mother and toddler group may be providing some additional PCSO cover.

Now, I know they call the summer months the silly season, but the idea of 16 year old PCSOs really does take the biscuit, or should that be rusk.

I mean, what are our chief officers thinking of? I know they are desperate to recruit as many PCSOs as they can. Their argument, the same as the government, that PCSOs are the eyes and ears of the service. I assume that makes police officers the arms and legs, as eyes and ears alone can't do very much.

But recent events in the Metropolitan Police Service would suggest there's an alternative agenda. I note in the latest edition of *The Job*, the Met's internal magazine that the first SPCSOs have arrived.

So, what are these SPCSOs? Are they Special PCSOs? Perhaps these ones can detect more than one crime every six years, as reported recently in the *Daily Mail*.

But, no; they are Station Police Community Support Officers. Yes, you did read that right – station PCSOs. Perhaps they provide the eyes and ears to detect any tea mugs that have gone missing from the canteen. SPCSOs are to replace Station Reception Officers. So, they are taking police staff jobs as well now. There is, however, a more sinister logic to the introduction of SPCSOs. As the PCSO funding comes from a separate pot of money the Met is able to recruit and train them to do the jobs currently

being filled by police staff, starting with front counter work.

You may ask where will this all end? Well, if our chief officers have their way, don't be surprised if the next time you take a break, you're served your tea by an acne-laden PCSO behind the kitchen counter.

===== [September 2007 issue](#)

[read the latest issue of POLICE MAGAZINE](#)

The Police Federation is calling for the government to urgently establish a minimum age of 18 for community support officers after a number of young teenagers have been employed in the role by forces.

Alan Gordon, vice-chairman of the Police Federation, has written to the Home Secretary Jacqui Smith to express 'grave concern' that the teenagers have been employed in the roles and has asked that a minimum age should be set at 18, the same as a police officer.

Although at sixteen teenagers are not allowed to buy alcohol in a shop by law, community support officers are often dealing directly with members of the public as the 'eyes and ears' of the police.

Thames Valley Police admitted to employing two 16 year olds, who may not be able to legally drive a car, but have the power to detain a member of the public.

The Federation is concerned that the teenagers do not have the experience or emotional maturity to deal with the demands they face on the streets.

Mr Gordon said in his letter: "Their lack of life skills and knowledge is likely to place not only themselves in danger, but also their police officer colleagues and the general public."

However, a spokesman for Thames Valley Police said:

"If you are good enough, you are old enough to do the job." Nick Gargan, assistant chief constable of the force, said that there is 'no reason in law why CSOs who are under 18 cannot exercise powers under the Police Reform Act'.

Mr Gordon said that 'employing children' into the CSO role merely acts to 'undermine the function, concept and value of what PCSOs were meant to do'.

The Home Office currently recommends that forces do not apply a minimum age of recruitment if the candidate can demonstrate 'appropriate competencies'.

Officers' health hit by canteen and gym closures

this is from the November issue of 'Police'

The closure of force canteens and gyms can have a negative impact on officers' wellbeing, according to new research by the Health and Safety Executive.

In their in depth report of the management of sickness absence in seven police forces, the HSE found that canteens had been shut down due to lack of space and gyms had been closed because forces feared litigation from injuries sustained.

However, the report found the lack of canteens had a negative impact on the availability and quality of food for both officers and staff. It also said gyms are vital for officers to keep physically and mentally fit.

"Both canteens and gyms were seen as places where officers and staff could relax and reduce their stress levels," the report found.

Jan Berry, national chairman of Police Federation said "It's atrocious that gyms are being removed from police stations and headquarters.

Chief Officers should be assisting police officers to keep fit, particularly when working 24/7 shifts means it's nigh on impossible to make full use of a gym outside. For many, the gym at the station is the only opportunity they have to work out."

The HSE report also found that work was perceived to be a contributory factor to both short and long-term sickness.

