

# Roads Ahead

Police Federation Roads Policing Newsletter  
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## Contents

2 Pursuit related deaths need more attention

3 Technology v trained police officers

4 Professionalising the road ahead



Our aim is to use this publication to open up informative channels of communication between all roads policing officers and associated bodies. We intend to focus on key issues that influence the delivery and professionalism of traffic officers around the country.

If you have a roads policing news story, views or comments or you require further details please email: [roadspolicing@polfed.org](mailto:roadspolicing@polfed.org)

## Welcome to our first edition

Jan Berry, Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales

The Police Federation of England and Wales is keen to show support for roads policing and we hope this newsletter, which we aim to publish quarterly, will highlight and address some of the issues that are important to you.

We recognise that policing the roads is too often undermined in favour of other policing demands. However, this role is a key and crucial function that is inextricably linked to a professional police service. Our mission is to maintain the momentum at all levels, to influence and to ensure that your voice is heard and resonates loudly with those who make an impact on the high quality

contribution you all make.

For the first time, we worked alongside ACPO in joining together to hold the national roads policing conference last November, which had a strong agenda under the theme of "Professionalising the Road Ahead". This joint approach worked well and we have agreed to do the same again this year on the 26th and 27th November.

I hope you find the topics covered in this first edition of Roads Ahead appeal to your interests and stimulate support for this key area of policing.



## Guest editorial

Steve Green, Chief Constable

As the new ACPO lead for Roads Policing I welcome this opportunity to contribute and support the Federation roads policing newsletter.

At a strategic level, my task is to ensure we have the right balance and policing priorities aimed at tackling road crime. There are many challenges to address in all areas of policing, but we also face unprecedented demands to meet public expectation in delivering a traffic enforcement programme. The work we do today affects the policing of tomorrow. Getting the balance right is not easy, nonetheless I share a vision of ensuring that traffic policing will be well represented and supported.

The number of deaths and serious injuries continues to cause concern, so does the problems of drinking and drug related driving. I share the Federation view and recognise that we need to do much more to deal with this level of criminality. This is one area I am particularly keen to

improve on.

Seizures of vehicles for document offences are at an all time high following the introduction of Section 152 of the Serious and Organised Crime Act. Much of this success is down to your awareness and the proper targeting of offenders. The amount of time spent processing offenders needs simplifying and I am working at ways to make legislation easier to enforce.

We must ensure your skills and knowledge remain as sharp as ever, that's why I support the Federation position on professional development.

I thank you for all your hard work and hope that we can continue to work together to ensure that as changes are made we retain a joint commitment to effective roads policing.

Together we can deliver!



# Key Issues

## National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS)

The Police Federation welcomes the new programme being put forward by North Wales Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom. At the joint PFEW/ACPO Roads Policing conference in November Mr Brunstrom spoke about the implementation of the National Driving Offender Retraining Scheme; he told conference he has committed to delivering this by April 2009. The Federation strongly agrees that driver education should, and must, be seen as the first option where possible, especially for minor offences. The key to a successful retraining scheme would be a national role out, where it is consistent in every force and area. Further information can be obtained from Ian Aspinall who is leading this project for ACPO at [ian.aspinall@acpo.police.uk](mailto:ian.aspinall@acpo.police.uk).

## Professional Development

Professionalism has a key part to play in the future of roads policing. The Federation has been campaigning for some time to get a national and consistent standard of competence qualification recognised. The work carried out by PC Martin Vine (Hampshire) and others in the traffic training field deserves national recognition for the quality and standards being set. We also support the great work being done by the team striving to improve standards and training for Family Liaison Officers (FLO's). PC Jeff Goodright and Insp Peter Hughes, spoke at conference, updating on progress so far. They did so alongside Commander Shabir Hussain and Dr Frank Pike in relation to the new Road Death Manual, which was delivered last year.

From the information and evidence, it is clear that a huge amount of investment for appropriate training and development is required. ACPO support the initiative of the Federation and have commissioned the NPIA to carry out the research work, which the Federation will contribute to. We are hopeful that all traffic officers will have the opportunity to meet national minimum standards from April 2009.



