

February-March 2009

Front Line

Avon and Somerset Police Federation Constables Newsletter

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Please forward your questions via your federation rep. or direct by email to pbudd@avsomfed.org

Well it's about time too. The great October timewaster otherwise known as activity sampling has been binned. The argument it seems is about who can claim credit for this achievement. The constables branch board has long questioned the usefulness of this data collection, and now the government is refusing to publish the latest results as they show that officer visibility on the streets has decreased whilst paperwork has increased. Now, like you, I did not need to have a huge data collection exercise to come to that conclusion. The argument as I write this is whether ACPO can claim the credit because they decided in December 08 they would not do it anymore, or the Home Office who claim it is part of their drive in reducing bureaucracy (although I would suggest the latter's motivation is as simple as it is not showing them in a good light). As for me, I really don't care whose idea it was, its going and that is good for all serving officers and frees up time immediately from the burden of filling in the forms. Whilst we are talking about bureaucracy, Jan BERRY, ex chairperson of the police federation has published an interim report into reducing bureaucracy. A link to this report can be found on our website and if you have a little time to spare its worth a read. It's worth reading for no other reason than showing there may appear to be some light at the end of what has been a long tunnel which has seen police officers become the paperwork providers of our 'partner agencies'. One highlight for me is to include returning more charging decisions to custody sergeants and the reduced burden on officers that would immediately follow. We know what has become a great evidence chase just to get a job through the door at court. Custody officers bring that extra perspective that is needed in such cases and I for one welcome it.

Paul Budd
Editor

Cover picture by: Paul Budd

Does this picture indicate a reduction in police visibility on the streets?

Activity Sampling p2

There are not many people, other than bean counters, that will be sad at their demise.

National Constables Changes p3

Nationally the constables join central committee are to see some changes.

Constables Board Contact Details p3

Details of the current Constables Board.

On Call Allowance - Arbitration p4

Despite a promising start to negotiations no agreement has been reached.

Debt Management - Seek Advice p4

When debts are mounting and paying becomes difficult seek advice early.

National Police Promotion p5

The national police promotion framework is no longer supported by the federation.

Key Workers Housing Assistance p6

New officers may find getting a home problematic, but help is on hand.

Your Letters p7

Medical insurance, the 30+ scheme, tax and working on annual leave days.

FEDERATION WEB SITE TOP SEARCH PHRASES

1. **CRTP** - Register in the forums for latest news.
2. **Insurance** - Visit the services/insurance area for details.
3. **Travel** - Visit the services/insurance for certificate.
4. **Refreshments** - Check the 'FAQ's Other' section.
5. **Key Worker** - Visit the Financial Services page.

Join the forums to keep updated with regular news:
<http://forums.avsomfed.org/ucp.php?mode=register>

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE THE VIEWS OF THE ARTICLE AUTHORS AND THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE SAME VIEWS AS THE AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE FEDERATION.

National Constables Committee Changes

The chairperson of the Constables Central Committee, Julie Nesbitt, has stood down from the post and returned to her previous role as the National Reserve seat representative. A link to the full text of Julie's letter can be found on our website.

Some of the reasons given include a belief that some local boards were critical of the direction that the CCC were taking on a number of issues. As representa-



tives we all have a duty to reflect the concerns and issues that our members highlight to the best of our ability. It is a representatives role to provide sufficient information to the members in order that they can make informed decisions about issues when asked to complete surveys for example. It follows that our national representatives should continue to do the same and not pursue issues where there is no desire for such a course from the rest of the country.

Locally we have found ourselves at odds on a number of issues including the role of the 'lead constable'. As Julie rightly says nobody can hope to have all the answers but representation is about realis-

ing this and collectively working on the way ahead. Julie is to stand down with immediate effect.

At the same time as the announcement from Julie our national General Secretary, Ray Coster is to return to his regional role.

Ray is to stand down from his position on the 31st May 2009



after seeing in the transition of the election and appointment of a replacement.

CONSTABLES REPRESENTATIVES

On Call Allowance - Going To Arbitration

Four years after a claim for an on-call allowance was first tabled by the Staff Side of the Police Negotiating Board a stalemate has been reached. A failure to agree has been registered and the Staff Side claim will now be referred to the independent Police Arbitration Tribunal.

Over the last two years attention has focussed mainly on the fight for fair pay. However, at the point of agreement of the three-year pay settlement the Home Secretary indicated that she and the Official Side would look more favourably on the Staff Side claim for an on-call allowance, particularly as some forces already recognise and compensate a requirement for on-call by way of a Special Priority or Bonus Payment and this money could be redistributed to fund a specific on-call allowance.

Regrettably a series of working groups where on-call was discussed failed to move the matter forward with the Official Side fail-

ing to acknowledge that it should be a nationally agreed payment reflecting any occasion where there is a requirement to be on-call. Following a meeting on 10th February the Staff Side of PNB has registered a failure to agree with the independent Chairman of the PNB and now await the matter being referred to independent arbiters.

