



policebeat

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March 2018

The News Magazine of The Police Federation for Northern Ireland

THE PAY GAP

*Last
year*

*Still waiting
for pay rise*

*This
year*

*Seeking
5.4%*

*Frustration
and anger over
shoddy treatment*

also inside this issue

Mental Health Wellbeing • Representatives Maps • Benefits Scheme Renewal

EDITORIAL

Overdue pay deal a source of smouldering resentment

The clock is ticking on the recommended pay and conditions package which is now six months overdue. In fact, the PFNI has formally submitted its pay claim for 2018 with no sign of Officers getting what they are entitled under the 2017 recommendations. It is now a festering sore and the source of great and understandable resentment.

The Government is to blame for this foot-dragging and failure to put a process in place where in the absence of a Minister, proper pay increases could be implemented. Other Public Sector workers have had their pay settlements implemented and backdated. The notable and inexplicable exception is the Police.

This Federation has made strenuous representations to get this mess sorted out but as yet to no avail.

Naturally, depleted Officer numbers who continue to maintain law and order on our streets are left bewildered. Why, they ask, would the funding Department treat them so shoddily? What possible explanation could the Government offer for withholding their meagre pay increase?

They feel that words of support from officialdom for the work that they do ring hollow. Substance is absent with little sign that, anytime soon, that senior officials will sign off on the deal. They will argue that they can pay the flat 1% increase, in line with Public Sector Pay Policy but have difficulty with the unconsolidated bonus. In England and Wales, the bonus comes out of Chief Constable's reserves or money that isn't spent but carried forward into the next financial year. The crux of the matter in Northern Ireland is that the Chief Constable doesn't have this facility as all underspends have to be remitted at the end of the financial year.

The Federation insists that whatever was agreed in national pay negotiations must be implemented in full in Northern Ireland in order to maintain parity on core pay spines.

Quite how the current political failure to find a way to restore the devolved institutions at Stormont will affect Officer pay is unknown. We have asked the new Secretary of State, Karen Bradley MP, for a meeting to highlight the ridiculous position we find ourselves in. We await a response from her office.

This delay in sorting out a below inflation figure pay increase is needless and inexcusable. Our hope is that with continued pressure from this Federation we will get to a position where common sense will prevail.... and Officers will get what they are entitled to, fully backdated to 1st September.

In the meantime, as you will read elsewhere in 'Policebeat', we are forging ahead with a top line 5.4% pay claim for 2018/19.

The Police Federation for Northern Ireland,
77-79 Garnerville Road, Belfast BT4 2NX Tel: 028 9076 4200/1

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New pay round: Officers say pay review body in danger of losing all credibility

The Police Federation for Northern Ireland is warning the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) that the pay review process is in real danger of losing all credibility with PSNI Officers.

The PFNI points to the lack of a devolved administration in Northern Ireland which led to significant failings in the process.

In a cover letter to the PRRB which accompanied the PFNI's 82-page submission on a new pay round, PFNI Chairperson, Mark Lindsay, singled out the failure to implement last year's recommended pay award as 'the most prominent failing'.

Mr Lindsay said: "At the time of writing in early March, Police Officers are still awaiting an award to be made for the 2017 pay round. This unacceptable situation should not be permitted to continue or be reliant on political stability in Northern Ireland.

"PSNI deserve and expect to be treated on an equitable basis with their colleagues in England and Wales. Pay parity on core pay spines has to be maintained."

The Government's decision to split the 2% presented a unique issue for Northern Ireland. The 1% unconsolidated would be funded through Chief Constable's reserves. However, the PSNI Chief Constable isn't allowed reserves – an inability to carry forward efficiency savings – which means the 1% 'bonus' couldn't be funded through existing Government rules.

The headline claim in the new pay submission is for a consolidated 5.4% increase. The figure is made up of the 2% from last year, backdated to the 1st September, and 3.4% which is in line with HM Treasury's RPI forecast for 2018 (see Recommendations).

The submission sets out strong economic argument which underpins the need for an adequate pay award, and illustrates how Police pay, in real terms, has fallen behind by 18.3% since 2010.

