

**Police Federation
of England and Wales**



**Ffederasiwn Heddlu
Lloegr a Chymru**

Established by Act of Parliament

Federation House, Highbury Drive, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7UY
Telephone 01372 352012 Fax 01372 352013
Email Chairman@polfed.org www.polfed.org

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

Our ref: SW/jmv

23 October 2015

Sara Thornton CBE
Chair
NPCC
10 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0NN

Dear Sara,

Conscious that a paper on compulsory severance is to be presented and debated at the National Police Chiefs' Council meeting later this month, we discussed this issue at our Interim National Board (INB) meeting this week.

While accepting the financial difficulties forces may face if further cuts are imposed through the Comprehensive Spending Review, the view of the INB was one of complete dismay and anger that such a blunt and divisive tool as compulsory severance is being considered for use by chief officers. Particularly when we have evidence that morale of police officers across the service is falling as the budget cuts to policing and cuts to terms and conditions take effect.

The fact that compulsory severance has only recently been considered and that an independent Police Arbitration Tribunal did not recommend its introduction at that time, makes consideration of the issue again so soon all the more astounding and galling.

There is already considerable change being progressed through the Leadership Review, which could see changes to the structure of policing. It therefore makes even less sense to us for the need to seek legislation to introduce compulsory severance when there are already changes to the future policing landscape; especially when any legislative change would take at least two years anyway. It would also put us in a position where, on behalf of our members, we would be compelled to take whatever action is needed to stop its introduction.

While unacceptable, an attack on terms and conditions of police officers across England and Wales by the government is one thing; but an attack by our police leaders would be of grave concern for all police officers and for the Police Federation of England and Wales, as we represent them.

It would appear that this is purely a cost cutting consideration and not one based on service demand and delivery. We have already seen a decline of 16,000 police officers in the last four years, without the need to implement compulsory severance. We believe that to reduce numbers further would seriously jeopardise the current level of policing that we provide to the public and we appreciate this is a view openly shared by many chief officers.



Not only do we consider the threat of compulsory severance would undermine the independent Office of Constable; there is no evidence to suggest that it is required. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has identified a lack of workforce planning; which calls into question the evidence upon which you could even make decisions of this nature. In addition, the National Audit Office has voiced concern that there is no assessment of current or future demand, yet financial decisions that may impact on structure and process are arbitrarily being taken by government. We understand the pressures this puts on you, but would urge you to stand against this misguided course of action, rather than acquiesce in such a damaging way.

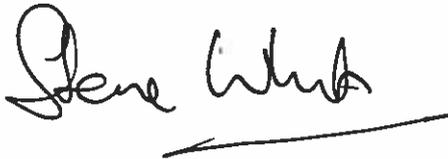
The use of the voluntary severance scheme has only been adopted by a handful of forces. Surely, this should be extended before any consideration is given to compulsory severance.

We do not agree there is a need to introduce compulsory severance for police officers. It is completely unnecessary, yet its consideration alone will cause unnecessary worry, unease and widespread anger across the service. To seek legislation to introduce it risks further damage to the psychological contract that exists between police officers and the police service and is likely to have negative consequences for policing.

We ask that you give consideration to all of these factors and do not just make a decision that will inevitably have a negative impact on policing and the service we provide, purely for the purpose of cost cutting. We would risk losing good and experienced police officers. So, while we should strive to improve our business practices, we must never lose sight of the fact that we are a police service; an independent, flexible, apolitical police service. Compulsory severance would threaten this.

I would be grateful if you can ensure this view is presented to the meeting and consequently I will be copying this letter to all Chief Constables.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve White', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Steve White
Chairman – Police Federation of England and Wales