



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

Editorial - July 2008

Commonsense Day?

On the first day of this month two major pieces of news that directly affect police sergeants throughout England and Wales were announced.

Firstly, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary released, under embargo, their long awaited report 'Leading from the Frontline'. The HMIC began the work in May 2007 as a consequence of the Police Federation's 24/7 Report published the year before, and the Federation played an active role working alongside the HMIC.

The report is right to term police sergeants the 'guardians of excellence', recognising the pivotal role they have as the first line of management on the ground. For years the Police Federation has seemed like a lone voice saying that sergeants are undervalued and have a distinct lack of support.

The HMIC's primary recommendation is that there should be national standards for sergeants, to ensure consistency of training, skills, knowledge and support mechanisms.

Let's hope the Home Office, NPIA and ACPO pull their fingers out and ensure the good practice recommended is implemented. That way there may not be the reluctance amongst constables to seek promotion. Whereas all they see at the moment are sergeants working flat out, being given more and more responsibility with less resources and training.

The other major news on the same day was the announcement by the Police Minister Tony McNulty that the government have abandoned plans to civilianise the role of the Custody Sergeant.

How they ever thought a non-sworn employee could undertake such a crucial role as the chief custodian of PACE is beyond me. But that's exactly what the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act of 2005 allowed – the introduction of Staff Custody Officers.

However, continual pressure by the Federation and other groups meant that good sense prevailed and the Minister made clear that the role of Custody Officer should remain with the police sergeant.

The 4th of July may be renowned as Independence Day across the Atlantic but for over 21,000 police sergeants throughout England and Wales the 1st of July could well become known as Commonsense Day.

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