



Adele Kirkwood, secretary of the legislation sub-committee

Federation focus

A recent article in The Independent stated that the Labour government has created more than 3,000 offences since they came to power in 1997. The legislation sub-committee has had a key role to play on your behalf to give a reality check to the law makers in order to make the laws you have to use in your duties as practical and useful as possible.

The media are currently debating the pros and cons of so-called 'street justice' after the Association of Chief Police Officers stated they are considering proposals to punish people for offences without going to court. This could mean officers handing out penalties such as a fixed-penalty fine to youths committing anti-social behaviour.

The sub-committee are examining the disproportionate resources and police time allocated to the chasing of sanction detections, the arbitrary use and extension of offences to be dealt with by use of Police Notices of Disorder with the lack of a registered conviction and the subsequent effect of their potential wider use for juveniles aged 10 and above.

The laws that impact on policing and police officers are researched thoroughly by the legislation sub-committee on assessment they are either supported, added to, amended, challenged or lobbied on. Ideas for changes to legislation are submitted by police officers from around the country and form a very important part of our work. The aim is always to try to achieve legislation that is practical for police officers as well as being, robust and victim centred, but this is easier said than done, as no doubt many of you will be able to testify to when trying to use them.

The sub-committee deals with areas ranging from roads policing, sentencing guidelines council, stop and search, criminal and youth justice, crime, drugs, domestic violence, bureaucracy, victims and witnesses, to name but a few. In addition any motions for conference, which require legislation in order to achieve them are

researched and campaigned on, if agreed as policy.

At the time of writing this article we are in the middle of the Parliamentary summer recess, awaiting the Queen's Speech for the next 12 month legislation programme, much of it will directly or indirectly involve the police. This is therefore a good opportunity to assess our own current programme of work.

Roads policing is always high on the agenda, the continued development of the Highways Agency - working towards its 10 year strategy of becoming 'a force', a report on driver training by the Independent Police Complaints Commission and the development of the autumn seminar on roads policing are all very much at the forefront. We are also progressing a power for you to automatically identify persons who are entering and leaving England and Wales by the checking of passports at points of entry and exit. Also, not allowing police stations to be used as a place of safety for persons suffering from mental health conditions and the government's sentencing policy, especially with regard to guilty pleas and the role of the parole board.

The sub-committee is pleased to receive any ideas, comments or views that you have on current or proposed legislation. Please visit the website (www.polfed.org) for our most recent responses to government and other key stakeholders.

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