

Payment by results won't reduce reoffending rates

Government plans to introduce payment by results to cut reoffending rates received a lukewarm reception at the Police Federation's annual conference.

Earlier this year justice secretary Ken Clarke announced plans to make better use of the voluntary sector's expertise to help deter offenders away from crime. The plans involve paying independent organisations by results in reducing reoffending, and measuring success by the progress the offender makes in becoming a functioning member of society – such as holding down a job and a house, and avoiding reoffending.

Harry Fletcher, assistant secretary of NAPO representing probation officers, warned that the move could pose a risk to public protection. He said: "I believe the payment by results scheme is going to be difficult to implement, hard to monitor and even more difficult to evaluate. The real risk [is] fewer arrests because of fewer police officers to catch people, fewer people going through the courts, and fewer people in jail."

Helen Goodman, MP, described Ken Clarke's strategy as "incredible" and said it would not reduce reoffending, given the cuts being made. She warned that unemployment, lower housing benefit and fewer police all worked against the scheme.

Mark Ashford, from West Mercia, referred to an initiative in Worcestershire where officers attempted to divert people arrested for low-level offences to an alcohol awareness scheme.

"That cost us £25,000 a year and diverted some 27 percent of offenders from reoffending in two years," he said. "Getting in early requires investment, if you don't have investment in the infrastructure then you will not have the results. How are these voluntary organisations going to fund that type of work?"

David Sutcliffe, Greater Manchester Police, added: "The way to protect communities is to put violent offenders in prison. Young offenders want to go to private prisons where they can run amok. If you're serious about rehabilitating offenders it's the HMP prison staff who will do it for you. Private sector prisons are a complete and utter waste of money."

Made in Dagenham duo back the fight against inequality

Two of the Dagenham Ladies credited with being the driving force behind the introduction of the Equal Pay Act 1970 had some simple advice for policewomen facing a raft of measures which could impact on their pay – keep fighting.

Gwen Davis and Vera Sime, now in their 70s, were car seat cover machinists who worked for Ford in Essex, and found themselves at the centre of a dispute to be recognised as equal to their male counterparts for their skills.

Jayne Monkhouse, equality advisor to the Federation, spoke at the Women's Eve of Conference Meeting to outline a number of recommendations which will disproportionately impact on women and their pay packets, such as unsocial shifts attracting more pay.

Asked what they thought about the differences policewomen faced in their treatment and pay packets, Vera replied: "It's wrong and policewomen have to keep fighting like we did."

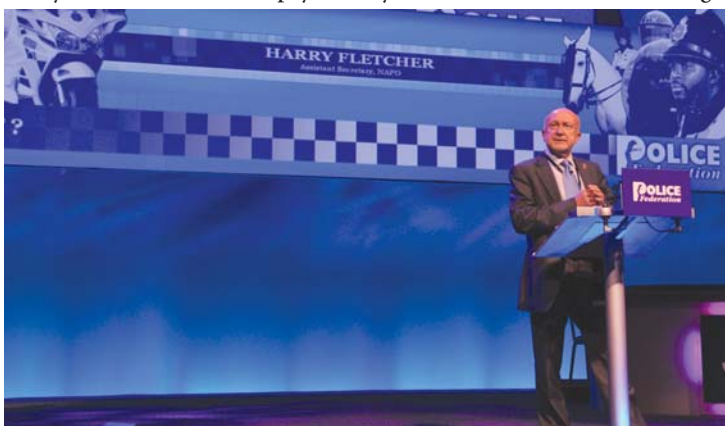
Gwen said she had "no idea" of the impact of their actions, which effectively changed the face of equality in Britain and around the world.

"We were just fighting for ourselves; we were just women with families. That was what brought us out in the first place."

The ladies have now been thrown into the limelight since their struggle was immortalised in the film *Made in Dagenham*. Vera said they are getting used to the attention, and the difference they had made to many women's working lives.

"People have stopped us and said thank you for what we have done," she added. "We didn't realise how far [the impact of what we did] went until we got a phone call about it from Ceylon!"

Harry Fletcher warned that payment by results won't reduce reoffending



Dagenham duo Gwen Davis and Vera Sime

