

'Scaremongering' Federation accused of 'crying wolf'

Home Secretary Theresa May has warned the Police Federation to stop 'crying wolf' over the cuts and warned more savings will have to be made over the next five years.

Speaking at the annual national conference in Bournemouth, she said the Federation had spent years 'scaremongering', with promises of rising crime rates which had failed to materialise, and claimed reform had been 'unambiguously good' for policing.

She announced that 'police reform is working', with the cutting of bureaucracy and central targets saving up to 4.5 million police hours – the equivalent of 2,100 full-time officers.

And she said more cuts were to come: "If we want policing in this country to be the best it can be, then we must reform further."

The Home Secretary told delegates: "There is no ducking the fact that police spending will have to come down again. The last five years have shown that it is possible to do more with less – crime has fallen, the front-line service has been maintained and public confidence in the police is up, even as spending has reduced."

She continued: "I know there are those who say there is no more waste to cut. But I simply do not accept that. It is perfectly possible to make savings without affecting the quality of neighbourhood policing."

"Because I know – as you do – that there is still wasteful spending in policing and that resources are still not linked to demand."

She suggested savings are found in more collaboration, a reduction in staff officers and improved ICT and said the next five years of reform would mean working to understand and reduce demand on policing.

There would be more focus on greater reporting of previously ignored or under-reported crimes, such as child abuse and less 'social worker' activities.

"As I have said, the police are not social workers, they are not mental health nurses, or paramedics. I stand by the sentiment," she explained.

"It is not good enough for police



Theresa May takes questions from delegates.

custody to be used as an overspill facility for A & E - or for secure children's homes to use the police to control the children in their care.

"And I will do everything I can to work with other departments to reduce other unnecessary demand on policing."

Technology will change too. Notebooks and pens could be a thing of the past for officers, with handheld tablets loaded with apps, currently being used by Cambridgeshire, possibly the way of the future along with body-worn video.

The Home Secretary envisages police cars becoming mobile police stations, removing the need for officers to go back to the station to type up paperwork.

And she promised she will listen to the Federation, saying: "If, in everything I am talking about, the Federation comes to me with serious proposals to help change policing for the better, then I will listen."

"Because if we do this right, if you come with me and if you work with me, then we will be able to deliver the reform necessary and improve the working lives of police officers while cutting crime for the public."

She continued: "The choice is yours. As Home Secretary, I can – as I have for the last five years – reform the police without the support of the Federation. But the opportunity to work constructively with Government should make the world of difference to you. So join me and work with me to change policing. The reward will be a better police – for officers and staff and the public you serve – and a country that will be safer and fairer than ever before."

She promised up to £15 million is to be made available to deliver health-based places of safety in England so no-one has to be detained by police and held in custody due to a lack of suitable alternative.

And she announced a major independent review of the use of local crime and performance targets in every police force in England and Wales, to be led by Irene Curtis – president of the police Superintendents' Association.

She concluded: "What I have set out today will help transform policing for the better. If you want British policing to be the best it can be, join with me to make that happen."

Welsh dimension cannot be ignored

By Jeff Mapps, chairman of Gwent Police Federation

Conference week started with a Monday afternoon gathering of representatives of all four Police Federation branches in Wales.

Joining with our colleagues from Dyfed Powys, North and South Wales, we considered the special considerations that need to be factored into the Federation's ongoing reform programme.

As chair of the Welsh Affairs group, I gave a short speech to the gathered delegates while Mark Hinge, political adviser to the Federation on Welsh political matters, outlined the background to the meeting.

After a presentation by Accenture, the project managers for the Federation reform programme, delegates were asked to come up with their own list of considerations which included the infrastructure of the region, the bilingual nature of the communities, the need to improve the service to the public, possible structural and representational changes to the Federation and demand for a Welsh voice for the Federation in Westminster as well as in the Welsh Assembly.

This work is ongoing and we will keep you informed of progress. But, as a sign of the need for special considerations to be made for the Welsh forces, I noted with interest the Home Secretary's speech.

In one of the key sessions of conference, the difficulties faced by the police service in trying to fill the gaps in mental health provisions were highlighted on Tuesday morning with everyone seeming to agree that people who are mentally unwell should not be detained in police cells and neither should they be using the police service as a gateway to mental health services.

