



SERVICE GROUP

CONFERENCE DECISIONS

October 2008

- 1. Police Force Funding** **Lost**
- 2. Outsourcing by Another Name!** **Carried**

Conference is concerned by the increase in shared service working involving the transfer of business to private companies; this is not a shared service it is outsourcing.

Conference motions on this issue have been before you - motion 13 in 2005, motions 2 and 6 in 2006 and motion 9 in 2007. The Trade Union side of the Police Staff Council submitted a draft "framework agreement on efficiency, shared services, collaboration and contestability" in August 2007. What has happened to this document?

Where redeployment/Transfer of Undertaking of Protection of Employment (TUPE) is not an option, forces are increasingly turning to redundancy of Police Staff.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) seek to negotiate through the Police Staff Council (PSC) guidance for forces in the development of in-house shared service working practices;
- 2) by the Trade Union side of the PSC to obtain the response to the Framework Submission Agreement;
- 3) immediately start negotiations through the PSC demanding an enhanced redundancy package for Police Staff who are unfortunate to suffer redundancy.

3. Positive Revision of PSC Handbook **Carried as Amended by 3.1**

The Police Staff Council (PSC) handbook has been used for some years. There is now a need to review the handbook in order to ensure it is meeting our member's needs.

For example, in recognition of widespread current practice relating to leave where reference is made to a 'day' or 'days', the handbook could make provision for these to be expressed in hours. For those not working standard hours or patterns of work, including part time and shift workers, the failure to provide for calculation of leave in hours creates the possibility of disadvantage. Likewise the handbook fails to define start and finish times of a working day.

Conference welcomes the consultation that the SGE is currently undertaking with branches on these issues.

This Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to undertake a review of the PSC handbook and to seek positive changes and improvements.

4. What is an Exigency of the Service? **Carried**

Conference you may recall this issue being raised a few years ago by the North West Region. Yet Conference it has become a phrase that is now being used almost on a daily basis when managers want to change/cancel annual leave, rest days, shifts etc.

Merseyside's Chief Constable, on a forum, agreed with Chief Constable Mike Todd's understanding, in that an "exigency is an unplanned or unforeseen event".

UNISON were happy with this but over the last couple of years the meaning has expanded to include all annual events that Resources Managers have all year to plan for, i.e. Halloween, New Year's Eve.

Staff are only too willing to accommodate changes and support their forces when a high profile murder or unforeseen incident occurs but the continual voice of a Manager telling staff that their rest days are being re-rostered over Halloween/bonfire night is unacceptable. What about our work/home life balance that Managers are always quoting to us?

All our forces have different high profile events to resource throughout the year but staffing resources should be better managed.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to seek to negotiate through the Police Staff Council a definitive, clear and unambiguous definition of exigency of service as an unplanned or unforeseen event.

5. Flexible Working

Carried

Conference is appalled that police forces are using the notion of flexible working to pursue an agenda of rationalisation which in reality is a cost cutting exercise and one based on more 'for less'.

UNISON condemns this practice that requires our members to work longer hours for no increase in salary, a pay cut by other means. Such savage cuts will not deliver or improve public services. It will only deliver a demoralised workforce.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to support our members by influencing the Employers Association, Association of Police Officers (ACPO), Association of Police Authorities (APA) and the Home Office to desist from this appalling abuse of power.

6. Christmas falling on a weekend

Carried as amended by: 6.1

Conference is aware that there is a payment issue when Christmas Day, Boxing Day and/or New Years Day falls on a weekend. Staff, unlike officers, are only paid Bank Holiday rates for the days designated as Bank Holidays and can end up working the actual days with no additional payment. Following the last series which ended on 26 December 2005, Conference, in that year, instructed the Service Group Executive to resolve this issue by achieving parity with officers prior to the next series commencing on Boxing Day 2009.

Conference is concerned that this issue is still unresolved and instructs the SGE to:

- 1) inform all branches by 31 December 2008 on progress made to resolve this issue;
- 2) ensure that police staff are treated no less favourably than police officers are when any or all of the three Christmas and New Year Bank Holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, commencing 26 December 2009.

7. Unjust Sickness Self-Certification

Carried

Conference Motion 2 in 2007 was overwhelmingly carried. To date Conference notes that there has been no work undertaken by the Service Group Executive (SGE) on this issue other than a mention in the recently circulated draft Attendance Management Document.

