



***Police Federation of England & Wales
(Region 7 – Wales)***

**Evidence prepared for
The National Assembly for Wales Communities,
Equality & Local Government Committee**

‘Inquiry into Community Safety’

www.polfed.org

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Oath of Attestation

“ I do solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will well and truly serve the Queen in the office of constable, with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality, upholding fundamental human rights and according equal respect to all people; and that I will, to the best of my power, cause the peace to be kept and preserved and prevent all offences against people and property; and that while I continue to hold the said office I will, to the best of my skill and knowledge, discharge all the duties thereof faithfully according to law”.

“Rwyf i yn datgan ac yn cadarnhau yn ddifrifol ac yn ddiffuant y byddaf yn gwasanaethu'r Frenhines yn dda ac yn gywir yn fy swydd o heddwas (heddferch), yn deg, yn onest, yn ddiwyd ac yn ddiuedd, gan gynnal hawliau dynol sylfaenol a chan roddi'r un parch i bob person; ac y byddaf i, hyd eithaf fy ngallu, yn achosi i'r heddwch gael ei gadw a'i ddiogelu ac yn atal pob trosedd yn erbyn pobl ac eiddo; a thra byddaf yn parhau i ddal y swydd ddywededig y byddaf i, hyd eithaf fy sgil a'm gwybodaeth, yn cyflawni'r holl ddyletswyddau sy'n gysylltiedig â hi yn ffyddlon yn unol â'r gyfraith”.

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Foreword

The Police Federation welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the National Assembly for Wales' *Communities, Equality & Local Government Committee's inquiry into Community Safety* in particular in relation to:

- *the police funding cuts and to assess how those spending cuts will impact upon frontline policing;*
- *a view to the Welsh police forces' reform programme designed to improve efficiency and reduce costs; and also,*
- *the implications for local communities and community safety policy in Wales.*

The Police Federation will supplement this written evidence with oral evidence to The National Assembly for Wales on 5th October 2011.

We are happy that this advice is placed in the public domain.

Jeff Mapps
Chairman
Police Federation
(Region 7, Wales)

Phil Addicott
Secretary
Police Federation
(Region 7, Wales)

Introduction

Following a police strike in 1918, the 1919 Police Act also formed the Police Federation. Police officers would no longer be allowed to belong to a trade union, meaning the end of the [then] Police Union. A second police strike, called in defiance of the Police Act, was a failure and the rioting had to be put down by military intervention; all 2,000 strikers were dismissed. In November 1919, the first Annual Conference of the Police Federation took place. Unlike their civilian support staff – including CSOs – police are not allowed to strike indeed it is a criminal offence even for an officer to cite such action.

In the UK, The Police Federation currently represents over c.136,000 police officers and some 7,600 in Wales. This is made up of 98% of all uniformed and CID ranks from Constable to Chief Inspector. The Superintendents Association and Association of Chief Police Officers form the remaining 2%.

The Police Federation's membership comes from each of Wales' four police forces. It's representatives – who are themselves, serving police officers – are elected to their respective roles.

The Police Federation was established to protect and promote the 'welfare & efficiency' of police officers and in its discharge of functions as laid down by statute.

This paper submitted by the Police Federation ('The Federation'), gives the view from the front-line. Others submitting evidence will undoubtedly give detailed advice concerning budgets and associated facts. The Federation however intend to advise the Committee on *the impact* of the UK Governments cuts, how it is felt by all officers, the knock-on effects to training, service, resilience, morale and ultimately the service we give to the public.

The independence of office of constable

It may assist the inquiry into understanding the very nature and constitutional position of what policing is in the UK, is and how it operates.

Uniquely police officers are not 'employed', they give public service under Police Regulations and are accountable, not to The Crown, but simply to the law itself for their actions, or inactions. This is rightly scrutinised by statutory bodies.

The police operate outside of '*political interference*' and this is the established bedrock of policing in the UK under what is termed '*The Independence of Office of Constable*'. It is unique because it is the sworn attested duty of police officers to protect life and property, preserve order, and prevent the commission of offences and where an offence has been committed, to take all measures to bring the offender to justice.

