

# Constables' call to protect numbers

Sickness levels among the constable rank could rise if their numbers are culled as part of government cutbacks, the chairman of the Constables' Central Committee has warned.

Paul Lewis was speaking at a parliamentary and media reception held by the Committee at One George Street, in Westminster last month. He said: "No-one wants to see a reverse trend in sickness levels. Over the last few years police officer sickness records have improved immensely. Any decline in police officer numbers is likely to see those rates increase again.

"It's all very well saying we must do more for less, but should that equate to more work with fewer officers, then the strain placed on those at the sharp end will be immense."

Mr Lewis said that with 80 percent of the policing budget devoted to staffing costs, there was a temptation for "the axe to fall on personnel".

"Before this happens, chief officers must ask themselves two questions. One – will this affect the standard of policing we deliver for the communities we serve?

"And two – are there other efficiency savings I can make before I make cuts that will affect the frontline?"

Mr Lewis said police numbers had to be maintained as assaults on police are still high. "It's a difficult and demanding job we do. That's why we must ensure that we have sufficient police officers, with the appropriate safety equipment and training, not only to protect the public, but to protect and support each other when need be."

He called on the Federation to work together with the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Superintendents' Association to ensure that any financial decisions taken did not have a detrimental impact on the service provided to the public.

"Last year we launched a campaign entitled 'communities need constables'. They don't just need constables, they deserve constables," added Mr Lewis.



Constables' Central Committee General Secretary, Paul Barker, and Chairman, Paul Lewis, speaking with Shadow Police Minister, David Hanson MP



Constables' Julie Nesbit with Lord Maginnis



Constables' Central Committee Chairman, Paul Lewis, with Chair of the Home Affairs Committee, Keith Vaz MP

Former Home Secretary David Blunkett and Shadow Home Secretary Alan Johnson MP were among the guests

Constables' Paul Davis with Rebecca Camber from the Daily Mail