Also contained in the PFNI submission are case studies which detail how two Constables feel about pay restraint and the way they've been treated by Government (see separate stories).

Case study 1: The absolute reliance on overtime Constable, 18 years in rank. 6 years since last incremental pay increase

This case study highlighted, in detail, the significant personal and family impact of pay stagnation stemming from the combination of the pay cap, increasing national insurance contributions and increasing pension contributions. The first participant reported that, for him, the main impact of this is the absolute reliance on overtime which is now required in order to 'keep you ticking over'.

Financial impact

He reported that whilst on 'light duties' owing to an injury sustained whilst on duty, he was unable to avail of any overtime for a period of nine months. During this time and whilst relying upon his basic wage, he was forced to go overdrawn on his bank account – 'the first time in my life I've been over drawn'. This financial impact was directly attributed to the absence of overtime meaning that 'because I was on the flat rate I simply couldn't manage it'.

Reference was also made to the increased cost of living with the participant reporting that 'I can see that things are more expensive, yet my money has stayed the same...I'm having to spend more money on the essentials'. He reported that he has had to make changes to the things he buys, stating that he is a keen cook and enjoys buying good quality products but now 'I've had to stop that, I have to not get the stuff I want to get, I had to go back to the cheaper stuff'. This has also impacted on bigger value purchases which for the first time ever we've done it on finance, we've never have to do that before'. The participant reported finding this increased uncertainty stressful and has added to worries about any unexpected bills – 'there's no back up plan any more. It's on my mind a lot'.

Family impact

The reliance upon overtime has a direct impact upon family life, with particular reference made to childcare arrangements. The respondent's wife is responsible for childcare when he is on duty and works when he is off. However he now feels he has to work overtime and so his wife has less time to devote to her work.

This participant also noted that whilst he counted himself lucky that he could draw on additional funds from overtime, he has to be 'in work' to do the overtime and this means 'you don't have as much time off to spend with your family and enjoy life'.

Career progression

This participant also referenced the impact necessary overtime has had on his personal development and career progression noting that 'I couldn't afford to go and do an office job in the PSNI, no matter how much I wanted to, say I wanted to develop and go to C3 or intelligence, I couldn't do it because I couldn't afford it because there's no overtime. That's a big thing for me now...your career progression is out the window'.

Morale

The impact of continued pay restraint was viewed as another blow from 'a government which have just hit us from every angle'. He reported that Police Officers are 'fed up with it' and that 'everybody is aware that we're not valued, not just by politicians but by our bosses. Everybody is so demotivated anyway, this is just another bit'.

Case study 2: It's easy to single us out!

Constable, 14 years in rank. 4 years since last incremental pay increase

This case study participant touched on a number of the issues identified within the first case study, including the personal financial impact of the prolonged period of pay restraint. However, the key theme emerging from *this* case study involved the **lack of understanding** of, and **indifference towards**, the need for adequate recognition and recompense for Police Officers by 'decision-makers'.

Financial impact

This participant identified that a 1% pay rise equates to approximately £40 a month, however he noted that 'with the price of everything increasing at the minute, £40 doesn't cover everything'. He reported that 'people are absolutely aware of the loss in the value of their pay, they are **really feeling the pinch**'. This Officer also noted that whilst overtime can partially 'compensate' for this loss, 'then you are working every hour to make that up, so you have to balance between spending time with your family and working extra for your family'. He felt that achieving this balance was so important that he 'couldn't rely on that overtime, so you need to be quite frugal with your money now'.

This participant said that in the last year his gas bill went up by 7% and his electricity by 6% - a 1% award 'wouldn't even cover that, and that's just two bills'. He reported that food, fuel, car insurance 'everything has gone up, but our wages remain stagnant'. For him and his family the difference between 'these increases and our wages means **we simply can't afford things** the same way we used to be able to'. He reported that he now has to think more carefully about what he can and can't afford, referencing school trips for his children and family holidays which they were unable to take last year. However, he felt that the **key financial impact was on his savings and his ability to save**, 'if you save something per month now you're lucky'. This has caused undue worry and stress because 'before if something broke down in the house, it would be ok because there's savings there, but now you are just hoping that nothing breaks down'.