To effect this, the police are 'sworn and warranted' in that 'office'. That Attestation (shown on page 2) the Police Federation in Wales submit, is now under direct threat by the Comprehensive Spending Review cuts which were announced in October 2010. We submit that the 'responsibilities and functions of an officer' cannot be fully carried out, if such support is not in place, so as to allow an officer to fully act to uphold the law, and importantly be accountable for those actions. The impact of the CSR dilutes the meaning of The Attestation and that matter goes to the very heart of policing.

The Attestation has stood the test of time - and has been replicated many times overseas - it has adapted and recognises legal changes, such as human rights legislation. The Federation wish to make it explicitly clear, that the Attestation is, without question, the single most important factor that remains the driving force behind policing.

Parallels may be drawn to the medical profession who take 'an oath', but in the case of policing, when police are sworn to preserve life, sometimes sadly officers give of their lives. To put this into context, sadly last year, five police officers died in protecting the public. The year beforehand twelve officers died, thirteen the year before that, and in 2007, fifteen died.

Officers, whether female or male, in or out of uniform, on-or-off duty and attending *any* incident, can by the very nature of their job, face rapidly changing scenarios and surging problems. For example, public order matters or escalating and harrowing situations when dealing with the public or indeed within civil contingencies. The knowledge that 'back-up' exists and that it is fully available - 24/7 - makes the role and implementation of policing more secure in the officers own mind whilst doing-the-job. If this resilience is lost or diminished, the Police Federation have grave concerns that conducting professional policing will suffer, the public will not be protected and officers roles and lives will be put at risk. *The National Police Memorial Day* hosted in Cardiff in 2005 and 2009 and latterly in Glasgow this year, sadly pays testament to the rigors of policing today.

Strategic view of cuts

As the voice of some 136,000 officers, The Police Federation felt it was important to advise The Committee what is happening 'to-the-job' that officers are proud to do, in a service, that is regarded as the finest in the world. Other countries look to the UK and indeed within the UK look towards Wales in respect of our community engagement through our Community Safety Partnerships.

The message that is being sent to us by our members from around the country is a strong one that we are certain politicians will not wish to ignore – officers are deeply concerned about their future and what they see as the deterioration of the service to the public. Morale within the service is at an all-time low, public trust in the service is under threat and the special relationship between Government and the Police (which is in itself unwritten but unique) are becoming increasingly strained.

As a short summary, the current situation from the perspective of the rank-and-file is as follows, we also make some suggestions on how things may be improved.

- The Federation have always accepted the fiscal gap had to be addressed and that all constituent parts of the public sector would have to play their part in sharing the financial burden. However, what has caused the service great consternation is the size of 'the hit' specifically to the police service.
- The 20% cut to the police budget, front loaded for the first two years, which was announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010 appeared to take no heed of the report by Sir Denis O'Connor (HMIC - Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary), entitled '*Valuing the Police*', which warned that cuts to the policing budget of over 12% would not be achievable without damaging frontline services.
- The UK government maintain that cuts to the service can be made without effecting frontline services. But what is meant by frontline services? If we work on the basis that this means 'anything that is not back office support services' then, according to HMIC, this means that 95% of officers and CSOs work in frontline services. It is therefore clear that cuts of this magnitude cannot be absorbed simply by re-engineering the back office and cutting bureaucratic processes. This is something that over many years has consistently been addressed by all of Wales' forces as part of their on-going approach to increasing efficiency. Long ago, the fat was carved-off leaving now only muscle to cut away.

- The evidence of this 'cutting' is already becoming clear. In the UK as a whole, in the last 12 months the number of rank and file officers has already been depleted by 4,000. In their recent report, *'Adapting to Austerity'*, HMIC estimated that by 2015 the total number of officers will reduce by 16,200. This will turn the clock back towards 2002 (in terms of total service strength) but when the increase in the population is taken into account, this leaves an officer : citizen ratio, the likes of which we haven't seen since the 1970s and one of the lowest in Europe. We are indeed in the same timeframe that demanded 'recovery' where The Edmund-Davies Report (1976) was made. Thirty years ago, to reverse such hemorrhaging, required both political will and extensive funding. Only this time, the fiscal means are now seriously in reverse.
- The reality is that this is now putting extra stress and strain on our members who are striving to deliver a level of service to the public with ever dwindling resources. They want to maintain a police service they can take pride in, not one they have to continually apologise for.
- Rising crime and civil unrest must serve as a stark warning – it's time to pause, think and urgently reconsider the 20 per cent cut to the police service. The safety of the public cannot be based on 'forecasts' made by the Office of Budget Responsibility. The responsibilities lay with governments.