"This occurred where individuals felt they were under pressure due to the lack of resources or bureaucratic demands, especially when this was against a background of organisational change."

"Those affected felt that they just had to take time off or did so to register a protest about their situation or management decisions," said the report.

Under funding was often a problem leading to slow or inadequate responses and creating barriers to staff returning to work, according to the report.

Police row over 'child' community officers

Fred Attewill and agencies
Monday August 13, 2007
[Guardian Unlimited](#)

The body representing rank-and-file police officers has described the hiring of two 16-year-old community support officers as a "nonsense" that could endanger lives.

Alan Gordon, the vice chairman of the Police Federation, said the "children" would be exposed to "inordinate risks" which they were ill-equipped to deal with because of their age.

He was speaking as Thames Valley police defended its decision to recruit the school leavers, claiming they would be able to interact with other young people.

A spokesman for the force said: "If you are good enough you are old enough."

However, Mr Gordon said Police Federation members were "not happy" about the move.

"These children are going to be put in a uniform the public believe to be of a police officer and be expected to take on responsibilities on the streets," he said.

"Police officers can't protect them from the unpredictability of policing. To expect 16-year-olds to have the knowledge of life, maturity and judgment to tackle incidents is incredulous.

"And what about the police officers who have to work with these people? We already have concerns when officers are in a conflict situation working with PCSOs [police community support officers].

"Officers are already saying to us they have to keep an eye on the PCSO's safety, as well as their own, because they are not as well trained or equipped."

Mr Gordon, who said he was "staggered" that there was no minimum age for the position, suggested that some members of the public may become aggressive if young PCSOs attempted to discipline or detain them. He also claimed that officers were quite able to deal with young people themselves.

The row came after Thames Valley admitted it had hired the two recruits, who are currently undergoing training before taking up their paid roles.

Depending on their duties, they will have the authority to detain suspects until a police officer arrives, issue penalty notices, deal with minor offences and guard crime scenes.

They will also be able to confiscate alcohol consumed in a public place, despite being two years below the legal drinking age, and to direct traffic and have vehicles removed, even though they are too young to drive.

A Thames Valley spokeswoman said: "We have recruited these people because they demonstrated the skills that we need.

"They bring experience of being able to interact with the public, especially young people. If you are good enough you are old enough."

Other police forces said today they would be highly unlikely to hire such young PCSOs.

A Cambridgeshire police spokeswoman said: "Our minimum age for a PCSO is 18. The reason for that is so they have all the skills needed for the job.

"A large part of their work is around confiscating alcohol from underage people. They wouldn't be able to do that if they were underage themselves."

[view the thread on this](#)

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<http://www.polfed.org>

from the January 2007 issue of POLICE:

Last month the stark reality of a Police Federation warning to the government was realised. A community support officer (CSO) from Greater Manchester Police was seriously injured after being stabbed in the neck whilst assisting bailiffs with an eviction.

Fortunately the CSO fought through two bouts of emergency surgery to survive this incident,

but the outcome could have been very different and his family and colleagues could have been facing a devastating Christmas.

Now, I know historically the Police Federation has not always been the CSOs friend, but in the last few years there has been an acceptance that they have a role to play in the policing family. What the Federation remain opposed to is their use in any other activity beyond an eyes and ears role, working with sworn officers as part of neighbourhood policing teams.

This tragic injury has brought to the forefront of all our minds just how diverse and varied the training, equipment and deployment of CSOs is across the 43 forces in England and Wales. And with the government announcement last month that the crime fighting fund is to be scrapped we lose the last bit of protection from chief officers hungry for more CSOs at the expense of sworn officers.

So, the situation is likely to get worse before it gets better.

And what's the likely outcome; CSOs will be given more powers, equipment and training? Well, it may be true that the government are ensuring that new legislation allows them to increase powers for CSOs at the drop of a hat, but as for more safety equipment and training, well that's highly unlikely.

