

Case Study: JBB Chairman

Kath Kane
Chairman, Merseyside Police Federation

I joined Merseyside Police in March 1976 - not long after the Sex Discrimination Act, and went to work in uniform in the Division covering the two Liverpool Football grounds. I worked there for about eight years then moved onto a variety of CID and specialist roles including CID Detective, the Force Drug Squad and working in the Force Major Crime Squad.

Whilst relatively young in service, and still in uniform, I stood in the election for the then Policewomen's Constable's Representative (now the Reserve Seat Rep) and went onto the Merseyside Joint Branch Board in January 1985.

In May 1995 I was elected chair of the Policewomen's Eve of Conference meeting. During my time as Chair I took several motions to conference. One was on incremental pay scales for part time workers, which were discriminatory. Unbelievably, the then Conference rejected the motion. But by keeping the issue in the media and threatening tribunals (I believe they call it "influencing") the JCC eventually changed their position and the regulations were changed.

As the Police Women's rep I gained experience representing officers on a number of issues and supporting them (and still do) through grievances and the tribunal process, including Constable Devanna who was successful in her claim of race discrimination against Merseyside Police.

I was elected as the Chair of the Constable's Board in 1996 and then Chair of the Joint Board in 2001. During this time Merseyside has had two Chief Constables (Sir Norman Bettison and currently Bernard Hogan-Howe) which have presented the Federation with different styles of policing and therefore different challenges. Bernard Hogan Howe recently stated that his ambition is for Merseyside Police to be the best force in the country. We share that ambition and also hope for our Federation to be the best in the country!

One of the many challenges we face in Merseyside is that we have a Chief Constable and a Police Authority committed to increasing police numbers but hindered by a reduced budget. There are also extra demands on our police and our resources as Liverpool is the European Capital of Culture.

I am extremely fortunate that I am part of a fantastic team here at the offices in Merseyside. All the members of the Executive and our office staff are helpful and supportive and make it a pleasure to come to work each day. I love my job, and hope that when I do retire, I've made a difference.

In the 2007 New Years Honours list, Kath Kane was awarded an OBE in recognition of both services to policing and the Federation.