Previous advice to government

The Federation has warned about rising crime and the impact that cuts to policing will have on public safety. It simply won't be possible to provide the same level of service or protection to the public if we do not have enough police officers or resources to do so.

In May 2009 we published a report, *'Crime and the Economy,'* where we warned government that an additional 2,000 police officers would be required over the following three years to maintain the current level of service and we predicted a rise in property crime as the recession deepens.

In May 2010 at our annual conference, the Home Secretary, Theresa May who had been in office just a number of days, was warned publicly – on the conference platform - that a rise in crime and in particular rioting was a very real threat; this was ignored. Months later, the 'student riots' commenced.

In January 2011 the respected think-tank *Civitas* also reported that a reduction in police officer numbers as a result of a 20 per cent cut to policing is highly likely to lead to increased crime and create a more dangerous society.

Both of these reports have been supported by the recent annual crime statistics, which found that for example, burglary statistics have risen nationally by 14 per cent. In some areas, this is even higher.

We take no pleasure in being correct with our predictions and seeing the dramatic rise in reported burglaries. We have been calling on the UK Government for months to listen to us, listen to police officers about the impact of cuts and the increase in criminal behaviour.

Rising crime must serve as an inherent warning to government – stop, think and urgently reconsider the 20% cuts to the police service; otherwise we will see further increases in crime.

In May 2011, The Home Secretary was again publicly warned at the Police Federation annual conference – from the same conference platform - that street violence and riot was likely to happen; this was again ignored. By August 2011, the inevitable was witnessed across England that saw five people murdered, homes destroyed, businesses laid waste and at a policing cost presently standing at £75 million.

The cuts have a stark reality for public order issues, we would lose over 16,000 officers – and that figure of sixteen thousand should be remembered as the equivalent number of officers deployed on London streets to put an end to the violent riots recently. But a police service cannot operate on ‘bussing in bobbies’ there needs to be a daily street presence, gathering intelligence, giving the public daily and continual reassurance.

The HMIC report, *‘Adapting to Austerity’* confirmed our worst fears that the cuts being implemented by the UK Government will turn the clock back by reducing police officers (and police staff) by over 34,000 in the next four years. The knock-on effect will be police forces struggling to keep their heads above water as they try to deal with increasing demands and diminishing resources. An almost inevitable consequence will be a rise in crime rates as the population continues to increase and the number of police officers decreases.

Frontline versus backroom

HMIC defined frontline policing as *‘those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law.’*

The Government is claiming the cuts will only affect ‘back office functions’ and not frontline policing, but the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister are failing to recognise that these so-called ‘back-office’ functions play a vital role in combating crime.

Back office functions include more than just Admin and Human Resources processes; they include anti-terrorism intelligence, child protection, domestic violence units, forensics, family liaison units, witness services and 999 call handlers, amongst many, many others.

The Police Federation wish to highlight just one example of many and that is in respect of Domestic Violence. Given forthcoming legislation, this is relevant specifically to Wales and one area that may well suffer from the cuts.

We recognise that The Welsh Government will be progressing Wales-only legislation in respect of *The Domestic Violence (Wales) Bill*. It has been advised, the Bill will not have any criminal justice elements, but it will “*place a duty on relevant public sector bodies to have a domestic abuse and ‘a violence against women’ strategy and support elements in place*”. Clearly this process will involve the police and The Federation will examine the Bill when it is published.

