



## PRESS RELEASE

### Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing

Police Officers should be trusted to deal with minor criminals and lesser offences using professional judgment and discretion, according to a new report. Published today, the *Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing – Full Report* calls on Government and Police Leaders to cut the red tape that handcuffs police officers to the rule book.

The report build on the work of Sir Ronnie Flanagan, takes a comprehensive look at the police service, and cuts through areas where policing has become overburdened by excessive bureaucracy with clinical recommendations aimed at removing duplication, inefficiency and waste. The report recognises a genuine desire by government and the police service to remove unnecessary bureaucracy, but highlights the slow progress made, due largely to dysfunctional organisational structures and confused accountability

The report is written by Jan Berry, former Chair of the Police Federation, who was appointed Independent Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing Advocate in October 2008 to challenge government and policing to remove unnecessary bureaucracy.

Jan Berry says,

‘People join the police to do the right thing and make a positive difference, but somehow the system manages to put obstacles and hurdles in their way. You cannot write rules for every situation. Officers need to gain experience applying common sense and professional judgment, rather than drowning them with reams of rigid rules.’

The report argues that existing systems and structures do not flow effectively, resulting in duplication, overlapping responsibility and more handling and handing on of information. Nonetheless, in policing the rules, processes, systems and structures have become more important than what they are seeking to achieve, and the balance is wrong.

Jan says,

‘There is a need to address the root causes rather than the symptoms. Too much paperwork is the result of unnecessary bureaucracy not the cause, and we need to keep the bureaucratic burden under control. Strong leadership and effective communication is the key to making a difference, and we must be mindful of the fact that reducing bureaucracy is more of a marathon than a sprint. Long term cultural change is required to challenge the status quo, and continuously learn from experience to improve systems, structures and processes.’

The report highlights the fact that some bureaucracy is very necessary in accountable bodies such as the police service, but that it must serve a clearly defined purpose and add to the

efficiency of the system, rather than obstruct, complicate or confuse processes. A clear example of this is the IT requirement, which is woefully disjointed across the whole of the Criminal Justice System.

The report calls for joined up technology across CJS, starting with the electronic transfer of case files, and the provision of hand held computers so that officers do not have to keep returning to their station to log data and information. This is a mammoth task, and the report is clear that this will take time to achieve, especially in these straightened times.

Jan says,

‘There is a need to go back to basics and do what is right. There are difficult times ahead, public confidence is low following both the recent expenses debacle and the chaos caused by the breathtaking irresponsibility of the banks. The need to rebuild trust is the most important thing, and I believe returning proportionality and balance to policing brings us one step closer to returning confidence in the establishment to the public.

The report particularly highlights the need to;

- ? turn the proportionate crime recording and investigation ‘four force pilot’ into a ‘forty-three force reality’ and empower officers to resolve minor issues in a victim led, ethical, proportionate and appropriate way, without worrying about performance league tables and sanctioned detections,
- ? remove unnecessary paperwork in court files and calls on police, CPS and Courts to manage the process more robustly,
- ? ensure data collected is necessary, not duplicated, adds value and is collected in the least bureaucratic way,
- ? recognise an ongoing requirement to remove and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and,
- ? address risk aversion by equipping officers with the skills and experience to use professional judgment to do the right thing and make good decisions.

-End -

---

Note to editors:

Jan Berry was appointed the Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing Advocate in October 2008 to challenge government and policing to remove unnecessary bureaucracy. Jan joined the police service in 1973, rising quickly through the ranks from constable to patrol inspector. In 1997, she was promoted to the rank of Chief Inspector, and in September 2002 Jan became the first woman chairman in the history of the Police Federation.