

## Chairman's Keynote Speech – Conference 2017

(Final version: 15 May 2017)

Home Secretary, colleagues, guests:

Welcome to Birmingham.

And welcome to the new style, new format, two-day Police Federation annual conference.

Welcome also to a new Home Secretary.

I'm reliably informed that it's a good stepping stone to bigger things apparently.

Your predecessor addressed us seven times and it didn't do her any harm.

We are grateful that you have taken time out of the campaign trail to address us.

For, Home Secretary – General Election or no General Election - there is no greater job than overseeing the security of our nation and the safety of its citizens.

No greater reward than being the Secretary of State overseeing the best police service in the world.

It was 10 months ago when you were appointed and your first official engagement was to join us at the Police Bravery Awards.

You couldn't have had a better briefing on what it means to police this great nation of ours.

I can honestly say that I saw first-hand how moved you were as you gave the final award.

And yet it was a night of terror as well, with that awful attack in Nice which unfolded as we celebrated. And who would know that all too soon it would come to haunt our country, our democracy and our police service this March.

And all too soon you had to grieve with us Home Secretary. How many more times will we grieve together?

Time, actions, team work will tell.

But I will say this as politicians and political commentators work themselves into a poll driven frenzy.

Policing is too important to be a political football and we look to politicians to raise the debate to where it needs to be. Front and centre. Fair and square. Listening to the public. The electorate.

And as the Prime Minister decided to skip the electoral cycle, please do the same.

Take a long term, unpolitical view of policing.

Whilst the world will move on, if you have a five year parliament, give the police a five year funding strategy. Why not?

After all, politics and politicians will move on, but policing, its officers and people's safety will always be needed.

No matter who is in government.

Put policing before politics, put the people before politics, and put those who pledge to serve before politics.

The service will respond to that and work together, with the Police Federation of England and Wales playing its full part.

We are the very best police service in the world.

We are a police service that is envied and emulated across the globe.

But we are just that – a service.

A police.....service.

Not a business.

Not an organisation that you can cut back and then build up again overnight.



Not a body that says we don't do that anymore.

We are a service that wants to deliver what the public want, when they want it and how they want it.

24 hours a day: 365 days a year.

But this is getting impossible.

In the last year we have seen a further loss of approximately 3,000 police officers.

Home Secretary, it's like me telling everyone in your own constituency of Hastings and Rye that every single police officer in Sussex is to go.

So, 3,000 is not just a number.

It is much, much more than that:

- It's 3,000 fewer police officers patrolling and protecting communities;
- 3,000 fewer cops investigating crimes and supporting vulnerable victims;
- 3,000 fewer tackling cyber-crime, dealing with historic offences and tackling the atrocities of terrorism.
- A sorry total of 20,000 police officers over the last four years.

That's not just uniformed officers. In its PEEL report HMIC referred to the shortage of qualified detectives as a 'crisis'.

And it is a crisis.

A crisis that we don't have enough police officers to deal with the demands placed upon the service.

And that should be very worrying for government, whose primary responsibility is the safety and security of its citizens.

Home Secretary, as police officers, we know full well the reality of the threat we face.

And on 22 March, we lost one of our own as he fought to stop a terrorist at the heart of British democracy.

In the past we used to say 'Not if, but when'.

The reality now is that it is, 'Not when, but where next'.



So, dismiss our claims if you wish – but lives matter.

And numbers matter too.

Even if some in politics struggle to get to grips with them...

Home Secretary, last year you and politicians from all parties expressed support of our Protect the Protectors campaign.

A campaign aimed not just at reducing the number of assaults on police officers, but also by giving officers the right protection, equipment and support.

Whatever duties officers are doing, they all need protecting.

Many of your colleagues from all political parties were vocal and stated their support for a change in legislation.

Many expressed support for a change to see harsher sentences for those convicted of assaulting officers.

And so, today I ask you and every politician seeking to be elected – can we have a firm commitment to make this happen.

And happen now.

No more excuses about timetabling.

No more excuses about process or protocol.