But to physically implement a future strategy, there will be a need to be a change to current ‘policing procedures’ and indeed this would demand dedicated training of officers and certainly additional resources for the police to meet those demands that the new polices will put in place. But given a 20% cut back in resources, we have very real concerns that such Wales legislation will not have the necessary fiscal backing to make it work. Westminster is wholly unaware, or indeed oblivious of this issue.

If as one example, cuts are made here, more frontline officers will be taken off the streets to fulfill these roles – albeit needy - not to mention spend more time carrying out admin work which would have been previously undertaken by police ‘civilian’ staff. Officers will be stretched further and further and whilst we will do all we can to protect the public, ultimately something has got to give.

Let us be clear, there is only one thing you get for less, and that is less.

Morale

Although not quite relevant to the consultation, it is important to understand that part of the delivery of good policing is to have a motivated police service.

With a public sector two-year pay freeze, a proposed two-year freeze on police officers' incremental pay, forcing our most experienced officers to retire through Police Regulation A19, and in addition, an increase in pension contributions beyond the current 11%, it is no wonder that our recent survey of police officers found 98 per cent said morale is low and they knew of someone who wanted to leave the service. The Government is letting down the very people they should be representing and protecting.

Police officers are feeling more demoralised than ever, given the UK Government's reaction to the how we policed the recent riots. We went out in force, had rest days and annual leave cancelled, worked 20 hour shifts and faced torrid violence. Over 240 officers were hospitalised but we worked hard to restore order on the streets and bring the perpetrators to justice. Wales played an important part in this public order issue on a scale never before witnessed in the history on the mainland.

Understanding Wales by Westminster

It is worthy to note that in November 2006 at an HM School of Governance seminar held in The Senedd, Sir Jeremy Beecham (Beecham Report '*Beyond Boundaries*' on public sector working), stated that "*policing will fall within the cracks of devolution*".

It is a concern that The Federation share, given the diversity of modern day policing and the demands placed up it. This should be viewed against a backdrop that there does exist a lack of 'understanding' from Westminster towards Cardiff bay upon issues that affect policing (and the service we give to the Welsh public) and that given the devolved settlement have become, for Wales, more undefined and lacking scrutiny. At its extremities, the understanding of policing in Wales by Westminster has become arguably undemocratic and most certainly lacking in transparency.

There is a danger therefore, that any subject issue that is prefixed 'policing' – howsoever defined - may seemingly not be considered by London as being of relevance to Wales (when in fact it is) or not worthy of consideration in Wales through a lack of knowledge.

It would be fair to state, that the understanding of Welsh devolution by Westminster and Whitehall is poor. As such, in 2006, during the '*Police amalgamation process*' under Home Secretary Charles Clarke, we saw policing minister Tony McNulty attending 'the Assembly' completely unaware of the roles and responsibilities of Welsh Ministers in respect of policing.

This was typified late in 2009 during an inquiry led by the House of Commons, Welsh Affairs Committee, whereby the former First Minister, Rhodri Morgan and Sir Jon Shortridge (Permanent Secretary in Wales) gave evidence to the effect that *'London did not understand devolution'* and that *'devolution was seen as an experiment'*.

Of late, under the current UK-coalition Government, the progression of the *Police Reform Bill*, sees a serious lack of understanding by the Police Minister, Nick Herbert on the functions and responsibilities of Welsh Ministers; this criticism is extended also to his government officials. Indicative of this, is the result witnessed by the Legislative Consent Motion on parts of that Bill rejected by The National Assembly for Wales on already devolved functions.

It is worthy to note that prior to this, in 2009, *'The all-Wales Convention'*, headed by Sir Emyr Jones-Parry highlighted in his report (Chapter 4) of concerns in respect of policing and that it was by *"default rather than design"* that the Home Office had some understanding of devolution. This was resolved simply as David Hanson, a Welsh MP, just so happened to be the Minister of State for Policing. Such was the concern that it warranted inclusion in the Conventions report. Seemingly nothing has changed.

Taking the above into consideration, The Federation therefore submits that given the concurrent misunderstanding by the UK government of the mechanisms of devolution in Wales that as and when powers become 'devolved' and/or 'granted' to Welsh Ministers, they will likely have had little or no understanding of present Welsh powers – and how it affects policing - or indeed how they impact upon the development of unique Welsh policy. It is the Federation's contention that this too extends towards the funding needs for a very diverse country in Wales.

