



PROTECTING THE PROTECTORS

The reality of policing

Annual Conference 22 - 23 May
Birmingham International Convention Centre

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Calum Macleod, Chair, Police Federation of England and Wales

Keynote speech

*****PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

KEYNOTE SPEECH: FINAL (21 May 2018)

Good morning conference.

Good morning Home Secretary.

Welcome to the 94th annual Police Federation conference.

And Home Secretary – particular thanks to you for joining us here today, given that it is only your third week in office.

Home Secretary, in January when I was elected Chair of the Police Federation, I made clear that my role is to be the voice of police officers across the 43 forces of England and Wales.

Brave officers dealing with the reality of policing - crime, crisis, trauma, victims, mental health issues, terrorism and bereavement. All for the public.

To speak out on their behalf.

Not to be a spokesperson for the Home Office.

Not to stay silent if I see or hear things that our members believe will mean a poorer service for the public.

In my first meeting with your predecessor, I made it absolutely clear that my job is to represent the views, opinions and concerns of the 120,000 members of the Police Federation. Issues which ultimately affect the public.

And I repeat that message here today.

My focus is to deliver for the hard-working rank and file officers who are run ragged as they have seen numbers fall and demands increase.

There will be times when we will agree and times when we will disagree.



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But let me be clear -when we disagree I will do what I am elected to do to ensure that the views of police officers are not just heard, but are listened to.

So it will come as no surprise to you today that I have some things to say that may be difficult for you to hear.

But it is vitally important that you listen Home Secretary.

It is important that you listen here today to the voices of experts with years of operational policing experience.

Home Secretary, learn the lessons your predecessors failed to.

Three years ago, Theresa May accused us of crying wolf.

We were accused of scaremongering over the effect of budget cuts to policing.

Our warnings that cutting police officer numbers would see an increase in the number of victims of crime were dismissed.

Yet, what have we seen?

The latest ONS crime stats show.....

- Robbery offences up 29%
- Knife crime offences up 21%
- And violent crime offences up 20%.

That is nearly 1.3 million violent crime offences.

But they are not just statistics.

Every number is a real person - real victims.

The public are no fools. They see and feel that there is an increasing number of victims of crime.

Home Secretary, just ahead of the launch of the Violent Crime Strategy last month, an article which suited the Government's political agenda appeared in the Sunday Telegraph stating that the increase in violence was unconnected to the cuts to the police service.



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And then, just a day later, from a 'leaked' document from your own Department, we learned the truth of the matter - that the cuts 'likely contributed' to the rise in violence.

Well, who's crying now?

Let me tell you – thousands of families, crying real tears, because they became victims of crime as police budgets were cut. That is who.

Home Secretary, policing is a difficult job; it is a dangerous job too. And sadly, some of our colleagues make the ultimate sacrifice protecting communities.

With deep regret, I have to report that two of our colleagues have died in the execution of duty since conference last year.

They are, PC James 'Dixie' Dixon from Thames Valley Police; and PC Dave Fields from South Yorkshire Police.

Conference, let us pause for a moment to pay tribute to them.....

[Fallen Officer VT]

And let us also remember PC Steven Jenkins from Gwent Police who died while on duty on 6 October at Pill police station in Newport after he was taken unwell.

They will never be forgotten

Home Secretary, there are four points I wish to raise with you today and they all tie in to our conference theme Protecting the Protectors.

The first is the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Bill – a Bill intended to show emergency service workers that they are not society's punch bags for those fuelled by drink and drugs, or trying to evade arrest.

Locally and nationally the Police Federation campaigned for this legislation and the Bill is progressing through Parliament.

But it has been watered down to such an extent that it gives nowhere near the level of protection we expected for police officers.



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The deterrents in the Bill are nowhere near strong enough – with the maximum terms for common assault increasing to 12 months.

As the Bill stands, it means offenders may face little or no additional consequences for their actions when it comes to common assault.

Why? Because magistrates do not currently have 12 months' sentencing powers.

Therefore, six months is the maximum we can expect at the moment.

Six months Home Secretary!

If a criminal enters an early guilty plea then the sentence is automatically reduced by a third.

Then they only serve half of that in custody.

Before you know it - in little over eight weeks - they are back on the streets, free to offend.

We have argued that the sentence should be 24 months yet it was felt by some in government to be unreasonable.

Unreasonable!

Unreasonable to offer better legislative protection for those who run towards danger when others run away.

Unreasonable - for those who protect society from criminals who rob, burgle and assault indiscriminately.

Is that really unreasonable Home Secretary?

