



# policebeat

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## The plight of an Officer forced from his home by terrorists

(Full story on page 3)

## EDITORIAL

### When it comes to pay, our Officers are caught between a rock and a hard place.

The Government purports to have lifted its unpopular Public Sector pay cap, and although moving in the right direction is still a long way off providing the public sector with a fair pay increase, which at the very least matches inflation. For our colleagues in England and Wales, came a miserly 1% pay increase accompanied by a 1% bonus backdated to the start of September.

The increase is hardly reason to leap up and down in unbounded joy, especially when you consider that Officer pay has fallen 15% in real terms since austerity was ushered in seven years ago.

One percent isn't even a standstill award. It would mean an increase of between £200-500 per annum for federated ranks, which is considerably less than what is required to keep abreast with inflation.

Under an established convention, Officers here qualify for the same level of increase as their colleagues in England and Wales. The PFNI made a comprehensive Submission to the Pay Review Body and set out the reasons why our Officers deserved a pay increase of 2.8%. And although we haven't been given sight of the Pay Review Body recommendations for our Officers, there's nothing to suggest that our pay award would be any different from England and Wales.

Now, to the heart of the matter. Whilst colleagues across the water will get their increase, Officers here will have to wait



it out until a Minister signs off on the recommendations. We don't have Ministers or a functioning Executive, which means that any pay increase, paltry and miserly as it is, will not happen anytime soon.

The Department of Justice was insistent; no Minister, no pay increase! Tough, but that's the way it has to be until 'Humpty Dumpty' is put back together again at Stormont. The situation then took a dramatic and farcical twist when within a day, another Department here approved a controversial planning application for a waste incinerator at Mallusk.....without a Ministerial signature.

So, it seems, there's a wholly inconsistent approach being taken by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Police Officers don't get what amounts to a derisory pay increase because there's no Minister, but when it comes to a waste project, the Department for Infrastructure doesn't require Ministerial sign off.

This is a bizarre situation, one which places our men and women at the back of the queue when they should be first in line. It is unfair and downright shoddy treatment from a Government that constantly lauds our work but does nothing to adequately reward it.

The PFNI has now written to the Secretary of State seeking his intervention to resolve the pay issue. This stalemate must be broken and in the absence of a functioning Executive, only Mr Brokenshire can fix the problem. He's reluctant to step into the fray for fear of boosting the Direct Rule case, but the decision by the Department for Infrastructure suggests that where there is a will to resolve a problem, there is a way and that Ministerial sign off can be set aside on occasion.

It's worth pointing out that the longer this inconclusive situation continues, the more we will see Officer pay being eroded. Any break from core pay parity with England and Wales is dangerous and will be resisted with vigour.

We hope the Secretary of State will be decisive to bring this sorry mess to a satisfactory conclusion. If he doesn't act, it may be some considerable time before the pay award is approved. Whichever way it's handled, this Federation will hold firm on the increase being backdated to September.

A package containing a one percent pay rise with a 1% bonus won't cause great delight, but it would be better than what we have right now, which is nothing.