

National Secretary 2025 Conference Speech

Conference – colleagues, friends – thank you.

We come together today not just to reflect, but to push forward. To speak with one voice, louder and more unified than ever, on the issues that affect every officer: pay, pensions, conditions of service, and the fundamental right to be heard

Section 1: Pay – Progress and Transparency – 1.5 minutes

About a year ago, we made you a promise: more transparency, more engagement, and more representation in the pay award process.

We delivered on that.

- We asked you what matters – and you told us.
- We wrote to every member with the priorities we were putting forward.
- And for the first time, we polled you on the final offer. That's how it should be, a two-way conversation, not a closed-door process.

Although we remain outside the Pay Review Body, following our 2021 vote, we have not stayed silent. Far from it.

This year, our evidence and engagement helped secure a 4.2% pay rise, plus increases to:

- On-call payments
- Away-from-home overnight allowance, and
- Hardship allowance

But more importantly, they listened. Because we pushed hard on:

- A shift disturbance allowance
- A detective's allowance
- Better support for family leave
- Clear, enforceable guidance around rest days, annual leave, and on call
- And recognition of the extra hours routinely worked by the inspecting ranks

The Pay Review Body has now asked for proposals in these areas and that work is already underway.

Section 2: Pay Must Reflect Responsibility – 1 minute

We also believe this: pay must reflect the standards you're held to.

Policing is one of the most regulated professions in the country:

- Misconduct regulations

- Unsatisfactory performance procedures
- Probation
- Vetting
- And every day, public scrutiny that few other roles endure

Accountability is essential, we support that. But accountability must be fair, and it must be matched with recognition.

You cannot expect officers to carry the burden of such responsibility and be paid like it doesn't exist.

And just as pay must reflect responsibility, recruitment must reflect the standards we uphold.

We believe recruitment should be consistent and standardised across England and Wales, ensuring that every candidate meets the same professional benchmark.

That means psychological testing, not as a barrier, but as a safeguard, to make sure those who join have both the temperament and the personal values needed for the realities of policing.

Because the public deserve officers who are not only capable, but suitably prepared for the pressures and principles of the job.

Now is the time to be honest about recruitment.

The public deserve better, and policing deserves better.

We are calling for the immediate introduction of comprehensive psychological testing, before recruitment.

This isn't about creating barriers. It's about protecting the integrity of the service and the safety of the public.

Every applicant must be tested, not just for capability, but for values, temperament, and emotional readiness to serve in today's policing environment.

We've all seen the Panorama footage.

We know what happens when the wrong people get through the door.

That cannot happen again.

Psychological testing must become a national standard, not an optional extra.

Because this job isn't for everyone, it demands resilience, empathy, and moral strength.

And those qualities can't be assumed; they must be tested.

If we are serious about rebuilding trust, it starts here, with who we recruit, how we test them, and the values we insist on from day one.

Because this job demands integrity not just competence.

And if we don't raise the bar now, we risk lowering the standard forever.

And let me be clear: this cannot wait for another review or another report.

We are calling on Government and police leaders to act now.

Section 3: The Next Pay Award – 1 minute

Looking ahead to the next pay round, we're realistic, we know the Home Office budget is tight.

But being realistic doesn't mean being quiet.

We will be clear in our message:

- Police pay must be restored
- Salaries must reflect the skill, danger, and dedication required
- Retention is worsening
- Assaults are rising
- Officers are burning out
- And personal lives are suffering

We will push for improved and new allowances, not as handouts, but as fair recognition of the professionalism and sacrifice you bring to the role.

And we won't go into this without being prepared. Behind every submission stands our team of policy experts, researchers, and academics, because if we're going to win the argument, it will be with facts, evidence, and unity.

But I want to mention one key thing with a standard pay award across all ranks. And it's this, equal percentage pay awards might look fair on paper, but they're not fair in practice. When everyone gets the same percentage rise, those on higher salaries keep far more of their income after the bills are paid, while those on the frontline see their disposable income vanish.

