



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Police expected to assume a criminal justice role

This story courtesy of the Police Oracle and the Sunday Times

The Director of Public Prosecutions and Britain's leading policeman have expressed concern at the way the system of "out of court" penalties is being used to deal with violent criminals and burglars.

Keir Starmer QC said that while there was a proper place for trivial offences to be dealt with outside the courts, the system – which includes cautions and fixed penalty notices – had developed in an "incoherent way" and needed to be looked at again.

"There is now a case to be made for a review," Starmer said in an interview in the Times.

His remarks echoed those of **Sir Paul Stephenson, the Metropolitan police commissioner**, who said yesterday that cautions should not be used for "theft and thuggery". The police chief's comments, in a Sunday Times interview, came as official figures showed a surge in the number of offenders issued with multiple cautions.

Stephenson said attempts to reduce pressure on courts and overcrowded prisons meant **police were expected to assume a criminal justice role**. *"The outcome of that has been an almost uncontrollable increase in cautions, and the introduction of the fixed penalty ticket, which in the public's mind equates to a parking ticket, which should not be [the case] with theft and thuggery. It's put the police in the correctional business, instead of what we should be in, the law and order business, preventing and detecting crime."*

Sir Paul said he wanted more criminals, particularly violent offenders, to be brought before magistrates.

He added: *"We've ended up cautioning far too many people. We've all come across examples – I'm personally aware of a recent case where a thug hit a smaller lad, from behind, without provocation, shifting his teeth. The shock felt by the victim and a number of people present was palpable. What was the outcome? The assailant) received a police caution. I cannot imagine anyone would see this as justice."*

He continued: *"Nationally the figures show **that only 38% of citizens have confidence in the criminal justice system...** If a huge thug comes and hits someone in the face for no reason and that person then gets off with a caution the following day because he's expressed remorse when he's sobered up, it's fundamentally not right. It's not right in the public's mind. It's not right in my mind... that someone (like that) is going to get away with what is basically a parking ticket."*

He also criticised the policy of allowing prisoners out of jail before their minimum terms were completed. Latest figures show that **a total of 2.2 million people were cautioned between 2000 and 2008**, including more than **550,000 who were given repeat cautions**. Of those, 51,874 had been cautioned four times and 104,915 on three occasions.

Cont.

The PPP comments ... We expressed concern about the growth of this system years ago primarily for motoring offences. In this area the press regularly refer to it as ‘the war on motorists’ i.e. against the vast majority of the population!

It has now become an inherently flawed tax on criminal behaviour often financed by the state and the proceeds of crime. It strangely combines an abusive assumption of guilt with a very significant reduction in deterrence and inadequate penalty. It has destroyed the public’s confidence in the whole criminal justice system and in the Police in particular. All members of the CJS have sat back and let it happen.

As we know, only too well, in North Wales, it’s architect from within ACPO was Richard Brunstrom.

See our comments in 2007 and 2008 here ...

<http://www.properpolicing.org.uk/articles/Chief%20Constable%20blog%20Dec09.pdf>

<http://www.properpolicing.org.uk/articles/Chief%20Constable%20blogs%20April%202007.pdf>

Ironically we have just removed all the articles on this site (BUT not from our fireproof archive!) that contained ‘Brunstrom’ in the Title. The removal of his disastrous legacy from the UK National CJS will take a lot more than a few clicks of the mouse