



## **Federation opposes changes to Proceeds of Crime Act**

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Several newspapers are today reporting that fare dodgers and council tax evaders could have their homes searched and cash seized by council officials under planned government changes to the Proceeds of Crime Act. The reports state that Home Secretary Alan Johnson will let town halls tackle small-time offenders with powers designed for police to use on crime bosses. This will mean that Town Hall officials, the Royal Mail, the Rural Payments Agency and Transport for London will have the right to search homes, seize cash, freeze bank accounts and confiscate property.

Reacting to these proposals, Paul McKeever, Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, says:

"The Proceeds of Crime Act is a very powerful tool in the hands of police and police-related agencies and it shouldn't be treated lightly. There is a behind-the-scenes creeping of powers occurring here and I think the public will be very surprised. They would want such intrusive powers to be kept in the hands of warranted officers and other law enforcement bodies - which are vetted to a very high standard."