


# Chiefs are urged to give 'consistent' support to Tsunami officers

 Police officers working overseas to help with disasters such as the Tsunami should be issued with clear guidance from chief officers on their pay and conditions while abroad, according to the Federation.

This follows concerns from officers involved in work such as body recovery and identification, mortuary investigation and family liaison who volunteered to help in the wake of the Tsunami in Asia.

A number of local federations have been contacted by officers seeking information and reassurance on issues such as life insurance, in case officers are killed abroad, pensions contributions and welfare of families left in their home country.

Chris Fox, president of ACPO, has sent a letter to all forces in England and Wales urging chief constables to take a consistent approach when it comes to supporting police officers deployed abroad.

Clint Elliott, general secretary of the Federation, said that they have raised the issue at the Police Advisory Board and are hoping



**Police officers help in the Tsunami aftermath**


officers working overseas can be issued with key guidance on the support and pay and conditions they can expect.

He explained: 'We would like it made clear to members what they can expect before they go aboard. We have a ridiculous situation where officers are having to ask questions when they have already been deployed overseas, or worse still, when they have got back without understanding their level of cover.'


Police officers involved in

work in Kosovo found the conditions they worked under could vary from force to force.

Mr Elliott says: 'One example was where officers were using their mobiles to keep in contact with friends and family and although some forces met the costs or gave some contribution, others did not contribute at all.'

Although guidance is available within the Overseas Deployment Manual for Police Officers, there is still a lack of consistency between forces. 

## Inspectors should control their own hours, says report

 The British Psychological Society is supporting Federation calls for inspectors to be able to take part in organising their work patterns to avoid damaging their health and home life.

The Society highlighted the pressures police inspectors are under when 'duty calls and home life stalls' at their conference held last month in Warwick.

Almuth McDowall, from Goldsmiths College in London, who was involved in compiling the research, presented the findings of the study outlining the main impact on the officers was the lack of control they have over when they were expected to work.

He said: 'The findings show




how much pressure police inspectors are experiencing outside work because of the increased demands within work. One talked of a work/work balance rather than a work/life balance, which is worrying. If we are to address this it is essential that police inspectors themselves are able to participate in the re-organisation of their

working patterns themselves as other research shows this has a positive impact.'

The study of 5,038 inspectors, carried out by the Federation's Inspectors' Central Committee, revealed that 83 per cent of inspectors feel that their life away from work has been damaged by changes to their job.

More than half, 60 per cent, felt that they had no control over the hours they worked.

The study showed cutbacks in staffing, particularly at superintendent rank has meant an increase in responsibilities and duties for inspectors who are routinely on-call between official hours of duty. 

### IN BRIEF

- A date has been set for National Police Memorial Day to remember officers who

have died while on duty. St David's Hall in Cardiff will provide the setting for families, colleagues and friends to honour and remember those they have lost.

The day will be held on Sunday October 2 and any donations can be sent to National Police Memorial Day, 15/17 Langley Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 6LP.

- Police officers from across the country have volunteered to work in areas affected by the Tsunami disaster.

The Met has taken a leading role coordinating Operation Bracknell, the UK police response, on behalf of the Foreign Office.

The effort involves family liaison officers and disaster victim identification.

- Federation representatives around the country can take part in a seminar to learn how to deal with post-incident procedures such as a shooting, death in custody or collision.

The Post-Incident Procedures seminar will take place at the St John's Centre, Regent Street, in Leicestershire on February 22 and 23.


Anyone interested can contact the Federation's operational sub-committee on pauldavis@jcc.polfed.org

- The Government has launched an anti-social behaviour action line to encourage the public to report 'yobbish behaviour'.

The It's Your Call phone line will be available in 25 specially appointed areas around the country.

Posters and phone cards promote the action line number: 0845 605 2222.

# Federation letter warns officers 'do not join' National Crime Squad

 Hundreds of police officers are being advised not to sign up to the National Crime Squad because of fears they will lose their status when transferring to SOCA.