And yet, at the same time the Animal Welfare Bill, which increases the maximum prison sentence for animal cruelty tenfold, from six months to five years, quite rightly receives Government support.

That is the reality Home Secretary.

But this approach to our safety just adds to how the rank and file feel – expendable, undervalued, worth less than an abused household pet.



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And it won't change how offenders feel – that they got away with it. Making a mockery of our justice system.

All is not lost Home Secretary. You can still do what is right for police officers by implementing Section 154(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, empowering the magistrates courts to hand down more appropriate sentencing.

And Government needs to send a clear message to the Crown Prosecution Service, that failing to support victims of crime – police officers who are assaulted while serving the public - is completely and totally unacceptable.

Taking the easy option - downgrading charges, dropping cases and failing our members is totally unacceptable too.

Last year, in West Yorkshire alone, there were over 350 cases of assaults by spitting at police officers.

We were given assurances by Government that the seriousness of the abhorrent act of spitting would be made clearer to the authorities in the criminal justice system.

These attacks are disgusting and degrading and those assurances from Government must be delivered.

Conference - before I move on can I ask you to join me in showing our appreciation to all those who spoke up on our behalf and put this issue on the legislative table – and particular thanks to MPs, Chris Bryant, Holly Lynch and Philip Davies along with all those cross party members of parliament and assembly members. And we must not forget the public who supported this Private Member Bill from its inception. Thank you...

Secondly, I wish to talk about the Emergency Response Drivers (Protections) Bill.

Last month, I expressed my anger that, after seven long years of campaigning for a change in the law, the government failed to support Sir Henry Bellingham's Private Member Bill.

A Bill to give officers greater protection as the courts would take into account their level of driver training when pursuing suspects or responding to an incident – all to keep the public safe.

We know that Government has conducted its own Review and you now intend to consult on it.



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But Home Secretary – this is not something that has just come up in recent months.

This has been going on for seven years. How much longer will this take?

Seven long years of lobbying for a change which would allow officers to protect the public, without fear of undue prosecution for doing what the public expect of them.

Seven years of Government dragging its feet and stalling.

Seven years of Government creating delays and kicking it in to the long grass.

And please do not give us the same old nonsense about legislation taking time to enact. For that is just an excuse to hide behind.

Only last month, when knife and gun crime spiralled out of control, Government announced new legislation to tackle violent crime.

New legislation that we will likely see before Parliament in a matter of months.

So, Home Secretary – we ask you today - as a matter of urgency - prioritise the legislation needed to protect officers and to protect the public.

For I imagine the same newspapers the Home Office was fending off when the Serious Violence Strategy was announced would take a particularly dim view if police officers only ever drive within the legal speed limit when the public urgently need us.

None of us want that.

Home Secretary, you may only be three weeks in office, but you know that policing is far more than just fighting crime.

You know the pressure that police officers are under – dealing with human trauma, the sorrow of victims of crime and helping the most vulnerable people in society.

This all takes its toll on police officers and their families. Particularly as we have seen police numbers fall and demands increase.

Annual leave and rest days cancelled.

No guarantee of back-up when needed.



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Unprecedented levels of officers suffering stress and anxiety.

And then cheap shots if an officer dares to take 5 minutes out to sit and have a cup of tea in a local café.

Yet, despite all of this, we know that policing is about being there for the public.

An arm to support someone who has come home to find their house burgled.

A shoulder to cry on when someone is involved in a road traffic incident.

A symbol of strength, reliability, safety and compassion.

Policing is all of these things.

Not just some of the time, but all of the time.

Let's take a look at this short video which seeks to highlight the reality of what our members deal with day in day out, the reality of policing.....

[KEYNOTE VT]

That is the reality of policing Home Secretary.

The cost of policing; the human cost. To the public and to our members across England and Wales.

The cost to police officers' health and wellbeing.

The cost to their loved ones.

That is why policing needs to be properly resourced and why police officers need your support.

Home Secretary - a very important question was asked at the end of that video and let me answer it.

We are, first and foremost, a staff association funded by rank and file police officers across England and Wales.

First and foremost, the voice for thousands of officers unable to speak out publicly because of the job they do and the restrictions on their public and private lives.



PROTECTING THE PROTECTORS

The reality of policing

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First and foremost, an organisation that fights for what is best for them, for their families and for the public we all serve.

And while that may have been lost on some in recent years, it has not been lost on me.

We protect them and we will continue to do so.

But Government has a duty to protect them too!

I don't think it will come as any surprise to you that I also intend to talk about police pay.

Home Secretary, let's be clear.

