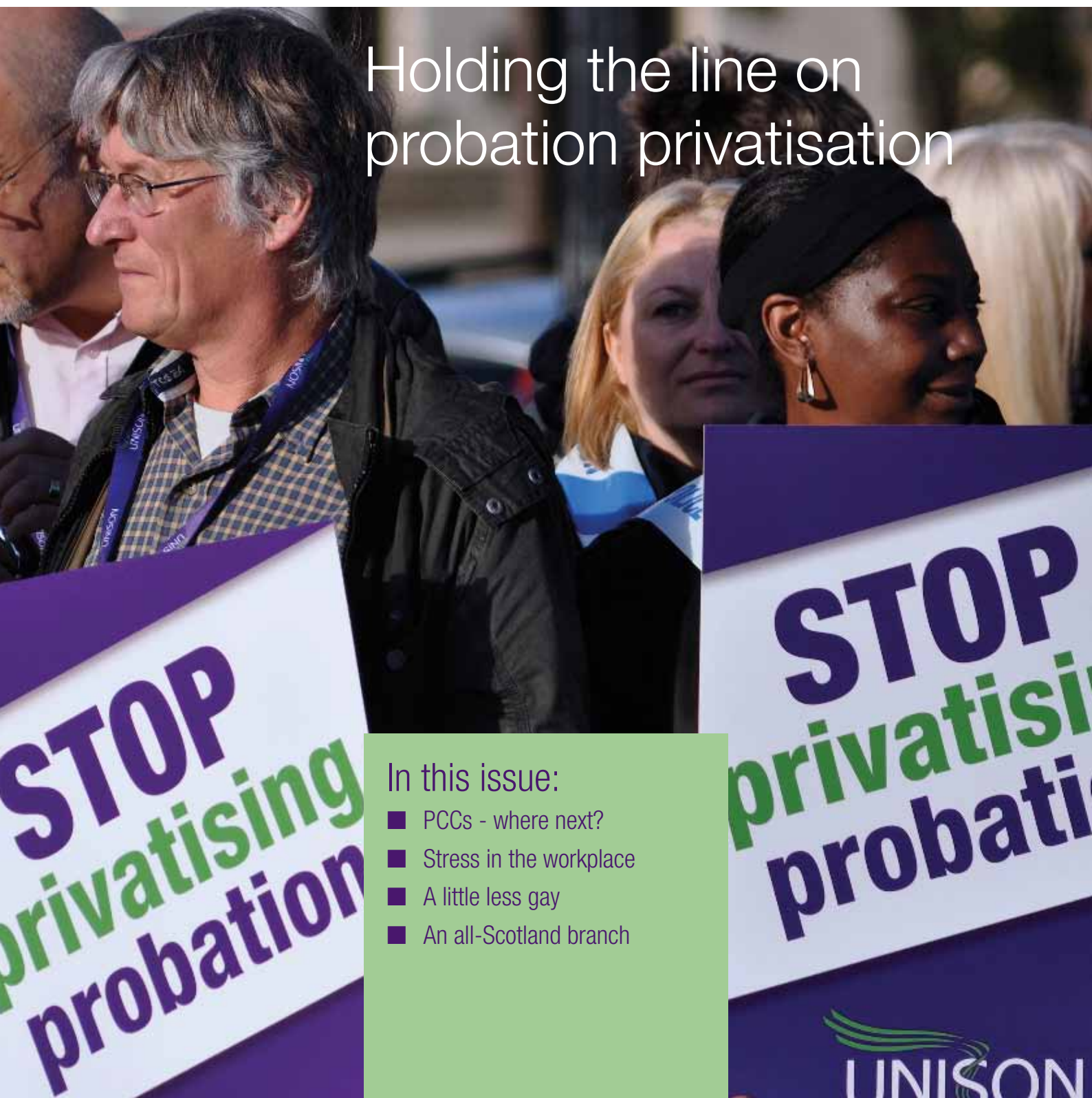


Police & Justice

The magazine for all UNISON members working in
Police and Justice

Holding the line on probation privatisation



In this issue:

- PCCs - where next?
- Stress in the workplace
- A little less gay
- An all-Scotland branch

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Editorial

Doubts appear

The agenda for the Government remains the same – the dismantling and undermining of the public service ethos, which once gave the UK a global reputation for thoroughness, quality and fairness. The belief that the market can recognise every single need and meet it, no matter how difficult, remains unshaken in the Coalition.