On behalf of the Staff Side of the Police Negotiating Board, Ian Rennie, General Secretary of Staff Side and the Police Federation of England and Wales, says:

“We are extremely disappointed that once again we find ourselves having to fight the government for a basic fair working condition for the 170,000 police officers throughout the United Kingdom.

“In order to provide the necessary frontline resilience police forces and officers must be flexible but this voluntary flexibility by officers must be recognised. We’re not asking for any new money to

fund the on-call allowance; there are sufficient funds within the Special Priority Payments to cover this. This is about recognising the commitment to the public and sacrifice to their families that officers make by being on-call during their off duty time. Recognising the restrictions that forces place on officers limiting what they can do with family and friends including having to be available and fit for duty including no consumption of alcohol and having to remain in their force or a geographically defined area with a requirement to return to duty within a specified time period.

“Police officers understand that 24/7 policing will impact upon their personal lives but it is only right that anything that goes beyond what is considered ‘reasonable’ that impacts on their family life should be financially recompensed.”

Debt Management - Seek Early Advice

We are receiving an increasing number of calls regarding financial matters, predominantly around managing debt. The reasons for finding yourself in debt are numerous and varied but it is not a problem best dealt with by ignoring it. Creditors shout very loudly and put a lot of pressure on individuals which can lead to medical problems like depression, and relationship problems, such as constant arguing and rows. If this sounds like a familiar situation then you need to seek advice. There was a

great fear in the past that debt solutions such as IVA's and bankruptcy proceedings will automatically result in a police officer losing their job. That is not the case any longer. What you must do however is take steps to deal with your situation. The first is to seek some good advice and assistance from specialists. A local company has offered to assist by providing free advice on dealing with debt and assisting with solutions if required. We have arranged for this local firm to provide some one hour ‘clinics’ at the federation offices in

the same way as we do for family law and financial planning. The first clinics were held on the 26th March 2009 and more clinics will be arranged in the future.

Once you have spoken to an independent adviser you will be better informed as to the course of action you need to take - there are solutions other than IVA's and bankruptcy. Once you have come up with a plan to deal with the debts a written report explaining your situation addressed to the PSD department will suffice as far as notifying work is concerned.

National Police Promotion Framework

Since 2005 the NPPF, previously Work Based Assessment (WBA) for Promotion, trials have operated in seven forces as an alternative to the Ospre Part 2 examination. The Police Federation has always supported the principle of WBA being part of the promotion process to the ranks of Sergeant and Inspector.

However, our concerns in moving to such a process to replace the Ospre Part 2 examination, which we have consistently raised with the Police Promotions Examination Board (PPEB) and latterly the Police

Promotion Implementation Project Board (PPIPb), have been in respect of consistency, standardisation, quality assurance and the potential impact in respect of equality and diversity.

The Police Federation of England & Wales position has always been to support the roll out of WBA to replace Ospre Part 2 when it has been evidenced to our satisfaction that the time is right and that all the relevant structures are in place. We have actively engaged with the PPEB and PPIPb to develop an effective and robust promotion process that is implemented consistently with sustainable national standards.

The PPEB are recommending that national roll out of the NPPF process for promotion to Sergeant

and Inspector to the remaining 36 forces should commence from 1 April this year. The Joint Central Committee has serious concerns that the relevant structures that would facilitate and support the



workability of such a model are unable to be put in place for the NPPF to provide a sustainable national promotion process for our members. At the January 2009 meeting the JCC adopted the following policy:

‘The Police Federation of England & Wales no longer support the National Police Promotion Framework because of a lack of confidence that it can deliver sustainable national standards.’

The rationale for this decision being that:

1. The PPEB and NPIA are unable to guarantee compliance with the NPPF.
2. There is no effective governance process to ensure forces comply

with the NPPF.

3. There is no effective underpinning performance development review and assessment structure process.

4. There is uncertainty and a clear lack of clarity in respect of the actual cost for the implementation and operation of the NPPF.

5. There has been a failure to comply with the statutory duty to promote diversity under the race, disability and gender duties to promote equality. An adequate Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken which identifies whether replacing the Ospre Part 2 examination with the NPPF process will have a disproportionate impact on people from minority groups in the Service; or whether, in those circumstances the NPPF can be justified as being a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim" as required by the legislation.

Whilst the Joint Central Committee agrees that work based assessment should form an important part of any promotion process, we believe that the proposed NPPF does not meet the requirements of a national promotion process. I have written to the Police Minister asking him not to roll out the NPPF from 1 April and to direct both ACPO and the NPIA, to undertake, as a matter of urgency, a fundamental review of the promotion process for Sergeants and Inspectors as recommended in the HMIC ‘Leading from the Frontline’ report.

Key Worker Government Housing Assistance

Did you know as a key worker you may be able to receive government assistance to get on the property ladder?

