

Government cut CSO targets for recruitment

The government is cutting recruitment targets for CSOs by a third before neighbourhood teams are in place next year.

Tony McNulty, police minister, announced that forces do not 'necessarily need' 24,000 community support officers and funding would only be available for 16,000 officers.

But the announcement on specific grant settlements comes at the same time the government is considering giving chief officers flexibility on how they spend the crime fighting fund, currently ring-fenced for recruiting police officers. This would allow forces to spend the funding on community support officers or police staff.

Mr McNulty told Parliament: "We are making these changes in response to requests from the police service itself for greater flexibilities and freedoms in order to decide locally the best way of delivering visible, responsive, and accessible policing."

However, Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation, has expressed concerns about the flexibility given to chief officers on the crime fighting fund. Evidence from some local federations has shown the numbers of officers are being reduced while numbers of CSOs are increased.

Paul Kelly, chairman of Manchester Police Federation, told *Police* magazine that he believed the introduction of neighbourhood policing with the CSO as its 'bedrock' has failed.

He said: "The experiment failed and failed miserably – no disrespect to the fine men and women who become CSOs – it is not their fault."

But he added: "You cannot send a soldier out to fight a battle unarmed and untrained – be clear, we are in a war [against criminals]. Why do we allow this government to continue wasting our tax pounds on this ridiculous experiment?"

Federation accuse IPCC of prosecuting officers

The Independent Police Complaints Commission has been branded the 'police prosecution committee' by the Manchester Police Federation.

Paul Kelly, chairman of the local federation, said that since the introduction of the IPCC officers have been treated like 'second class citizens'.

He added that there had been a case in his own force involving a sergeant who had been filmed making a completely lawful arrest of an extremely violent man using techniques from police training.

This was investigated and when the Crown Prosecution Service examined the evidence they said the officer had no case to answer.

However, Mr Kelly said that the IPCC had then stepped in and instructed the force to carry out a tribunal through their own complaints and discipline procedures.

"The costs to this federation we will ask the IPCC to give back," he told the meeting.

He added: "They are a totally irresponsible bunch of individuals; it's a police prosecution committee."

Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation, said that they initially supported the idea of an independent organisation to investigate police complaints but said that the IPCC are 'anything but independent'.

News in focus!

Recruitment targets for CSOs have been cut by a third



Photography: Howard Sayer

Nick Hardwick, chairman of the IPCC



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