



## **Absolute disgrace - Home Secretary's letter of betrayal last straw for police officers**

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A truly dishonourable move by the Home Secretary, a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer exposes the absolute contempt held for policing by the Home Office and this government. The letter which on the surface appears to ratify the pay arbitration finding, goes on to deliver the final blow to police officers by asking the Chancellor to support her in a decision that will not only pay police a lower than inflation award but effectively cut police officers pay for 2007.

**Jan Berry, Chairman, Police Federation of England and Wales:**

**“This is contemptuous behaviour by the Home Secretary, and has rightly angered the 140,000 police officers in England and Wales who have been waiting patiently for their pay award since 1st September. This is a cheap shot by a Home Office, not fit for purpose, seeking to remedy their own financial mismanagement by penalising police officers to the tune of £30.5 million; money that is rightly theirs, money they've worked hard for. There are a number of officers who are now saying we should have the right to take industrial action. In the light of this letter we are calling an emergency meeting of national and local Police Federation leaders in London next week. Police officers should either have full industrial rights or independent binding arbitration; currently we have neither. ”**

In the letter the Home Secretary requests the Chancellor supports her decision to not back-pay police wages to September which means the under inflation determination made by the arbiters of 2.5% effectively becomes 1.9% - a lower award than any other emergency service or public sector body in England and Wales, and for the one group of workers that cannot take industrial action.

The letter also supports the introduction of a pay review body and the demise of the Police Negotiating Board. This is before the Booth II report has been published.

**On this point Mrs Berry says:**

**“Despite assurances that there would be full consultation with us before any decision is made, it is clear that the Home Secretary has already decided on a pay review body. I cannot understand on the weight of**

**evidence presented how Booth or the Home Secretary could contemplate this. For 30 years the PNB has worked effectively as a fair negotiating machinery to determine police officers' pay. It is this government who has deliberately obstructed PNB ensuring it fails in order to impose a pay review body on the police service. This isn't just about saving money – this government want total control of policing, from budgets to operational interference. They are eroding the structures and practices which have made the British police service the best in the world. Once we go down this road, there can be no turning the clock back.”**

Police Officers unlike other workers do not have access to industrial rights and continue to police no matter how badly they are treated. By making such an outrageous award the Home Secretary is effectively taking them for granted.

**Mrs Berry adds:**

**“We're already seeing a change of mood amongst officers who have had enough and this latest blow may well be the final straw. However, it is the tone of the letter from the Home Secretary that will really turn the knife on a morale weary police service? This will come back to haunt her. “**

**END**

### **Notes to Editors**

Since the late 1970s police pay has been up rated by an index that has fully taken account of the unique status that officers hold in society – the inability to take any form of industrial action and the numerous restrictions on their private lives. Whilst the index has changed over the years that unique status has always been factored in.

Last year the Government chose to unilaterally move away from the index, the matter went to arbitration and we were awarded a rise in line with the index. Sir Clive Booth was commissioned by the Government to do an “independent” review of police pay, including a new index for 2007 and the police pay machinery.

This year's pay rise was negotiated through the Police Negotiating Board (the arena for negotiating police officers' terms and conditions) but a failure to agree was registered. A rise of 2.325% had been consistently offered but was rejected over the desire to stage it, effectively reducing it in real terms to 1.85% (below the Government's pay ceiling of 2%).

The issue passed through conciliation to binding arbitration; this reported on 29th November 2007 giving a rise of 2.5% backdated to 1st September. Arbitration is binding on both sides of the board and must then be ratified by the Home Secretary.

**For further information please contact the Police Federation of England and Wales press office on 020 8335 1000**