Regrettably, despite Federation pressure some forces are still failing to realise the importance of proper investment in suitable safety equipment and sufficient training. I mean, how many custody sergeants have had prisoners brought in with handcuffs placed on incorrectly? And how many new recruits have had to tell custody sergeants that we don't place the prisoner in that position any more when leaving a cell?

Until the government accept they cannot reform the service on the back of a fag packet and make a resolution to examine the future of policing in the whole, 2007 promises to be anything but a happy new year.

[> more](#)

<http://www.polfed.org>
DECEMBER 2006 issue of 'Police'

Government cut CSO targets for recruitment

The government is cutting recruitment targets for CSOs by a third before neighbourhood teams are in place next year.

Tony McNulty, police minister, announced that forces do not 'necessarily need' 24,000 community support officers and funding would only be available for 16,000 officers. But the announcement on specific grant settlements comes at the same time the government is considering giving chief officers

Recruitment targets for CSOs



have been cut by a third

flexibility on how they spend the crime fighting fund, currently ring-fenced for recruiting police officers. This would allow forces to spend the funding on community support officers or police staff.

Mr McNulty told Parliament: “We are making these changes in response to requests from the police service itself for greater flexibilities and freedoms in order to decide locally the best way of delivering visible, responsive, and accessible policing.”

However, Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation, has expressed concerns about the flexibility given to chief officers on the crime fighting fund. Evidence from some local federations has shown the numbers of officers are being reduced while numbers of CSOs are increased.

Paul Kelly, chairman of Manchester Police Federation, told Police magazine that he believed the introduction of neighbourhood policing with the CSO as its ‘bedrock’ has failed.

He said: “The experiment failed and failed miserably – no disrespect to the fine men and women who become CSOs – it is not their fault.”

But he added: “You cannot send a soldier out to fight a battle unarmed and untrained – be clear, we are in a war [against criminals].”

Why do we allow this government to continue wasting our tax pounds on this ridiculous experiment?”

999 calls must be a priority for the police service

Community policing is a ‘luxury’ when the service should focus on answering urgent calls from the public, according to Paul Kelly, chairman of Manchester Police Federation.

Officers at the Manchester Federation open meeting, held last month, debated how the introduction of neighbourhood policing teams has impacted on response policing.

Mr Kelly told the meeting an effective response was one of the most important services the police could provide. Michael Todd, chief constable of Greater Manchester Police, admitted they do not have enough officers to provide response and neighbourhood teams.

Mr Kelly said: “There is one thing we must have - and that is an effective response. If one of these jobs is delayed and no response is available that is one too many.”

The force has split teams into 24/7 response dealing with 999 calls and neighbourhood policing teams but Mr Todd concedes the balance in some areas is ‘not quite right’.

“We have to review this. In the main, they have not got enough officers on response. As soon as we start saying that we need to take some officers from neighbourhood policing teams we are going to have complaints from the local population.”

Mr Todd said that ‘it’s a real challenge’ but added ‘I want us to get up to the [police] numbers we had a couple of years ago’. He added: “At the moment there are about 7,900 officers, we had gone up to 8,000. We have now got those officers and we do not want to go down to 7,900.”

Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation, said: “If we do not respond to these calls properly and in the right times, an awful lot of damage can be done.

“When officers are coming on response teams they have a stack of jobs waiting before they go on patrol and they know they will not get through them.”

Targets mean officers are criminalising ordinary people

Officers are criminalising middle England and becoming like 'robots' because of government targets, according to a meeting of Manchester Police Federation.

Police officers told the open meeting, held last month in Manchester, that the drive to chase sanction detections meant arrests were simply being made to hit administrative targets.

A sanction detection is defined as those where an offender has been charged, cautioned, reported for summons, reprimanded, where the offence has been taken into consideration or a fixed penalty notice has been issued for a notifiable offence.

But one officer said that police officers were leaving in their droves because they were sick of being 'robots, ticking boxes'.

Paul Kelly, chairman of the Manchester Police Federation, asked: "Why are we criminalising a small number of relatively minor players [in relation to drugs] while we are ignoring the main players?"

