

## Campaign for CJS workers

Organisations representing workers across the criminal justice system pledged to lobby the government over cuts to services.

The Police Federation joined organisations representing prison officers, probation workers and a number of others from across the CJS at the TUC Conference held last month in Bournemouth.

The organisations aim to lobby the government to get a fair deal for workers in the justice sector during Justice Week set to be held from December 8 to December 12.

During the justice forum at the TUC's conference the groups hit out at the cuts being made to services by the government.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of Napo, the probation and court staff union, said there are cuts across the whole justice system and the government was taking away the rights of workers.

He added that workloads in probation have reached unprecedented levels and where officers may have been working on 30 to 40 cases they have now seen workloads double 70 or 80 cases.

Mr Fletcher said this had meant a knock-on effect with waiting times of around six months for community programmes aimed at ending domestic violence and drug abuse.

Simon Reed, vice-chairman of the Police Federation, said that the police service was being dismantled and all the organisations within the criminal justice sector were working within a crisis situation.

He added that the reoffending rate stood at 70 per cent for young men and it was a 'national scandal' that no one was dealing with it. He added that the government is 'chipping away' at police powers and giving them away to people who are not fully accountable. He made reference to the Police Federation's ongoing pay dispute and that police officers were not asking for generosity, just fair pay for the job they do.

## Shop security guards manage sex offenders

Security guards are being drafted in to monitor sex offenders in accommodation for serious offenders under supervision - because of a funding shortage leaving communities vulnerable to them carrying out further 'horrific offences'.

Matthew Lay, chairman of the national probation committee in Unison and a Labour councillor, said a lack of funding was putting communities at potential risk of more offences being committed by serious offenders.

Mr Lay told the justice forum at the TUC's Conference: "Managers are not getting the funding so they are removing skilled and experienced workers. They are going in much below that by bringing in shop security guards to provide frontline cover. One of their key roles is observation to identify if the risks [of them committing further crimes] are increasing.

"In the community, our intelligence is critical. Staffing is degraded and that impacts on the quality of the competence of the people working there, the consequence is that they are just residential units with no significant work going on and no proper supervision or intelligence gathering, working with the police to keep the community safe. A lot of these places are in residential areas. Potentially they could commit further offences and the offences can be quite horrific."

He said that there are 101 approved premises up and down the country and 'frankly they are in a mess'. Mr Lay added that the maintenance work on such premises is being contracted out, with one company literally threatening to take away toilet paper and food because they had not been paid for it.

"The justice system cannot take anymore. The resourcing has put the justice system under so much stress it's about to break."

He added 'we are telling them [the government] they will have a problem and communities are being let down'.

The criminal justice system is working in a 'crisis'



Photography: Shutterstock Inc.

Shop security staff are working in frontline roles



Photography: © Paul Doyle / Alamy