The above issues are common to all of Wales' forces. There are however, issues that affect individual forces and just some of these issues are as follows.

Gwent

Financial pressures will result in the loss of over 150 officers from a small force. This will undoubtedly result in a reduced service / response to the public. For example by not responding to some calls and by dealing with them by way of a telephone resolution, 50 officers will be lost from the frontline. The public very often complain that they don't see a police officer in their area with our current numbers. Less officers will mean even less visibility.

On top of these reductions it has also been necessary to remove nearly 20 officers from frontline policing to supplement control room support staff. These officers will be critical in maintaining service when support staff (including CSO's) take industrial action.

Collaboration projects will also result in the loss of police officers, this will do little to assist in maintaining a critical mass. For example the southern Wales collaboration on Firearms capability will result in less authorised firearms officers across the three Welsh forces. If these officers are based outside of the Gwent Police area then there will be times during the day when there will be no firearms officers in the force area. This should be of grave concern to the public of Gwent and the officers who will be in need of urgent specialist assistance.

North Wales

Without any recruitment there is a possibility that over 200 serving Officers will be lost within North Wales Police over the next four years in order to meet the enforced savings.

The loss of Officers in such numbers will obviously affect the frontline services afforded to the people of North Wales. Additionally with reduced numbers our capability to provide mutual aid as witnessed during the August 2011 riots in London and elsewhere such as Manchester will be seriously hampered.

There are reviews currently being undertaken into Serious Crime investigation, CID and Community Safety. There is little doubt that there will have to be savings made in all these strands of Policing. It can safely be assumed that there will be no additional Officers assigned to the work.

South Wales

The impact of the CSR has resulted in the force being required to reduce the number of police officers by 256 and almost 500 police staff over the next four years, with 85% of the savings required in the first two years. By the end of the financial year 2011/12, some 131 police officers – many highly experienced - will have been required to retire and although minimal recruitment will commence in January 2012 this will not prevent the overall reduction of police officer numbers but will prevent stagnation in recruitment and promotion opportunities.

The force have closed a number of police stations and have also had to reduce the number of 'public facing' police stations – for example in the Western BCU, only Swansea Central and Neath have front office enquiry clerk facilities to the public. The force is actively seeking alternative methods of communication and contact with the public including internet, e-mail and public networking sites (Facebook etc). There will be one centrally located Public Service Call centre instead of the current structure.

There has been a project team looking at the structure of South Wales Police for some years. The emphasis has been to reduce the number of police officers in the colloquially termed 'back room functions' and returning them to the front line. However, the reduction of police officer numbers means that simply there is little resilience left 'back in Wales' when instances such as the recent riots occur.

Collaboration projects with Gwent and Dyfed Powys Police are well advanced and South Wales Police already have a number of shared services such as Human Resources, Legal and Assistant Chief Constable 'protected services', such as Terrorism. The South Wales Police Authority, have recently authorised the commencement of the collaborative firearms department with Gwent and Dyfed Powys Police.

The Comprehensive Spending Review cuts have a severe and direct morale impact as the additional stress upon Neighbourhood Beat Managers and Neighbourhood Patrol Team Sergeants will increase and specifically have a knock-on-effect to efficiency. Although the Welsh Government may increase the number of Civilian CSO's, without question, if there are not enough warranted Police Officers who can arrest and solve crime, then such CSO's will not be effective or efficient, thereby failing to provide overall a cost effective measure to meet our ever increasing Communities needs. Also from a practical perspective – despite calls and the hails of cutting in bureaucracy - Community Safety and such responsibilities still rests at our feet. This may extend from the most heinous of crimes, to dealing with mental health issues or even to some seemingly minor policing matters, but nonetheless they being of importance to *the public*.

Due to the Comprehensive Spending Review, change within South Wales Police is advancing at great pace, indeed it is surging and there is no doubt that the future structure will look very different to the past and even the current structure. Only time will tell how the cuts are going to affect South Wales Police but there is an unnerving amount of uncertainty and deep concern with officers at this time, both in respect of the service they provide to the communities of South Wales and also as to their own personal 'employment' status and conditions.