But 2012 may be looked back on as a pivotal year. First of all, serious cracks started to appear in flagship private schemes such as security at the Olympics and into-work programmes.

Then, in police services, the Government found its own scheme for populist elected police commissioners had rebounded. Many of them opposed wholesale outsourcing and have also taken up the cudgels over cuts generally.



Lastly, but equally important, UNISON nationally and at local level has continued to campaign (left) against privatisation. It has explained the unsoundness in detail, with authority and in measured tones.

At the same time, it has also been willing to build relationships with employers who take over services that members deliver.

That is the key dual role which UNISON is

well equipped for and why it provides an important service – firstly to its members but also to service users and taxpayers.

The union would not claim exclusive credit for any of the second thoughts by Government or service commissioners, in the last year. But it worked hard to highlight the massive overkill threatened by the privatisation programme for West Midlands and Surrey police forces. The West Midlands branch was recognised with a regional TUC campaigning award. And UNISON lent its voice to warnings about a premature rush to outsource all community payback work in probation. This is currently going ahead only in London.

It will continue to critique the pitfalls of the latest schemes, including payment by results in probation. Government would do well to listen.

So far it is business as usual for ministers. But outsourcing is no longer a technical discussion as far as the public is concerned. They have seen a culture, not just in criminal justice, which all too often overbids to get a contract and then cannot deliver. UNISON's warnings will be vindicated and maybe sooner than anyone thought.

Fundraising double

UNISON member Richard Nelson has jointly raised £10,000 for research into Parkinson's disease after he cycled the French coastline during the summer.

But the fundraising effort came at a price after a disastrous crash at 40 kph caused by contact with another bike. He ended up in a French hospital for six days but full recovery at home in West Yorkshire took several months.

His fellow cyclists from the Keighley & Craven Athletics Club were able to continue to Biarritz and earn the

sponsorship. Richard, who works for West Yorkshire Probation, is affected by Parkinson's himself after being diagnosed four years ago. But he is determined to get fit and get back in the saddle.

You can still sponsor Richard at <http://www.justgiving.com/richardsride2012>

National Officer Ben Priestley accompanied Richard on the first leg in France earning more than £360 towards the sponsorship total. He is pictured (left) with Richard taking a well-earned breather.



Well done

Jill Harrison and Mark Brittle from West Midlands Police UNISON are pictured receiving their joint-TUC regional campaign of the year award recently with UNITE colleagues. The unions were recognised

for their hard work and determination in opposing the proposed privatisation. Jill commented: 'It is a bit daunting taking on a global giant and a government hell-bent on privatisation but I think we made key decision makers and the public think about the issues.'



Probation alert

Proposals for wholesale outsourcing in Probation have been branded 'dangerously misguided' by UNISON.

National officer for probation staff Ben Priestley said: 'The plan would dismantle a service created over a century, in one go.'

'We support the ambition of the Justice Minister to revolutionise rehabilitation, but he is dangerously misguided in his approach. Probation is a local service. It gains its strength from its links with local authorities, police forces and community and voluntary sector organisations that operate at a neighbourhood level.'

Facebook

Facebook has arrived in the police and justice service group. Keep fully up to date by logging on. You could also 'like' the pages.



A view from the top

UNISON took part in the first ever PCC Summit, which highlighted the changed landscape following November's elections. Laurence Pollock reports

The proposals for police and crime commissioners in England and Wales were controversial. Even after the elections in 41 police forces in November, the implications are still being worked out. But UNISON is fully committed to working with the new governance – while ensuring that the professional contributions of police staff are fully recognised.

