

'Take your share of the pain'



Home Secretary Theresa May.

Stood in front of a backdrop calling the cuts to policing 'criminal', Home Secretary Theresa May urged officers to 'stop pretending they are being picked on'.

She said the police service needed to 'take its share of the pain' as the Government battles to balance the books as she delivered her keynote speech to a packed hall on the Wednesday morning of conference week.

She admitted the 20 per cent cuts came down to money but was adamant there was need for reform.

As she took to the stage she was greeted by silence from the rank and file officers, many of whom were holding up banners and placards with 'Enough is enough' written on them.

She said: "There is so much to be proud of in British policing. But that doesn't mean that everything in policing is perfect. And it doesn't mean that there is no need for reform.

"The cuts will be challenging, they will involve hard choices, but they are manageable and they are affordable. I know the Fed often say we're singling out the police. But that simply isn't true."

Adamant the reforms in the Winsor review are in the 'long-term interest of policing', she said: "Let's be clear about what the Winsor proposals actually mean.

"Total savings of less than two per cent

of the police officer pay bill; skills, hard work and front-line officers rewarded; a new unsocial hours allowance; faster progression through the pay scales; and every single penny of savings ploughed back into policing.

"You will remain the best paid of all the emergency services - and that is what you deserve to be."

She added that the right to strike was 'not on the table' as keeping communities safe was 'simply too important'.

With the privatisation of the police service hitting the headlines recently, it was no wonder Ms May spoke about her visions for the future of the private sector in what has been described as 'the best police service in the world'.

She said back office functions, such as new technology and staff for control rooms and custody centres could be contracted out, freeing up warranted officers for front-line roles, but that she would 'never privatise policing'.

And Ms May was heckled by the audience when she told them they should welcome reforms which will bring in outsiders to some of the more senior ranks.

However, she did promise to help cut the amount of paperwork officers had to complete, giving them more time to be out patrolling the streets and she announced officers were to be given more powers to prosecute cases themselves - starting with

traffic offences when defendants don't turn up to court.

She also pledged more money for treatment centres to help injured officers and said mentally ill offenders and victims will be looked after by the NHS - not the police.

She concluded: "The office of constable is the bedrock of British policing. And that is something that we will never change.

"But policing does need change. I know that change can be difficult, unsettling, sometimes even painful. But it's my job to tell it like it is, not how we'd like it to be.

"It's my job to do what's right for policing and right for the country. And it's my job to reform policing so it is fit to face the future. Less paperwork; more police work. More power for the public; less power for the bureaucrats. And freeing the finest police officers in the world to fight crime.

"That is my vision for policing; and that is what I am determined to deliver."

Conference overview

By Jeff Mapps, chairman of Gwent Police Federation

Conference 2012 gave officers the opportunity to make the Home Secretary and police minister fully aware of our concerns about their reform programme.

Delegates made it clear that this is not just about preserving our pay and conditions, it's about the risks to public safety and the very future of the British police service.

Just days after 35,000 officers took to the streets of London for the Police Federation march, we hammered home our messages. But I'm not sure they were really listening, they seem intent on carrying on regardless.

Only time will tell, of course. But in the meantime, officers should rest assured, the Federation, both locally and nationally, is doing all it can to fight for you, for policing and for the office of constable, the bedrock of the British police service.

Cuts put public safety at risk, chairman warns

The Government has been warned it is racing towards a train crash that could destroy the effectiveness of policing and damage public safety.

The warning came from Police Federation chairman Paul McKeever who, in his keynote address to conference, urged Theresa May to slow the pace of the 'reckless' changes to the police service.

"Home Secretary - take breath. Stop now, and review what you're doing or you will be found guilty of destroying the finest police service in the world."

The coalition Government was giving everyone a bad deal – officers, the police service and the public, he explained.

Officers were facing a four-year pay freeze, paying more for their pensions, losing pay through Winsor 1 and 2 and were feeling less safe due to their reduced numbers.

"You cannot expect officers, those who understood the fiscal situation and accepted that some cuts were necessary, to take an unfair share of the cuts and just sit there and be content with their lot," he said.