We have clearly seen that when the Prime Minister and your parliamentary colleagues want something – then it happens.

Not in months, in weeks.

We want a commitment that you will give the police officers of England and Wales the support and protection needed to do their job.

That is, support in numbers.....

Support in equipment....

And support in law.

For, without that support, without the numbers needed, we can't continue doing everything.



When she was Home Secretary, the Prime Minister told us we should have a single mission – to fight crime.

We said it then, and I say it again now, policing is so much more than just fighting crime.

Tell the family of a suicidal man with mental health issues making threats to end his life that it's the NHS they need; it's not one for the police.

Tell the elderly victim of a burglary seeking comfort and reassurance that time is money and the job of the police is to fight crime and capture an offender, rather than counsel them as a victim.

Home Secretary, you cannot put a price on the value of policing.

And no government can cut tens of thousands of police officers and expect us to pretend that it won't make a difference.

For it does.

It does make a difference.

It makes a huge difference.

A huge difference to victims of crime.

A huge difference to police officers run ragged, hardly finishing one call before taking another.

And a huge difference to criminals, who are the only winners in this perverse game of risk that government keeps playing with policing.

In the past I have been accused of scaremongering.

When I said fewer officers would mean more crime, I was accused of crying wolf.

And yet in the past year we have seen total recorded crime increase by 9% - a total of 4.8 million offences.

And only weeks ago, HMIC published their State of Policing report, which highlighted the failures of other public services.

Especially in respect of children's and adolescent mental health – where all too often the police are the service of first resort.



Well after years of warning, let me be absolutely clear in my message to you and to all politicians today.

We cannot continue doing everything.

I am not going to stand here, turn a blind eye and pretend all is well.

I am not going to lie and tell the public they will get the same level of service at no cost.

For there is a cost.

A very real cost.

A cost to the public.

And a cost to the health and well-being of police officers.

Police officers who work ridiculously long hours to try to get everything done and who still go home stressed, bruised, exhausted and feeling guilty that they cannot do all that the public want and expect from them.

And so today, let's be honest.

Let's all be honest.

We cannot do it all.

So let's make the changes needed.

We either invest or we divest. Put more resources in or take demand out. They are the only options.

Stop dealing with drug use perhaps and decriminalise Class C drugs?

Leave policing the roads to Serco?

Leave missing people to the experts in missing parcels, the Royal Mail?

I know, let's hand over the protection of parliament to G4S...

In their same report, HMIC also said, and I quote.....

'We cannot realistically expect the police to meet every possible demand we might make of them.'

They also said....

'There needs to be a well-informed and mature debate about what the



police should be expected to do and, just as importantly, what they should not do.'

You know we have been saying the same thing.

And I call upon the new government to put the same trust in the public that it did when they were asked to vote on Brexit.

Ask the public what they want from the police service.

And then give us the tools and people to do so.

Home Secretary, you are aware of the efforts we have been making as an organisation to improve the welfare provision for officers.

During the past year we have been working closely with the Defence Medical Welfare Service to ensure officers get the treatment and assistance needed to help them recover or get fit for work.

Following successful trials, I implore the new government to support the bid going to the Police Reform Transformation Board to roll this service out across all forces.

To support those officers who need help and assistance with their welfare.

And while I am talking of welfare, let's not forget that government has a duty to ensure that those tasked with protecting society have the equipment needed to protect them.

And importantly, to protect themselves too.

We know and have seen first-hand the benefits of Taser and Body Worn Video.

And last year, we commissioned an independent public survey by Ipsos MORI about such protective measures, which put paid to the myth that the public see these as barriers to approaching police officers in their community.

They don't.

And we don't either.

It was merely nonsense peddled by those who would happily send officers out to face guns and knives with nothing more than a pair of handcuffs, a baton and harsh language.

Home Secretary, we are pleased that the use of the Taser X2 was approved by the Home Office.

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Now all we need are the devices and the money to pay for them. Last time I looked there was still millions in the transformation fund. Let's do something useful with it...

We need it now.

Do not make chief officers have to decide between the protection of their officers and balancing their books.

