

Federation debates police family joining

Officers will be asked if they think the extended police family should be admitted to the Federation as Police Reform tops the agenda at this year's conference.

The conference comes just two weeks after the general election and presents a golden opportunity for officers to influence the future direction of policing, according to Jan Berry, chairman of the Federation.

'Police reform remains high on the agenda and more change is inevitable, but it has got to be the right change. The building blocks have to be in the right order and it has to be in the best interests of the public, which hasn't always been the case.'

'This is an opportunity to set the policing agenda using our practical policing experience,'



Jan Berry, Federation chairman, will encourage debate

said Mrs Berry.

Presentations on the effects civilisation has had on the service and its implications for the Federation will be delivered on the final day of the conference.

Jan Berry will chair the discussion on the pros and cons of admitting police staff into the organisation.

She said: 'The Federation is at its most effective when it mirrors the operational structure of the service. This has changed dramatically in recent years and the police Federation should review its position in response to these changes.'

Delegates will be asked for their views on community support officers, custody officers and Highways Agency traffic officers in what is set to be a lively debate.

The week-long conference is taking place at Blackpool's Winter Gardens from May 17 to 19, where a wide range of policing issues will be tackled including race and diversity.

Peter Fahy, ACPO lead on diversity and chief constable of Cheshire, and Anesta Weekes QC, who is a member of the Morris Inquiry Team Panel, will take part in the debate on whether the law should be

changed to introduce affirmative action for black and minority ethnic officers following the Morris Inquiry and the CRE's investigation into racism in the service.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission will also be in the spotlight as conference reviews its progress a year after it was set up.

Training will take centre stage on Wednesday with Robin Field Smith, HMIC in charge of training, answering questions on the development of the Initial Police Leadership Development Programme (IPLDP).

Conference delegates will also have the opportunity to put their questions directly to the Home Secretary who will deliver his keynote speech on the Wednesday of the conference.



What would be your top three priorities from the next Government?



Insp Kim Hudson, Sussex Police, has been a police officer for 18 years and is currently based in Chichester.

● Police officer numbers

More police officers will always make it better on the streets. There is a limitless supply of work when it comes to solving crime and preventing it. If we are going to be employing more police staff, they should be employed in ways that mean it allows police officers to carry out a basic policing role. If officers end up being stuck in police stations the public just think we are not there, people need to see us out patrolling the streets.

● Value sergeant role

I do not see how the job would function without the role of sergeant and we have had difficulty over the past 18 months trying to recruit them. More should be done to attract them, we have lots of probationers who need proper supervision.

● Lift the status of constables

I think the Government should help put in place measures to fully recognise uniform officers and the importance of their role. It is just as important as any specialist role and it should be recognised in some way to try to encourage officers to stay in it, rather than try to leave it as soon as possible.

PC Neil Wilson, is a dog handler in Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and has spent seven years as a beat officer in the force.



● Officer safety

Officer safety is paramount and the trials with Taser should be extended to cover patrol officers. Taser would be of great benefit for officer safety on the ground. Violence against police officers is on the increase and we need to protect officers as best we can with the best kit.

● Bureaucracy

I would like to see a reduction in

bureaucracy. Officers are expected to fill in forms on road traffic accidents, missing persons, investigating crimes, and there must be around 15 to 20 crimes per officer. Officers can end up spending 35 to 50 per cent of their time doing paper work. We need to see some real progress to bring down the amount of bureaucracy involved.

● Community support officers

We need to have more of an outline of the role of community support officers. We are not sure exactly what they are supposed to do, we know that they are there to be 'eyes and ears' but they now have the power to detain yet no self-defence training, it's all confused.

My concern is also that officers will be denigrated into dealing with confrontational situations with the public because police officers are taken away from community interaction.



Sgt Mick Hoare, a West Midlands officer for 16 years.

● Police officer numbers

Officer numbers is a big issue. I never have enough officers to deploy in order to meet all the requirements I am expected to meet. We have to meet community demands but also hit performance targets and calls for assistance.

● Bureaucracy

The amount of bureaucracy we have to deal with makes it difficult to reassure, motivate and lead officers in policing and preventing incidents. The demand to complete paper work is huge. I want to be able to lead motivated team of officers on the streets and the amount of bureaucracy needs to be cut in order for me to do that in the way I would like.

● Performance targets

I think there should be less interference from the Home Office on policing priorities. Chief officers should be able to focus on local policing and local accountability and performance targets. This would make it easier to police local problems and make communities happier.