



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Police overtime has nearly doubled in the last decade

From the Police Oracle

Spending on police overtime has nearly doubled over the past decade despite a record increase in police numbers, a report has found.

Overtime payments in England and Wales rose by around 90% between 1999 and 2009, hitting **£400m last year**, according to the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.

The increase came as the number of officers reached an all-time high of 142,151 in 2009: 15,337 higher than a decade ago. Researchers said overall policing costs had also grown by almost 50% over the 10-year period, from £98bn to £14.5bn.

"Spending has gone up by nearly a half, but the value of this huge increase is much harder to pin down," said the report's author, **Richard Garside**.

"We now have the largest police service ever. Yet there seems to be no clear rationale behind this incremental growth, nor a clear measure of its success. Is there a point in having a 'reserve army' of this magnitude? Now, more than ever, we need a public debate about priorities and choices."

The amount spent on policing became one of the key battlegrounds during the general election campaign. Theresa May, the new home secretary, is due to meet rank-and-file officers at the Police Federation next week.

Last night, a **Home Office spokesman** said plans were being drawn up to change the way police worked.

"Despite increased spending and police numbers, officers too often spend their time dealing with red tape and bureaucracy instead of getting out on to the beat," he said.

"The new government has plans to slash police paperwork so that officers can do the jobs they signed up to do and keep our communities safe."

The report also showed a wide variation between forces in the size of their overtime bills, with officers in the Metropolitan police claiming on average more than £4,400 each in 2006/07 while officers in Northamptonshire averaged just £209.

In December the Home Office said it was planning to reduce spending by £500m by 2013-14, including £70m from the police overtime budget.

However, the **Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)** defended the payment of overtime yesterday saying it was a flexible way of using officers *"to deal with the competing demands placed on the service"*.

Chief Constable Peter Fahy, ACPO's head of workforce development, added: *"As a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week organisation, we have to have the ability to respond to any event or crime at any time."*

Fahy said overtime was paid to officers of constable or sergeant rank, and that police chiefs and authorities should properly monitor payments.

"We are absolutely committed to making serious reductions in spending but we will need some brave policy decisions to ensure that we can do that without impacting on the frontline," he said.

According to the report, spending on staff made up just over three-quarters of the overall costs (76%), with the rest coming through capital expenditure, property, transport and other services.

The study, which found that a growing proportion of the police budget came from local authorities, was welcomed by **the Association of Police Authorities (APA)**. *"Police authorities are committed to continuing to ensure that the police service provides value for money to the people it serves,"* said the **APA chairman, Rob Garnham**.

"Within tight budget constraints, we will work with forces to ensure that services to the public are maintained at the highest possible level, both now and in the future."

The report found that the growth in civilian staff, including police community support officers (PCSOs), had also outstripped that in police officers. There were 77,609 civilian staff last year, up from 52,975 a decade ago. The number of **PCSOs**, which were introduced in 2002, reached **16,331 in 2009** *"The fact that spending has so vastly increased in the past decade should be a stimulus to fresh thinking about the shape and size of the police service as a whole,"* the report concluded.

*"A new political debate about police numbers could become a sterile diversion unless there is a **fundamental discussion** about what the police are for and what that means for the public purse."*

The PPP comments ... WE TOTALLY agree about the need for a fundamental ANALYSIS of what they do and why. The Police Authorities fail to identify the waste of resources that requires overtime to fill the gaps in frontline REAL policing. The only praise for PA's comes from the PA's themselves or the APA. Most Politicians don't get involved and the public haven't a clue about what goes on. Most PA meetings are open to the public and nobody attends. Everything is retrospective with the usual wise after the event comments and lessons to be learnt. We have been asking the question for 7 years "where are all our 1585 Police officers and what are they doing". The latter question also applies to the 1052 police staff.

We know that a total of over 170,000 hours were lost to sickness or 64 hours per employee. We have highlighted a number of ways they waste their own time and avoid REAL policing ... Enter key words ,... **doing what are where are day into our News article search facility.**