The PCC Summit was designed to showcase the role and explore many unanswered questions. It included newly elected PCCs like Bob Jones (right) from the West Midlands, senior police officers, MPs and professional organisations. TV journalist Michael Crick chaired. There were only two PCCs present – from the West Midlands and West Yorkshire but there was wide ranging debate from a variety of stakeholders.



Platform sound bites

Michael Crick said being a PCC was a lonely job, especially for independents and there was a need to achieve authority and standing before the next elections in 2016.

Andrew Hawkins of ComRes polling organisation said the 15 per cent turnout was the story of the election – the lowest in peacetime since the Euro-elections of 1999. Surveys

showed crime came after the economy, immigration and health in the public's priorities.

Alan Travis, home affairs editor of the Guardian stressed that police and crime panels were not shadow police authorities but a check on the PCC's budget and a decision to sack the chief constable.

Will they stay?

David Hanson, the opposition police minister faced questions about Labour's intentions if it formed another government. He said Labour would look at how PCCs worked in practice, using a report by former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Lord Stevens. Labour in power would decide whether to keep, strengthen, amend or scrap but at present there was no commitment on 2016 elections.

To privatise?

Ben Priestley (below) UNISON's national officer queried the issue of split responsibility



between chief constables and PCCs and concerns about privatisation. He pointed out that many of the elected independents were opposed to privatisation.

Bob Jones, the new West Midlands PCC, responsible for the biggest force affected by the new system, highlighted the lack of clarity around government-

backed privatisation plans: 'We want to get a framework about what the private sector role is. We have no clarity on profits, public accountability or length of contract.'

He commented that the outsourcing contract in Lincolnshire was for 15 years, pre-empting the PCC's freedom to act.

Steve McCabe MP, a member of the Commons Public Accounts Committee stated: 'The committee looked at procurement and there are some savings (in outsourcing) but the idea that there are rich pickings is a myth.'

Fighting the cuts

Sarah Crowe, UNISON, Bedfordshire asked what PCCs were going to do to fight cuts in the police service, pointing out the difficulty of doing this locally and regionally.



Mark Burns Williamson, the PCC for West Yorkshire said a successor to the Association of Police Authorities was vital: 'We can't have a vacuum at national level.' He also looked forward to more economies of scale in procuring IT. Bob Jones insisted on listening to local communities. He said the Surrey-West



Midlands collaboration would only have made sense if the system was adaptable but the two areas were diametrically different.

'Back office'

Bob Creedon, chief constable Derbyshire said: 'I never use "back office". Attempts by HMIC to define front and back office take us down the wrong path. Whether it's the army, police or Barclays – everyone delivers the whole.'

Steve Williams, chair of the Police Federation added: ' "Back office" is spin that politicians have used. It is a nonsense.'

Irene Curtis, chair elect of the Superintendants' Association: 'I do not agree with "Frontline"..It is a divisive political term.'

Happening since

Bob Jones has recently described funding for West Midlands Police as 'grossly unfair'.

West Midlands Police had joined other metropolitan forces arguing they are being disproportionately hit by cuts to government grants.

Mr Jones added: 'This means the people of the West Midlands will continue to be penalised to reward areas with much lower policing demands and needs.

'This is grossly unfair and I will continue to seek support for the Fair Funding Campaign for West Midlands Police Service.'

PCSO posts and groups supporting victims, young offenders and drug addicts could be in danger.

What now?

The Police Staff Council Trade Union Side has drawn up two employment pledges one directed at police and crime commissioners and the other aimed at chief constables. The pledges aim to:

- Take the initiative in the terms and conditions agenda for police staff.
- Put police and crime commissioners and chief constables on notice that we are serious about defending members' terms and conditions, defending national collective bargaining and ensuring that no two-tier workforce emerges among police staff.
- Highlighting the commitment to the equalities agenda.

