

## Funding crisis for disabled officers group

The National Disabled Police Association could close within weeks unless urgent funding is found.

The registered charity which represents the interests of disabled officers and staff revealed its funding has been cut and it is now threatened with imminent closure.

In previous years, the NDPA has been funded by the Home Office. This year the NDPA submitted a 'Grant In Aid' bid to the Home Office setting out its plans for the coming year. However, to date, no money has been received for the current financial year, jeopardising the charity's existence.

"It is now July and thanks to the Treasurer's diligence our funds have lasted until now. The money runs out on August 10, meaning public liability insurance will cease, along with the vital means of contact; website, email addresses and phones. This means the NDPA will cease to be able to continue to run," said Deborah Munday, chair of the NDPA.

The NDPA offers advice and support to anyone with a disability issue including carers who are covered by the DDA. The Association has until recently represented its members' views at the National Attendance Management Forum, ACPO EDHR and National DSSA meetings.

"Due to lack of funds we have had to give our apologies in the last couple of months. This means that we are not able to represent the disabled at these meetings, keeping everyone up to date on current issues and our knowledge around the issues.

"Everyone on the Cabinet of the NDPA is very disappointed that we now face the prospect of having to close."

The NPDA was launched in 2004.

## Call to rebalance the criminal justice system for victims of crime

Victims are still receiving a raw deal at the hands of the criminal justice system, according to the country's first Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses.

Speaking at the Royal Society for Arts recently, Louise Casey said victims had been relegated to the sidelines of their own cases.

"Being a victim and/or witness can still mean entering a complicated and haphazard system with no guarantees. To that victim of the crime, he or she is the reason they are all there in the courtroom and yet the victim is the 'side show'.

"We should not be surprised that many victims describe the criminal justice process as being victimised all over again."

Ms Casey said the balance between a fair trial and the victims' needs had tipped in favour of the offender.

"In our quest to be scrupulously fair to defendants and to ensure that the interests of justice are not prejudiced – all extremely important things – it seems to me that sometimes we lose balance and end up by being unfair and sometimes even inhuman to victims."

She highlighted the fact there is no limit to the number of Post Mortems that can be held and that child victims of adult offenders are expected to give their evidence in an adult court.

She added: "We need a system that is equally fair to victims, because in their own right they are vital for justice to run its course. When we ask victims to step aside and let the Crown deal with the case, this is as fundamental as the right to a fair trial for defendants, and we should not treat the victim like a piece of bagged evidence in a trial process.

"We need to look again at whether a universal system for victims of crime, which takes little account of seriousness or vulnerability of a victim, is sustainable."

The NDPA, which represents disabled officers, faces closure



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Victims are still getting a raw deal, says Louise Casey



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