He explained that officers spending hours, weeks and months to target the bigger drug dealers meant they would still only get one tick in the box in relation to sanction detections.

He added that the targets meant officers are now pushed to criminalise people who would not normally fall into that arena and that they were skewing the way officers had to deal with crime.

"We are criminalising middle England, how can it be right to have performance indicators for traffic officers to stop someone using a mobile phone but stopping a disqualified driver doesn't count. That is the problem if you have a league table."

Fighting to protect 24/7 response policing

This will come as no surprise to every one of the 140,000 police officers throughout England and Wales, and even less of a surprise to those at the sharp end of our 24/7 response – the thin blue line is at breaking point. And new government objectives and targets are just making the job of responding to emergency calls more and more difficult, with many response teams often understaffed and falling below minimum levels, leaving officers and the public in potential danger.

"This means that those called upon to be first on the scene to deal with anything from a serious sexual assault to a terrorist incident are usually young in service with the least operational experience."

Whilst the Police Federation is entirely supportive of community policing and the constable being at the heart of it, our research clearly shows that the government target of every BCU having a neighbourhood policing team in place by spring 2008 is placing a tremendous burden on frontline officers tackling the growing number of 999 calls.

Contrary to government plans the neighbourhood policing teams are not tackling all local issues, but actually creating even greater demand on the already overstretched 24/7 cover.

Then to top it all, overworked 24/7 officers are facing a backlash from middle England, many now finding themselves criminalised by the lunacy of government targets for sanction detections. This was epitomised at the Kent Police Federation open meeting last month when an officer stood up and, with a straight face, told the

gathered troops that someone on his team had been called to a school to arrest a child who had taken a bit of cucumber out of a sandwich and thrown it at a fellow pupil. I defy the Home Secretary to tell us that was a good use of our time.

Graffiti, thefts and noise - when groups of young people form intimidating gangs which hang around the streets, what can the police do to break it up?

John Dean reports on a dispersal order being used to do exactly that in Durham

It is a tool which gives police officers new powers in the fight against antisocial behaviour. Dispersal orders allow officers to break up gatherings of people, often youngsters, to relieve the suffering of communities blighted by their actions.

That has certainly been the case in the first such order in Darlington, part of the Durham Constabulary area. Incidents included graffiti, stones thrown at windows and the theft of property from garages. However, according to community Inspector Brian Maudling, the three-month dispersal order has had a dramatic effect since it

force, there have been virtually no incidents.

The dispersal order covers the area of Nightingale Avenue, another road running off it, a path nearby and the site of the dilapidated school. The order gives police and community support officers the power to break up gatherings of more than two.

It also imposes a curfew on under-16s between 9pm and 8am every day.

It was based on a similar order in Chester-le-Street, further north in the force area, brought under section 30 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, in March after people living in and around the Gibside estate complained about the behaviour of groups of young people. The main shopping precinct, in particular, was a magnet for under-age drinkers, who verbally abused staff and shoppers.

During the six months the order was in place, complaints dropped sharply.

A total of 13 arrests were made, mainly for criminal damage and public order

<http://www.polfed.org>

all above from the DECEMBER 2006 issue of POLICE magazine



JULY 2006 POLICE MAGAZINE:

Police numbers could be cut by almost half

Community policing puts response teams under

pressure

Federation chairman Jan Berry said she was 'stunned' to learn that chief officers have been considering proposals to cut the numbers of police officers by almost half nationally.

Mrs Berry, who spoke out at the Police Federation's annual conference on disturbing reports that ACPO were considering a cut in police officer numbers, has learned of a further potential reduction.

She told delegates at the annual conference that ACPO were looking at a reduction of 25,000 but officers at the North Yorkshire Federation open meeting were told of an even greater threat - a cut of 80,000 officers across the country.

Mrs Berry said that she had heard ACPO and the management consultancy, Accenture, have been considering a fall from 140,000 police officers to 80,000 nationwide.