The pay award

On the continued 1% award, this participant said '1% in real terms is, without giving you nothing, as low as you can go'. He said that his team are very aware of the decisions which have been taken in recent years, reporting that 'we talk to each other about the pay increases and you see it on the news...**all you can do is sit there and shake your head** at every decision in terms of how you are getting paid for the work you do'. He stated that 'I don't think they [politicians] are interested...in the police and **I don't think they really care**...they don't want to look after us properly'. He felt that this indifference was possible because 'it's easy to single us out, we can't go on strike so...they know they've got us, we have no other options. Your choices are, either suck it up...or if you don't like it move away, leave'.

The participant referenced the 'continued decimation of pay' and stated that 'it's demoralising to keep being faced with this, year after year'. Whilst he spoke of the love for his job, he said 'I find it hard, because **I'm not always able to see the worth in it any more**'. He noted that pay and the pay award have a **'big impact upon morale**...people are relating their low morale to pay more and more as they find it tighter financially...you're getting worked harder and harder and you're not getting the financial reward at the end of it...that really is affecting morale'.

He also said that, despite the devolved nature of policing in NI, Officers tend to look to England and Wales to see how pay issues are progressing; 'when you see that they're not getting anything it's going to transpire that we're not getting anything...there's no faith there in terms of a belief that Stormont can somehow deliver something better for us'.

It's time to value what we do

Budgets reduce, the workload gets heavier, numbers get fewer and public expectations remain high.

In a nutshell, these are some of the constituent parts that make up policing, 2018-style.

It's not scientific, nor is it meant to be, but a look at Press Releases issued by the PSNI Press Office provide some idea of the routine demands placed on Officers.

Over the course of a week in February, there were thirty-seven Press Releases from the PSNI informing the public of the wide range of crimes committed, being investigated and where they happened.

Some of these incidents are unique to the Northern Ireland policing environment. All of this activity takes place under the spectre of a severe terrorist threat where individuals try to murder Officers going about their duties.

We had arrests following a murder in West Belfast. A serious assault in Strabane and a petrol bomb attack in Ballymena.

All departments the PSNI were continually stretched. The Terrorism Investigation Unit arrested two men in Lurgan. The Organised Crime Unit arrested five and seized £350,000 of herbal cannabis. The Criminal Investigations Branch, the Public Protection Branch and the Neighbourhood Policing Team were active across several fronts.

Aggravated burglary, attempted intimidation, possession of an offensive weapon, the discovery of a viable pipe bomb, assault, shop robbery, a shooting incident, drugs offenses, missing persons and suspected arson are a snapshot of some of the offenses under active investigation.

This is before we look at anti-social behaviour, domestic incidents, road collisions and burglaries.

Right across Northern Ireland, Officers are working flat out to protect society. Dromore, Artigarvan, all parts of Belfast, Londonderry, Clough, Strabane, Ballymena, Ballyward, Cullyhanna and Lurgan all featured in the week's Press Releases.

On top of that, we had a renewed appeal on the first anniversary of the attempted murder of one of our colleagues in Londonderry. The appeal explained how an IED left under the car of the off-duty Officer by the 'New IRA' failed to detonate and was discovered in the driveway of his Culmore home after he'd driven off.

