



Star Wars

Just rewards?

Amidst the perfect storm of Winsor, Hutton and Neyroud, a small ray of light has appeared following the riots, or as some would have us believe, the 'disturbances' of August 2011. Many inspectors around the country were either directly affected by the disorder, by policing it in their home force or on mutual aid, or indirectly by being required to work longer hours to cover the work of those previously mentioned.

The inspecting ranks, in the main, tend to have a 'can do' attitude. However, as the cuts begin to bite and the workloads increase, the goodwill that is so often shown and not often recognised is being sorely tested. As a direct result of the inconsistent recognition of inspectors' workloads following the riots, Steve Williams, general secretary of the Inspectors' Central Committee, wrote directly to chief constables to ask that, where duties were performed relative to mutual aid and held on reserve provision, they support considering the rank receive appropriate recognition through the acknowledged system of a bonus payment, for their commitment and engagement during those many long, difficult and often unpleasant hours.

We're all acutely aware of the financial constraints facing chief constables but praise must be given to the majority of the ACPO members who readily recognised the contribution of inspecting ranks. Most agreed a rate of £100 per day for those engaged in public order duties. It is disappointing that it was felt necessary to issue this prompt.

It is unclear why most forces capped the awards at £500 – surely if an event is recognised at a given amount (in this case £100 per day), officers who were required to work more than five days would have the value of their award diminished? Two neighbouring East Anglian forces adjusted their diverse positions and settled on £50 per day.

A couple of forces 'clawed back' some payment by not including the days spent travelling. Only Dyfed Powys, to date, has interpreted the use of the bonus scheme without placing a restriction.

Not being ones to complain, most inspectors were grateful for the recognition of work well done. However, some four months after the riots, some forces have still to agree an appropriate form of recognition, despite Peter Fahy, ACPO spokesman on workforce development, taking a paper in support to ACPO cabinet. One chief constable stated: "Whilst recognising the challenging nature of the work performed it was not felt that any individual warranted singling out for recompense in this way at any rank, and nor would it be appropriate, or correct within the scheme, to reward everyone involved with a carte blanche payment."

The Metropolitan Management Board has eventually chosen to award £115 per day for PSU inspectors for the first four days and £58 per day for the next five days. For all those placed on 12-hour shifts for six weeks, or who worked excessively long hours that enabled 'business as usual', any award will be at the discretion of the OCU commander.

It is no wonder that staff morale is so low and the goodwill is evaporating – this was a pretty unique event in recent mainland history and an opportunity for senior managers to openly recognise the value of the important work being done by the inspecting ranks, above and beyond what is reasonably expected of the rank.

To all those inspectors' branch boards and local federation representatives' officers who negotiated a settlement for the inspecting ranks, well done and keep on fighting! Dependent on the outcome of Winsor Part 2, the Inspectors' Central Committee intends to pursue the important issue of what is reasonably expected of the inspecting rank and suitable recompense.

Paul Huitson, Inspectors' Central Committee

Why the title Star Wars? The badge of rank for inspecting ranks are the Bath Stars and this could be one of the biggest fights we will ever have. May the force be with you!