

Sergeants' role should be protected

Constables should not be paid more for supervisory work than sergeants who provide a 'vital link' to ensure an effective service to the public, according to the Federation lead for the rank.

Paul McKeever, chairman of the Federation's sergeants' central committee, stated they would not accept police constables being paid more than police sergeants to perform their supervisory roles.

Speaking at the Police Federation's annual conference in Blackpool, he said: "That is the job of the first line supervisor, that's our job, sergeants.

"The sergeant rank is the vital link that ensures effective service delivery within the police service. We ensure that policy is implemented as intended and we also act as a reviewer within service implementation, reporting back when flaws are identified."

He warned those involved in police modernisation: "Tinker with that dynamic and you risk losing the effective supervision that the police service relies on."

Ch Supt Alan Cooper of the South Manchester division of Greater Manchester Police said he could see the value of sergeants on a daily basis and that there were less complaints, less sickness and higher morale associated with their leadership.

Sergeants also branded the Booth Review into police pay and conditions a stitch-up from top to bottom.

Mr McKeever said the first report of Sir Clive Booth's review *Fair Pay for Police*, published earlier this year, was unfair and that the committee would fight to retain pay indexation in a 'fair form' for members.

"The message from Booth indicates that he wants to find a form of indexation that fits in with Gordon Brown's wish to keep public sector pay to two percent and below," he told delegates.

Police officers should not be treated like medical staff

Police officers are not trained medical professionals and should not be treated as such, according to the Police Federation.

Speaking at the Federation's annual conference in Blackpool, Paul McKeever, chairman of the sergeants' central committee, said 'more and more' mentally sick people were finding their way into police stations and custody because of the direct failings of the NHS.

"We are police sergeants, not trained medical professionals, yet more and more we are being expected to deal with mentally ill people that the NHS has effectively washed their hands of," he told delegates.

He added: "It is clear the NHS has been allowed to abrogate their responsibilities to the point where at times police intervention has become the rule, not the exception and we end up dealing with their patients."

John Coppen, who represents the Federation on the Custody Officers Forum, said a number of meetings had been held with government ministers in an attempt to address the issue.

He added: "We have tried through the auspices of the Draft Mental Health Bill to have police [cells] removed as places of safety for mental health [patients]."

Mr McKeever said he was concerned that some emergency departments were refusing to deal with some sick, ill or injured individuals placed in their care.

He added: "It cannot be right that their patients can be effectively thrown out and left to be dealt with by police officers who are untrained in medical provisions.

Where's the accountability of NHS staff who act in this way?"

The sergeants' chairman also attacked the Association of Chief Police Officers for being 'totally disinterested' in the issue and branded the ACPO National Detention Forum a disgrace for not pursuing the matter.

Paul McKeever: do not 'tinker' with sergeant role

Sergeants debate mental health issues