Some ways of protecting officers come at no cost at all.

We remain gravely concerned that, under current legislation, officers are not being afforded adequate protection for doing what the public rightly expect of them – getting to incidents as safely, but as quickly, as possible.

I am talking about police pursuits.

The current test of what is dangerous driving is outdated, misinterpreted at best and downright ridiculous at worst in the way that it applies to police officers.

This news just in.....pursuits are dangerous and the criminals who engage in them don't care.

They know we are just as likely to be prosecuted as they are.

And they drive off laughing, as they kill another innocent bystander or police officer.

We want to ensure that, if a situation arises where an officer, doing their duty, has to engage in a response or pursuit in a police vehicle, that they are not unfairly processed through the court.

New guidance hasn't worked.

There must be exemptions in place.

Exemptions, in law, which recognise the skills of trained police drivers and their role and function as police officers.

We cannot have any more perverse, unfair, unjustified witch-hunts, when officers have found themselves in the dock for simply doing their job in accordance with how they have been trained.

Just imagine the outcry if we are compelled to advise our members that they



should never exceed any speed limit when pursuing a criminal or they could end up in jail.

Because, as the law currently stands, we will have to say that soon.

And it will mean Christmas has come early for those who only play by their rules, not societies.

So please, work with us quickly to get the protection officers need so that they can protect the law abiding public.

It's not about a get out of jail card; it's about giving officers the tools to do their job without fear or favour.

While Brexit might be the buzz word at the moment, this stuff really matters...and it matters now; not in two or three years' time.

Home Secretary, it won't have passed you by that the theme of this year's conference is Protecting the Protectors.

For that is what we, everyone here in this room, does.

We look after those who look after you.

We look after those who look after the communities they serve.

In recent years though, the men and women who take pride in doing their duty have felt victimised.

Not victimised by criminals.

But by government.

By successive governments who give platitudes and encouragement with one hand, but take money and support with the other.

Let's just take a moment to look at a snap-shot of policing – of the pressures officers are under.....

**[Protect the Protectors VT – 1min 17 secs]**

A strong message to take away Home Secretary.

A powerful message for you and for all seeking to be elected next month.

Policing is on its knees.

It's in intensive care.



It is fighting for its life.

The police service is made up of good men and women.

Professional, dedicated and devoted men and women.

And they have had personal challenges in recent years.

As an organisation, we have taken the brunt of the anger and frustration officers felt when the government introduced a new pension scheme.

A scheme which, while benefitting some, has also been to the detriment of others.

Officers having to work longer, having to pay more in to their pension and then receive less when they retire.

The world changes.

We know things cannot always stand still.

But government moved the goalposts half-way through the game.

Government changed the deal officers signed up to.

And coming after other changes to pay and conditions of service – is it any wonder that officers feel angry, undervalued and demoralised.

That's pensions.

But look at police pay too.

Last week I heard in the news speculation that politics may be going back to the 1970s.

Well, police pay is certainly heading that way again.

I mean, do you realise that a new recruit – maybe a Special Constable who decides to join, or a Community Support Officer – will only be taking home approximately £1,300 a month.

By the time they pay rent, council tax, utility bills, food and travel, their disposable income is probably less than £100 a month.

And if they have a family, then god help them. It'll be food banks each night.

Well, we enter a new world now.



A new government will be formed next month.

An opportunity to make changes for the better.

So, allow me to suggest one.

Remove the shackles from the Police Remuneration Review Body.

Allow them to take the evidence we provide – full and detailed analysis – and decide for themselves what pay award officers should receive.

Allow them their independence.

Do not pretend it's an open and transparent process if you are tying their hands by setting a 1% cap for any public sector increase.

I see some benefits of the pay review body in the detailed recommendations they make on a number of issues.

I see how they listen to what we say.

How they take our evidenced submission and make recommendations in a number of areas, using information we provide.

But I also understand that, for the men and women out there policing today, they just see what their annual pay increment is.

And understandably, they question the point and purpose of the review body if its hands are tied behind its back.

I ask, what is it with politicians and maths?

