

## Call for working time to be honoured

Police officers are 'on their knees' due to pressure to hit performance targets and are clocking up an average of a 60-hour week.

Essex Police Federation held an open meeting to highlight some of the issues officers on the ground are facing with the increased drive to boost detections and performance.

Tony Rayner, chairman of the federation branch, told the Essex Open Meeting that the force is ignoring legislation that allows officers to opt out of the maximum 48-hour working week.

He added: "The federated members of this force are on their knees due to the unrelenting pressure for performance. Performance at all costs – and the principle cost is being paid by the four ranks we represent.

"Chief inspectors are beginning to fall over at regular intervals from the stress imposed by a hierarchy that has absolutely no interest in their health. A hierarchy driven by statistics and targets focussed solely on numbers of arrests, detections, and notional crime reduction without regard for the broader consequences on the public or our officers."

He added that there are inspectors averaging 60 hours a week in the workplace, and then working at home, dealing with emails and taking phone calls.

He asked: "Why is it that the federation has been banging its head against a brick wall of disinterest from chief officers for over five years?"

The federation were so concerned they took the issue to the health and safety executive but say they were told they had been 'instructed by the government not to enforce working time regulations with respect to the police'.

He told those at the meeting held last month: "Chief officers are breaking the law with impunity."

## League table of overtime

Essex Police has a league table of which officers earn the most overtime but are ignoring the welfare of those working the hours.

Tony Rayner, chairman of the Essex Police Federation, told the Essex Open Meeting that the force has a league table which is sent out to tell divisions, not who is working the longest hours, but who is earning the most overtime.

He said: "Divisions are told who their top earners are so that the overtime bill can be managed. A constable working an average 60-hour week will be earning a small fortune in overtime – and that is all Essex police is interested in. Not the welfare of an individual putting in those hours week after week."

Mr Rayner said that the federation were regularly contacted by constables and sergeants saying they are being asked, 'even forced', to work overtime without payment because the management has spent their budget.

He added: "Officers are not clamouring for overtime anymore. At the end of a ten-hour shift, they want to go home. They do not want their duties messed around for some ill thought out operation, organised in the vain hope of meeting an arbitrary target. They do not want their rest days cancelled because divisions can't be bothered to plan ahead."

Andy Bliss, deputy chief constable, said: "On the forward planning front, I agree we do have to do better. We'll take a bit of a hit on that one."

Working regulations: force is "breaking law with impunity"



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League tables: force just concentrates on overtime payments



Essex Police Federation