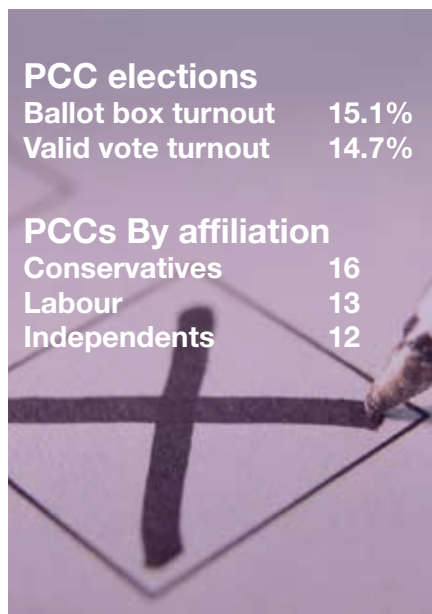
- Ensuring that the trade union issues around procurement/ outsourcing/ privatisation are raised with the new employers as early as possible.
- Seeking openness in the provision of information to the trade unions.

http://www.unison.org.uk/policeandjustice/pages_view.asp?did=15003

At the conference: UNISON

delegate Sarah Crowe from Bedfordshire attended the conference. Sarah said the summit was helping UNISON to understand the role and to build a relationship with the PCC but she was worried how one person could take on the work previously done by 19 police authority members.

On Twitter: several members of the UNISON delegation 'tweeted' from the summit. If you have a twitter account enter the hashtag #pccsummit to view updates from the day. Also check UNISON police staff branches with facebook pages for reports from the event.



Probation privatisation fears

The Government has announced a massive outsourcing plan for medium and low risk offenders. But privatisation has already arrived in London. There are key lessons to learn

Last year UNISON protested vigorously at the Ministry of Justice's decision to sell off Community Payback in London to Serco. The company took over the service last October.

UNISON argued that the profit motive would creep into probation work, accountability would suffer, people on probation would get a worse service, and those working hard to provide the service would also pay the price.

So far, London is the only region of the country where Community Payback work has been privatised.

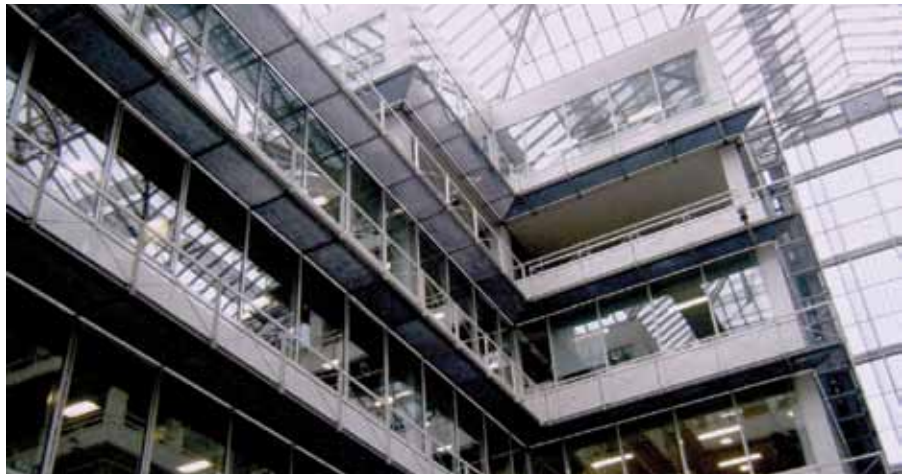
Ben Priestley, UNISON national officer for probation staff highlighted growing public worries about privatisation including the Olympics security contract, poor standards of care at Winterbourne View, and the future of elderly people at Southern Cross.

'The consequences of the Ministry of Justice's decision to sell this service off are deeply worrying.'

The union has been working with Serco to ensure that London's Community Payback remains a good quality service and a decent place to work. It pledged to make sure that the Ministry of Justice was held to account for any repercussions that arise from a flawed decision to privatise.

Key privatisation fears:

- Community Payback is a



London Probation Trust HQ: How much transparency?

huge part of probation trusts' work. If they lose it, they may find that community links and financial viability suffer.