Conference notes with great concern the practice of self-certification being withdrawn. It is common practice in many forces managing attendance policies to include this as a sanction. UNISON recently produced a guide (in draft at the time of writing this motion), which is out for consultation, which included the self-certification withdrawal.

Conference believes it is unjust as many of our members who are genuinely sick are being put under more pressure by the demands of Management in insisting they obtain a sick note from their doctor who frequently refuse to provide one.

We believe forces have other ways of dealing with staff who are not genuinely sick and we believe this practice should cease forthwith and all forces should be required to remove the sanction from their policies.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Seek to ensure that the Police Staff Council (PSC) guidance does not include provision for withdrawal of self-certification;
- 2) Clarify what the implications are under the Disability Discrimination Act for the withdrawal of self-certification;
- 3) Obtain advice on the application of the Statutory Sick Pay (Medical Evidence) Regulations 1995 on certification.

8. Future Role, Powers and Equipment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

Carried

Conference notes with concern the continuing lack of consistency over PCSO powers, uniform, role and equipment across England and Wales. Conference is particularly disappointed that:

- 1) The original concept of standard powers for PCSOs was significantly watered down by stakeholders;

- 2) The continuing discretion allowed to Chief Constables over PCSO powers has resulted in a patchwork approach to the PCSO role, which is confusing for the public and frustrating for our PCSO members;
- 3) The wide variation in PCSO uniform, and the inappropriate uniforms issued by some forces, continues to detract from the authority and effectiveness of the PCSO role;
- 4) The ongoing refusal of a small number of forces to issue PCSOs with stab vests flies in the face of common sense and places those members affected in needless danger every day they are on patrol;
- 5) Some forces are using PCSOs in inappropriate non-front-line roles, which damages the PCSO image and effectiveness.

Conference welcomes the findings of the Casey Report “Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime” published in June 2008. The Report identified that:

- Those who had seen and met PCSOs in their area were very positive about the role they play
- 53% of the public said that they were doing a good or excellent job
- There were high levels of public support for PCSOs having stronger powers
- 92% of the public surveyed felt it was important for PCSOs to have the power to detain
- 91% said it was very or fairly important that PCSOs wear a uniform that shows they are part of the police service
- 87% felt it was important that PCSOs wear the same uniform across the country

Conference also welcomes the recommendations of the Casey Report that:

- Maximum abstraction rates should be set for PCSOs as a condition of ring-fenced funding allocated to police forces
- Powers to detain and to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for disorder should be added to the standard set of powers and duties that apply to all PCSOs
- Standard PCSO uniforms and equipment should be adopted nationally

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to continue to campaign for:

- a) All current PCSO powers to become the standard powers available to every PCSO;

- b) The power for PCSOs to issue fixed penalty notices, or report on summons, where motoring offences have been committed;
- c) A standard identifiable uniform for PCSOs across England and Wales comprising: force crest, blue and white chequerboard hat/cap band, 'Police Community Support Officer' to be clearly identified on the uniform;
- d) All PCSOs to be issued with stab vests;
- e) A new PCSO supervisor role to provide career development;
- f) An end to the concept of the volunteer PCSO.

9. Support to Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the Press – Carried

Conference notes the positive actions undertaken by the Police Staff Service Group National Officer and the UNISON General Secretary in supporting Police Community Support Officers after a tragic accident in Manchester, where our colleagues were abused and attacked by the national press. Furthermore Conference notes the letter sent by the General Secretary to the Press Complaints Commission formally complaining.

These positive steps need to be reinforced and a continued positive press campaign linked to negative national press comments needs to be undertaken. Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to formulate a strategy which responds to press attacks.

10. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the Police Federation

Carried as amended by: 10.1

Conference notes that at the 2008 Police Federation Conference reference was made on a number of occasions in a negative manner to the role of Police Community Support Officers.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to request consultation and discussion with the Police Federation in relation to the role of PCSOs and the negative comments made at the 2008 Police Federation Conference.

11. Mobile Data

Carried

The police service is about to introduce mobile data terminals within both vehicles and hand held devices. This is a new area of technology that will hopefully provide a more efficient service to the public. Conference welcomes any initiative that provides an improved service and the working lives of our members.

As this is new technology there are a number of issues that are unknown with regard to health and safety. Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to enter

into dialogue with the Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officer (ACPO), Association Police Authorities (APA) and National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) on the scoping of any hazards that may be associated with the introduction of this new technology.

12 Police Staff Training Carried as amended by: 12.1

This Conference notes the importance of better training for Police Staff.

Police Staff for many years have been treated differently from police officers when it comes to police training.