Meanwhile, the service was suffering. "We have less resilience; fewer warranted officers, a weakened front-line and a radically altered model of British policing. You are on the precipice of destroying a police service that is admired and replicated throughout the world.

"Home Secretary, we are seeing proposals, things being put in place without infrastructure, that will fundamentally change the dynamics of policing."

He expressed concerns about the role of police and crime commissioners, and increased privatisation but said the most serious changes affected the office of constable.

"If you were to look at us from a business point of view, what would be our biggest strength? Trust,



Police Federation chairman Paul McKeever.

independence, fairness, integrity, compassion, understanding - it is an office the public respect and understand - communities identify with constables," the chairman explained.

"You need to think about this very carefully – you are meddling with the very bedrock of British policing."

"This is a slippery slope that you are leading policing down, Home Secretary. Why you are doing this is something we cannot comprehend. It shifts the balance from police officers being officers of the crown to being employees.

"It is for that reason, that many are calling for the question to be asked whether we should be seeking full employment rights for them."

He said the public would suffer too since 20 per cent less budget would mean less crime-fighting, resilience, public and police officer safety.

Earlier in his speech, he argued the new professional body due to be set up in

November would set the service on a course based wholly on academia at the expense of practical skills.

"We have seen other parts of the public sector, such as nursing, move away from technical skills and the core values of that profession appear to have been diminished. The Prime Minister himself has alluded to this," the chairman said.

"Home Secretary – do not make the same mistake with policing. It is the type of person we recruit, the training and support we provide, the values we hold and appropriate remuneration and conditions of service that makes a profession.

"We never lose sight of the fact that we are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job. Our core values are compassion, empathy, discretion, bravery and the ability to work autonomously.

"We do not need a professional body; it completely misunderstands what it means to hold the independent office of constable."

He told the Home Secretary that she was getting it wrong, and ignoring the advice offered by the Federation.

"We tried to warn you about areas of real concern. We warned you about the potential for riots and even showed you a film to the tune of 'I predict a riot'. We were accused of scaremongering. But you only have to look at what happened last summer," he explained, adding that 16,000 officers had to restore order in London, the same number that will be lost over four years.

"The resilience of the service is going. We saw the worst riots in our country's history. Five dead, many homeless and thousands of businesses damaged and destroyed. In London alone 250 police officers were injured. Our image abroad was damaged - how much overseas investment has been lost?"

And he added: "Home Secretary, quite simply, you were wrong."

Around 5,216 officers had been lost from the front-line – which the Home Secretary had said would be protected from the cuts.

Finishing his speech, he concluded: "Home Secretary, we warned you about the riots and you said we were scaremongering.

"We warned you that a 20 per cent budget cut would damage the front-line and were told we were wrong.

"We are warning you that you are racing towards a train crash that could destroy the effectiveness of policing in this country and harm the safety of the public."

How can report be fair and independent?

If the Home Secretary is still in office and if she attends Police Federation conference next year, she will probably be hoping that one delegate does not go for a hat-trick and stand up to ask her a question.

Last year, Sarah Adams from Derbyshire put Theresa May on the spot with the final question of the Q and A session when she asked:

"Home Secretary, how can you expect police officers or the communities we serve to trust you or your Government?"

This year, the Home Secretary, who had already faced a barrage of questions about the cuts and the independence of Winsor's reports, must have wished that facilitator John Stapleton had not turned to the young lady in blue for one of the final questions of the session.

Sarah asked: "Home Secretary, when you employed Winsor to carry out his independent review, did you know the law firm he was a partner in was negotiating a multi-million pound ground-breaking deal for Lincolnshire Police? How can it be fair and independent if there is a vested interest?"

The audience loved it. Theresa May was less impressed. The Home Secretary didn't actually answer the question but she replied that Winsor did his review independently of the partnership and not as part of the firm. She said it was not appropriate for people to ask this because "Tom" wasn't there. The review was done independently.

No-one seemed convinced and Simon Payne, chairman in Warwickshire, told Ms May: "We no longer trust you in the police service, full stop, end of story."