- Community Payback is a local service which will not respond to remote regional level contracts.
- Making a profit out of the unpaid work of offenders is morally offensive.
- The private sector is not accountable in the same way as the public sector. For instance, none of the companies bidding for this work is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.
- Private sector companies are driven primarily by the need to maximise profit, rather than deliver public service.
- None of the previous privatisations undertaken

by the Ministry of Justice or National Offender Management Service has been a success, with many of the contracts leading to poorer services at a higher cost to the taxpayer.

On the ground

Difficulties in accessing information about the contract have been a big factor in the experience of the UNISON members at London Probation Trust. Natalie Cole of the branch committee says other probation areas should be aware of the difficulties if they do not have all the relevant information in time.

Proposals to privatise community payback started three years ago but the pace picked up in 2011. Then criticism by the House of Commons Select Committee on Justice led to nationwide

The consequences of the decision to sell this service off are deeply worrying – Ben Priestley

outsourcing being suspended. Plans to implement went ahead in London only.

There have been no compulsory redundancies in London but a lot of posts have been lost, the branch says.

UNISON sought involvement in drawing up the specification but was regularly excluded on the basis of 'commercial confidentiality', comments branch secretary Georgette Johnson.

'We did attend a series of working groups set up by management but we were cautious. We went to them, for information, but we did not want to formally participate. We were concerned LPT would say UNISON had agreed the changes.'

Consultation took place but it was more like them informing staff, she says.

An appeal by UNISON, nationally, to delay the process in London, like elsewhere, met the response 'this has gone too far'.

Georgette adds: 'There was a lot of secrecy prior to transfer, you are guessing all the time. Some people did not know what building they would be working in and others had no identified roles to go to.'

'But Serco was more open about us seeing the contract in advance than London Probation Trust was.'

The branch is concerned that the distinction between staff moved to Serco on a TUPE transfer and those still working for London Probation Trust is blurred.

There have been some gains. Six staff studying for the probation framework would have lost this opportunity if transferred over to Serco but they are now staying in LPT.

Cafcass Update

Positive result

We have been working towards a reimbursement policy, which properly compensates people claiming for business mileage.

As offices have been closed people working 'from home' are more and more remote from a still existing office. Some travel up to 70 miles. Previously they were not paid for the first 70 miles of business travel as that was considered the same as travel to work – no matter how unreasonable.

The offer from management, which reinstates business mileage has now been put to members.

They had not formally voted at time of writing but they have 'overwhelmingly indicated' that we should continue negotiating a settlement as the new proposals seem fairer.

And Cafcass has now agreed to pay the £250 pay rise for all staff who earn under £21,000.

Double hit

A national newspaper article recently stated that Cafcass managers say they have dramatically reduced the numbers of days lost to sickness in just three years – from an average of 16 a year to fewer than seven – by using counselling, stress-buster sessions and expert help from occupational health.

But Cafcass is quickly moving on people who show signs of stress or depression. The organisation starts the sickness management routine, which leads to dismissal on grounds of illness-capability.

There is an added difficulty for Cafcass social work practitioners who are registered with the Health Care Professional Council. Being dismissed on health grounds can affect the HCPC's view of your fitness to practice and this will then make it more difficult to find another job in the future.

Trade union facility time

As elsewhere this is under threat. The Cabinet Office has sent spreadsheets to directors of HR demanding to know numbers and total costs.

In the air

There have been hints that Cafcass's budget could be reduced – despite pledges that it would be protected. There is a new shadow board at the Ministry of Justice. We will keep you posted.

David Jolly
UNISON national chair Cafcass

Pressure grows on staff

Stress at work, harsh sickness policies and a dilution of equalities work are growing trends as budget cuts dig deep into numbers and morale. UNISON members in police and probation talk about difficult times delivering vital public services

Catch 22

Keith Malcolm on behalf of the Northern Region Police and Justice service group



Northumbria and Durham Forces have had a significant number of job losses in the last two years. Though Cleveland was not in the same position, their Force had outsourced 500 police staff to a private company in 2010. At this time, all staff were given a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies for the duration of the 10-year contract.

This has now been retracted by the employers, and a number of staff working for the private company have already been made redundant. Any vacant posts within Cleveland Police remain unfilled with a view to deleting them permanently.