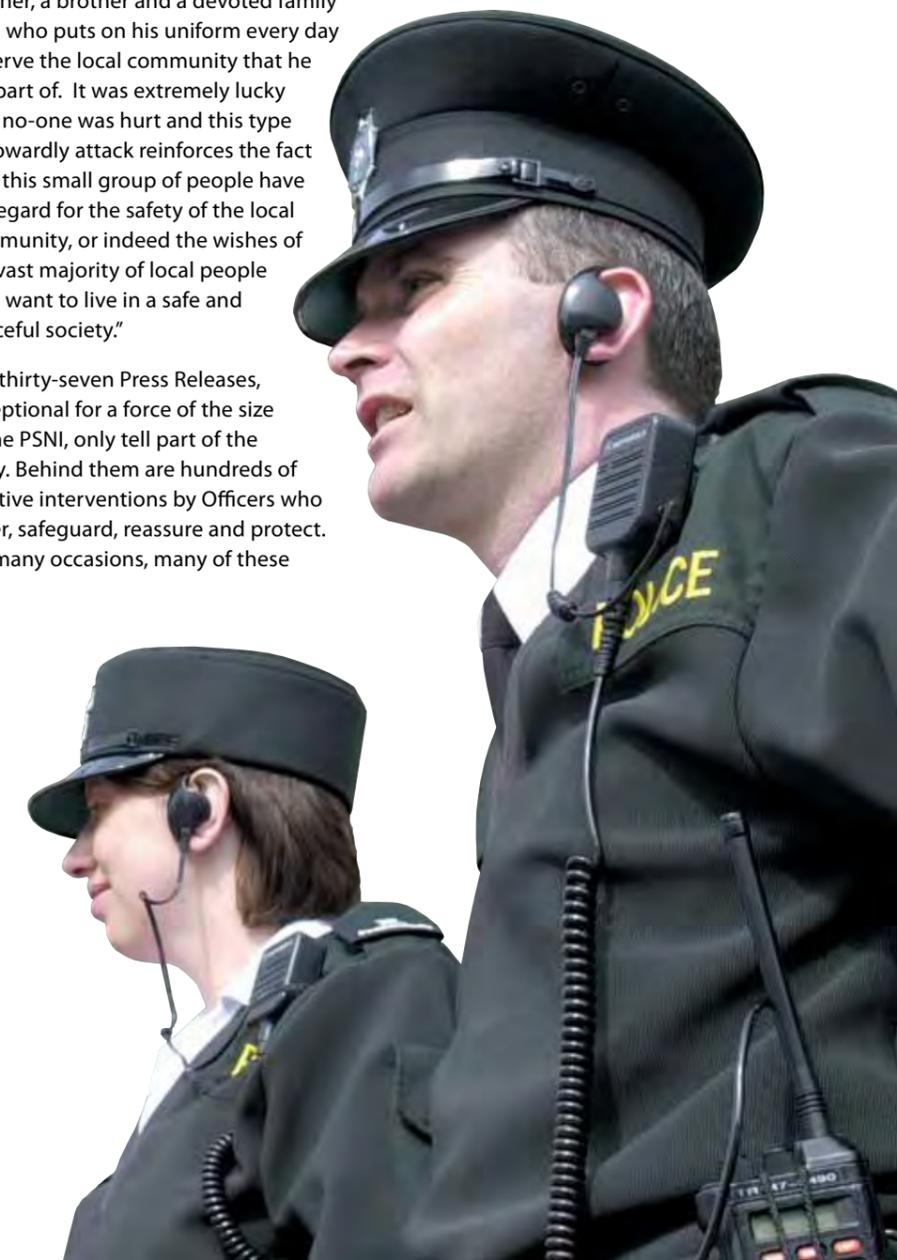
The Investigating Officer, Detective Inspector Peter McKenna, said: "He is not just a Police Officer in a uniform - he is also a father, a brother and a devoted family man who puts on his uniform every day to serve the local community that he is a part of. It was extremely lucky that no-one was hurt and this type of cowardly attack reinforces the fact that this small group of people have no regard for the safety of the local community, or indeed the wishes of the vast majority of local people who want to live in a safe and peaceful society."

The thirty-seven Press Releases, exceptional for a force of the size of the PSNI, only tell part of the story. Behind them are hundreds of positive interventions by Officers who deter, safeguard, reassure and protect. On many occasions, many of these

interventions save lives, but by their very nature are away from the glare of publicity.

A lot of what is done is quite rightly regarded as 'normal policing' - Roads Policing is one example - but a significant amount of the workload is countering terrorism and thwarting attacks aimed chiefly at our men and women.

The Chairperson of the PFNI, Mark Lindsay, puts it like this: "The work is time-consuming, draining, dangerous and rewarding, but it would seem that those who say they value what Officers routinely fail to follow-up with actions on matters such as pay, which would give real and tangible expression to being properly valued."