The crowd applauded and heckled, calling for the Home Secretary to resign.

But she countered: "When I first came to conference I talked about the deal between the police service and the Government. I want to help you to be more effective at your jobs. I am putting changes in place to help you do your job. We want to deal with the causes of crime. My vision is to maintain the office of constable because I genuinely believe we do have the finest police service in the world and I intend to deliver reforms that will enable you to carry on being that."

Sam Roberts, North Wales' sergeants' rep and chair of the eve of conference meeting, didn't seem to believe her.

She asked: "Do you regularly work all night? Have you told parents their child is dead? Have you faced someone with mental health issues? Have you been shot at, spat at, covered in someone else's blood or your own? I assume the answer is no. Do you think £19,000 is enough to pay a new recruit to do these things on a weekly or daily basis?"

The Home Secretary said she recognised the job police officers are doing and the proposal was to lower the entry salary and then speed up progression.

But Sam replied: "To pay a probationer £19,000 is disgusting."

Other questions included in the session and the Home Secretary's responses are summarised below.

John Apter, chairman, Hampshire:

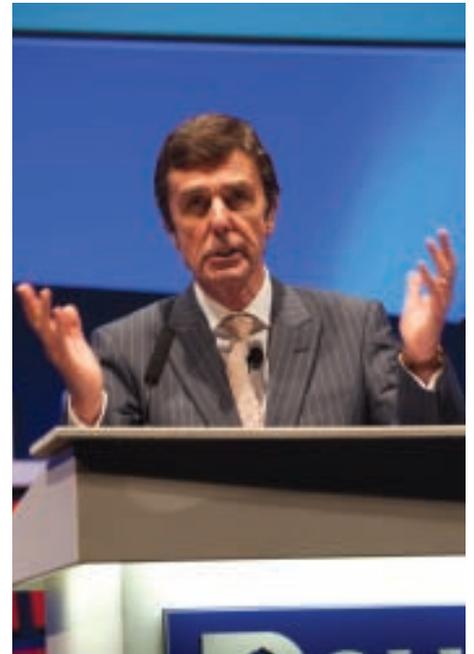
There is no shortage of people who want to be MPs. So by Winsor's rationale, there isn't a recruitment problem so is it time to cut MPs' pay?

HS: This isn't a service being picked on. Everyone in the public sector is having to go through pay freeze and pension changes. MPs have had changes to their pay and pensions. It's Government funding to police forces being cut by 20 per cent and your percentage varies from force to force depending on the precept.

Ian Leyland, Merseyside: The pace you are currently going at means you are being reckless. Please slow down and listen. Slow down and listen to us.

John Stapleton: Home Secretary, when you saw those police officers marching last week, did it give you any pause for thought? Did you ask "is there anything we need to re-consider"?

HS: Of course we listened. We listen and talk to police officers. But the march was against funding cuts and I have responded as to why it's necessary for these cuts to deal with the deficit. No Home Secretary wants to come to the Police Conference to say we are cutting budgets but I said I would tell it like it is and that's how it is. But the Winsor reform is right – we ask for the proper processes to look at this then look at what he has found in his report.



Facilitator John Stapleton.

John Stapleton: What these people are saying is that Winsor has no experience of the police service, no experience of pay structures, but he came to conclusions that were pre-ordained and had a remarkable resemblance to a speech made by the Prime Minister a few years before.

HS: We asked Winsor, he wasn't involved, he was independent, to do the review. It was open and transparent. In terms of David Cameron's speech about six years ago, we have only ever said reform is necessary. No secret about that, we have been clear.

John Stapleton asked the chairman: So what's wrong with an outsider doing that?

Paul McKeever: You need to take people with you. Hands up if you believe the Winsor report was truly independent? Home Secretary, I notice you didn't raise your hand.

Steve Rees, West Mids: Question about business partnering. If you go on a certain private company's website, they are advertising jobs in child abuse investigation etc. Is there anything you will not privatise? The fear of our members is a paramilitary police.