## Pursuit related deaths need more attention

The findings of a recent report by the Independent Police Complaints Committee (IPCC) on police related, road traffic incidents (RTIs) highlights that the majority of RTIs involving death or serious injury are pursuit related. The research, carried out between April 2004 and September 2006 also revealed that approximately 40 people die each year as a result of RTIs.

Responding to the report findings, Jan Berry said: "Having provided much of the evidence to the IPCC contained within this report, its findings and recommendations are welcomed. We have been saying for years that better data collection and analysis is needed following a police pursuit incident."

"This will help the police service understand why a precise incident occurred and, if needed, identify any lessons to be learned. Frontline officers will also welcome the recommendation by the IPCC for the fitting of data recorders and on board DVD recording devices in all police operational response vehicles; a call we made to chief officers two years ago." Mrs Berry added; "This will protect officers as well as give public reassurance in a fair and transparent post-incident process."

The report also called for ACPO to revise its current guidelines in favour of codification and impose stricter means of implementing them. What is clear from this report is that the ACPO pursuit guidelines are not being adhered to by all forces. It also revealed that the level of driver training and refresher training is not consistently applied and in some examples was woefully inadequate in terms of frequency.

The IPCC report shows that 98 per cent of pursued drivers were male with an average age of 24 years. Tom Bucke from the IPCC told the attendees at the joint conference that appropriate training is the key to reducing pursuit related fatalities. "Effective pursuits need to be authorised, managed and assessed. Forces need to ensure that only suitably trained officers undertake pursuits and risk assessments need to be carried out regularly."

He added; "The recording and auditing of pursuits is essential as very often there are lots of lessons to be learned". However, to keep things in perspective the IPCC recognise that most pursuits last for a few minutes and generally officers operate above reproach.

The Federation urges that this is given the attention needed once and for all to minimise the occurrence of pursuit related deaths and welcomes the work done by ACC Andy Holt in South Yorkshire and Supt Alan Green from Greater Manchester in revising a new national pursuit codes of practice. Hopefully, this will pass through the ACPO cabinet with a successful outcome resulting in Chief Officers adopting the codes of practice without delay.

# In Focus : November conference

## Technology v trained police officers

There is no disputing the rapid rate at which technology is developing. This was particularly noticeable at the conference where an array of new kit was on display. Roads policing officers do not need reminding of the importance of upgrading and implementing new technology to stay ahead.

As highlighted many times during the conference; the perpetrator of a crime will generally use a vehicle. The Federation strongly advises that the best way of detecting, deterring and catching criminals is to have more visible officers on patrol. Chairman Jan Berry says "Using technology like ANPR to support, not replace road policing officers is important. The presence of officers is crucial as a beacon of our enforcement of the highways." Mrs Berry expressed particular dismay at the move away from routine patrolling of motorways which is the best way of denying criminals the use of the road and promoting road safety.

Vernon Coaker MP, Under Secretary of State for Police & Security, commended roads policing officers on their commitment and dedication. He reminded officers that the government is supportive of traffic policing; "We value all the activity you are undertaking and we are eager to work alongside you in some areas, we want to experience it first hand through going out on the beat with you and hear your problems."

In response to this Alan Jones of the Police Federation commented; "We must remain concerned when the Minister, in mistaken belief, asserts that many roads policing tasks can be done by a beat Constable. Regrettably not all PC's are trained with the necessary skills nor do they have the resources, opportunities, time etc which Mr. Coaker failed to recognise."

It is important to highlight that roads policing in particular has suffered a drastic demise in recent years. Due to the lack of resources allocated and the decrease in fully trained officer numbers, roads policing is demanding the attention it so desperately needs from ACPO and



government. One of the biggest issues we have to address is the disconnection between the Home Office and Dept for Transport in relation to ownership of roads policing matters. Both the Federation and ACPO through Med Hughes, when leading on roads policing, have been trying for some time to resolve this problem.

"Sufficient numbers of properly trained roads policing officers is not a luxury; it is a necessity for public safety, security and dealing with the range of criminal behaviour and activity that our road network carries every day. Enforcement of disqualified, drink or drug driving legislation must become recognised and valued by the Home Office as much as any sanctioned detection crime," says Mrs Berry.

