



Glen Smyth, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation

## Pay pressure

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith now seems to be labouring under a massive delusion – namely that police officers are going to swallow the insult of being told that their pay agreement is being put in the shredder because the Government doesn't think that their professionalism, dedication and often downright bravery is worth very much.

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The agreement which the government has just gaily confettied was introduced in 1979 by Home Secretary William Whitelaw. Mr Whitelaw had somewhat greater moral rectitude who recognised that the police deserved recognition of the unique dangers and challenges which they face, the sacrifices they can be called on to make in their private lives and the fact they are prohibited – under pain of criminal penalty – from taking industrial action. Every government since then has honoured that agreement without question. But not this one.

Listen to Lord Geoffrey Dear, who is a former chief constable and a former chief of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, who, you may think, knows a thing or two more about policing than Ms Smith.

In a House of Lords debate on policing on June 7 this year, he said: “Since 1979 salaries have been pegged at the retail prices index, moving the service for the first time away from the shameful situation that was last seen in the late 1970s, when the best often did not join the police, the best still serving left in droves and morale plummeted.

“Current suggestions that the service should once again be opened up to ‘market forces’ ignore the lasting

damage that we saw before the Lord Edmund-Davies review of 1979 and fly in the face of history. In the future, the task is going to become more complex, more difficult and more dangerous, and we need a service populated by people who are up to the job.”

Lord Dear's wisdom hasn't gone to pot as Ms Smith's appears to have done. We intend to drive our message home to the politicians at an open meeting on September 13 at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, which we are urging all Met Federation members to attend. To date, the Tory and Liberal Democrat shadow police ministers have indicated that they will be attending. The government, on the other hand, has not so far responded to our invitation at all.