

Blinded officer vows to continue his career

The officer shot and blinded by gunman Raoul Moat has vowed to continue working as a police officer.

PC David Rathband was on static patrol when Moat approached him and shot him at point blank range; 50 minutes earlier, Moat had called the police informing them he planned to kill an officer. He had already shot his ex-girlfriend, Samantha Stobbart and murdered her boyfriend Christopher Brown. Despite his horrific injuries, the 42-year-old officer managed to radio for help.

Speaking to the media from his hospital bed, PC Rathband said he recognised Moat instantly. "I knew him and I knew what he had done."

PC Rathband said that his injuries would be life changing, but would not beat him. "I'm upset and angry. He's taken my eyesight that will prevent me from seeing the things in life I looked forward to, like my son's graduation and my daughter's wedding. But he will remain furthest from my thoughts for the rest of my life.

"I will do everything in my power to live a near-perfect lifestyle with my family. He hasn't killed me and he ain't going to beat me.

"If I have to use new skills, I will do it. I went from being a plumber to being a police officer. I will go from being a policeman with sight to a policeman without sight."

Raoul Moat shot himself in a field in the village of Rothbury after being on the run for six days.

In response to enquiries, Northumbria Police Federation are now co-ordinating donations as well as messages of goodwill, on behalf of PC Rathband.

Anyone wanting to send a message of support or make a donation should send it directly to Northumbria Police Federation, either via internal mail, or externally to 11-14 Apex Business Village, Annitsford, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 7BF. Please make cheques payable to Northumbria Police Federation.

PC David Rathband talks to the media from his hospital bed



Federation chairman warns greater savings will mean frontline cuts

The chairman of the Police Federation has warned that if the government imposes savings above 12 percent, it will lead to an even greater reduction in frontline officers.

Paul McKeever was speaking following the publication of two reports last month, including HMIC's *Valuing the Police*. Mr McKeever broadly welcomed the reports, but raised concerns that savings above 12 percent would cut frontline officers.

"That could have serious consequences for the level of service we are able to provide."

He added: "We accept that in the current fiscal climate, economies need to be made, but everything must be done to protect frontline services which ensure the public gets the service the public wants – more police officers on their streets."

Mr McKeever warned against "short-term, rushed financial decisions" which, although they might lead to small savings, could have a detrimental effect on the police service.

"These reports make clear that in the first instance efficiency savings without the need to start cutting back on staff must be explored. We support that entirely. Losing officers is not an option where public safety and security is concerned," Mr McKeever said.

The HMIC report also added that 80 percent of forces are unprepared for the cuts.

"With such a multitude of ideas being flanked as the possible way forward, you'd be hard pushed to blame them for not knowing which path to pursue.

"What is needed is a consistent approach to efficiency savings across the 43 forces in England and Wales, driven nationally, but managed locally to ensure chief officers have the flexibility needed to serve different communities in different areas," Mr McKeever added.

Cuts of more than 12 percent risk damaging frontline services



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