She added: "That's the equivalent of North Yorkshire losing over 600 fully-sworn officers, bringing force numbers to below 1,000."

Mark Botham, chairman of North Yorkshire Police Federation, said that force strength had gone from 1,356 overall and 1,043 constables in 1998 to 1,308 and 1,011 respectively in 1999.

He added: "We do not wish to see a return to a period of cuts in officer numbers."

Mr Botham said that currently North Yorkshire Police Authority and Della Cannings, chief constable of the force, has supported an increase in numbers but concern still remained over the future of the funding for community support officers.

"That may inevitably lead to a choice between sworn officers and community support officers," he said.

But Mrs Cannings, said: "I believe that there is a very professional role for police officers, a very distinct role

[more here](#)

JULY 2006 POLICE MAGAZINE:

Community policing puts response teams under pressure

The introduction of neighbourhood policing means officers on response teams are under increasing pressure, says Mark Botham, chairman of North Yorkshire Police Federation.

The force rolled out neighbourhood policing in April 2005 and has since dedicated more resources to the teams which has had a knock-on effect on response teams.

Mr Botham told the North Yorkshire Federation open meeting, held in York last month: "We regularly receive complaints of a lack of resilience, not helped by the long hours' culture and the well known

concerns about the NSPIS duties package (National Strategy for Police Information Systems)."

One officer reiterated that there were 'problems in the balance between response and the neighbourhood policing team'.

Della Cannings, chief constable of the force, said that she had always intended to make the force more proactive than reactive and that to do this there had been a 'quite harsh performance culture' to drive down the demand for reactive work and move officers from response into community policing.

Mr Botham said officers had given anecdotal evidence that they were at breaking point.

[more here](#)

JULY 2006 POLICE MAGAZINE:

The striking difference

Two of the most overused phrases in discussions about the police reform project have been 'workforce modernisation' and 'the extended police family'.

The first implies that the service is bogged down by outdated demarcation lines that frustrate all attempts to secure greater efficiency; the second suggests that everyone who works within the police service belongs to one big happy family in which all are equally valued.

Those who have swallowed these notions should take careful note of what happened on March 28 this year, when according to Unison, thousands of police staff picketed police buildings to protest against proposed pensions changes.

We should never forget that the Police Federation came about because, in 1918, almost every constable and sergeant in London went on strike to press for better pay and pensions, and the recognition of the outlawed police union. The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, granted the pay claim in full and pensions were improved, but he stalled on the crucial issue of union recognition, and a year later, following the Desborough Report, the Federation was born, the union was outlawed, and striking by police officers became a criminal offence.

Since then, successive governments have made it clear that the Police Federation cannot be a part of the family of unions. Thirty years ago, when discontent over police pay was running so high that forces were voting by large majorities to press for the right of police officers to strike, the Federation Conference voted to press for that right, and to affiliate the Federation, as a free association, to the TUC. The Labour Government would have none of it, but following the Edmund Davis report, they did concede the largest pay increase since, well, since the 1918 police strike. The new pay levels contained an unspecified amount to compensate the police for not having the same rights as other workers.

Having achieved its real aim, the Federation quietly buried its new-found enthusiasm for becoming a union.

When thousands of police staff, at the behest of their union, shut down their computers and picket police buildings, they demonstrate an adherence to a culture and that is totally alien to the notion of the

extended police family. If loyalty to the union takes precedence over loyalty to the service, we should think twice before eradicating all distinctions between sworn and nonsworn staff.

If ministers and chief officers are unconcerned about what happened on March 28, and could happen again if the pensions issue is not resolved to the union's liking, then they should be.

As very recent events have demonstrated, the terrorist threat to this country has never been as high as it is now. Every contingency plan that has been drawn up to counter that threat, and to respond to whatever emergencies and disasters result from terrorist action, takes it for granted that the entire police service, officers and unsworn employees alike, will play their designated roles as required. The ability of terrorist cells to take immediate advantage of any disruption of police readiness must not be discounted.