For every MP last year must have misread the 1% pay cap. Perhaps they were seeing double, giving themselves 11% instead.

But, they had a chance to get it right this year. Oh hang on... no, this year.. 1.4%

Well, we have evidenced the need for an uplift of 2.8%.

The difference between an increase of 1% and 2.8% - £90 million.

And I'm sure of my figures.

While that may sound like a lot, in the scheme of government budgets it's negligible.

And that increase would be just to stand still.



To stand still so that we don't lose even more than the real terms decrease in pay of 15% that we have already suffered.

Yet all the while demand, danger and daft ideas make life even harder for our members.

Home Secretary, last month you will have seen the commotion caused by the Chief HMI Sir Tom Winsor, when he inadvertently suggested during a Sky News interview that, unlike detectives, response officers don't take their work home with them.

If Mr Winsor wished to cause a flap on Twitter, then he certainly did that, with hundreds of 'I took home' messages.

The positive effect was that it put into the public domain in a gritty way exactly what officers do take home.

One officer took home, the image of a boy lying lifeless after hanging himself with a school tie.

Another officer took home, the image of a dead child in a garbage bag, the very first day back from one of his son's being born.

What have I taken home?

I took home the look of evil on the face of an armed, drug-crazed hijacker as I levelled my 9mm carbine to take a shot.

Amongst policing this is nothing extraordinary.

Amongst our communities they are never seen events.

Amongst our officers they haunt, they shape, and often remain hidden until it is sometimes too late.

Policing is a service.

A service built on trust, experience and knowledge.

It's not a business where you bring in someone with no knowledge and experience of the function and purpose of what we deliver.

And while it is right that we further professionalise the service, giving officers the skills and qualifications which can be used in wider society, it must not become a service which restricts and creates bureaucracy giving less flexibility at a time when we need more.



Yes we need specialisms. And yes, there are areas where a license to practice makes sense.

But the strength of our service – the strength of our model of policing – is the omni competent police officer.

The public don't want a service where they ring up to report a burglary and they are told we have no officers in with a certificate to deal with that crime today.

They don't want that.

And nor do we.

Sadly, each year during the keynote speeches at conference we pay tribute to those police officers who have died or been killed on duty.

This year we remember a number of our colleagues who have died on duty.

And this is even harder this year because it comes only weeks after the tragic death of PC Keith Palmer, killed in the line of duty, protecting the Palace of Westminster and all those inside from the threat of a terrorist armed with a knife.

Many of us in this room attended his funeral and were struck, not just by the public outpouring of love and support, but by the strength and dignity of Keith's family.

Let us remember those we have lost during the past year.

**[Fallen Officers VT (1 min: *In memoriam* -**

- ***PC Austin Jackson, Leicestershire Constabulary***
- ***PC Paul Briggs, Merseyside Police***
- ***Inspector Mark Estall, Essex Police***
- ***PC Joe Mabuto, Thames Valley Police***
- ***PC Gareth Browning, Metropolitan Police***
- ***PC Keith Palmer, Metropolitan Police]***

Their service, their commitment, their sacrifice – will never be forgotten.



Home Secretary, the next issue I intend to address will come as no surprise to you.

Accountability.

And the way in which the police service is held accountable.

We must be one of the UK's most accountable, regulated and scrutinised bodies.

Indeed, I have joked in the past that we are teetering on the brink of having more people watching the police than actually policing any longer.

But ours is not the concern of being held accountable.

It is the process and mechanism of accountability.

For regrettably, we still have a system which continues to focus on blame.

A system which allows the media to witch hunt and allows ambulance chasing lawyers to give false hope.

Rather than a system that promotes learning and implementing procedures to ensure the service can minimise future risks.

Maybe I'm an idealist, but I believe I speak for most officers when I say; we want an environment where we can put our hands up to identify possible concerns and pitfalls, safe in the knowledge that it would be welcomed and we wouldn't be unfairly penalised.

If we genuinely felt that a near miss or minor error would be taken as a learning point, rather than a stick to beat us with.