The following day the Home Secretary, in a far more conciliatory speech than last year, thankfully, announced £15 million of funding for more health-based beds and services for people with mental health issues in England. While, of course, this is to be welcomed, it is somewhat telling that there was no mention of Wales yet we have just the same problem as forces in England. Time and time again, we find ourselves stepping in because there is no adequate mental health services or limited out of hours access and these issues are aggravated by the geography of our region meaning that suitable, qualified help and support is several hours away.

We will keep representing you, fighting for you and calling for the special considerations for Wales to be kept to the forefront. It is important for you, for the Force, for our other regional colleagues but most of all it is vital for our communities.

Neighbourhood policing: an endangered species?



Forces are being forced to choose between neighbourhood policing and 999 responses now they are cut to the bone.

Steve White, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, expressed concerns about the decline in neighbourhood policing saying it was becoming an endangered species.

"Neighbourhood policing, the foundation of local confidence, trust and reassurance in communities that the police are there; that the police will be there when needed, policing with their consent," he said in his keynote address to conference.

"Neighbourhood policing - the source of so much information that stops the public from becoming victims of crime; that keeps people safe, that prevents terrorist attacks on our country.

"And neighbourhood policing is just one of the endangered species in the new stream-lined barren policing landscape.

"A generation of young people is growing up never seeing their local police unless they are unfortunate enough to experience a serious crime. Is that the type of police service the public deserve?

"Policing is about building relationships. Not statistics. Not computer says no. Not chancellor says no."

And he hit back at Government claims that the cuts were having no detrimental effect, saying: "Home Secretary: cuts really do have consequences. And we see them every day.

"We see the shocked, traumatised faces of the victims of crime. We see the tears of people who feel rushed, passed over, dismissed, as fewer officers try to deal with the number of emergency calls.

"Police officers forced to run from job to job, at the expense of being able to provide the highest quality service to those asking for help.

"We share the heartache of the public who tell us we are a service, not a business. A service that they expect to be there when they need it; a service that doesn't say no. But the cuts are now making that impossible."

He said chief constables and police and

crime commissioners across the country fear the consequences of further budget cuts and warned civilianising police officer roles 'sure as hell' wasn't a solution.

"Police officers understand their role is to serve the public. They are not private security guards or box-ticking functionaries because they do more than going through the motions. They are committed professionals trained to go the extra mile," he said.

"Let's look at the real costs of cuts. The human cost to my colleagues. Colleagues who have to deal with the stress of leaving one job half done to get to the next emergency call; the cost to their own health and welfare. The low morale officers feel; undervalued, unappreciated by Government.

"When you look at the national budget, the amount we spend on policing in comparison to other areas, such as overseas aid, is peanuts. So what else do you expect us to cut? We have responded magnificently over the past five years, but it has come at a cost."

He hit out saying the cuts now felt personal, with officers being expected to do much more with much less and the pensions goalpost having moved significantly.

And he called for an independent review of policing that takes account of what the public wants.

He went on to suggest the option of a one-force model is explored further saying: "We currently have over 43 police forces operating in England and Wales. Who does that really benefit? To the public, the police are the police. They don't distinguish between cap badges.

"To them the structure is irrelevant. What matters is when they need help, they get it. What matters is feet on the beat; cops investigating crime. Shouldn't we at least be having a conversation about structure? A look at how many forces we need?" the chairman asked.

He called on the Home Secretary to ensure the resources, such as Taser, will be there as extra protection for officers.

And he said the Federation was standing by 'ready to be part of the conversation'.

He said: "We are not asking you to put your life on the line as so many police officers do every day. But we do ask that you act for the long term.

"Home Secretary, after five long years in office, you know the Police Federation has never been an obstacle to change.

"We have shown you we are changing ourselves. We have actively sought change. But change that is considered; change that is long term. And change that is for the good of policing and the public."

'Best bit of kit' - but still question marks over BWV

Body-worn video (BWV) has an important part to play in modern policing, but should not be used to supersede the honestly held belief of an officer caught up in a violent, or potentially violent situation.

That was the message from speaker after speaker at conference as they recognised the many benefits of BWV and highlighted concerns that need addressing before any full roll-out.

Andy Marsh, Chief Constable of Hampshire, referred to the work done within his Force where officers are encouraged to provide commentary when wearing BWV. Many have described it as: "The best bit of kit I have ever been given."

