



Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation

We've come a long way...

As I'm about to retire, I have been asked a number of times about my years as a police officer. I feel my time within the police service can be viewed from three angles: the state of policing, the position of women within the police service and the Police Federation.

In terms of the state of policing, we must never underestimate how far we have come, and that we remain the best police service in the world. The challenges for policing are huge, but by and large I think we are meeting them.

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Having said that, we can't afford to rest on our laurels and I feel we are not reflecting enough on what we do or what we are trying to achieve. The police service is currently suffering from a lack of leadership. There are too many people vying to be leader while there's confusion over local delivery and what should be dealt with at a national level.

When I first joined the police service I knew the name of every female officer in my force because there were so few of them. Today more than 20 per cent of officers are female and that is a remarkable achievement. It is great to see so many successful female officers. If my becoming chairman of the Police Federation gives out the message that we can influence and play a big part in policing then I'm pleased about that.

However as a service we don't deal with differences very well. I do think there's a danger that we dwell too much

on differences when it would be better if we concentrated on our shared values of safety, security and impartiality that we should all be seeking to achieve.

If we were sitting here trying to draw up the purpose of the Police Federation I don't think it would be very different to the organisation we have today. When we have needed to, we have worked together very effectively for our members and for the public.

I think people need to remember that we were set up to fail. We can find differences that can be magnified out of proportion, but we must never forget that we represent our members and that at times we must even be a social conscience for the service when others fail.

We work best when we are united, that is when we are our most effective.