

# POLICE

## Police Magazine Update

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### **Federation concerns over police officers leaving service**

The numbers of officers considering leaving the police because of low morale over cuts is “extremely worrying”, Paul McKeever, chair of the Federation told a fringe held at the Liberal Democrat Conference.

Opening a discussion at a debate on policing and politics on Monday, Mr McKeever said police officers were “greatly demoralised”.

He spoke about the cuts to police budgets, pay and conditions, saying they were of “a magnitude we have never experienced”.

A Police Federation survey, released at annual conference in May, showed that around 90 percent of police officers felt many would look to leave in the wake of attacks on their pay and conditions. Budget cuts, reduction in officer numbers and changes to their terms and conditions saw 98 percent of more than 42,000 officers who responded to the survey claiming morale has fallen.

Mr McKeever said cuts are already having an impact on forces and reversing previous successes. He told a panel, which included Tom Brake MP, chairman of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party Committee on Home Affairs, Justice and Equalities, that the government appeared ‘enthusiastic’ to speed through reform in policing while being prepared to take it slow with the banking sector to avoid ‘unintended consequences’.

Sir Hugh Orde, president of ACPO, contributed to the debate by saying that ACPO believed it had some influence on policy and believed that the bond between police and public had been cemented during the riots.

However, he hit out at any suggestion of political influence – saying the operational independence of policing is ‘crucial’.

Derek Barnett, president of the Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales (PSAEW), said the difficulty in fighting for police rights in a reasonable manner was not newsworthy in the same way that, for instance, TUC demands and strike threats were.

His message to all political parties, though particularly the coalition, was that they had allowed the narrative of the police service to be negative, in order to argue for its reform.

“You do not have to destroy our reputation to improve policing,” he told the audience.

Mr Brake mentioned how the party committee he chairs could work to improve the relationship between politicians and the police, particularly by ensuring there was a dialogue between the two during challenging times.