Benefits, he said, included:

- **transparency - showing the level of violence being faced**
- **being an independent witness, catching the dynamic decision-making process**
- **ensuring charges reflect the level of violence**
- **giving victims confidence to give evidence and go to court**

- **a reduction in complaints**
- **earlier guilty pleas when perpetrators are faced with the evidence, saving time and money**
- **possible moderation of behaviour of individuals when they see video cameras.**

He is deploying 2,800 BWV to front-line staff, funded through reserves, and said: "If we are going to have fewer staff, those fewer people have to be well led, well equipped and supported by technology."

PS Adam Smith, firearms training officer with the Met, said the very many differences between seeing through our eyes and the images taken, via a video camera. He went on to say that the mounting options of BWV cameras is of key importance.

Carl Gumsley, Commissioner, IPCC, acknowledged the benefits of BWV, but warned answers must be found to some of the questions around its use.

There is, he said, academic evidence from two small-scale studies in the United States. One recorded a 59 per cent reduction

in use of force by officers wearing cameras and an 87 per cent reduction in complaints against officers wearing cameras. The other showed that officers without cameras had nearly three times the number of complaints made against them.

Scott Ingram, senior principal lawyer at Slater & Gordon, raised concerns that in death and serious injury cases officers may not be allowed to review BWV evidence before making detailed statements at the earliest opportunity. He feared this undermines the position of an officer who is a witness, but who can very quickly become a suspect, and whose recall may be affected by emotional turmoil after events.

Doug Campbell said the Federation is fully behind BWV but wants assurances of issues around video ownership, encryption, standardisation, procurement, sustainability of technology, compatibility and accessibility across the police service and the wider criminal justice system.

Officer assault 'never, ever' part of the job

Assaults on police officers should "never, ever" be considered part and parcel of the job, and every Federation should be challenging what is happening to protect and support officers in their own forces, conference was told.

John Apter, chairman of Hampshire Police Federation, shared his own experience of looking at the issues raised by assaults on officers, and the shocking lack of a national data base to show the true numbers of police officers affected.

Setting the scene was a chilling body-worn video clip from Hampshire Sergeant Kerry Lawrence being severely assaulted last year while dealing with a 'routine' case. The perpetrator later received a three-year sentence, partly because the judge could see the level of violence involved.

John revealed the strong support he had received when he challenged his Chief Constable to protect officers.

John said: "Officers were telling me that assaults against them were getting more



John Apter, chairman, Hampshire Police Federation.

vicious, they were all single crewed and the perception from officers was that it was getting too bad and that we, the Federation, had to do something about it."

A Crisis Gold Group, chief officer-led,

was set up to look at officer assaults.

Hampshire has developed a simple seven-point plan which it will be circulating to other forces. The plan spells out how to better protect and support officers, and to help them return to the front-line quicker after injury.

ACO Nicola Cornelius said they discovered that only around 20 per cent of assaults were being recorded on their own health & safety system compared to their CRS system, which they are now relying on for a more accurate and ethical picture.

She said: "I was very surprised to find that some of our own officers seemed to accept assault was just part of the job, it's just what happens. It must never, ever become that. It is never acceptable to come to work and be assaulted."

Chief Superintendent Scott Chilton warned: "We only really hear about the vicious assault, but there are thousands of cases where officers are spat at, punched, kicked or dragged and we don't hear about it. As a service, if we can't protect our own staff, what does that say to the victim?"

John Montague, Senior District Crown Prosecutor, CPS Wessex, had looked in detail at cases in two months in Hampshire this year, there was a conviction rate, if you have assaulted a police officer, of 95 per cent involving police assault against a general rate in Hampshire of 84 per cent.

Lively debate over political challenge

Claims from two leading think tanks that the police service could sustain more cuts and deliver more with less were disputed by delegates during an, at times, tense debate on the first day of conference.

The session, The Political Challenge, putting the public first – investing in policing, saw representatives of both the Policy Exchange and Reform having their views challenged by officers who found considerable support from Surrey PCC Kevin Hurley, who said the service was at tipping point, some sympathy from his Sussex counterpart, Katy Bourne, but more from shadow policing minister Jack Dromey, Labour MP for Erdington.