We want a learning culture, more commonly known as 'black box thinking' because the airline industry have excelled at implementing a culture of openness, admission and learning – not a culture of blame.

Home Secretary, regrettably, things are not improving.

We have complaints about Independent Police Complaints Commission.

And simply changing the name on the door doesn't change the way an organisation conducts itself.

We have complaints about the unacceptable length of time that police officers are under investigation.



The worry, pressure and burden on them and their families and colleagues is unacceptable.

We have concerns about the new IPCC guidance on achieving best evidence in death and serious injury matters.

On the one hand, the service is looking to increase the number of firearms officers.

Yet on the other hand, the IPCC guidance is fuelling mistrust of the IPCC among firearms officers and others, limiting the shared learning that post incident procedure allows.

So, just as we look to identify and promote best practice, so too should the IPCC.

You see Home Secretary, this is not about whether we should be held accountable.

Of course we should.

It is about creating an environment of learning and improving.

Not finger-pointing and blaming.

Not seeking retribution or a pound of flesh.

But instead seeking solutions and improvements.

Home Secretary; let me finish by making myself absolutely clear about what we want.

What we want from you.

What we want from all elected MPs.

And what we want from the newly formed government.

We want....

**Fair pay and reward.**

Fair pay determined by an independent mechanism; not one with its hands tied behind its back.

And a system of reward that recognises the valuable contribution all police officers make to society, to

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fighting, detecting and preventing crime and supporting our communities. Pay and reward that will stem the tide of experience exiting the service.

Pay and reward that recognises the strain of policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We want....

**A national system of welfare provision for police officers.**

Fully funded and supported by government and chief officers, to ensure officers get the best support possible to do their job and be fit for work.

We want....

**Legal protections for officers doing their job.**

A change in legislation, so that skilled and trained drivers responding to calls or pursuing suspects in vehicles are not unjustly penalised for exceeding a speed limit.

A change in legislation so that anyone convicted of assault on a police officer receives the harshest possible sentence. We need a proper deterrent.

We want....

**The right protective equipment for officers.**

Your office has approved the use of the Taser X2.

We know it works.

So, find the money to give officers the protection they need.

Give forces the money to roll out the Taser X2 and Body Worn Video.

We want...

**No further budget cuts.**

Policing has been cut to the bone.

We can't carry on as we are.

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We won't carry on as we are.

The new government needs to recognise that.

We are not going to prop up any political propaganda by pretending the service can cope.

It can't.

It isn't.

Not without a real term increase in funding.

We want...

**An immediate halt in the reduction of officer numbers.**

And a long-term 5-year investment to build the numbers up to provide the resilience needed and to allow the service to continue to deliver.

Numbers do matter.

We need the investment to ensure we have sufficient police officers to be able to do all the public rightly expects and wants from us.

Not just to deal with the unexpected events – the riots – the disturbances - but to deal with the growing new crimes, the historic enquiries and the traditional crime.

Without that, we will be forced to prioritise to the extent that, in some instances, we will have to say, we don't do that anymore.

We want....

**A progressive culture and an open environment where the police service learns from its mistakes.**

Where officers are encouraged to speak out if they have concerns.



We do not want a culture of suspicion, of finger pointing, blame or retribution.

Nor a culture of pretending all is well, when we know full well that we are struggling or cannot cope.

Not when we are talking about public safety and well-being, or the service we provide to victims of crime.

Not when we are putting officers in a position that they cannot safely do their job.

And finally, we want **a government that supports the police.**

Not just in words.

In actions too.

We want a Home Secretary who recognises that we are the best police service in the world.

A Home Secretary who will fight to ensure we are able to remain so.

A Home Secretary who will fight to ensure we are able to do what is expected of us.

A Home Secretary who will fight to ensure we have the right equipment, protection, funding and numbers.

From what I've been reading in the run up to General Election, there's speculation of public sector protests during the summer months

Let's not add policing to that list.

But if our members fail to see the new government responding to what we say, then we may have to. And I will not shy away from it.

We are proud to be British police officers.

We are proud to do our duty.

All we ask is that government does its duty too. And protects the protectors.

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