I don't suppose that any right-minded police officers lack sympathy with their staff colleagues over the government's shabby behaviour concerning local government pensions. But the greater issue remains; how can the service rely on the total loyalty and co-operation of its unsworn employees in times of emergency in the future?

Tony Judge has been involved with the Police Federation for 40 years. He was the youngest police officer on the Joint Central Committee and founded Police magazine in 1968.

[more here](#)



John Child from London graduated from KIAD Rochester in 2001 now working as a graphic designer

Performance reviews are 'meaningless'

Performance development reviews are the most 'undervalued and meaningless' document officers have to complete, according to Alan Gordon, vice-chairman of the Police Federation. The Federation held a *Training Matters* seminar in Leicester last month to discuss challenges facing the service. Mr Gordon said that since PDRs were introduced three years ago to assess performance and training needs, chief officers, with few exceptions, have not been 'inspirational' in their leadership, commitment and support for them.

The PDRs are supposed to be carried out by line managers but the Federation revealed at their annual conference in May that around 18 per cent of inspectors had ended up completing their own.

Mr Gordon added "Where PDRs were completed, over two thirds of officers were apparently in no further need of development. That I cannot believe." In 2003 when PDRs were first launched the Home Office sent round circular 14 entitled, *The beginning of a new start for the police service*, but Mr Gordon says the service is still waiting for the 'new start.'

Mr Gordon told the seminar "Given this weight of evidence, for some to suggest that in future, pay should be linked to PDRs would be laughable were it not so disturbing."

source: PAGE 7 [Police Magazine](#) (Aug 06)

[topic on this](#)

LAST YEAR'S NOTABLE FED NEWS FOR PCSOs

Row over community officers' role

Tuesday, 6 December 2005, 20:03 GMT

Police Community Support Officers, hailed as the future of policing in London, are at the centre of a row about their role.

Full-page adverts taken out in two south-east London newspapers by the **Metropolitan Police Federation** ask for readers' views on community officers. The federation, representing rank and file officers, says "real" officers are being replaced by the "new breed".

The ad calls on Londoners to vote for which they would rather cut. Community officers were introduced to provide a high visibility, uniformed and reassuring presence on London's streets.

'No sense'

They are now operating in every London borough tackling low-level crime and anti-social behaviour. However, in contrast with fully-trained police officers, they cannot arrest people, have only basic equipment and are advised to withdraw from violent situations, according to the federation.

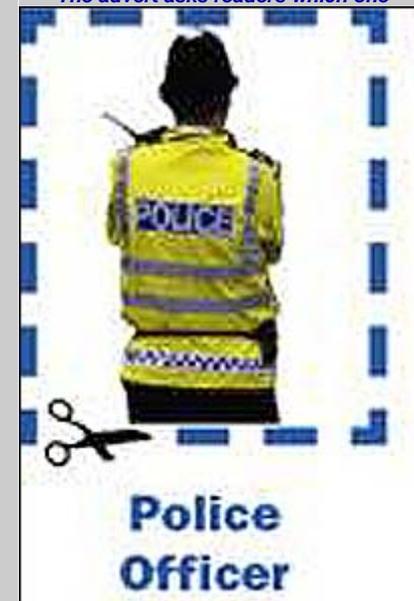
Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Brian Paddick, said it was never an option to replace traditional officers.

"It does not make any sense to reduce the number of police officers in London," he said.

It is hoped to increase both the number of officers and community officers if the new budget is agreed and extra funding is allocated for terrorism, he said.

Glen Smyth, head of the federation, said: "It is a step too far if we reduce the number of officers fully-trained and fully-equipped and replace them by people who aren't fully trained and are not equipped and do not have powers."