Last year, Government ignored - completely ignored - the pay recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body.

Your predecessor dressed up a 1% consolidated pay uplift as a 2% pay rise.

The independent recommendations of the pay review body were ignored in favour of playing politics with policing. The Home Office caved in to the Treasury, letting the police and the public down.

The impact of funding the bonus payment was put on local communities – with chief officers in the position of finding the money somehow and, inevitably, having to make cuts to the service the public receive.

That is the reality - one percent, with a one percent one-year bonus, funded by cutting services or the number of officers available to protect the public.

The ridiculous justification offered by your predecessor was that forces had money in Reserves they could use. But that money is not for salaries; it is for unforeseen operational costs –for being there to support the public when the wheels come off.

Quite simply Home Secretary – your predecessor passed the buck.

Police officers need to have faith in the pay machinery.

With the Police Negotiating Board we had a process. A process of appeal, called arbitration.

But we have no arbitration now. We have no appeal process.



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The reality of policing

Annual Conference 22 - 23 May
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www.polfed.org/conf

And that is why we need to have faith that the recommendations of the review body will be implemented in full.

Because – without industrial rights - faith and fairness is all we currently have.

And it is not as if what we ask for is unreasonable or without evidence.

Home Secretary, as an 'apprentice' in your new role, just be glad it's not the National Police Chiefs' Council determining what you're worth. Because under their apprenticeship plans for policing, the price our leaders place on a new starting officer is only £18,000.

£18,000 for facing knives, guns, being spat at, the threat of assault, putting their lives on the line - while colleagues starting through other routes will be earning more.

That is an absolute disgrace.

And while the NPCC may have a long list of ifs, buts and maybes, we put forward robust, credible, and well evidenced submissions.

For what is fair, right and reasonable.

The final issue I want to touch upon briefly is one discussed at conference yesterday.

For the last three years the Police Federation has been conducting research into the links between demand, capacity and police officer welfare in order to find solutions to help officers deliver the level of service to the public they so desperately want to.

Having held workshops with police officers, from constable to chief constable, we ended up with four recommendations that were taken to those who manage and hold policing to account.

With so much work going on already around welfare – by the College of Policing and your office, it was decided to focus on the cause of the issue and not the symptom – namely, increasing demands and less capacity.

Together with other policing stakeholders, the Police Minister agreed with the recommendations and that the Home Office would play its part on a Steering Group to explore them further and take them forward.



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The reality of policing

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They focus on the need to define the role, purpose and responsibility of the police; to improve the data collected to help map demand and capacity; more effective management systems that balance the needs of the service and individual officers; and improved working with other public services, pooling resources and setting out clear roles.

This valuable piece of work can make a real difference to find shared solutions to deliver a service to the public that we can all be proud of.

And so to conclude Home Secretary.....what do we ask of you?

We ask that you hear what we are saying and support us.

We ask that you also do what is right and support legislation that will put in place stronger sentences to deter people from assaulting police officers and lay down a clear marker that spitting at officers is completely unacceptable. Do not accept watered down legislation simply because it's the easier thing to do.

We ask that you back legislation that gives police drivers the confidence that they will not be hung out to dry merely for doing what society expects of them, when they are pursuing criminals or responding to emergency calls.....all to protect the public.

We ask that you respect and honour the independent recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body so that police officers can have confidence in the process.

Finally, we ask that you recognise that we are an organisation seeking solutions to improve the service our members are able to provide to the public. And that you support our work on demand and capacity; ensuring the Home Office actively participates bringing these recommendations to life.

Home Secretary – you hold the most important political position when it comes to the safety and security of this country.

The responsibility for the safety of the British public is firmly at your door.

And we are the people who do this for you – day in, day out.

We all join the police service to serve and protect the public.



PROTECTING THE PROTECTORS

The reality of policing

Annual Conference 22 - 23 May
Birmingham International Convention Centre

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www.polfed.org/conf

But frankly, in recent years, Government has turned its back on those who it expects to keep the public safe.

Real term salaries cut.

Officer numbers cut.

And yet, demand increases.

You have the opportunity to make a difference for the public and for the police. To put right the wrongs of the past.

To value the fact that we police by consent in this country – that the police are the public and the public are the police – and to keep politics out of policing.

You have the opportunity to show that you understand, respect and appreciate police officers and the difficult job we do. To stop hollow words and show us through your actions.

You have the opportunity to do what is right to ensure we have sufficient numbers, sufficient resources and sufficient funding to help keep the British public safe.

Home Secretaryyou have the opportunity.

Take it.