Glyn Gaskarth of the Policy Exchange



Shadow policing minister Jack Dromey, Labour MP for Erdington.

summarised eight key points including problems with forces' buildings which, while valuable, were often poorly designed and not fit for purpose, the need for forces to share some support functions to reduce the administrative burden and a drive towards a focus on crime prevention. Money could be saved by more collaboration with other emergency services and also by reducing demand. His concluding comment that police could do more with less brought laughter from the conference floor.

Charlotte Pickles from Reform praised the police for the 'tremendous job' of delivering improvements in the last five years.

But, she then said, a drop in crime proved police claims that crime levels were linked to officer numbers were not true and asserted there was further scope for cuts, pointing out that HMIC said there was potential for substantial savings.

The focus needed to be on productivity and capability, the workforce skills mix and

increased use of new technology including pre-populated forms and face recognition software, increased collaboration and an overhaul of the criminal justice system to reduce time wasted in the court process.

"I do not think budget cuts going forward is in itself the wrong answer," she concluded.

But Mr Hurley disagreed. The cuts, he said, had taken the service to tipping point and it would take a long time for it to recover.

He expressed concern at the drop in officer numbers saying the 17,000 lost over the last five years corresponded with the number who 'stopped London burning' in 2011.

Mr Dromey made three key points – Labour would stand up for the police service, defending neighbourhood policing; it would halt the reform agenda and create a victim centred criminal justice service.

He called for a very different approach, explaining that it had never before been so important for the service to have a strong and effective Police Federation.

During the question and answer session, many delegates took the think tank experts to task for their views, saying they did not really get what the police do, that officer safety was at risk, more could not be done with less and that while the service had embraced new technology it could not always replace the officer on the beat.

Mental health custody scandal - much more to be done

The successes and shortfalls of street triage, of liaison and diversion techniques and the urgent need for many more health-based places of safety, particularly for the young, came under the spotlight as conference opened with a debate entitled The Mental Health Challenge.

Throughout the session, there was widespread agreement that police cells are not the right place for those with mental health issues who have not committed offences, but that on too many occasions they are the only places available for someone in danger of harming themselves or others because of a lack of mental health funding and alternative accommodation.

However, the loudest round of applause of the session came when panel member Inspector Michael Brown, the mental health co-ordinator of the College of Policing, questioned why police are so often called to situations which could perhaps have been resolved earlier in the day had appropriate health based services been available.

He acknowledged the many benefits of both street triage and liaison and diversion, but said he had shadowed street triage schemes where he had been left wondering



Inspector Michael Brown, mental health co-ordinator, College of Policing and mental health lead at West Midlands Police

why police have been called out when there was often no core policing component like a crime in progress or threat to life or a suicide attempt.

Instead, there was a vulnerable person in need of mental health assessment and street triage was seen as the only way to get a response to that person, he explained, adding that police were effectively being used as a

means to access unscheduled care for people with mental health needs.

He asked: "Why are police being considered as the gateway for that (unscheduled care) service in the first place?"

Marylyn Haines Evans of the National Federation of Women's Institute had earlier talked about its Care not Custody campaign, to end the inappropriate detention of the mentally ill within the Criminal Justice System by working to improve health-based facilities.

Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), reported that PCCs are working with chief constables to make the detention of under 18s with mental health issues in custody suites a 'never, never' event.

Julie Denley, head of Disability Learning Services and Partnerships, agreed with Kate Underhill, mental health co-ordinator, Strategic Partnerships, that street triage should not be seen as an end solution but, with improved responses to mental health challenges, the goal should be to eradicate the need for it at all.

The session was followed by a lively question and answer session.

Force needs to look at diversity

Long-term strategies are needed to ensure that police forces become more representative of the communities they serve, Inspector Kam Bria of the College of Policing told conference during a session on diversity.

Insp Bria argued that all forces needed to take responsibility for increasing the number of women and people from BME backgrounds in the service and said it needed to involve everyone not just staff in HR.

He highlighted the Federation's BME Progression 2018 Programme commissioned in 2013 which aims to work with forces to develop and improve recruitment, career progression, opportunities for specialisation and retention of women and BME officers.

"We all need to do better at addressing this issue of under representation," Insp Bria explained during the session which was entitled The Myth of Being A Diverse Police Service, adding that there would be challenges in this area in the next five years.



Inspector Kam Bria.

There were a growing number of new communities, retention issues and a high number of BME officers reaching retirement

age having joined during a recruitment surge around 25 years ago.

