

Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, says:

“The Federation has long warned of the consequences of the boom and bust approach to recruitment to the police service taken by successive governments. Although it appears that a large number of the 10,000 leaving is through natural retirement after completing 30 years service. But the consequence for the resilience of the service remains a concern, especially in view of our 24/7 response policing report published last year, which showed just how stretched and under resourced most response teams are already.

“Regrettably 2,000 officers resigning in the last year does not surprise me. In the first instance the job of policing has changed substantially; whereas in the past it was considered a 30 year career with the opportunity to develop and perform a variety of tasks, all too often now officers are only called upon to interact with communities when the wheel comes off. Research shows that many of those resigning are 24/7 frontline officers frustrated at their inability to be able to do the job to the high standard they wish.

“Also, the service has never faced so much change and uncertainty as it does today. Is it any surprise that demoralised and overworked officers, who face an uncertain future with regard to their pay and working conditions, look towards other safer careers where they are properly rewarded for their efforts. The knock on effect is that those left at the sharp end find the demands upon them are always increasing, there’s no real let up from the burden of bureaucracy and chasing targets, but they remain committed to delivering the very best service to the public they can.

“What is urgently needed is a comprehensive review to examine where we want policing to be in 10 years time, rather than the habit of governments focusing on the issues to suit parliamentary and election timetables.”