Clint Elliott, general secretary of the Federation, has sent letters to officers not recommending joining up under present conditions.

Although the Home Office has said they will honour terms and conditions of those expected to transfer to the Serious and Organised Crime Agency, the offer is not concrete and the SOCA Bill, currently making its way through Parliament, has cast further doubts.

Mr Elliott says the way is open for 'politicisation of the service' where officers no longer



**Officers could be accountable to the Home Secretary**  
**Charles Clarke**


swear allegiance to the Crown and keep their status of the Office of Constable, but will, instead, be ultimately accountable to the Home Secretary.

The agency, set up to tackle serious crime such as drug smug-

gling and people trafficking, hopes to bring together officers from the National Crime Squad, the National Criminal Intelligence Service with elements of HM Customs and Excise and the Immigration Service.

Police officers who are employed by the National Crime Squad, and not seconded from their force, would compulsorily transfer, becoming employees and would lose the Office of Constable.

Those who transfer, there are 1,140 NCS officers, will also be dependent upon the director general of SOCA to designate powers, ordinarily held by a constable.

● Details of the SOCA Bill and the full letter are included  on pages 13, 14 and 15.

## ACPO do not support call for increased handcuffing powers

Chief officers do not support Federation plans to give officers on the ground the choice of being able to handcuff those they feel could pose a danger to them.

The Association of Chief Police Officers spoke out against the proposed change in legislation which would mean an officer could be authorised to automatically handcuff a person they felt posed a danger to them or to others.

Legislation currently in place means officers have to carry out a risk assessment before handcuffing detainees, however cases involving the recent deaths of officers have highlighted the need for a change in the law.

Officers around the country have raised the issue at open meetings and the Federation has put forward the amendment to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 as the Serious and Organised Crime Bill passes through Parliament.


Jan Berry, chairman of the Federation, said that the plans would mean police officers could handcuff for safety reasons and then carry out a risk assessment of the detainee.

Serious assaults on police officers have increased by 1.7 per cent across the country from 2002 to 2003 and 2003 to 2004, according to the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary annual report released in December.

A spokesman for ACPO said that they believe current provisions for handcuffing are adequate.

**If you have any comments regarding any of the issues raised in Police Magazine write to the Letters page at Police, 15/17 Langley Road, Surbiton Surrey KT6 6LP**

## Custody sergeant role is under threat

 The Federation will fight to keep the crucial role of police custody sergeant from being civilianised and has been backed by a raft of organisations.

The role is under threat after the Government put forward proposals in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill currently passing through Parliament, to introduce staff custody officers.

Jan Berry, chairman of the Federation, said: 'The role of custody sergeant takes experience, independence, knowledge and has a strong supervisory element. It is crucial the role is carried out by a police officer.'

The Federation also argues the point to the Government in their briefing paper which states: "Custody is part of a continuum that begins with arrest by a fully sworn constable. It is not merely a processing function.

"Custody officers determine whether arrested persons should be detained or go free, making critical quasi-judicial decisions as to whether arrests are lawful; deci-



sions that dictate an individual's liberty. Only police officers have the authoritative accountability to carry out such a role."

There has also been support for the role of the custody sergeant from Liberty and Justice, both human rights organisations and the Law Society, the representative body for solicitors.

Liberty state in their briefing paper on the Bill: "The custody officer is the custodian of PACE

(Police and Criminal Evidence Act). The function is invariably carried out by an experienced police sergeant. If a civilian is allowed to carry out the role we have serious doubts that they will be able to provide the same protection."

A spokesman for the Home Office said: 'We attach considerable importance to the role of the custody officer both in the welfare of the suspect and in aiding the integrity of the investigation process.

'We want to raise the ability of chief officers and BCU Commanders to make best use of local resources to ensure that custody suites are effectively operated and at the same time, free up hundreds of experienced police sergeants at a time when front-line supervisory experience is at a premium.

'We know that some forces wish to press straight ahead with the introduction of staff custody officers. That is a matter for individual chief officers who think they are at that stage.'