HS: On the privatisation issue, in Hampshire there are officers working alongside private sector companies but they do a part of some things the police would only have done themselves. There will be no movement on warranted officer powers to the private sector. We are not talking about reducing warranted officers. In places like the West Midlands and Surrey, it's right that they are asking what the options are.

What's so wrong with policing?

The proposals in the Winsor reviews are firmly based on political ideology, says Ian Rennie, general secretary of the Police Federation.



Ian Rennie, general secretary of the Police Federation.

In the Police Pay and Conditions – The Future? session, he asked what was so wrong with policing in this country that the Government needed to change it – crime was down, victim satisfaction and trust were up.

"The Winsor proposals will undermine the office of constable," he told delegates, arguing that lowering starting pay while talking about attracting better recruits was 'quite perverse'.

The Winsor reports, the general secretary claimed, were pre-ordained and were linked to David Cameron's 2006 speech on police reform.

For the Federation and for officers, opposition was not just about pay and conditions but was also about the future of policing.

Earlier in the session, equality adviser Jayne Monkhouse said the proposed changes to pay and conditions could put the police service back to the 1970s in terms of its employee profile with barriers put in place to block certain people – including women – being police officers.

Sue Hastings, an independent consultant on job evaluation who had worked on the NHS Agenda for Change, said that while her head said it was fair and logical to introduce job evaluation for police roles, her heart groaned at the work involved.

She said that Winsor 'had chickened out' of recommending job evaluation and put it back on the 'too difficult, too costly shelf'.

But, she explained, the individually assessed competence-related pay progression, establishing two skills threshold levels, 'makes job evaluation look like a walk in the park'.

The fairest systems, she concluded, involved decent levels of basic pay and as few as possible added pay elements.

'Cuts are too far and too fast'

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper has urged the Government to 'change course before it is too late'.

She accused the coalition Government of 'cutting too far and too fast' in its reform of the police service and putting public safety at risk in doing so.

Ms Cooper accused the Government of having 'no positive vision for the future of policing', just 'chaos and contradictions'.

And she told delegates core policing, such as neighbourhood patrols, serious criminal investigations, or assessing high risk offenders, should not be contracted out, no matter how cheap the contract price.



Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper.

No fees for professional body – yet!

Two key points came out of the first session of conference – there were no plans to charge or compel officers to join the new police professional body, yet.

The Professional Body Working Group presentation on Tuesday afternoon included input from Stephen Kershaw, Home Office director of police reform and resources, who did little to dispel officers' concerns about the new body due for launch in November.

John Giblin, the Federation lead in this area, explained the police service was already professional and that officers did not need to be members of a professional body to be seen as such.

Officers already underwent pre-joining assessment, then had warranted powers and a strict discipline code backed up by courses for specialisms.

He raised questions over the benefits of a new professional body, how would it help improve service to the public, if it would be voluntary, would officers need a licence to practice, how would the Federation and ACPO be involved, what governance would be introduced, would officers have to pay to join and who could be a member?

"There are more questions than answers," he concluded.

Stephen Kershaw said a professional body needed to be set up following the abolition of the NPIA later this year.

It would offer, he said, first class, nationally agreed standards across all specialisms, would have a role in setting standards for threshold payments and fitness tests and would identify best practice, and share it.

'We're at a crossroads'

General secretary Ian Rennie told delegates that he totally believed the Federation and the police service as a whole were at a crossroads.

Speaking at the annual general meeting which was held on the Thursday afternoon of conference week, he said the changes taking place under the Government's reform programme were having a major impact on policing.

But he explained the Federation's concerns were not just about pay and conditions but were also about how the policing service is delivered and said the reform was just another word for privatisation.

Winsor's report, he said, brought new meaning to the word independence.

As a glimmer of hope, the general secretary, who is also the Federation's chief negotiator, said Winsor had invited

MPs to a briefing on the reports. This, Ian added, was as a result of the pressure being put on MPs by Federation branches and their members.

He urged members to continue visiting MPs and to encourage their colleagues to do the same.

"We need your help to create an environment to allow me to negotiate on your behalf."

