



**People for Proper Policing in North Wales**

## **Police Community Support Officers.**

Quoting ex Police Officer Johnno from his real policing website .... "My disapproval of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) stems both from operational experience and the misguided belief in them as a support for police officers. **The most effective support for sworn officers is more sworn officers.**" For the whole quote go to <http://johnnoblog.blog.com/>

Quoting KEITH HELLAWELL ex chief constable of West Yorkshire 13th August 2007

**We need REAL police - not kids in uniform.**

*Policing in this country is based on democratic consent. Without the support of the public, our constabularies could not function. But such an approach requires the public to have respect for the abilities and efficiency of police officers.*

*The attempt to fill the gap with Police Community Support Officers has hardly been a roaring success. These officers were first recruited five years ago and were meant to provide a high-profile presence on the streets. But with limited powers and training, they have come to be regarded as a poor substitute for the real thing. That feeling can only be reinforced by **Thames Valley Police's** decision to recruit two 16-year-olds to act as Community Support Officers.*

*These teenagers are too young to vote, to drive a car, to buy a drink or watch an adult film, yet the **Thames Valley chiefs** feels they are fit to be thrown into the front line against crime. Though barred from driving themselves, they are able to stop and seize vehicles, and direct traffic. They cannot have a pint in a pub, yet can confiscate alcohol from those drinking in public and issue penalty notices against fellow teenagers for breaking the licensing laws. It is absurd.*

**Thames Valley** claims that the two teenagers, "**reflect the community in which they serve, that includes all ages, genders and races**". **That remark is both frivolous and wrong-headed.** But the public does not want a service that is a precise reflection of its demographic make-up. It wants a service that can do its job properly and that has to mean the majority should be mature, physically capable men. Age and height restrictions were abolished and requirements that applicants had a certain physical strength were removed to encourage female candidates. Whereas they might once have moved swiftly to tackle a certain crime, such as a siege or a kidnapping, today the senior officers have to conduct a 'risk assessment' before acting.

**We cannot fight crime from behind a desk, with Community Support Officers or with 16-year-olds. We must return to the basics that once served this country well.**

**Meanwhile ... Hampshire Police unveil their latest weapon against crime - 15th August 2007**  
Hampshire's latest initiative is to pack beat officers off to join youths at a skate ramp. Uniformed officers attend skateboarding workshops aimed at 12 to 16-year-olds, where they mix with the youngsters and get tuition from expert skaters. At least **one of a team** of four constables, three community support officers and one sergeant are there **for each session, held twice a week.**

**PCSO Dean, 22**, in particular, is keen to get on board. *"It's great for breaking down barriers, it lets the youngsters see a more human side to the police".*

**Five police forces admit using teenage PCSOs** 14th August 2007. They each confirmed recruiting teenage civilian officers, who are too young to join the regular force but have the power to detain and question suspects. The revelations came after it emerged that **Thames Valley Police** employed two 16-year-old school leavers to carry out foot patrols from Reading police station. The move, revealed exclusively in the Daily Mail, prompted controversy amid claims that force chiefs and the Government are trying to "police on the cheap". Three forces are employing 17-year-olds as Police Community Support Officers: **Humberside, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.**

**Northamptonshire** said it had previously employed two civilian officers aged 17 while **Devon and Cornwall** admitted it had once employed a 17-year-old PCSO.

A number of other forces, including **Cleveland, Durham and Suffolk**, said they would be happy to consider employing teenagers who have just completed their GCSEs.

| THE POWERS THEY HAVE   |  |
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| ■ Detain a suspect for up to 30 minutes, using reasonable force if necessary, until an officer arrives | ■ Issue penalty notices for disorder (PNDs) relating to the sale and consumption of alcohol by under-18s, firework offences, trespassing on a railway, destroying or damaging property and causing harassment, alarm or distress |
| ■ Demand an offender's name and address  | ■ Disperse groups and remove young people  |
| ■ Stop and search under the Terrorism Act in authorised areas  | ■ Deal with beggars  |
| ■ Make under-18s and people drinking in prohibited areas surrender alcohol                             | ■ Remove abandoned vehicles  |
| ■ Search for alcohol and tobacco and seize tobacco from under-16s                                      | ■ Issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for cycling on a pavement, dog fouling, littering, graffiti, fly posting  |
| ■ Seize drugs and take the name and address of the person caught in possession                         | ■ Enter and search premises to save a life or prevent damage   |
| ■ Stop and seize vehicles, carry out road checks and direct traffic                                    |  |