Dyfed Powys Police

Dyfed Powys Police Federation continue to have deep concerns with respect to the 20% cuts in policing. In real terms this will affect the resilience we afford to the public and in being able to give 24/7 immediate response to the public.

The force establishment should be 1,200 officers however, ahead of the cuts we already run 5% below this in actual numbers. At present we have 1153 full time police officer posts as we had a recent intake of 26. These officers will take a number of years to go through training and to consolidate that experience on-the-beat.

Dyfed Powys Police presently do not use a dedicated enforcement of Police Regulation A19 (enforced retirement for those over 30 years experienced service) or A20 (enforced retirement for those injured on duty in protecting the public), although to date more officers have left the force than usual, but that figure has not yet been fully assessed as 'public cost savings'. Taking this all into a complex equation, Dyfed Powys Police are 71 police officers down on last years figures.

We have had an intake of special constables albeit these are warranted, sworn officers they are essentially 'volunteers' who undertake a policing role on top of their normal day jobs. Such an input is valuable, but gives little flexibility or training capacity to develop their roles.

The resilience of the force was shown to be under immense stress during the [then] planned badger cull. Additional funding was needed to allow basic policing of what was/had been planned. Such a contingency although rare is not uncommon when facing protracted public order and civil contingency plans.

Officers of Dyfed Powys Police are wholly committed to giving their all. However, we now have officers who are not only focusing ahead on their important roles, but are now constantly looking over their shoulders as to what will happen to them. This is not good for any organisation least alone policing which demands excellence on a 24/7 basis.

We are mindful also of the impact that the cuts are having upon family life. This may equate to cancelled rest days, extended shifts, cancellation of annual holidays and all have to be taken in the stride of officers, such is the demands placed upon officers.

We find it fatuous that think-tanks appear to be driving the UK government agenda and a recent report produced by The Policy Exchange is indicative of a 'metropolitan outlook' the likes of which seem to be touching a chord with The Home Office. Here we see demands be sought that will press police officers to travel to work on public transport and in uniform. The Committee will be aware that few busses run across rural Wales even during 'normal hours', but our deepest concern is expecting officers to travel to work 'in uniform' without their appointments of radio, baton, handcuffs or protective clothing upon them. We firmly believe the understanding of policing by the UK government is poor to the extreme this extends also to seeking 'mutual aid' to other areas of the UK, including Northern Ireland where officers will be placed upon the streets in vastly differing uniforms and lacking the necessary dedicated training for that operational theatre.

Conclusion

The UK Government's current approach to policing has been chaotic, foolish and aggressive. The sheer scale and pace of cuts (20 per cent, with two-thirds front loaded in the first two years) is excessive and greater than any other public sector cuts either in Wales or in England and most certainly contrary to, if not at a complete divergence away from, the advice they have been given by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

There has been an *ad-hoc*, piecemeal approach to 'reforming' the police service and more worryingly nobody has consulted the public about what they would like from their police service. Indeed the UK Government have not even consulted the Welsh Government on their viewpoint and the ways that policies are being developed (in Wales) to benefit the public. That is itself a sign of negligence and certainly a lack of respect towards a devolved government and indeed opposition parties. This situation however, can be reversed by pausing, reflecting and holding proper dialogue.

The Police Federation will continue to call for a Royal *Commission on Policing*, in the meantime there needs to be a serious period of reflection on the demands placed upon policing and importantly an evidenced based review on the correct funding required, in order that the police can protect communities. The Federation in Wales submit that the HMIC study '*Valuing the police*' is not that far off the mark.

In conclusion The Police Federations Chair, Paul McKeever made a speech on 18th May in the presence of The Home Secretary. The full speech, which lays out The Federations deepest concerns can be found at www.polfed.org . However, we believe one part of it is highly relevant to all of those who give public service.

"...Following an IPSOS Mori poll, it showed 86% of the public are worried by the policing cuts, it is the first duty of any government to protect its citizens. It appears the public have little confidence in you to fulfil this basic requirement of government..."