



Police pay – your questions answered

As the Police Federation fights for police officers' pay, Jan Berry chairman of the Police Federation, answers some of the questions officers may be concerned about.

Am I going to get an annual pay rise this year?

Yes, you will get a pay rise, but we are currently in dispute with the government regarding the level of the pay rise. To that end, whatever is finally agreed or imposed should be backdated to 1st September.

Is anything being done about this?

The Police Federation of England and Wales, together with the other members of the Staff Side, employees, of the Police Negotiating Board, is fighting to ensure that police officers throughout the UK receive a fair pay settlement for 2007; the payment is effective from 1st September 2007.

Why is there a pay dispute?

The Official Side, employers, of the Police Negotiating Board is seeking to change the index which determines our annual pay rise. Whichever way we look at this it is a pay cut compared to the annual increase the index used last year and for preceding years, would have delivered.

What's being offered?

In July this year, the Official Side of the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) offered 2.325 percent. The Staff Side of PNB rejected this offer, and using an amended index of private and public sector worker salaries, put forward a counter claim of 3.94 percent.

Why put forward an alternative pay award claim?

The alternative claim of 3.94 percent put forward by the Staff Side of PNB takes into account an element of compensation for the move from a private sector index to a public sector index at a disadvantageous time when public sector average increases are falling and private sector increases are rising. Previously the index used was the median of private sector pay.

How have negotiations gone and what happens next?

There was a failure to agree at an extraordinary meeting of the PNB on July 27 and the matter was referred to conciliation on August 15, but both sides failed to reach a recommended settlement. The matter will now go to the independent Police Arbitration Tribunal, the findings of which will be binding on both sides of PNB. The findings of the Police Arbitration Tribunal are not binding on the Home Secretary, so Jacqui Smith MP can choose to ratify the finding or impose an alternative pay award if she can demonstrate that it is a matter of public interest.

Why is the government changing the rules for our annual pay rise?

We are aware that the government is attempting to reduce the public sector wage bill across the board. Therefore this must be just a money saving exercise. I have heard the Prime Minister refer to 'value for money'. Is that what this is about? Clearly the police service demonstrates value for money – reducing crime rates, prisons bulging with those we have successfully arrested, gathered evidence, charged and convicted. To that end, it seems only fair that coupled with the dangers faced, the increasing terrorist threat and the restrictions on our lives, the 24/7 accountability, and the lack of a right to strike, that Mr Brown and his government offer a fair pay reward that reflects this.

What is the Federation doing about this?

The Police Federation will continue to fight for fair pay. We will apply pressure to politicians and other stakeholders, both at a national level and locally through the Joint Branch Boards to ensure that police officers receive a fair pay package. We will present a solid case at arbitration. We will also continue to highlight to the national and local media the excellent work officers are doing up and down the UK, whether it's tackling terrorism, fighting the floods and or assisting to prevent the spread of foot and mouth disease. We will engage with the media to raise awareness of the issue and ensure that your voice is heard and your views represented. We will also make use of the autumn political party conferences to ensure politicians are left in no doubt at our anger at being treated this way.

What can I do about this?

Make your voice heard and your view known. You can lobby your local MP to sign Early Day Motion 1986 that Conservative MP, David TC Davies, kindly registered on our behalf in parliament. You can do this either by getting in touch with your local federation or using the online lobbying tool on the Police Federation of England and Wales website at www.polfed.org

How long have I got to make my voice heard?

Conciliation failed on August 15 and it is unlikely there will be an arbitration hearing ahead of October.

If the government is suppressing public sector pay generally, how are other professions dealing with this?

Other public sector staff associations and trade unions have the power to threaten, or take, strike action. Police officers are not able to take industrial action or strike action (it is a criminal offence), which is one reason why we are fighting for fair pay to reflect this and other restrictions on our private and working lives.

What happens at arbitration?

At arbitration both sides of the PNB independently put forward their case to a panel of independent arbiters. The panel will then make a decision which is binding on both sides of PNB. The Home Secretary can then choose to ratify the finding or impose an alternative award.

Is the Home Secretary bound by the outcome of arbitration?

No, the Home Secretary can, at any time, impose an award of her choice.

How long before I know what the pay rise will be this year?

Both nationally and through the Joint Branch Boards, we will keep you updated throughout the process. As soon as we know we will inform you of the date of arbitration, likely to be late September/early

October. We may then have to wait several weeks for the decision of the Police Arbitration Tribunal. To that end it may be mid to late October when the matter is finally resolved.

When will I get the pay rise?

Once a pay award is decided it would be at the earliest agreed date with police forces, owing to the issues of force payrolls, and it will be backdated.

Why must we fight for a fair pay deal?

- We often face danger in the course of our duties
- In certain circumstances we are expected to put ourselves at risk in order to protect members of the public and property
- We are required to present ourselves for duty when ordered to do so
- We have restrictions placed on our private lives and business interests
- We are prevented by law from being members of a trade union
- We are prevented by law from taking part in any form of industrial action
- We exercise a substantial number of statutory and common law powers including the power of forcible arrest on suspicion
- We are accountable for our actions, or inactions, both on and off duty
- We are expected to deal with incidents even where we are off duty

What is the current position on police officers taking industrial action?

Currently it would be illegal to take strike action, and a police officer could face imprisonment if such action was taken.

For further information log on to: www.polfed.org