**Despite ALL the above POWERS PCSOs ONLY solve one crime every six years'** according to figures released under the Freedom of Information Act. The figures show PCSOs hand out fines for anti-social behaviour, public disorder or motoring offences **at a rate of one every four months. In several areas of the country, PCSOs failed to detect a single crime over the past year**, the DAILY MAIL claimed (20th August 2007) . The figures state that forces where PCSOs failed to detect any offences include the **West Midlands, which has 644 PCSOs, Northumbria, which has 248 PCSOs, and Nottinghamshire which is served by 217 PCSOs.** **The Police Federation's Alan Gordon said:** *"PCSOs have been seen by some as a cheap alternative to police officers, who can make the public feel safe. But these figures show we were right to be concerned about what benefits they bring to the table."*

**In the past year the number of PCSOs nationwide has risen from 7,000 to 13,748.** PCSOs, who can earn up to £24,500 a year, have powers to detain suspects until police arrive and hand out fixed-penalty notices for a range of offences.

**A Home Office spokesman** said “detecting crime and handing out penalty notices was not the prime function of PCSOs. To attempt to measure their success solely by looking at the number of penalty notices and crimes they detect is to miss the point. ***Their primary role is to provide high-visibility reassurance, build confidence in communities and support police officers.***”

Full-time police must be at least 18 but there is no minimum age for the community support officers. **Police Federation officials are convinced that PCSOs are being recruited as cheap replacements for mainstream officers.** They cost at least **£10,000 a year** less to employ than full-time regular officers. **Glen Smyth, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, said:** “There used to be laws to stop children going into dangerous occupations such as down mines. Now kids are going on the beat. It is reminiscent of sending boys into the trenches of World War One. ***It is totally inappropriate for 16 and 17-year-olds to be PCSOs***”. **THE FEDERATION’S views on PCSOs are at ...** [www.polfed.org/we\\_stand\\_D93FA810488D48608FDD6B7826A70F20.asp](http://www.polfed.org/we_stand_D93FA810488D48608FDD6B7826A70F20.asp)

**Shadow home secretary David Davis** attacked the decision to hire 16-year-olds, saying that ***“it defies common sense and typified the Government’s reckless approach to public safety”***.

**The PPP comments ...** What the above stats prove and The HOME office statement really means is that it is **ANOTHER CON.** to convince the public that these **UNIFORMS** wandering the streets are actually protecting us and preventing crime ... what a **JOKE & a blatant insult to our intelligence.**

**With Reference to their Costs ...** we could have **TWO** real PCs for every **THREE** PCSOs which would be much better value.

We endorse the above comments from experienced officers and the federation. Locally in North Wales PCSOs and now the **CADETS** are being used as a distraction from the real lack of experienced officers **IN THE COMMUNITIES**. PCSOs in twos, often looking and behaving like teenagers, are aimlessly wandering the streets.

We now have the full **GAMUT** of boy’s (& girls) **AND** their toys including a helicopter, dogs, horses, **TASERS**, **GUNS**, speeding cars with flashing lights **BUT** a significant rising trend of serious crimes particularly in the eastern Division. **WE DO NOT** blame the individuals **BUT** the leadership of the force which is, as always keen to lead **IN THE WRONG DIRECTION!**

Many professional organisations and Industries used apprentice schemes, effectively, to select, train and later **RESELECT** young people for specialised jobs. **AND** there was a tendency to use/abuse them as cheap labour which good managers **HAD TO** resist.

**THE PPP** could support a **REAL** progressive and rigorously selective and tough apprentice scheme that took cadets via PCSOs to full PCs. This scheme must be designed by the most experienced **REAL** Police Officers and the **FEDERATION** and with input from the **ARMED FORCES** ... not the likes of Brunstrom, Wolfendale and most of the current **ACPO** members.

**I.E. to produce horses for courses .... BUT not riding Horses!**