

Training for inspectors is not keeping PACE with the job and is leading officers to teach themselves

More than half of inspectors who responded to a Federation survey felt they had not been trained properly in the PACE codes of practice.

Fifty eight per cent of inspectors from 25 forces described the availability of structured, formal force training and awareness, including accreditation for inspectors undertaking custody reviews as 'poor'.

Bob Kitchen, chairman of the Federation's Inspectors' Central Committee said most inspectors taught themselves the skills needed to undertake PACE custody review through 'trial and error' or by being mentored by colleagues.

Mr Kitchen said that the inspectors who responded to the survey 'quite rightly' questioned this approach.

He said that officers should ask for training and if it is denied them, a risk assessment on the task would show that they could not perform it.

'If everybody promoted to this role adopted this approach



Bob Kitchen, chairman of the Federation's Inspectors' Central Committee

then forces would have no alternative than to train them properly.'

The lack of training in PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) is leaving inspectors vulnerable to disciplinary action, the Inspectors' chairman warned.

Two West Yorkshire inspec-

tors are currently suspended following a death in custody. The case is currently ongoing and the details could not be revealed, but Mr Kitchen said: 'It does concern me where one of those inspectors is newly promoted, and has not received relevant training.'

Pressure on inspectors to supervise civilian custody officers

Inspectors face more pressure as the custody role is civilianised

Bob Kitchen, chairman of the Federation's Inspectors' Central Committee, said that the proposed civilianisation of the custody officer could put inspectors under even more pressure.

He said the Federation was 'alarmed' at the civilianisation clauses contained in the Serious and Organised Crime Act passed by Parliament prior to the election, especially the crucial area of custody.

'This will inevitably put more pressure on inspectors to ensure proper management is taking place in the custody block.'

Apart from specialist areas, the only formal training for inspectors is delivered as part of the Core Leadership Development Programme, although even this was not happening, according to Mr Kitchen.

'My members inform me that the main reason for this is the lack of inspectors and that they cannot be afforded time away.'

Forces condemned for not signing working hours agreement for inspectors

Forces are riding slipshod over working hours for inspectors - delaying signing working time agreements, says the Federation's Inspectors' Central Committee.

Bob Kitchen, chairman of the Inspectors' Central Committee, congratulated 12 forces who have signed or are about to sign the agreements, but warned the 31 forces who had not.

'Far too many forces are riding slipshod over the working conditions of our members. That is unacceptable and we will pursue this.'

The Inspectors' Committee has been campaigning for forces to agree to restrict the number of hours an inspector routinely works to around 40 hours a week, as part



John Francis, general secretary of the Federation and Bob Kitchen, chairman of the Inspectors' committee

of the 'Overstretch' campaign.

Mr Kitchen said progress had been made with HMIC since last year's conference and working time is now included in baseline assessments of forces.

He said that the Health and

Safety Executive were 'eagerly' awaiting the results of the assessments.

'Chief officers cannot say they haven't been warned. We will all need to keep a close eye as to how this will be reported particu-

larly in forces that stubbornly refuse to play ball with you.'

John Francis, newly appointed general secretary of the Federation, said forces had no excuse.

'We understand there will be days when inspectors will have to work longer hours to get the job. What we are saying is that this should be the exception and not the norm.'

Hertfordshire, Sussex, Kent, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Thames Valley and Lincolnshire are among those forces who have signed the agreement. Devon and Cornwall, the Metropolitan Police Service, Essex, Staffordshire and Warwickshire were 'well on the way' to having an agree-