The general secretary said legal advice was being sought to ensure that the national poll of members over industrial rights was conducted properly. Details of the poll would be announced as soon as possible, he explained, adding that it would be a 'monumental' legal fight if members voted in favour of seeking industrial rights. The Government, Ian told the meeting, had already said that industrial rights were not on the table.

Mother of murder victim tells of campaign to change law on stalking

Tricia Bernal, whose daughter was murdered by her stalker ex-boyfriend seven years ago, told officers she was proud of having secured stalking law reform in a moving presentation to the conference.

The change in legislation came just a few weeks ago, on 1 May, following the highly successful campaign by NAPO, the probation and family court trade union, and the Protection Against Stalking charity which Tricia set up after her daughter, Clare, was shot in the head in the Harvey Nichols store in Knightsbridge in 2005.

Tricia told conference Clare (22) had only dated Michael Pech for three weeks but, after she ended the relationship, he "stalked, harassed and frightened her for weeks and made her life a misery".

Tricia spoke of her sense of helplessness at the time. Through her

tireless campaigning, she now knows there were, and are, recognised danger signs in stalking cases and these are now part of new police procedures on stalking.

The Protection Against Stalking campaign called for fundamental changes in police training, the establishment of a victim's advocacy scheme and for the treatment of offenders.

Harry Fletcher, assistant secretary, NAPO, said: "This was probably the most successful and moving campaign that I have ever experienced."



Tricia Bernal.

Police minister put under pressure

With two morning sessions under his belt, police and justice minister Nick Herbert clearly knew he would be put under pressure during a question time session about the current climate in policing.



Police and justice minister Nick Herbert.

He may have faced both the constables' and inspectors' separate meetings already but officers still had plenty of questions and the other members of the panel – Sir Hugh Orde, president of ACPO, Derek Barnett of the Superintendents' Association, shadow police minister David Hanson, Paul McKeever, Police Federation chairman, and Javed Khan, CEO of Victim Support – were pretty much sidelined.

Simon Payne, chairman of Warwickshire Police Federation, quickly got to the point asking the police minister why he thought police officers wanted industrial rights.

But Nick Herbert was equally clear saying he accepted there were concerns. While officers were talking about the right to strike, he did not feel they really wanted to but that they wanted to be treated fairly which they were 'absolutely

entitled' to be. He said that proposals in Winsor 2 would be 'properly discussed'.

Paul McKeever said the proposals would fundamentally change the police service, with some proposals effectively turning officers into employees but without the same rights and protections as other employees.

John Stapleton pushed the point further when he recalled the previous week's march and asked if the fact that virtually every off-duty police officer had attended had not even caused the Government to pause for thought.

The minister pretty much stuck to the same lines he had given in the constables' conference – he understood the concerns, it was important there was a dialogue and added: "We believe strongly in treating police officers fairly."

Javed Khan struck a chord when he said the cuts would make it worse for victims of crime and when he asked why the rank and file officers could not be asked for the solutions so that sustainable reform could be implemented.

Other themes during the session were pensions, the adverse impact of Winsor 1 and 2 on women officers, the abolition of CRTP, fitness testing, the cutting of overseas aid, the new police and crime commissioners and the Official Side's dismissal of the Staff Side's alternative proposals for saving money.

Delegates' feedback

Michael Vaughan, JBB secretary

"The speech from the Home Secretary was iron-willed, not for turning, but as a result of Paul McKeever's speech, I was totally unconvinced that Tom Winsor's review was independent. It was nothing other than ideology of David Cameron from speeches he made in 2006. We are being treated unfairly and nothing she said changed my opinion."

PC Jon Williams

"The chairman's speech was eloquent and moving but with the undertone of knowing he was speaking to a Home Secretary who wasn't listening. The Home Secretary's speech was polarised and entrenched. She spoke in a way that illustrates the void between Government and the police. There is no goodwill from her to negotiate."

Chief Inspector Steve Thomas

"There were so many highlights from conference but probably the most impactful was the talk by John Peters at the inspectors' conference. This is my last conference and it was easily the best, which was an excellent conclusion to my 30-year policing career, in particular at a time when I am being discarded by the Force under the guise of efficiency."