The advert asks readers which one



they would like to cut out

Met fury over "cheap" recruits

Daily Mail dated 6.12.05 page 35

SCOTLAND YARD is facing a backlash from its own officers over the increasing use of civilian recruits to patrol the streets. Leaders of the rank and file police union are spending thousands of pounds telling the public that their community support officer colleagues are a cost-cutting "con trick".

It claims the support officers - called 'Blunkett's bobbies' when they were introduced by former Home Secretary David Blunkett - are gradually replacing sworn officers who have the power of arrest. The campaign, paid for by the Metropolitan Police Federation, is being placed in newspapers covering parts of London, Essex and Kent. So far, it has cost £2,000 and it is thought to be the first time that a police federation has actively opposed a force policy.

The advert claims "The Metropolitan Police Service wants many more PCSOs. In fact it is cutting the number of ordinary police officers in London's boroughs to make room for them. The advert then invites the public to text or write in with their views. Scotland Yard denied it was cutting the number of conventional police to make room for support officers.

from the August issue of [metline](#):

PCSO's court appearance is an evident disaster :pages 2 and 3 of the AUGUST 2005 issue of METLINE

The alarming consequences of the poor training given to PCSOs is graphically illustrated in this account from a Federation constable member in east London of what happened when one of them had to give evidence in court.

The police officer, who is a member of a Safer Neighbourhoods team writes:

I arrested a youth for Section 5 POA outside a school. It was a straightforward case involving a very nasty up-and-coming young man. I had a PCSO with me and a teacher came forward as a witness for police.

In court, the teacher gave evidence, followed by myself and there were no problems. But then the PCSO entered the witness box.

What followed can only be described as an embarrassment to the Metropolitan Police and will lead to an appeal against conviction.

The PCSO, when questioned, froze, gave completely the wrong answers, contradicted himself almost every time and was totally overcome by the whole occasion. He fell apart in the box.

In the words of the defence solicitor, we had two different 'police officers' giving two different stories.

The PCSO assisted the defence by disagreeing with his own statement and agreeing with the defence that his own statement was not correct. The statement itself, although a little brief, was correct and had been written by him two hours after the incident with no input (deliberately) from any other officer.

I have since questioned him, along with two other PCSOs and discovered that the only training given for court appearances came in the form of a 20-minute video. They have not been prepared for giving evidence in any sense of the word. As a result, police officers cannot have faith in PCSOs as witnesses.

The argument that they can give evidence as ordinary members of the public does not stand up to scrutiny. As the defence solicitor in this case intended, the magistrates and everyone else in the court saw two 'police

officers' in the box giving evidence. They expected a professional case to be presented. That this was not done is unacceptable and represents a failure by the organisation.

The whole PCSO team needs immediate training in court procedure, evidence writing and the presentation of evidence in court. Without this training, they cannot be relied upon as professional witnesses.

I believe PCSOs should give evidence in plain clothes until this issue is dealt with. That way the court will accept that they are not trained police officers and treat them accordingly. As things stand, I feel there are serious implications for police officers as more cases are lost.

The PCSO in the case I have just described told me that he was very upset by the experience and feels let down by the Metropolitan Police Service.

Sad reflection in The Mirror

; pages 4 and 5 in the August 2005 issue of Metline

From the news pages of the "The Mirror" comes a sad reflection on the world of the London Police Community Support Officers.

When that paper sent a reporter undercover to join the ranks of the capital's PCSOs he returned with a dismal tale of poor training, confused briefings, frightened personnel and neglect of duty.

Just a week later, the same newspaper came up with further revelations, many of a similar nature, from a PCSO who had "quit in disgust."

The Met Federation, unlike other federations, has always seen a place for PCSOs – provided they are properly trained and appropriately used. We have said from the outset that they can be a valuable asset in the task of securing London against terrorism. But we have always warned of the consequences of employing them on duties for which they are not adequately prepared or equipped.

So far, our warnings have gone largely unheeded. The result: two damning national newspaper reports about the chaotic situation on the streets which has finally forced the Met to sit up and take notice.

Even now, its response to the situation is worrying.