This Conference calls upon the Police Staff Service Group to listen to police staff needs, and lead a campaign to identifying training needs, in particular in the posts which form part of the Neighbourhood Policing Team and to ensure that forces and the Government through the Home Office ensure that adequate funding is made available for training for all staff, irrespective of the role carried out.

13. Assistive Technology

Carried

Conference notes with concern the poor record of Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and individual forces in introducing assistive technology for disabled police staff. Assistive technology is the provision of software applications which allow workers with disabilities to access IT which otherwise would be denied to them.

Conference notes that recently introduced police software packages, such as VISOR, were rolled-out without assistive technology applications being available. This has meant that disabled police staff have been excluded from job opportunities in contravention of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Conference welcomes the recent agreement of the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) to work with UNISON and other stakeholders to develop common standards on assistive technology in the police service.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to campaign for the NPIA and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to prioritise this important work to ensure that disabled police staff do not face discrimination at work.

14. Making Equality Count

Carried as amended by: 14.1

Conference is concerned that some police services have introduced workforce monitoring on sexual orientation without any consultation with UNISON or other staff unions, or with any clear purpose. Some police employers only liaise with the Gay Police Association and/or independent organisations that deal with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues, such as MESMAC (Men who have Sex with Men - Action in the Community), on such matters and do not recognise UNISON's legitimate role in representing our members' interests, including our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.

Conference notes that there is no legal requirement to monitor sexual orientation. Many workers can and do keep their sexual orientation to themselves, to avoid discrimination.

Conference also notes that monitoring alone does not make anything more equal. It only makes a difference when it is part of a proactive programme of equality actions.

Conference reaffirms UNISON's policy on workforce monitoring of sexual orientation - that it should not be introduced unless:

- 1) There are already agreed, well-publicised policies on sexual orientation equality in place for the particular police force;
- 2) There is proper consultation with UNISON and other unions, and the workforce, including those most directly affected;
- 3) There is a clearly stated purpose to the monitoring - how the data will be interpreted and how it will be used to further equality;
- 4) There is a robust strategy to ensure that confidentiality of people's answers, including who will receive data and how it will be processed, stored and reported.

Conference calls on the Police Staff Service Group Executive to:

- a) Circulate the full UNISON advice on sexual orientation workforce monitoring to branches;
- b) Collect information from branches on where sexual orientation monitoring has been introduced and the outcome, and
- c) Publicise best practice examples.

15. Supporting Women in Education Carried as amended by: 15.01, 15.02

Conference believes in promoting education for all, but often that is not the situation for our women members. They find themselves balancing their lives around home and work without the opportunity or encouragement to develop for themselves or their employment.

UNISON within the East Midlands region has recently run a women's lives course with a great deal of success, with this encouragement women will be able to develop themselves, however this is not enough.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to work with UNISON's Learning and Organising Services to do more education support within the police service group for women members by

- 1) providing more information and guidance on the availability and support for women members seeking education opportunities both internally and externally;

- 2) providing a contact list of police learner reps to be placed in profile and other police service group databases;
- 3) continuing to promote and assist branches getting learning agreements.

16. Challenging Racism in the Workplace

Carried

Conferences notes that a Labour Research Report from 2001 identified that not all employers were doing all they could to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The 2000 Act amended the 1976 Race Relations Act to place a General Duty on all public authorities to promote race equality.

Conference notes that the General Duty compels public authorities, including police forces, to build race equality into all aspects of their service. The General Duty requires all public authorities to proactively fight racism. The Duty should:

- 1) Help achieve a more representative workforce;
- 2) Attract and retain a quality workforce;
- 3) Improve morale and productivity;
- 4) Help avoid claims of unlawful discrimination.

Conference also notes that a 2004 Audit Commission Report found that:

Although most authorities had produced a Race Equality Scheme, few were monitoring their policies or conducting impact assessments. Monitoring was described as weak in specific employment areas such as: promotion, training, recruitment, discipline, grievances and redundancy

Conference welcomes the launch of UNISON's 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace' Project. The Project aims to:

- a) Challenge patterns of discrimination by negotiating collective workplace agreements;
- b) Ensure that challenging racism becomes core union business for all activists and officers;
- c) Ensure that UNISON and employers actively promote and deliver race equality.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to work with UNISON's Membership Participation Unit to promote the 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace' Project and to encourage full participation by police branches

17. Disability Discrimination in sickness absence, capability and disciplinary procedures

Carried

This Conference believes that Police Authorities continue to discriminate against disabled workers despite their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and their responsibilities according to the Disability Equality Duty.

