



# policebeat

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The News Magazine of The Police Federation for Northern Ireland

**96%**

say services 'good or excellent'

Rejuvenate

Let go

**£1M Psychological Wellbeing Project extended for further year**

PFNI  
**Wellbeing**  
Project

Nutrition

Restore

Lifestyle

**99%**

'very or extremely relevant to stress management'

Time Out

Mental Health

also inside this issue

Chief Constable Introduction • PRRT New Chair • Wagglers Championship • Lottery

# Editorial

## Thousands more officers in England and Wales, but nothing for NI

The much-predicted removal of Karen Bradley as Northern Ireland Secretary of State was a relatively small part of the re-shuffle conducted by the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson. In her place came the Conservative Party Chief Whip, Julian Smith, who must confront a formidable list of challenges.

The Federation is keen to work with Mr Smith to see if we can get some progress on a wide range of issues including pay, PSNI resources, recent civil unrest, the ongoing republican terrorist threat to our officers and the thorny issue of legacy. Mr Johnson wasn't long in the Downing Street job before he announced a welcome police recruitment drive in England and Wales. Hundreds of millions of pounds will be allocated to the training of 20,000 additional officers. This is a reversal of previous Government decisions which saw numbers slashed by more than 20,000 between 2010 and 2019. There will also be a new National Policing Board to add a further layer of accountability.

There is no similar commitment to police numbers in Northern Ireland or financial resources to the PSNI. Officer numbers in Northern Ireland have decreased by around 500 in the past few years. This flies in the face of day-to-day pressures and is some way off what's required in order to provide much-needed reassurance in our communities. The PSNI is 800 officers below the number envisaged to police a Northern Ireland without a significant terrorist threat. And as we are all too aware, this threat level shows no signs of abating.

The Federation has until recently been a lone voice on this issue and that is a source of disappointment. It is reassuring to hear our new Chief Constable recognise that the Service is greatly under resourced and speak unequivocally of the need for the numbers envisaged in the Patten Report. His comments on Neighbourhood Policing echo the stated position consistently and steadfastly expressed by this Federation over many years.

The position of PFNI and the PSNI carries much more weight if, jointly with the Chief Constable, we set out in an evidence-based manner the measures the Government must take to better equip the Service for the myriad challenges we confront. In the shameful situation where we do not have an Executive and Assembly, this Federation has no other option but to look to Mr Smith and his new-look team at the Northern Ireland Office. The Secretary of State's intervention and willingness to take the argument for additional resources to the Cabinet would be a most welcome development.

Whilst policing, with the exception of national security, is a matter devolved to the Executive at Stormont, there has been no grasp of the serious social effect reducing numbers and budgets have had on society. It needs to be grasped before irreparable damage is caused to our still fragile society. Policing in Northern Ireland cannot be allowed to drift simply because no one is prepared to take responsibility for it.

The absence of a devolved administration should not leave Northern Ireland as the poor relation when it comes to policing and we would fully expect the Government to commit to additional numbers for PSNI in the same vein as they have for policing in England and Wales. Our political representatives must now use their influence to ensure that our voices and those of our communities are heard.