

Protect Police Pensions



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Dear

Re: Protect Police Pensions Campaign

Following the publication of the Winsor Review on Police pay and conditions, and the Hutton Report on public sector pensions, I feel the need to urgently bring some very important issues to your attention.

The government appears to be deliberately overlooking the absolute uniqueness of Police Officers in its seeming desire to rob us of so much in these times of austerity. Scant regard is being shown to Police Officers as individuals who are set to suffer immense personal financial loss, while at the same time being asked to perform so much more in their work with massive budget cuts; More With Less is fast becoming **More For Less**.

Consequently morale amongst my Police Officers colleagues is at an all time low, with feelings of real anger, despair and despondency as we seek to otherwise conduct ourselves professionally in our duties.

- Police Officers cannot be compared with any other public servants; we are not employees and have far more stringent restrictions placed upon us, both on and off duty. Unlike most public servants, we can and often are called upon to work on our days off to police some large event – be it terrorism, EDL marches, public disorder, protecting the Pope, royalty and politicians or football matches.
- We have restrictions placed on where we can or cannot live, who we can or cannot marry, who we can or cannot associate with, where we can or cannot go on holiday; we cannot take an active role in politics; we are banned from membership of any union and certain political parties; we are restricted over outside business dealings – even our spouses are restricted thus!
- How many public servants have to wear body armour at work? How many routinely miss school nativity plays and parents' evenings and their children's birthday parties? Worse, routinely face death in violent or tragic forms? How many face up to vile, nasty, evil people who are intent on causing them harm? How many face being severely injured at work because of the nature of their job? Or abused, verbally and physically, just because of what they are? How many spend hours tramping across a dark, dank, boggy marsh to look for someone's suicidal relative, or spend hours with someone in Police custody suffering mental ill health waiting for an assessment to be carried out? Or see shocking

results of children abused and scarred by vile adults or the victims of drunkenness and drug abuse?

- Whilst other public servants are able to run away from danger, the Police Officer is duty bound to walk towards it – not just on duty, but off duty as well, when they will not have the protection of body armour or protective equipment.

These and many other reasons put the Police Officer in a totally unique position. I love my job, and am proud of the uniform I wear, of what it stands for and I am immensely proud of the job I do. I feel most strongly that we need to be properly recognised for the enormous amount of sacrifice we make, in order to defend the peace, and preserve the safety and security of the country I love.

We have suffered several sensationalist headlines in recent days, quoting Police Officers earning ridiculously high salaries through overtime. The fact is that the tiny minority of Officers who earn such high incomes are generally involved in protecting Royalty, Diplomats, VIPs and, ironically, politicians! The huge majority of Police Officers earn standard incomes and only earn overtime due to staff shortages and overwork.

I fully understand and accept the current financial situation this country is now in will require a degree of sacrifice by all. However, this is something which should be shared equally, proportionally and fairly across all walks of life.

With both Winsor and Hutton, which combined are likely to have a serious negative effect on thousands of Police Officers, ripping the very heart out of the Police Service, I now simply ask that our pension contributions are protected from any increase, in order to provide a decent reward for the years of service that I and my colleagues will have given by the time we come to receive our pensions. Please bear in mind that Hutton is not subject to negotiation through the Police Negotiating Board.

I would ask you to urge the Police Minister Nick Herbert on behalf of my colleagues and me to reconsider his stance on this important issue, and for him and the government to recognise the uniqueness of a Police Officer when it comes to protecting our pensions.

Yours sincerely,