

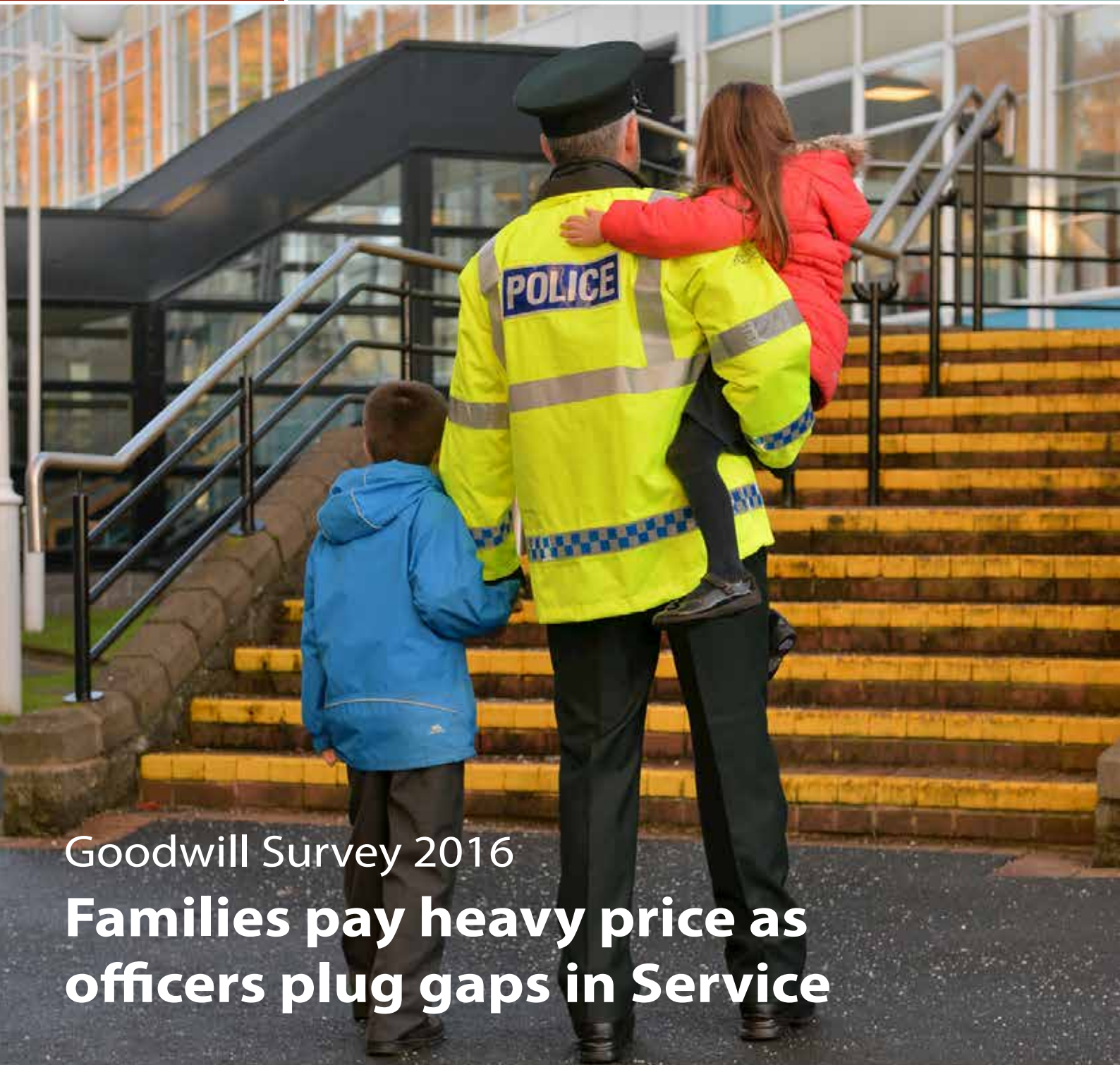


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The News Magazine of The Police Federation for Northern Ireland



Goodwill Survey 2016

## Families pay heavy price as officers plug gaps in Service

also inside this issue • Christmas Messages • National Police Memorial Day • PSNI Cricket Team in the USA • Plantar Fasciitis

## In my view.....

By **Mark Lindsay**  
Chairman, PFNI



The Goodwill Survey shows that goodwill flows in just one direction. Paid and unpaid overtime is piled on top of normal shifts causing, adding quite

awful pressures on our Officers.