Federated rank members today spend almost everything they earn just on living. Housing, energy, and fuel have risen far faster than pay, and what used to be a modest but secure income has become a financial struggle. Simple research from credible sources will show how rent has risen more than police pay

This isn't about generosity — it's about fairness. A superintendent and a constable face the same inflation, but not the same pressure. Identical percentages create real-terms inequality, not parity. Without correction policing risks becoming unaffordable to those who deliver it.

That's why the next pay settlement must recognise this truth: lower earners deserve a higher pay award. Because pay that protects buying power is what keeps people in the job, keeps policing professional, and keeps faith with those who hold the line every day.

Section 4: Pensions – 1 minute

Pensions remain a key issue. While we've seen progress in delivering the remedy, the process is still failing too many.

We're hearing from:

- Officers with part-time service
- Those who've transferred between forces
- Colleagues affected by pension sharing orders
- And those waiting on contingent decisions

These aren't isolated cases and they are serious issues, the people are real, facing real uncertainty about their future.

More worrying still, a growing number of officers are opting out altogether. That's a red flag and a sign we must do more to educate and support those at risk of being left behind.

Section 5: Industrial Rights – 1.5 minutes

But let's step back and ask the big question:

Is the current system, the Pay Review Body, fit for policing?

No. It's not.

And here's why:

Unlike other workers, police officers cannot strike. You can't walk out. You can't down tools. Even when your own conditions are crumbling, you turn up, because that's what the job demands.

But if you can't strike, then there must be something in its place.

We believe that means:

- Collective bargaining, and
- Binding arbitration

Collective bargaining means having a genuine seat at the table. The power to negotiate pay and conditions directly with government, rather than pleading your case to a supposedly "independent" body with a fixed and rigid remit answerable only to ministers. It's about fairness and respect: recognising that those who put themselves in harm's way for the public deserve a say in what's fair compensation.

And binding arbitration means that if agreement can't be reached, an independent third party makes the final decision and both sides are bound by it. No political interference. No moving of the goalposts. Just a fair, rules-based process that works in countless other professions.

We've taken this to Parliament. An Early Day Motion, supported by MPs across the political spectrum, sets out our position. The Liberal Democrats have submitted their own in agreement.

We're exploring a legal challenge, and looking at international pressure through the International Labour Organisation.

Will it be easy? No.

But we will not accept silence as a substitute for justice.

And we will not rest until the pay system reflects the unique status and restrictions of your role.

We'll keep making the case in Parliament, in the courts, and in the public eye. We'll keep building alliances and pushing for reform until there is a fair, modern system that truly values police officers for what you are: the people who hold the line when everything else gives way.

And there's no tactic off the table to get us there. Because my message to government is this: keep saying no, and distrust breeds. Momentum for militancy grows.

Let's be clear we are not calling for the right to strike. We believe policing is a public duty unlike any other, and that duty means you cannot simply walk away. But every generation of officers takes us further from the world imagined by those who wrote the laws that founded the modern police service.

Keep breaking police officers, keep underpaying, undervaluing, and overloading them, and more and more will withdraw their labour permanently through resignation.

And more will start to ask the question out loud:

Doctors won a fair pay deal because they had the ultimate weapon, the right to strike. So why not us?

That's the direction this government is pushing policing towards.

And unless they change course on industrial rights, they'll have only themselves to blame.

Closing – 1 minute

Colleagues – this is about fairness. It's about respect.

You are professionals. You are public servants. You are frontline protectors.

You are held to the highest standards, and you deserve pay, conditions, and pensions that reflect exactly that.

Because the job you do is like no other.

It demands a deep knowledge of legislation, an ability to make split-second decisions, and a working understanding of policy, procedure, and public safety that few outside of policing will ever truly comprehend.

It requires skills and judgment that are unique to the role, and the pay must reflect that.

But so must the conditions.

This job affects your mental health, your family life, and your personal well-being like few others.

The risk of assault, the threat of injury, the emotional toll, all of these are part of policing today. And they must be met not just with decent wages, but with conditions that support rest, recovery, and resilience.

We've seen the reality laid bare through the **#CoppedEnough** campaign. The stories are real. The need for change is urgent.

So let's be clear:

- We're not asking for special treatment.
- We're asking for fair treatment.

Thank you.