Harsh sickness absence policies that fail to take account of disability related leave as advised in the Code of Practice for Employment and Occupation, Capability procedures that fail to recognise that performance can be affected when adequate adjustments are not put in place and Disciplinary procedures that catapult disabled workers into long term unemployment continue to preserve institutional discrimination against disabled people.

This Conference calls upon the Police Staffs Service Group to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to review current arrangements on sickness absence, capability and disciplinary procedures and produce a toolkit for negotiators to use in their work to eliminate institutional discrimination.

18. Disabled Police Staff - the poor relation? Carried amended by: 18.1, 18.2

This Conference is concerned that police staff struggle to get the same level of support offered to police officers. Reasonable adjustments are not easily available and little regard is taken in the Personal Development process to ensure that police staff are afforded appropriate opportunities to develop their careers and enjoy the range of job opportunities available to others.

By comparison police officers who become disabled through injury are given significantly higher standards of support and are more likely to be treated fairly under the Disability Discrimination Act. We believe that there should be not disparity between the support available to Police Staff and Police Officers and that police authorities' should utilise their responsibilities under the Disability Equality Duty to ensure institutionalised disability discrimination is eradicated, as required by law.

In order to take these issues forward this conference instructs the Police Staff Service Group Executive to:

- 1) gather evidence of disparity in Personal and Career policies and procedures for Police Staff and Police Officers
- 2) promote the UNISON guidance on Access to Work to police branches to enable greater support to be provided by reasonable adjustments through the Department of Work and Pensions;
- 3) raise concerns about the experiences of disabled UNISON police staff members with the Home Office and other appropriate bodies;
- 4) report on developments at the Police Staff Conference 2009.

19. White Ribbon Campaign Carried as amended by: 19.1

Conference condemns Domestic Violence and abuse in all forms and guises.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to support International White Ribbon Day on 25th November 2008 by circulating to all branches UNISON's advice on dealing with Domestic Violence and abuse and an information sheet on the White Ribbon Campaign.

20. Victims of Domestic Abuse Carried as amended by: 20.1

Conference believes our members are often placed in a vulnerable position when they are victims of domestic abuse. The employer tends to follow their own domestic abuse policy which relates to that of a service provider and not that of an employer. The absence of such policies often leaves our members open to further vulnerabilities at home and at work.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) develop guidance in association with UNISON's Membership Participation Unit on welfare based Police Staff policies for our members that are separate to operational police policies and procedures;
- 2) supply information to support our members who are subject to domestic abuse;
- 3) be more proactive within the union and involve/liaise with other groups and self organised groups to assist us in achieving our aims.

21. Violence and aggression towards Staff Carried

Conference is concerned that violence and aggression towards Police Staff members is on the increase. Conference notes the necessary personal protective equipment and training for front line operational staff is not forthcoming from certain forces. Conference believes that this training and basic equipment is sadly a necessity in the modern policing environment and that the failure to provide this equipment is putting our members at risk.

Conference call upon the Service Group Executive to make representations to the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) with a view to encouraging forces to supply the necessary equipment and training.

22. Protecting Members in the Custody environment from false allegations

Carried

Our members working in custody are vulnerable to all sorts of false allegations from detained persons; these allegations have included physical and sexual assault. Once the allegations are made our members are put under immense pressure for long periods of time until investigations are complete. This causes not only difficulties at work, but home also.

Conference believes that members should be afforded as much protection and support

as possible to minimise the opportunity for complaint and the provision of support during the complaint process.

Conference therefore requests that the Service Group Executive examine best practice and provide advice and guidance to branches outlining the findings.

23. Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) Guidelines on Staff Complaints

Carried

Confusion exists regarding the right of Police Staff to raise complaints with the IPCC regarding the service they receive from the police as service provider as tax paying citizens. The IPCC guidance suggests that our members are unable to make complaints about service provision issues within their own force.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) seek clarity from the IPCC with a view to providing members with advice and guidance once clarity has been established;
- 2) seek to provide joint advice with the IPCC.

24. Professional Standards Department (PSD) Investigations Carried

Conference is concerned by the apparent lack of objectivity within Professional Standards Department (PSD) investigations and the lack of knowledge with regard to Police Staff Terms and Conditions and employment legislation.