Mr. Coaker said the government's focus on setting targets and performance assessments are a crucial tool in monitoring the ongoing developments and pitfalls throughout policing. He added; "The government recognises the need for specialist expertise and targets should "The government recognises the need for specialist expertise and targets should not be the sole focus. Nothing can overtake the presence of police on the roads."

## Drink Driving is not just a seasonal issue

The Police Federation is calling for government investment in roads policing following the recent launch of the new government campaign. The THINK! 'Moment of doubt' campaign targets young male drivers. At the launch, Transport Secretary, Ruth Kelly said: "Thirty years of sustained government campaigns have successfully changed attitudes and helped to significantly cut alcohol-related road deaths."

The Federation welcomes all steps to help prevent people from driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs. However, the Federation has doubts on the Government's assertion over the problem, which shows that drink and drug driving is still a serious problem that continually kills over 550 road users each year, with many more suffering serious injuries. "We support any moves to deter any potential drink-driver from getting behind the wheel, however, the government must look at the whole picture." Jan Berry said.

The government needs to look at the current drink drive limit, which puts the UK out of kilter with the rest of Europe. Increased investment and better equipment for detecting and enforcing drink and drug driving legislation could make it much harder for convicted drivers to re-offend. Drink or drug driving need to be more than just seasonal campaigns. A greater recognition of enforcement is required.

Rob Gifford, Executive Director of the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) agrees that government need to invest more time in aiding police to reduce the amount of offenders on the roads. "There is a great danger in letting technology replace police officers. Now more than ever there is a higher percentage of fatalities in non-seat-belt wearers and there is no technology or camera that can currently spot this."

Mr. Gifford also believes that many aspects like road traffic incidents should be policed at a local level. "Although political priority veers towards cross-boarder and national levels, PACTS strongly advises that most roads policing issues are local issues."



## Professionalising the road ahead

At the recent joint conference John Randall, chair of Skills for Justice highlighted the importance of professional development and the recognition of skills within roads policing in particular.

“In 2020, if the estimations are right around 40 per cent of jobs will require graduate level skills. Let us not be fooled because policing will be no exception to that,” Mr. Randall warned.

He also insisted that the police service will have to be prepared to meet the needs of future graduates to ensure the continuation of a top quality service. Recent research by the Skills for Justice shows that 37 per cent of graduates are currently looking to join the police service.

The Federation speaks for professionals within the service and supports the development of these certified standards. Jan Berry said; “The accreditation of all the skills necessary in roads policing is required if we want to attract new people in the future. Greater recognition of the qualifications and skills involved will meet with the expectations of future recruits.”

Mr. Randall also reminded the police service that it has a duty to provide learning and training paths to all employees. “We must bear in mind that new recruits in 2020 will have come through a system where they expect to learn and develop and we as employers will have an obligation to continue this professional development,” he said.

He suggested that the best way of ensuring a professional career path is available for new recruits is through assessments and PDRs. “Professionalism is

about having systems that allows officers to continually develop the knowledge and skills necessary for doing a job and PDRs are a good way of achieving a high level of professionalism.”

Alan Jones agrees with developing training and skills in roads policing. “The Federation believes in driving professionalism forward and there should not be 43 variations of such a key issue. It is imperative that any inconsistency of standards is sorted out,” he said.

In order for roads policing to call itself a professional service effective assessments will be crucial. “If performance is to be improved we need the paperwork to prove this and PDRs provide the basis to do just that. However, PDRs are, in the main, currently not credible and are unfit for purpose and a lot of work is needed to improve this area. We will need to force a culture of level performance through analysing the individual’s contribution to the overall performance of an operation,” added Mr. Randall.

The joint conference was a step in the right direction. “Assessments of the individual should be seen as a way of identifying how things can be improved or as a way of monitoring how good they are,” he added.

Jan Berry agreed there is a need to accept the challenge and recognise what the needs of all future recruits will be. “Roads policing has identifiable learning operations but accredited professional qualifications are needed to encourage future employees,” concluded Randall.

**The Police Federation of England and Wales – the voice of the operational police officer – is the staff association for police officers up to and including Chief Inspectors. Established by statute, we are responsible for the welfare of officers and the provision of an efficient police service.**

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