



NEWS RELEASE

The Constables' Central Committee, Police Federation

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PUBLIC SAY NO TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (PCSOs) - POLICE BRAND THE GOVERNMENT'S PCSO "EXPERIMENT" A FAILURE

The public's overwhelming lack of support for PCSOs was demonstrated on the eve of the Police Federation Constables' conference in Bournemouth according to a YouGov poll published today.

70% of respondents said they would feel safer if there were fewer PCSOs on the beat but more Police Officers.

The finding will come as a blow to the Government which is planning to consult on reducing Police numbers and increase the level of civilian support, such as PCSOs, later in the year. However, just 8% of the public said they would feel safer with more PCSOs on the beat at the expense of police number cuts.

When presented with details about starting salaries of PCSOs and Police Officers 57 % of respondents said that Police Officers were better value for money than PCSOs, with only 8% thinking PCSOs were a more cost effective Policing solution.

Julie Nesbit, Chairman of the Constables' Central Committee at the Police Federation said:

"The Government's experiment with PCSOs has clearly failed. The public want to see Police Officers, not imitations, on our streets. These findings clearly demonstrate that the public feel safer with Police Officers patrolling our streets and not civilian staff.

The Constables' Central Committee warned the Government when PCSOs were introduced that trying to Police on the cheap was short sighted and it seems our position has now been vindicated."

The Constables' Central Committee of the Police Federation is launching a campaign at conference – **Communities need Constables.**

Notes to Editors:

For further comment or to arrange interviews with Julie Nesbit, chairman of the Constables' Central Committee at the Police Federation please contact:

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YouGov survey conducted between 14th-15th May 2008

	Gender		Age					
	Total	Male	Female	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 +
All GB Adults	2117	1016	1101	233	431	333	369	752
Unweighted Sample	2117	988	1129	201	416	349	433	718
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were introduced by the Police Reform Act 2002. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) work on the frontline, providing a visible and reassuring presence on the streets and tackling the menace of anti-social behaviour. PCSOs have different roles in different forces, but they usually patrol a beat and interact with the public, while also offering assistance to police officers at crime scenes and major events. Depending on where they work, they:

- Deal with minor offences**
- Offer early intervention to deter people from committing offences**
- Provide support for front-line policing**
- Conduct house-to-house enquiries**
- Guard crime scenes**
- Provide crime prevention advice**

One of the roles of PCSOs is to provide a visible and reassuring presence on the streets. They have the power to issue fixed penalty notices for anti-social behaviour but do NOT have the power to arrest suspects in the way warranted Police Officers do. PCSOs have replaced Police Officers as the largest group of personnel conducting regular beat patrols in communities in England and Wales.

With this in mind which ONE if any of the following comes closest to your preferred opinion on patrolling the streets?

More warranted Police Officers patrolling the streets but less PCSOs than is currently the case	58	65	51	44	52	62	57	65
More PCSOs patrolling the streets but less Police Officers than is currently the case	8	7	9	9	10	7	9	7

The same number of Police Officers and PCSOs patrolling the streets than is currently the case	22	16	27	28	21	22	23	20
Don't know	12	11	13	19	17	9	11	9

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	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Thinking about since PCSOs were introduced which ONE of the following statements do you agree with most?

I would feel safer if there were more Police Officers and less PCSOs patrolling the streets	70	72	68	61	63	69	69	77
I would feel safer if there were more PCSOs and less Police Officers patrolling the streets	4	3	5	6	4	4	5	4
None of these	16	15	16	17	21	17	15	12
Don't know	10	10	11	15	12	9	11	8

According to the Police Recruitment website, the average starting salary for a Police Constable (outside of London) is £21,534 and £16,000 for a PCSO (outside of London).

'Police Constables provide better value for money than PCSOs'

Strongly agree	26	32	20	23	20	24	24	32
Agree	31	32	30	26	28	33	31	32
Neither agree nor disagree	28	23	33	24	31	33	28	26
Disagree	7	5	8	13	8	6	6	4
Strongly disagree	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	1
Don't know	8	7	9	14	12	4	9	5