

Federations fear 'fragmented' approach to Taser

The police federations representing rank and file officers across the UK have raised concerns over inconsistencies in the way officers are being trained to use Taser.

At a special meeting in Belfast last month, the Police Federation of England and Wales, the Scottish Police Federation and the Police Federation for Northern Ireland said they were concerned about the 'fragmented' approach to teaching officers to use the electronic stun gun.

They called on their respective governments to ensure all police officers have the same skills and training, regardless of which force they serve.

The three federations said they wanted to ensure all officers were properly trained, 'rather than the fragmented approach to training and deployment currently in place'.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Police Authority, has reluctantly given the go-ahead for Taser to be rolled out across the force.

Amid continuing concerns, the MPA finally backed the pilot at a meeting last month, after twice preventing its implementation following worries over how it was to be used.

Cindy Butts, deputy chair of the MPA, said: "Once again, members raised legitimate concerns about broadening the use of Taser to routine policing. We remain worried about the message this sends out to London's communities about the escalation of confrontation and need further reassurance that vulnerable people who may behave differently - the young, old and those with disabilities - will not be adversely affected.

"However, we have to recognise that the national Home Office roll out is now underway. Without the Met participating, this Authority will be unable to influence a final decision about future use of the Taser."

Ruling could see paedophiles released

Thousands of prisoners, many of whom are convicted paedophiles, could be released following a ruling from the Court of Appeal.

The Police Federation says it is extremely concerned that if the system of indeterminate sentencing is declared unlawful it could lead to the release of up to 3,000 prisoners.

Judges have the power to impose indeterminate sentences on those found guilty of certain offences, if they are considered to pose a significant risk of serious harm. It was introduced to deal with convicted paedophiles who could be allowed out of prison at the end of their fixed sentence, but still pose a risk to children.

In July this year, a convicted sex offender who had been given an indeterminate sentence challenged the law, arguing he couldn't be considered for release because his jail doesn't offer a parole course.

Law Lords ruled the government had acted unlawfully by keeping prisoners in jail longer than necessary. They granted the government a stay on the ruling, pending an appeal.

The Federation believes the potential to release thousands of prisoners would not only have a 'hugely detrimental' effect on communities, but also serious resource implications for an already over-stretched police service.

"The impact on those communities and indeed on the police service should not be underestimated," said Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

Roll out goes ahead in London



Photography: PA Photos

Serious offenders could be released



Photography: PA Photos