Warren & Co. Independent Mortgage Advisors have been advising police federation members and police staff for years, and are pleased to announce the introduction of two new schemes to help key workers onto the property market:

Homebuy Direct is a brand new product from the Homes and Communities Agency working in partnership with house builders. It aims to provide affordable new homes to people who have been priced out of the market. This is a nationwide scheme with specific Builders taking part, there are well known names such as Barratt Homes, Bellway, Crest Nicholson, Lioncourt and Persimmon.

You purchase an equity share of at least 70% of the property by way of a mortgage; this will be dependent on individual circumstances. The 30% will be provided by equity loan from the builder and the agency. Warren & Co. will help you find the mortgage with a qualifying lender at the best rate suited to your needs and circumstances. There is no rent payable on this scheme. The unsold equity share will be registered as a charge on the property. When your financial circumstances allow you may buy further equity, this is known as staircasing.

New build houses and flats are available on this scheme within the following areas, call 01452 547783 for more details:

Wiltshire 19 sites



Chippenham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Salisbury, Swindon, Tidworth and Westbury

North Somerset 27 sites

Bristol, Portishead, Weston-Super-Mare, Bath and Paulton

“new build houses and flats are available on this scheme”

Somerset 17 sites

Bridgwater, Street, Taunton, Wells, Burnham-on-sea, Frome, Shepton Mallett and South Petherton

The second scheme available, My Choice Homebuy, allows approved purchasers to purchase any property on the open market. You can receive a government equity loan for up to 50% of the purchase price. Any savings or contribution from family/friends above £10,000 can be used to "top up" your purchase price without affect-

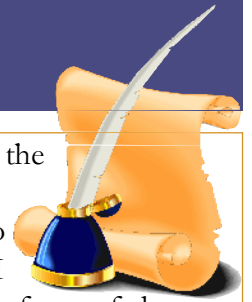
ing your government equity loan.

The Equity Loan is secured on the property by percentage and tops you up to your purchase price. It is repayable as that same percentage of the property's value or eventual sale price. The Equity Loan carries a low level monthly servicing fee payable to the HomeBuy Agent which is initially capped at 1.75% of the Equity Loans value. This fee will go up slightly with inflation each year and is set to be cheaper than say the equivalent monthly payment under a Shared Ownership Rent. My Choice HomeBuy is for people who would not otherwise be able to buy their own home.

To discuss either of these schemes with Warren & Co. or for free, independent mortgage advice on moving, improving or remortgaging, Warren & Co. hold regular mortgage surgeries throughout Avon & Somerset.

For more information call Warren & Co on 01452 547783 or visit one of the upcoming 'clinics'.

YOUR LETTERS...



Has anyone any advice on what happens if an annual leave day that was cancelled is reinstated with 2 days notice? Does the officer have the choice as to whether they work (claiming payment as per regs) or have the day off as would happen with a rest day?

Graham

Ed. In regulations there is the ability to cancel an annual leave day as yours was. You are then entitled to compensation as per regs = 2 days annual leave back or one day annual leave and a days pay at double time. The important bit is that there is no ability within regs to reinstate a cancelled annual leave day. So once it is cancelled you can still work it whether the force want to try and claw it back or not. You could of course choose to have the day back and I am sure that the force would bite your hand off.



Iam currently on the 30 + scheme and hope to be for at least 2 more years if not more. Are you able to clarify the NPIA report which featured in the January newsletter regarding the scheme being stopped in 31 3 2010. Will this effect me or is this for people wanting to go onto the scheme.

Regards

John

Ed. I was at a regional meeting last month where this issue was discussed. There was a view that the scheme was only ever set up to work until 2010 when it first came about. The NPIA decision to end it however, was not after consultation with any other parties, i.e. APA, Police Federation, ACPO and Supts. Association. It would seem a little hasty, not least of all because of the impending dilemma regarding the Olympics. As it stands the scheme is due to end. There will however be further discussion in the coming months as to it's future I am sure At this stage do not write it off completely. I cannot add anything further but will clearly make any future updates available as we receive them.

I telephoned the Tax office last week to query whether I was due a rebate for my federation subscriptions. They said I probably was as I have not claimed since 2005 however they would need to know what the annual subscriptions were since that date. How do I go about finding that out please.

Darren

Ed. There is a pro-forma letter on the website at; <http://www.avsomfed.org/docs/taxrelief2008.pdf>. The relative amounts for each of the years are included on the letter.

My family are interested in Medical insurance and I believe the federation have something in place with regards to Healthcare. Could I have the appropriate information or could you let m know who I need to contact.

Name supplied

Ed. Full details of the health care schemes can be found on the website at <http://www.avsomfed.org/otherservices.html>. Click the link on the page for the 'BUPA' scheme which was formerly known as 'Number 1 Healthcare'. Current rates and a link to the application form also listed.

Questions can be directed by email to pbudd@avsomfed.org or via your local federation reps.