



Sir Ronnie: suggested thematic on sergeant role
Photography: Sebastian Studios

HMI could look at sergeant role

Sir Ronnie Flanagan said the dearth of sergeants and their role should be the subject of a thematic.

Sir Ronnie, HM Chief Inspector, told the Sergeants' Central Committee that they would consider a full investigation into the role of the sergeant focusing on supervision.

Sir Ronnie, who is the former chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, said that he was concerned that too many experienced sergeants are in custody suites carrying out administrative duties as he spoke at the Sergeants' Conference in Bournemouth last month.

"There's a dearth of experienced sergeants. They are looking at whether the right document has been collected or the right box has been ticked, rather than being on the frontline supervising the behaviour of young officers."

A representative from Wiltshire Federation challenged Sir Ronnie, saying as far as he was concerned 'custody sergeants are frontline police officers'.

Sir Ronnie also questioned whether it remained necessary for sergeants to legally be the only rank able to carry out certain custody duties.

"I think all this supports the notion of a thematic on frontline supervision."

What do you think?

If you have any comments about issues raised at the Police Federation Conference, write to the letters page in *Police*.

Numbers of inspectors dropped to finance police staff

Dozens of inspectors' jobs are set to go in the next few years, the chairman of the Inspectors' Central Committee has warned.

Addressing the Police Federation Conference, George Appleby, said that although the numbers of inspectors had increased up to September 2005, there was evidence that inspectors' jobs would be cut to finance police staff.

"Official figures for the inspecting ranks up to September 2005 show our numbers have increased and I cannot argue with that.

"However, signs are there to suggest our numbers are dropping and are likely to continue to do so, as long as the objective is to balance the books whilst at the same time financing new police staff."

Mr Appleby said that a dip sample of Federation inspectors' representatives at a recent meeting suggested that 37 inspecting ranks are to be lost among four forces, and in one force pension regulations had been used to forcibly retire a detective inspector.

But he said the 'most worrying' was the Metropolitan Police Service. "The Metropolitan police, which is always a barometer of what is to come to the rest of England and Wales, is very likely to lose an average of two inspectors from each Borough Operational Command Units, 86 inspectors or more. Any reduction in our numbers is a massive issue."