It was imperative for operational policing that more was done to make the service more representative, he said, pointing to events in America as indicative of the disquiet 'bubbling under the surface' and threatening to erupt.

Diverse teams led to a better informed service, an improved perception of fairness within policing, improved trust and confidence in policing from members of the community and in turn improved community engagement.

Policing needed to reflect, represent and look like the communities it serves. There should be a step change in thinking so that differences are valued.

Jayne Willetts from the Police Federation described the work being done around diversity in the organisation. There was more engagement with groups representing minority groups.

"There is still some way to go before everything is equal," she concluded.

Federation on track with reform programme

The Police Federation has completed 40 per cent of the reform programme instigated by Sir David Normington's independent review.

Andy Fittes, general secretary, told national conference delegates this meant the organisation was on track with reform but that some of the proposed changes required legislation. However, the tractor-like Home Office, he warned, was not built for speed.

A number of the 36 recommendations from the review team, all of which were approved at last year's conference, have already been implemented including:

- **The creation of a Joint Fund for members' subscriptions**
- **The inclusion of a financial transparency clause in Regulations**
- **The appointment of Accenture as the change programme manager**
- **The acceptance of the Federation's core purpose**
- **The publication of an annual public value report (available online at polfed.org)**
- **The establishment of an Independent Reference Group.**

Work is actively in progress on 23 more recommendations including changes to the election system with the Federation involving market leaders Electoral Reform Services since it was such a complex issue.

Consultation meetings will also be held with Federation branches across England



Accenture's change programme director, Lynsey Lauer, and Andy Fittes, general secretary.

and Wales during June and early July in relation to the recommendation relating to a standardised expenses, hospitality and honoraria framework.

By May next year, Accenture expects 80 per cent of the work to be completed, again

keeping the project on track.

The Thursday afternoon conference session The Transformation Challenge was jointly led by the general secretary and Accenture's change programme director, Lynsey Lauer.

Women in policing - 100 years of change



Facilitator Samantha Simmonds from Sky News interviews two women officers in specialist uniform.

The inspirational women who over the past 100 years have helped shape policing as it is today were centre stage for the final day of conference.

And it was clear to see how far attitudes have changed since even the mid-late 1900s, when a clip was shown of retired female police officers interviewed for BBC Four's Fair Cop programme. First on stage was Pamela Collier, Birmingham City Police 1966-1978, WPC 134, whose career had started in an era of separate women's divisions.

It was a time when a famous singer, on seeing her and another female colleague in uniforms on crowd control duties back stage, felt it was alright to ask them to attend a party the next day in their uniforms; when it was accepted women

officers would sit on the laps of male colleagues if space was short in prisoner vans.

By the time she left the Force in 1978, however, things had changed, with parity of pay and men and women working alongside each other as equals.

Lynne Owens, Chief Constable of Surrey Police, revealed how she has had an amazing career since joining in 1989, but there had been two negatives along the way.

The first, she said, was when she wanted to return to work after having her daughter and the second was when she transferred forces.

She said the service needs to embrace difference: "The public are not one amorphous bunch, and neither should we

be. We should be bold enough to embrace our differences because that is how we get our legitimacy with the public and our ability to police with consent.

"We need different skills. We need people who are brave, those who are strong, those who are emotionally courageous and those who are mentally courageous; we need people who can bring in new ideas and bring in innovation, those who can do detail and make good detectives. None of us can do all those things so we should value the differences we all bring."

Looking ahead she feels optimism. The Leadership Review is looking at the organisational structure to overcome some of the challenges preventing not just women but many others from reaching their potential.

She is anxious, however, that as the service shrinks, it might become more cautious about flexible and part-time working. She added: "I worry there are less opportunities for people moving across specialisms, or upwards, and I do worry that in the absence of opportunity we might lose some of our brightest and our best people."

She is also concerned the progress in representation may be slowed. She said: "We have made a lot of progress for women, but we have not made the same progress for our black and minority ethnic colleagues and I worry about what that means for the future."

Looking at the Federation itself, she said she was optimistic when she hears the passion, but she challenged it to do more to embrace difference within itself.

Posthumous award for PCs Fiona Bone and Nicola Hughes

The two GMP officers killed in a gun and grenade attack on 18 September 2012 were honoured with a newly created annual award during conference.

