



Northamptonshire Police Federation

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STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC SPENDING REVIEW ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

by Sam Dobbs – Chair of Northamptonshire Police Federation

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My members are dismayed, outraged and worried. Their household bills won't be frozen, and they will face the spending increases we all know about, and worry about the inflation politicians talk about. We have to accept that policing will be dangerous and fraught with risk. But it is equally dangerous to take our vocation for granted.

Yesterday's announcement does just that and has been described by the National Police Federation Chair as 'a kick in our teeth'. As our officers get spat at, burnt, shot at and threatened, yesterday's announcement truly does kick us in the teeth, and we might as well have had our feet stamped on and grit thrown in our face at the same time. Let there be no doubt that this is being seen as a complete betrayal of my colleagues.

In recent weeks, Northamptonshire Police officers have been appalled by incidents highlighting the dangers which frontline officers face in their duty to fight crime and protect the people of Northamptonshire. Officers have had boiling water poured over them, they have challenged an armed man in a supermarket and have had ball bearings discharged into their face. This is after an extraordinary year when they have also dealt with everything that Coronavirus has wrought on us all. Police officers are the public and vice-versa, and many of us have suffered the impact on our home lives. We also understand, and forget at our peril, that we have been lucky to have jobs and an income with some security.

We have changed our duties to support the public, often at the last minute, and bent over backwards to do the right thing. We have received both the wrath or support of our community from those that want us to enforce more, to those that consider enforcement of Covid legislation wholly excessive. We have been largely forgotten in Government acknowledgements, though we are rightly happy to play a comfortable backseat to the real heroes of this crisis – our colleagues in the NHS. We have become used to the support, at last, of a Home Secretary who 'gets' policing, and with whom a meaningful relationship was forming. We were pleased with the unfreezing of our pay at the beginning of September, which started to recompense years of austerity and a real terms pay cut of 18%. This pay freeze marks that as laughably short-lived.

What the public can be absolutely assured of is our consummate professionalism and dedication to fighting criminals and protecting the people of this county with fairness, integrity and impartiality. But I am also very keen that the public understands the impact of yesterday's announcement on their police officers in these most difficult times and how officers feel.