PFNI LODGES FOURTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS IN DETAILED PAY SUBMISSION

In this, the fourth Submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body, the PFNI makes fourteen recommendations on the pay award itself and sets out the need for continued pay parity. The Federation also deals with the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA), on-call allowance, dog-handlers allowance and the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP).

The evidence-based document, and the commentary which accompanies it, has been developed within the context of continued political instability, significant budgetary pressures, declining workforce resilience, increasingly complex demand and the ever present threat from violent dissident republicans.

The document states: "We therefore believe that our evidence and our recommendations are both appropriate and are necessary in order to secure a fair, reasonable and warranted pay award for Police Officers in NI."

PFNI Recommendations

Any reference to the '2% 2017/18 award' in the recommendations which follow is made based upon a working assumption stemming from the details contained within the Third Report on England and Wales and the recommendation made by the PRRB.

1

Recommendation:

That parity on core pay spines is maintained with forces in England and Wales.

3

Recommendation:

The longer-term arrangements surrounding the future provision of targeted pay awards should be based upon robust evidence, including comprehensive, transparent and reliable data. A meaningful consultation process must be undertaken and any proposals must be thoroughly modelled in advance of implementation.

4

Recommendation:

If no award is implemented for the 2017/18 review round, we recommend that **all federated Officers** in the PSNI are awarded a consolidated uplift of 5.4% in September 2018. This award is to include the 3.4% HM Treasury RPI forecast as well as the 2% consolidated award recommended by the PRRB for 2017/18. This award must be consolidated in its entirety and the 2% 2017/18 award (including the pensionable element) back paid to September 2017.

2

Recommendation:

That targeted pay awards should be excluded as a feature of the 2018/19 pay review round.

5

Recommendation:

If a 1% award is implemented for the 2017/18 review round, we recommend that **all federated Officers** in the PSNI are awarded a consolidated uplift of 4.4% in September 2018. This award is to include the 3.4% HM Treasury RPI forecast as well as the additional 1% award recommended by the PRRB for 2017/18. This award must be consolidated in its entirety and the additional 1% 2017/18 award (including the pensionable element) back paid to September 2017.

6

Recommendation:

If the implementation of the 2017/18 award is the same as that in England and Wales (i.e. a 1% consolidated and a 1% temporary, non-consolidated bonus), we recommend that **all federated Officers** in the PSNI are awarded a consolidated uplift 4.4% in September 2018. This award is to include the 3.4% HM Treasury RPI forecast as well as the reinstatement of the 'temporary' 1% bonus to police pay scales. This award must be consolidated in its entirety and the additional 1% 2017/18 award (including the pensionable element) back dated to September 2017.

7

Recommendation:

If a 2% consolidated award is implemented for the 2017/18 review round (and back dated to September 2017), as recommended by the PRRB, we recommend that **all federated Officers** are awarded a consolidated uplift of 3.4% in September 2018. This award must be consolidated in its entirety.

8

Recommendation:

An increase to on-call allowance from £15 to £23 for each evening or weekend day period and to £30 for any time on-call during a day considered a public holiday within the terms of the PSNI Regulations 2005.

9

Recommendation:

That the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) is uplifted in line with the pay increase awarded to PSNI Officers.

10

Recommendation:

That the PRRB NITA recommendation outlined in the third report on NI is backdated to September 2017 as and when the 2017/18 pay award is implemented.

11

Recommendation:

That the dog handlers allowance remains and is uplifted in line with the pay increase awarded to PSNI Officers.

12

Recommendation:

That the PRRB dog handlers allowance recommendation outlined in the third report on NI is backdated to September 2017 as and when the 2017/18 award is implemented.

13

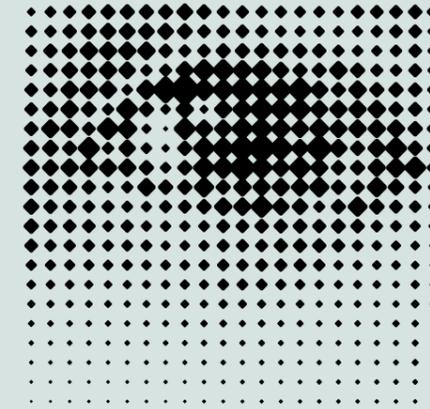
Recommendation:

That the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) remains open to new applicants for the entirety of the review period as well as during any implementation period which follows.

