



Andy Gilbert, chairman of the West Midlands Joint Branch Board

## Feeling blue?

The Conservative Party is holding their annual conference in Birmingham this month and tackling crime will be high on the agenda. Of course, our officers are integral to ensuring any policy of a potential next government will be carried forward effectively.

So what would officers, those at the coalface of policing the streets, dealing with everyday dangers and at other times buried by bureaucracy and targets like to see from the next potential government?

We would not want the Conservatives to do more with regard to policing. In fact, less would be helpful - less meaningless targets, less political interference and less headline-grabbing initiatives. By all means have an independent Royal Commission as this could result in a vision for the future of policing so we all know where we are going. Not a month goes by at the moment without someone producing a paper on what he or she sees the future of policing to be.

We also hope that if Mr Cameron is successful, he considers his choice of Home Secretary carefully. It is not a job for anyone lacking in experience and knowledge. The Federation would like to ensure that whoever takes on the role fully understands policing and understands the need for trust, confidence and integrity.

The current situation where the Police Federation has been backed into a corner over pay, offered below inflation rises at a time when everything else – fuel and food bills are rocketing – is not winning the trust of those who put their lives on the line and who feel deeply demoralised by the situation.

It is important for any Home Secretary speak up for police officers in cabinet and realise the benefits of having dialogue and a healthy working relationship with the Police Federation.

We should get back to basics. We are not pseudo social workers or audit clerks working on behalf of civil servants at the Home Office. Our job is to catch criminals whether they are bank robbers or bike thieves. Give us the resources and pay us fairly and we will crack on with doing just that.

If the Conservative Party do decide to return to the fine city of Birmingham for future conferences, Mr Cameron

may well be in office as Prime Minister. This can be at times a quite demanding role; so if you are successful don't take too much work on initially. If you could get us into a situation where turning on the central heating doesn't break the family budget and we do not feel like we have been mugged every time we fill up our cars with petrol that would be great. Finally, remember that you cannot be Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary all at the same time. It's being piloted at the moment and it isn't going too well.

P.S. Any chance of an evaluation in to the effectiveness of police community support officers?

**What do you think?**  
email: [syreetalund@polfed.org](mailto:syreetalund@polfed.org)