DC Victoria Day

"The Olympic session had the danger of being a dry subject. However, the visit from Sir Steve Redgrave was a highlight to the end of a long day. I haven't been able to attend conference for a few years so re-engaging with the process has been good and I've enjoyed the week. It would be a positive change to add some extra time to the Q & A sessions with guests important to our ongoing issues, such as the police minister."

PS Becky Doonan

"Paul's McKeever's speech was brilliant! It was the first time I have heard him speak publicly and I was very impressed. The delivery, visual presentations/aids and style were unparalleled. The Home Secretary delivered a typical politician's speech. It didn't give any answers or show any understanding to our plight."

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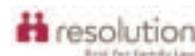
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Fit for women?

The theme of the policewomen's eve of conference meeting was 'The Police Service – fit for women?'

The meeting heard great strides made in recruiting and retaining women officers were being undone by the current reform programme disproportionately affecting females.

A survey of women officers conducted as part of Lord Stevens' review of policing has revealed that 40 per cent of them are seriously considering leaving the police service, delegates were told.

We are can do, will do people

Political interference and too much red tape is hindering an inspector's ability to deliver 'decisive and transformational leadership'.

And Alan Jones, chairman of the Inspectors' Central Committee, said politics and 'administrative micro management' were getting in the way of common sense decisions.

"As inspectors we act as the rock of stability, guardians of operational standards, planning and delivery. We are adaptable, creative, able to prioritise and lead whilst delivering efficiency in a modern fast moving world. We are can do, will do people," he told inspectors at their separate Tuesday morning meeting.

"We don't want to be steered by or answerable to paper chasing bureaucrats - we want our stars to shine in every difficult and problematic situation."

Inspiring speaker

Former RAF Flight Lieutenant and prisoner of war John Peters gave a rousing and fascinating motivational speech about his capture in 1991 during the Iraq war.

He told officers he understood their role. "It's about having the confidence that you have the support to do your duties," he said.

Equally inspiring was five times Olympic gold champion Sir Steve Redgrave who was a surprise visitor to the final session of the Wednesday afternoon.

He gave an insight into the life of Olympians during an update on the current position in planning the policing of the Games.

In an entertaining speech, he admitted he and his fellow athlete, Paul McKeever, shared five gold medals between them.

Winsor betrayal

Constables leader Julie Nesbit has slammed the Winsor reports calling them a 'betrayal', saying Part 1 was a 'body blow to policing' and Part 2 'a knife in the back'.



Constables leader Julie Nesbit.

As she addressed a room full of officers, the chairman of the Constables' Central Committee said the review into pay and conditions was a 'betrayal of every police constable who joined the service, and committed their lives in return for a

fair deal from Government'.

She said: "Unadulterated implementation of Winsor's recommendations will have long-term, lasting, and harmful effects on policing - from the quality of new recruits, to the numbers of officers available for front-line duty, and to the morale of long-serving constables."

She concluded: "Government cuts and Winsor 2 severely affect the livelihoods of constables. Moreover, they put constables' lives at risk, and the safety of members of the public we serve.

"It will also prove to be a betrayal of the public, who deserve far more than the weakened and under-resourced shell of a police service."

Don't gamble with the police service

The Government has been warned: "Don't gamble with the future of the finest publicly accountable police service in the world."

The stark warning was issued by John Giblin during his speech to delegates at this year's conference.

"Neither we nor the public will forgive you if it all goes horribly and terribly wrong and your legacy is one of the complete destruction of a great British institution, together with the office of constable, who served it and the public so well, true to their oath, the law and the crown," the chairman of the Sergeants' Central Committee told the rank's separate meeting.

He asked MPs to get behind the police service.

"We call upon the silent majority within Government to wake from their slumber and flex their voice and muscle in support of the police service as the sword and shield of law and order throughout England and Wales.

"We will continue to fight with all our strength on behalf of our beleaguered membership. This is a time for us all to stand united as the Police Federation of England and Wales, all for one and one for all in the face of adversity and threat."