14

Recommendation:

That the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) is uplifted in line with the pay award.



In my view.....

By Mark Lindsay
Chairperson, Police Federation
for Northern Ireland

We have recently held our Triennial Elections to Regional Boards and, as a result, the newly constituted Regional Boards and Central Committee have met. The new Boards have a mixture of experienced and newly elected representatives who are now in place across Districts and Departments in the PSNI, with the sole aim of representing the members who elected them. We have restructured to ensure that the spread of elected representatives mirrors the PSNI structures, with new Boards being established for District policing, Crime Operations and Headquarters Departments.

Never has there been a more challenging time for the Federation, with proposed reforms to policing an ever-present spectre combined with intense pressures on public finances potentially changing the face of policing forever.

We have a few defining issues on our plate in 2018. The first is pay. More particularly the failure to see last year's pay increase implemented and backdated to the 1st

September. In the absence of a Minister in the Department of Justice, our Officers have been left in the lurch. They are being treated disgracefully. When we combine this failure to implement any pay rise with the Government's 1% public sector pay policy, which has already seen Officers lose 18% of their salary in real terms over the past eight years, is it any wonder Officers are becoming increasingly frustrated and angry.

Other public sector workers have had their pay increases implemented, yet the men and women we represent have still to see any pay increase reflected in their payslips. There is an inherent unfairness about this and I, for one, fail to see any justification for the way Officers are being treated. On your behalf, we have made representations to senior officials within the Department and to politicians in Belfast and London to see if this deadlock can be broken. We will continue with our efforts and will not rest until we achieve a successful conclusion.

We now find ourselves having submitted our pay submission for 2018/19, without any sign of the previous year's award being implemented. In the absence of an Executive, we would have to question the effectiveness of the current evidence-based process as it has failed our Officers significantly. The process is inherently one-sided, with the focus being on affordability, rather than fairness and a realisation of the unique role and impact policing has in our society.

Added to the mix is the incumbent review of CRTP, which is due to commence in April 2018, for any changes to be implemented in April 2019. This allowance was retained by Federation negotiation in 2014 for a further five years. We should not lose sight of the fact that this allowance is an integral part of Police Officer pay, with the fact that it is a pensionable allowance crucial to its retention.

In some quarters "review" is defined as removal and we will argue vociferously that there should be an open-minded approach to how we review the allowance, whilst also being mindful of the financial and retention pressures within the PSNI at present.

Another significant problem we face concerns the wellbeing and welfare of our members. With reducing budgets and increasing workplace pressure, the situation needs to be adequately addressed.

With further cuts to the PSNI budget expected this year, the focus will fall on those Officers who are injured at work or who suffer from stress related illnesses as a result of their exposure to traumatic incidents in their roles. It is crucial that there is sufficient budget to enable the PSNI to adequately support these Officers and not simply leave them to deal with issues on their own.

The goodwill of our men and women is being sorely tested. They are enduring significant work pressures to keep the Service on the road and sooner or later, something will have to give. Slashing the budget, reducing Officer numbers and paring back on services will impact most severely on the vulnerable, the victims of crime and society generally if action isn't taken to stop the brutal and unwarranted financial 'surgery'.

We are currently well below the minimum of 6,963 the Chief Constable said he required to provide the full range of policing services throughout Northern Ireland. By this time next year, with hundreds more eligible to retire, and recruitment not keeping pace with Officers departing, the crisis we face will be a lot deeper.

In the absence of additional funding, there needs to be urgent and meaningful discussions around the role of the Police Service and the continued expectation that not only do we continue to do everything we have always done with regard to serving the public, but that we are also dealing with new crime trends and legacy issues. There needs to be an acknowledgement that the only thing you get with less....is less.

We will continue to voice our concerns, but we also think politicians need to step up to the plate and tell the Government that what is happening here is bordering on the irresponsible and needs to be brought to an immediate halt.