The families of Fiona Bone and Nicola Hughes received a long standing ovation as they were welcomed to the stage to receive the Police Federation of England and Wales' Women in Policing Award recognising the outstanding endeavour and dedication to duty by female officers.

"Emotionally it's a massive thing to accept the award," said Nicola's father, Bryn, "I think it should be [seen] as a celebration of Nicola and Fiona's life and not a concentration on what happened to them."

Fiona's father Paul explained: "It's a great thing for the Police Federation to acknowledge the role of women in policing over the years," he said, "Fiona and Nicola gave the ultimate sacrifice but they were just doing their job."

Steve White, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, described Fiona and Nicola as 'very worthy' recipients of the award.



Steve White (right) with (left to right) June and Paul Bone and Bryn Hughes.

Neighbourhood policing vital in fight against terrorism

Effective neighbourhood policing is essential in the fight against terrorism and extremism, delegates heard in a session led by the country's counter terrorism chief.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the National Police Chiefs' Council leader for counter terrorism, highlighted the increased risk of terrorists, extremists and other criminals exploiting 'blindspots' in technology to pass under the radar with IT 'capability degradation' leaving parts of the internet unpoliced.

And, he once again stressed the 'severe' threat to police officers highlighting that new guidance, advising officers on safety precautions, would be issued soon.

"We must ensure that our officers are as safe as possible," he told conference, adding that withdrawing officers from the streets would mean the terrorists had won and therefore a balance had to be struck between officer safety and a visible presence.

"It still remains our job to step into harm's way. As the challenge changes so has our response."

He explained that there were currently hundreds of live investigations, with 60 per cent being run jointly with MI5, 124 investigations followed reports of missing people.

On average there were 85 arrests per quarter with only half being charged with an offence but officers were using every tool available to them to cause 'relentless disruption' to terrorist activities which was helping prevent attacks.

AC Rowley said the service needed to build a strong counter terrorism model with a regional footprint and an international reach, with wider collaboration with the National Crime Agency and a link between local policing and other parts of the network.

"Neighbourhood policing is at the forefront of our fight," he explained, having



Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the National Police Chiefs' Council leader for counter terrorism.

pointed out the growing evidence of street gang members being vulnerable to becoming radicalised by extremist groups along with homeless people, those with mental health issues and detainees in prisons. A third of those arrested under counter terrorism laws had no previous terrorist link.

Panel calls for drink-drive limit to be cut

An increase in the number of women caught drink-driving has prompted a call for the limit to be lowered.

During a conference session called Women & alcohol – the drink-drive challenge, it was suggested that the limit is lowered from 80mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood to 50mg. This would bring England and Wales in line with Scotland which reduced its limit in December last year.

Vicki Martin from the Police Federation of England and Wales explained that, while the number of men caught drink-driving had halved, women were not changing their behaviour. In addition to a reduction in the



Vicki Martin from the Police Federation of England and Wales.

drink-drive limit, she would also like to see a set minimum unit price for alcohol and called for roads safety to be put back on the agenda.

Kristine Beuret, director of Social Research Associates, explained that drink-driving among women was going up while it was generally falling and said women's metabolic differences meant they could be more affected by alcohol than men and yet considered themselves less likely to be stopped than male drivers. In 1998, nine per cent of those caught drink-driving were women compared with 17 per cent in 2012.

Her views were echoed by Superintendent Jane Derrick, Surrey and Sussex Police RPU Operations Command, who said it was time for a debate around how to tackle the growing problem of women getting behind the wheel when over the limit suggesting that perhaps women were self-medicating with alcohol due to mental health pressures. She argued that it was time to start stopping women drivers on the school run and for

officers to change their perceptions of drink-drivers.

She said: "We've seen a huge increase, but it is the tip of the iceberg. We are stopping people based on our perceptions.

"If I see a woman driving a car I may view her differently to a male driver because of my professional knowledge, but also my own perceptions."

She pointed out that 63 per cent of the alcohol consumed was now drunk at home, with fellow panellist Inspector Colin Dobson from Durham Constabulary saying that many people were drinking alcohol bought at supermarkets before going out to pubs and clubs.

Deborah Hay, senior licensing and regulatory solicitor for JD Wetherspoons, said her company was doing its bit to educate people about the strength of drinks, unit values now being displayed on menus, and gave financial support to the charity Drink Aware.

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