

Officers voice concerns over rising crime as funding cuts lead to dwindling numbers

Police officers fear that crime will rocket as a result of savage cuts to the policing budget and dwindling officer numbers.

The views were expressed by officers during a question time session at the Police Federation's annual conference in Bournemouth and stoked impassioned debate.

David James, general secretary of Devon and Cornwall Federation, warned that his force would lose 700 sworn officers, while Simon Payne from Warwickshire Police Federation revealed that domestic burglaries in his force had risen by over 40 percent between April 2010 and April 2011. He also reported a 20 percent increase in violent crime over the same period.

Mr Payne said: "89 percent of my members that took part in a survey believe that when police officer numbers go down, crime levels go up."

His comments were addressed to a panel made up of police minister Nick Herbert, shadow police minister Vernon Coaker, chief inspector of constabulary, HMIC Sir Denis O'Connor, president of the Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales Derek Barnett, Paul McKeever, chair of the Police Federation, and Nick Gargan, chair of the NPIA.

The comments follow on the back of a Police Federation survey of 42,000 officers, which found that 86 per cent believed cutting officer numbers would have a detrimental effect on crime levels. An astonishing 91 per cent also predicted a decline in service delivery due to planned budget cuts.

Meanwhile, David Sutcliffe from Greater Manchester warned that some officers faced losing up to £4,000 a year under the current proposals.

Mr Herbert said: "I don't think it is the case that the majority of officers will suffer that." His response prompted jeers and shouts of "rubbish" from the audience.

However, a later comment, where the minister revealed he could not promise to make sure officers aren't out of pocket, also sparked fury among delegates.

He went on to say the independent review would help determine how many officers would be affected by the pay proposals and in what way. However a later comment, where the minister revealed he could not promise to make sure officers aren't out of pocket, also sparked fury among delegates. The minister pointed out that it was not merely police officers who were being affected by the budget cuts but the whole of the public sector including nurses.

Speaking generally Mr O'Connor urged the service to adapt or risk becoming "bitter". "We have to think about how we will adapt. I think it will be interesting to hear the conference view of how we can change," he said.

David James warned that his force will lose 700 officers



Simon Payne's members fear crime will rise as officers are cut