From my perspective, this is all avoidable. The levels of inconvenience, upset and disruption are unacceptably high; we all know the job involves some flexibility – that’s a given – but certainly not in this quantity.

Officers are being taken advantage of. They are committed, professional and earnest

about the job they do – and want to do the best they can – but that commitment is being cynically exploited by a Service that knows it’s struggling to cope.

We need more Officers – in fact, several hundreds more – if these pressures are to be eased. And we need the employer, The Department of Justice and the entire Northern Ireland Executive to take the issue seriously.

Pay and conditions are an integral part of this situation. We have presented the findings of this Goodwill Survey to the Chief Constable and his senior colleagues and will now share it more widely with Ministers, MPs, MLAs and Civil Servants as part of a concerted drive to make that ‘constituency’ better aware of what officers offer up and the working conditions under which we operate.

Policing needs to be adequately resourced in order to cushion the worst effects of what this survey exposes. We are a fair and reasonable profession, and all we ask in return is to be resourced and rewarded at a level that reflects what Officers have to do in order to protect the community.

All of our men and women work under an official threat level that is rated ‘severe’. Sadly, Northern Ireland must continue to confront and thwart the gunman and bomber and that far from satisfactory societal condition must also be recognised in a decent pay award that has to be forthcoming.

The Goodwill Survey follows on from the Workforce Survey of 2015 which quantified the extent of the challenges that confront our Officers and the Service. As a result of that particular survey, we asked for a number of practical measures to be introduced to lessen the burden. I want to acknowledge that some progress has been made but a year on, there are some issues that remain unresolved.

Officers are tired. They’re tired physically but also tired of hearing platitudes about how good a job they’re doing. It’s time to give real meaning and weight to that by allocating the proper resources to policing and to properly reward them for the sterling work they do under trying circumstances.

## EDITORIAL

## Goodwill must now be rewarded

When it comes to goodwill, our Officers take the top accolade. They are flexible and obliging, often at great cost to themselves and their families.

The goodwill they show delivers benefits to the Service. Our frontline men and women are how the public measures the PSNI; if Officers are seen to go the extra mile, then the Service gets to reap the rewards.

Our Goodwill Survey featured elsewhere in ‘Policebeat’ shows an over-reliance on the commodity. Last-minute paid and unpaid overtime is a crude mechanism to keep the Service ticking over. It is knee-jerk ‘firefighting’ deployed because there are too few Officers in the PSNI.

We are seeing the consequences being played out throughout the federated ranks. Family life is being turned upside down. There’s massive shift

and leave disruption, problems with like-for-like rest days, an over-reliance on the on-call system, high stress levels and mounting frustration.

The reward is in no way commensurate with the effort that is involved in being an Officer in a Service that expects so much. That has got to change. The Federation has now set out its position to the Pay Review Body, using the findings from the survey to underpin its request for a fair and equitable pay award.

We know budgets are tight, but that shouldn’t detract from the need to deliver a pay settlement that more accurately reflects the effort Officers put into the job. The case for a realistic increase is made with a solid piece of evidence from the ‘coalface’ to support it.

The Department of Justice may well try to hide behind tight budget lines and the current low rate of inflation to deny Officers what they deserve, but that is a flawed approach. Such a mantra would fail to recognise Officer goodwill that is so much in abundance and which seems to be under-valued.

We may get platitudes and lip service but, frankly, well-sounding phrases are no longer good enough. These are not pay negotiations – the Federation doesn’t have that ability under law – but that doesn’t diminish the force of our argument for a realistic settlement, one that goes some way towards acknowledging the undoubted rich vein of goodwill that exists.

It’s time the Department batted on our behalf rather than imposing a pay diktat that reflects poorly on them and does an enormous disservice to our Officers.