Gwent's brave officers honoured

Two Gwent police officers were among those honoured for their bravery during a short film shown on the opening day of the national Police Federation conference.

Sergeants Gareth Lougher and Stephen Drayton have been nominated for the Police Bravery Awards by Gwent Police Federation for their bravery during an incident in April 2011.

The pair attended a 999 call where a car had landed upside down in a brook and the driver was trapped. Without thinking for their own safety, they jumped into the brook and began to try to free the driver. They quickly

established it was a woman on her own, who was fighting for her life and searching desperately for pockets of air to breathe.

Both Steve and Gareth, up to their waist in water, frantically tried to open the doors, but they were stuck and it seemed an almost hopeless task. However, thinking quickly, one of them grabbed a hooly bar and used it to smash through a half open window and pulled the victim to safety.

The two officers will now attend a Downing Street reception with other nominees before attending the gala presentation evening in London in October.

DPP agrees to review on CPS police pursuits guidance

The Director of Public Prosecutions has ordered a review of CPS guidance on pursuit prosecutions after a campaign led by the Police Federation.

Keir Starmer announced the review after a roads policing seminar at the conference focused on the prosecution of Hampshire officers James Holden and Nicky Houghton after a pursuit in Portsmouth in February 2011.

But, while ACC Andy Holt, South Yorkshire, the ACPO lead in this area, has said there is currently a 'sticking plaster' in place to avoid similar prosecutions, he has admitted officers remain vulnerable to prosecution until the law changes.

The seminar was introduced by Alan Jones, the Police Federation roads policing lead, who praised Hampshire Police Federation chairman John Apter for bringing the presentation together.

John outlined the details of the case. At the time of the incident both PC Holden and Houghton were fully trained pursuit and response drivers. Their

four-minute pursuit through Portsmouth at around 8.30pm on a Sunday evening was brought to an end when the suspected burglar crashed through a level crossing barrier and ran off.

The Force's pursuit review group considered the incident and referred it to PSD and in turn James and Nicky were served papers for gross misconduct with James as the driver eventually being charged with dangerous driving by the CPS and Nicky the lesser charge of aiding and abetting, which was dropped at the committal stage.

Following an eight-day Crown Court trial, James was subsequently cleared in January this year.

But, John explained, the case had caused a real dilemma for the Federation in terms of what advice they should give to officers due to the vulnerable position they could find themselves in if they were to engage in a pursuit.

Mark Aldred, James' barrister, explained that there was a gap between

the political and practical messages on pursuits for emergency services which meant that it was difficult for officers to not to break the law on dangerous driving when following a suspect.

The officer would be judged on whether their driving fell below the standard of a competent and careful driver, not an advanced police trained driver, and a competent or careful driver would not be engaged in a pursuit which could lead to driving on the wrong side of the road or through traffic lights in the first place so they automatically fell short of that standard.

There were no exemptions and many of the arguments that officers might use, or their defence lawyers might, were what he called 'no defences'. The law provided no scope to balance the risk of prosecution against the risk to the public if no pursuit was allowed.

Following the case, the Police Federation was pushing for a change in the law, backed by ACPO and the Superintendents' Association.

The Department of Transport has recognised and accepted the problem and steps will be taken to change the law so the emergency services have some degree of protection from prosecution.

But in the mean time, the 'sticking plaster' means that pursuit tapes can be referred to the ACPO police pursuit steering group for independent advice for forces carrying out their own enquiries.



Gwent delegates at the conference.

More Tasers needed

Forces should have double the 12,000 Tasers in circulation around the country so more front-line officers have access to them, says Paul Davis, the Federation's public order lead.

In a session looking back on the August 2011 riots and including clips featuring officers involved in tackling the disorder, Paul said that it was Government policies that brought disquiet and that the police response should be Government funded.

He said it was for academics and politicians with the help of ACPO and the HMIC to work out what went wrong last year.

"It's not our place to understand the reasons for what has taken place it is our job within the Federation to ensure you and our members get the best equipment, training and support in order that you all get home safely to your loved ones," he explained.

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