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News review of 2006

January 2006

Initial findings from the Police Federation's interim research into 24/7 response teams paints a grim picture of officers under immense pressure.

The research, *A View from the Beat – 24/7 Response Policing in the Modern Police Organisation*, revealed dwindling levels of police officers on the teams expected to respond to 999 calls.

The study used interviews from officers in several forces, reflecting the mix of urban and rural forces nationally, to show how officers find themselves having to chase targets driven by the government.

February 2006

Police magazine reported how police staff could be involved in strike action after union Unison warned the government to hammer out a deal on pensions.

Unison represents more than 30,000 members in police staff roles including community support officers.

Another story from the February edition saw the Police Federation calling for trials of work-based assessments for police officers to be extended to ensure they were robust and fair.

The assessments, for constables and sergeants, are an alternative to the Ospre Part II assessment centre.

March 2006

A shake-up of the police service and roles could mean a new 'super cop' being paid more than top rate constables within three years of joining the service.

Bob Quick, ACPO lead on modernisation, told a conference that a fast track system would mean recruits could become an advanced constable within three years.

Another story which featured in the March edition hit out at a chief officer for complaining about his 'cold croissants' to an officer from the British Transport Police who had just finished helping people following the 7/7 bombings in London.

April 2006

The Serious and Organised Crime Agency is officially launched and the Federation argues that it is the start of 'fragmentation' in the police service.

But police officers joining the agency had to give up their status as police officers and simply become SOCA officers.

Cats also featured as a bureaucracy saving device in City of London Police in the April edition after a bureaucracy conference praised the force on saving money by employing their help to sort out a problem with pesky mice.

May 2006

Officers rejected arming the police service despite many believing their lives had been placed in 'serious jeopardy' over the last two years, according to a survey carried out by the Police Federation.

The survey of more than 140,000 officers found more than three quarters of those who responded, 77 percent, rejected routine arming. However, nearly a third, 28 percent had been personally threatened with a knife on at least one occasion in the last two years.

The new look *Police* magazine is launched at the Police Federation conference.

June 2006

Police magazine reported that the majority of Federation representatives from around the country voted against representing members of the extended police family.

The majority of officers voted against a number of options to extend membership into the Police Federation beyond police officers after a fiery debate at their annual conference.

At the same conference, John Reid, Home Secretary, promised to look into why Det Con Stephen Oake, killed during a terror raid, did not qualify for a posthumous George Cross for his bravery.

CSOs went on strike over pensions



Photography: Police Federation

Cat and mouse: feline help used to save costs



Campaign: Shutterstock inc.

July 2006

The Met officer leading a team of uniformed police officers during the World Cup said English football hooligans were likely to turn up in designer clothes and a trendy haircut.

Supt Roger Evans said the team of officers were trained to look for the possible offenders of football violence but that the stereotype of the typical English hooligan as a skinhead wearing an England shirt was far from the truth.

Officers patrolled ports and airports to check for potential trouble-makers.

August 2006

Officers in North Yorkshire thought they were being sent a joke when they found out a new building was to be named Cannings Court after their chief constable Della Cannings.

Les Coverdale, secretary of North Yorkshire Police Federation, said it would have been more appropriate to name it after a fallen officer.

The force did take a u-turn on the naming of the building after the article appeared in *Police* magazine.

September 2006

Officers across the country expressed their disgust that the Official Side of the Police Negotiating Board failed to agree to their annual pay rise in line with indexation.

The Police Federation vowed to fight for the pay rise and it was finally agreed in November following arbitration.

In the same month Prince Charles agreed to become patron of National Police Memorial Day to honour officers who died while on duty.

October 2006

Female officers are being put off specialist roles because of family responsibility and a lack of interest in 'bikes and guns'.

The British Association of Women in Policing found evidence from around the country about issues affecting their working environment.

The work, part of the Gender Agenda 2 document, uncovered a number of issues which can put women off entering specialist roles such as firearms.

Liz Owsley, coordinator of the BAWP, said: "The 22 percent of women in the police force nationally becomes smaller (in relation to specialist roles) when you have to pick from those who also have an interest in the subject."

November 2006

Chief constable of Hampshire Constabulary Paul Kernaghan warned that there would be a big squeeze on police budgets next year as the local federation said police officer numbers were likely to suffer.

Mr Kernaghan said that funding was only available for CSOs but he would have preferred to have had the option of increasing numbers of warranted officers. Steve Price, chairman of Hampshire Federation, said that CSOs were not a panacea.

December 2006

This month saw the final findings of the Federation's report on 24/7 response teams being launched on the Tonight programme revealing the stark reality many officers face.

The report found that some response teams were at half the strength they should be even though they are expected to answer the most urgent 999 calls from the public.

The research found that a number of pressures had added to the burden on response officers, including the quick pace the government expected to rush through neighbourhood policing.

British hooligans do not adhere to the stereotype



Illustration: Russ Tudor

Response teams are under immense pressure



Photography: Ross Young Photographers