



Jan Berry: the majority of officers reject routine arming
Photography: Sebastian Studios

Police officers reject routine arming

Officers overwhelmingly rejected routine arming despite nearly half believing their lives have been placed in 'serious jeopardy' in the last two years, according to a Police Federation survey.

The survey of 141,000 officers, released at the Federation's annual Conference in Bournemouth last month, showed that more than three quarters of those who responded, 77 per cent, reject routine arming.

This represents little change from a Police Federation survey carried out on arming the police back in 2003, when just over a fifth of officers, 22 per cent, felt officers should be routinely armed, compared to 23.4 per cent in this year's survey.

The figure in this year's survey appeared higher for those who responded from the Met, compared to other forces, where over a third, 37.1 per cent, supported routine arming.

Yet 40 per cent of the 47,328 officers from across the country who replied felt they had been in serious danger over the last two years.

Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation, said that this figure equates to 56,000 officers across the service nationally. Mrs Berry said that the tragic death of Special Constable Nisha Patel-Nasri, who was stabbed in north London while off duty last month, highlighted that knives 'continue to be the biggest threat to police officers'.

Nearly a third of officers were threatened with a knife, 28 per cent, equating to more than 40,000 officers nationally and 5.7 per cent were threatened with a gun, around 7,000 officers across the country.

Officers still do not believe they have sufficient back-up when dealing with firearms incidents – with 84.4 per cent believing there should be more trained firearms officers.

"The message coming from frontline officers that we do not have enough routine firearms officers," said Mrs Berry.

at a glance

Summary of figures from the Police Federation survey:

- A third of all police officers in England and Wales responded to the survey and while 77 per cent rejected routine arming of all frontline officers
- 89 per cent, nine in ten officers, wanted to see the use of Taser being extended beyond authorised firearms officers
- Over half of those polled, 58.4 per cent, believe the wearing of body armour should be mandatory
- 28 per cent of officers stated they had been personally threatened with a knife on at least one occasion in the last two years
- 5.7 per cent of officers who responded had been threatened with a firearm in the last two years and 37.7 per cent stated they had been threatened with another weapon, such as a baseball bat, in the last two years
- 41.6 per cent of officers polled said they had been injured as a result of an assault by a member of the public while arresting someone
- 36.9 per cent of officers stated that their force supplied them with their own issue of covert body armour
- 91.3 per cent of officers said their force has supplied them with their own issue of overt body armour

Full results can be found on the Police Federation website at: www.polfed.org