

Homophobic bullying means gay officers are leaving the police

One in ten people report some form of homophobic bullying within the police service, according to the Gay Police Association.

Officers from countries across Europe heard the comments from Paul Cahill, chairman of the GPA, at the Celebrate conference last month.

He said that the figures were 'horrendous' adding that the police service lose one in four of those who are victims of such bullying.

Mr Cahill, an inspector in the Met Police, who himself suffered months of homophobic bullying when he joined the service, told the conference 'These are people with considerable service. I am talking about people with 15,16,17 years service.

'We are only getting about 25

per cent of reports [on those suffering bullying and leaving the organisation] to the GPA, it's three or four times as high or higher. It is a massive loss to the organisation.'

Mr Cahill also warned that there was a 'new breed of homophobe' and that they have now gone underground and become sophisticated in the way they carry out acts of homophobia against gay staff.

He added that the police service needed to 'root out the institutional homophobe', language reminiscent of that used by police chiefs on the subject of race discrimination.

The Gay Police Association was only set up in 1990 and has just celebrated its 15th birthday.

Mr Cahill, who joined the GPA



Paul Cahill: There is a new breed of 'homophobe'

just after its inception gave a rallying cry to officers to find ways of pushing boundaries further and further back.

He said that the GPA is now handling on average around 4,000 calls a year from officers, including police staff, managers and organisations who may want to make a complaint.

Police chief says service 'homophobic' at same time as being branded institutionally racist

The police service was likely to be institutionally homophobic at the same time as it was branded 'institutionally racist' by the Macpherson Report, says the ACPO lead on diversity.

Peter Fahy, chief constable of Cheshire and ACPO lead on diversity [check], made the comments at the European Gay Police Conference held in London last month.

After a number of gay police officers spoke out about their experiences of verbal and physical abuse on video and in person, he told delegates that the police service still tries to 'knock' difference out of people.

'We certainly saw from that video that if Lawrence said the police service is institutionally racist it was institutionally homophobic at the same time.'



Peter Fahy: service 'institutionally homophobic'

The Macpherson report, by Sir William Macpherson, followed the inquiry into the Met Police investigation of the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

The report, published in 1999, made a raft of recommendations including those aimed at improving attitudes to racism in the police, but also remarked on institutional racism within the service.

Mr Fahy said that although the police service has made progress, they also had to 'be honest about how far we still have to travel'.

He added that despite moves such as action plans being drawn up within forces, 'we have to scratch our heads and say why hasn't it made that much of a difference'.



Let's get together

Organisations representing diversity in the police service should work together not in competition.

Paul Cahill, chairman of the GPA, told the Celebrate conference that they should dismantle unhealthy and competitive hierarchies in diversity.

He made the comments at the conference as the Gay Police Association, the British Association of Women in Policing and the National Black Police Association signed an agreement that they would work together.

Vic Codling, national training coordinator for the GPA, said: 'There is a definite hierarchy in diversity. Race at the top then perhaps gender but it's still okay for people to make homophobic remarks.'

But Mr Cahill said that all the organisations should come together 'to respond to rise in extremist and fundamentalist groups who repress our rights and freedoms'.

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