Both stories described instances of malpractice by PCSOs and also by police officers. One actually alleges criminal wrongdoing by the two groups.

DAC Brian Paddick told The Mirror that there would be a full investigation by "our anti-corruption people." There is, of course, no cause for surprise or complaint there. But where was any mention of looking again at the training of PCSOs, upon which depends their adequacy on the streets? Or, failing that, of confining their duties to those for which they have competency?

It is as if the Met hopes that these vital issues will disappear from the public view behind a smokescreen of disciplinary proceedings. The Met seems so dazzled by the concept of PCSOs that it cannot see clearly the dangers with which it is flirting as a result of its policies towards them.

Whenever the topic of PCSOs arises, the Met starts spinning – and is now spinning dangerously out of control. The amount of space devoted to stories about PCSOs in "The Job" newspaper is out of all proportion to their numbers within the organisation. There is a very real risk that other personnel in the MPS, including members of police staff, are going to feel undeservedly ignored and devalued.

This will help neither morale nor Commissioner Sir Ian Blair's vision of working "together" for a safer London. And it is certainly no substitute for the actions we have recommended.

The London Evening Standard has recently been carrying stories about the growing number of residents' groups in the capital which are hiring private security guards.

One focused on Kensington and Chelsea – a borough with a famously high concentration of PCSOs – in which it quoted a resident as saying "It makes me very angry that there isn't a police presence." So much for re-assurance policing by PCSOs. In another story, the Standard quotes Commissioner Sir Ian Blair as warning: "We do not want security to become quasi-police." Nor, we suggest, do Londoners want regular street policing done by quasi-police who are neither trained, equipped nor suited for the role.

Our message remains clear: we have no doubt that the majority of men and women who today wear a PCSO's uniform would make excellent police officers. But they are not police officers and the Met does not invest in them as it does police officers. The Met has to recognise this and deploy them in ways commensurate with their training.

What they said *in the stories*

In the first of two damning reports on PCSOs, Mirror readers learned that the officers were "badly trained, ill equipped and terrified of walking the beat."

The story told the experiences of undercover reporter Peter Samson, who succeeded in joining the Met's PCSOs. The Mirror claimed that its reporter, along with other recruits was not shown how to work a radio and received insufficient personal safety training. They were left confused about what to do if faced with violence, the story added.

The Mirror quoted a PCSO telling its reporter "It's (the PCSO role) supposed to make the public feel safer but it's a fraud. We've no powers and you're advised to move away from dangerous situations because you're not properly trained. Meanwhile, you're stuck on the streets with no protection. The public don't take you seriously and call you Mickey Mouse and PCs don't even say good morning to you."

The newspaper included excerpts from a 'patrol diary' which the reporter kept while at work. One entry describes the discovery of a suspected bomb. It reads: "Frantic police try to get all pedestrians and cars out of the area but are overwhelmed and unable to clear the streets. Meanwhile several PCSOs enjoy an extended refreshment break, playing on fruit machines and listening to the 'excitement' on their radios."

Commissioner Sir Ian Blair responded to the story by saying: "Quite frankly, this experience of this journalist during his brief time with the Met is inconsistent with most people's experience." Most Londoners, he added, are supportive of PCSOs as are police officers who work alongside them on a daily basis.

The second Mirror story concerned a PCSO based in south east London who had quit his job. He claimed that local police had "no real idea how to deploy us and consider us to be more of a hindrance than a help." He continued, "Most days we were more or less told to clear off, supposedly on patrol, to come back at the end of the shift and not to do anything very much while out on the street in case we created problems. The result was that most days PCSOs spend most of the day lounging about the police station."

DAC Brian Paddick told the Mirror that the PCSO should be "applauded" for his revelations, adding "We are taking his claims very seriously."

above from pages 4 and 5 in the August 2005 issue of [Metline](#)

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*to go to full coverage of the Mirror material referred to above held
on pcsos-national site, click on the Mirror emblem*

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