



Ian Leyland, general secretary of Merseyside Police Federation

Officers home life suffering

Merseyside is a top performing force providing a 24-hour response, but this has come at an enormous cost to officers' personal lives.

The problem we face is in relation to competing demands. On the one hand we've got a police service that deals with anti-social behavior impacting on people's quality of life, on the other, we have international crime and terrorism. The neighbourhood policing model delivers well on low-level crime, but it doesn't deliver the solution for high-end crime.

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In Merseyside we focus on the middle tier and high crime. The best way to deal with that is to focus on particular target areas. This means people are taken away from their day-to-day jobs to take part in operations, such as Operation Big Wing where the whole force comes together to target car crime for an ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) blitz.

In a survey of nearly a thousand officers, what came through loud and clear was the impact this was having on their personal lives; rest days are cancelled and shifts are changed at the last minute which means our members are unable to plan anything outside of their jobs.

The problem is now set to worsen as Liverpool's economy is increasingly based on entertainment and leisure. To encourage people into the city, it attracts big events and promotes late night drinking. Next year the city becomes the Capital of Culture, but unless we get additional resources of up to 200 extra officers, it will just exacerbate the situation.

We all need effective resource management. Some areas are fine, but others need improving. We need to capture data

on shift changes to ensure we are managing resources as effectively as we could be. We also need to de-brief those officers abstracted for operations so they understand the value of them, instead of perceiving each operation as a short-term measure.

We have to use the extended police family far more effectively so they can take the workload off the officers. In the survey people were asking why they couldn't be given the level three calls to deal with. We are now running a pilot on the Wirral to see if CSOs can help out more by attending level three calls that are non-urgent, but need to be answered within 24 hours.

Another recurring issue for officers is the problem of bureaucracy. This is something the force is tackling and we fully support them. We are about to launch an initiative where the force will challenge requests from the Home Office for information. We will look at what's being asked for. If the Home Office cannot explain how the information is to be used, if it is to be used at all, and the time taken to collate it is disproportionate to what it is going to be used for, the force will decline to gather the information.

We have got the confidence to do that because we are performing really well. The tactics we are using are effective and are making a difference; we just need to support our officers better.

- Ian Leyland is due to discuss the findings of the survey at this year's Federation annual Conference.