

Fair Pay for Police! Police Federation furious at Official Side 'betrayal'

For the first time in 27 years the 'Official Side' of the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) has failed to honour the annual indexation pay arrangement, which would have resulted in a 3 per cent increase in pay from 1st September this year.

This uprating pay formula was put in place to recognise the unique employment status and nature of policing; namely police officers being accountable for their personal actions and inactions every day of the year and not being able to take industrial action.

This means currently there is no agreed pay increase for the 160,000 police officers throughout the UK.

On 21st August 2006 representatives of the 'Staff Side' and 'Official Side' of PNB met in London to undertake conciliation talks after the Official Side failed to agree to the 3 per cent increase.

After conciliation talks failed to reach agreement, Alan Gordon, Vice Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said:

"I am bitterly disappointed that we have failed to agree a police pay settlement at the conciliation meeting, which means that 141,000 police officers throughout England and

Wales are still no closer to getting the percentage increase they should be getting from 1st September.

What is infuriating is that we have been betrayed by the Official Side, who despite an assurance that they would not meddle with the indexation arrangement for police pay this year, have reneged on that promise and failed to agree to honour our pay.

Our pay arrangement reflects the uniqueness of policing – the fact that we are accountable for our actions and inactions both on duty and off duty. We're not asking for anything unreasonable. All we want is our existing deal to be honoured"

So what does this all mean and what happens next?

Failure at conciliation meant we did not receive a pay increase on September 1st 2006. We await arbitration which is set for the 18th October where the arbitration panel will consider submissions from both sides of the PNB. The outcome of the arbitration meeting, which will be binding on both sides of PNB, will then go to the Home Secretary who has to ratify the decision.

The Police Federation will be raising awareness of the issue

amongst the police service, parliamentarians and the media.

It is vital for the future stability of police pay and conditions that we retain indexation. If we give this up without a fight who knows what the future will hold for police pay.

"Policing is unique - the pay arrangement reflects this. The government must honour our pay."



Why indexation of our pay is sacrosanct

In 1978 a Committee of Inquiry on the Police was set up, chaired by Lord Edmund-Davies. At this time police officers were very poorly paid, as police pay had fallen behind many public and private sector workers. It was this group that recommended that the unique status of police officers, namely accountability for actions and inactions both on and off duty and not being able to take industrial action, meant that the annual pay increment should be determined by an indexation formula which looks at the median of the private pay sector. Edmund-Davies stated that three groups of people are unique in our society and essential to its continuation:

- An independent judiciary (to interpret the law),
- The police (to maintain and enforce it),
- The armed forces (to protect us from external aggression).

Edmund-Davies was determined to ensure police pay would never again fall so far behind other workers. Whilst his indexation formula has been slightly amended over the years it has been in place since 1979 and ensured that police pay has been uprated with minimal negotiation.

The Police Federation considers this indexation formula to be sacrosanct, and if the 27 year agreement is not honoured by the Official Side and the government then the future pay and conditions for police officers will be in jeopardy.

Why we must fight for a fair pay deal

So what makes policing unique, and why should we fight to ensure the indexation arrangement for police pay is honoured:

- 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 Officers of the Crown, not employees of the police authority.
- We are accountable for our actions, or inactions, both on and off duty

The Police Federation will be applying pressure to ensure the arbitration hearing happens at the earliest opportunity. We are also developing a strategy to ensure that positive action is taken to ensure police officers receive a fair and just pay rise.

“Fair pay for policing”