The manner in which investigations and the subsequent information are presented and produced often call into question the reported facts where our members under investigation are often considered guilty prior to having gone through the appropriate process. Investigations should be concerned with presenting of facts with adequate opportunity for the accused to prepare and respond in the knowledge that it will be presented in an accurate and unbiased manner.

Conference expects our members to be treated fairly and reasonably during and after the investigation process. All members have the right to be treated reasonably and with dignity and respect in all circumstances.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to enter into dialogue with the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), Home Office and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) with a view to:

- 1) agreeing with the relevant bodies an appropriate protocol for the management and training of officers within PSD with regard to Police Staff investigations, terms and conditions and employment legislation;

- 2) the feasibility of IPCC monitoring and reporting of Police Staff investigations;
- 3) the feasibility of returning the responsibility for such investigations to HR departments;
- 4) to report outcomes back to 2009 conference or via Service Group bulletin if outcomes are available sooner.

Conference further believes our representatives need support, advice, guidance and training. In achieving this conference instructs the SGE to examine the feasibility of providing specific training for Police branches and the possibility of a national seminar on issues relating to Police Staff misconduct.

25. Demand Management System Carried

Many forces are introducing computerised demand management systems and Conference is concerned that issues relating to health and safety and other HR and terms and conditions issues are not being considered appropriately.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to enter into discussion with the Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Association Police Authorities (APA) and National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) with a view to ensuring that these matters are considered as necessary.

26. National Contact Management Programme Carried

Conference notes that the National Contact Management Programme (NCMP) aims to improve public/police interaction through the introduction of a standardised approach to contact management and the provision of guidance, which serves to support, shape and drive improved citizen focussed service delivery.

Conference further notes that, when effectively implemented, the National Contact Management Programme is meant to bring about:

- 1) Enhanced efficiency, through consistent standards and working practices;
- 2) Improved understanding of customer expectation;
- 3) Improved understanding of demand;
- 4) A better understanding of what good practice amounts to within the contact environment.

Conference believes that UNISON should support the National Contact Management Programme on the understanding that its design and implementation takes account of the aims and objectives of UNISON's "Call of Duty" action plan for police control room staff. UNISON's "Call of Duty" campaign is all about highlighting the vital work carried out by police control room staff. It is about the obvious link between decent working conditions and a world class public service.

Working in a police control room can be one of the most satisfying jobs around, but many staff face unacceptable conditions of work. Stress, inadequate staffing, poor management and health and safety problems are damaging performance in many forces.

UNISON wants to work with stakeholders and employers to improve our members' working lives and thereby raise service quality.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to campaign for ACPO and the NPIA to incorporate the action plan from UNISON's "Call of Duty" campaign in the design of the National Contact Management Programme, namely:

- a) Action to address chronic understaffing in police control rooms;
- b) The development of a jointly agreed demand management tool to enable staffing resources to be accurately matched to demand;
- c) The abandonment of the call centre ethos in favour of a service focussed on high caller satisfaction levels, not "wrap" times;
- d) Proper health and safety risk assessments, including software ergonomic and assistive technology applications;
- e) A national pay structure and consistent terms and conditions for control room staff;
- f) Better training and development, plus a rewarding career structure.

27. Representation on Service Group Standing Orders Committee

Carried as amended by: 27.1

The scheme of representation to the Police Staff Service Group Conference Standing Orders Committee shall be amended as follows:

- 1) Each Region shall be eligible to nominate one suitably trained representative;
- 2) Two Representatives shall be drawn from the National Delegate Conference Standing Orders Committee;
- 3) Proportionality and fair representation to apply.

28. Representation of Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) Committee on Police Staff Service Group Executive

Carried

Conference notes that in 2005, Conference voted to establish a Shadow SOCA Committee to represent members' interests in SOCA. The Shadow Committee elects

two representatives to the Police Staff Service Group Executive, namely;

- One National Crime Squad (NCS) representative
- One National Crime Intelligence Squad (NCIS) representative

Conference also notes that it was agreed to review these Shadow Sector Committee arrangements once SOCA was established. SOCA was set up with effect from 1 April 2006.

Pending a full review of UNISON's organisation in SOCA, Conference agrees to reduce the number of SOCA Committee seats on the Service Group Executive from two to one.

29. Branch International Relations Officers

Carried

Conference affirms its commitment to UNISON's International ideals and is disappointed at the lack of committed Branch International Relations Officers in the Police sector.

Conference therefore encourages all branches to recruit Branch International Relations Officers and instructs the Service Group Executive to work closely with the national International department to develop this work and to report back to the 2009 Police Conference on progress in this development work.