The impact of these job losses across the Region means that the remaining staff are left to pick up the outstanding work. Taking annual leave, therefore, becomes even more difficult, causing stress and anxiety, which will inevitably lead to an increase in sickness levels, which will lead to more stress. It's a Catch 22 situation.

It has been a struggle to redeploy or recruit police staff due to the demanding nature of the roles

Struggle

Tracey Bocking is a steward in the Communications Control Room (communications branch) at Greater Manchester Police

The recent budget cuts resulted in a review of police staff roles. PCSOs was unaffected but consultations took place for support services and operational services.

During the consultation, management were dismissive of UNISON concerns about the proposals for the control rooms. After deadlock the proposals went to the Police Authority, who agreed to management's proposals.

Approximately 80 posts were lost, the majority through unfilled vacancies or voluntary redundancy although a number of staff were redeployed or were made compulsorily redundant.

Due to the closure of one of the control rooms, concerns remain about additional travelling time for some staff, the stress caused by reduced staffing levels, changes to job descriptions and working practices. At the time of implementation, the communications branch was carrying so many vacancies it became necessary to recruit to certain roles. It has been a struggle to redeploy or recruit police staff due to the demanding nature of the roles.

Sickness figures have improved but people are upset and feeling stress – at the same time they are reluctant to report it or take time off work.

At a recent focus group run by management, staff reported lack of engagement with management, feeling undervalued and lack of real consultation.

GMP's senior leadership team announced over the Christmas period that the communication branch was under review again less than 12 months after the implementation of the initial program.

Pain threshold

Michelle Lemarinel is a PA with Lancashire Police



I have had a disability since undergoing major back surgery 14 years ago.

I have temporary bouts of paralysis and when they happen I can go right through my pain threshold. The pain hits the roof, my medication is

ramped up and I can't drive.

I do not know when those will come on but the Force is recording it as 'sick'.

HR wanted me to sign an 'action plan' with no deadline saying I would not go sick between January and March last year. During that period I was due to have pioneering surgery that could lessen my disability. No one can say they will never be off sick and I refused to sign the action plan. Increasing numbers of people are being asked to sign 'no sick days' action plans.

When I asked for reasonable adjustments because of my disability I was offered one extra day's sick leave. I am now on stage-one capability and the employer is setting people like me up to fail.

But I want to work even though I walk with crutches and sometimes need a wheelchair.

UNISON's national disabled members' committee has agreed a model action plan and I will be pushing for the force to adopt this.

Remain united

John Mackfall branch secretary of North Yorkshire Police UNISON warns of future cuts and urges strengthened trade union activity and membership

Already we have had a 20 per cent cut in jobs in most forces. That is a massive loss of experience and skills that in most cases has needed a lifetime of investment not only by the employer but also

the employee. Don't be fooled into believing that the cuts are all over. I would predict a further 10 per cent of cuts still to come. On top of this we are threatened by regionalisation, and outsourcing, forcing more staff job losses.

We must remain united and continue to be trade union members. The unions are the only group who can represent you and defend your rights at work. We are the only people who actually care about you and your life and maintaining a good standard of living and a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Dealing with stress

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as 'the reaction people have to excessive demands or pressures, arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their job, but find difficulty, strain or worry in doing so.'

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations the employer must assess the nature and scale of risks to health in the workplace and ensure there are proper control measures in place. This applies to the risk of stress just like other workplace hazards.

The Working Time Regulations limit the length of the working week, and forcing employers to give some level of paid holiday.

The Health and Safety Executive guidance on stress at work Tackling work related stress risk assessment at the heart of any plan to reduce the risk of work-related stress.

For fuller guidance from UNISON visit: <http://www.unison.org.uk/safetyvoluntary/stress.asp>

http://www.unison.org.uk/activists/pages_view.asp?did=14567

We must remain united and continue to be trade union members

Equality threatened by cuts

Katrina Gilman is an evidence review officer with West Mercia Police. Equalities are also threatened by cuts she says

“ I have experienced discrimination myself. I came out in my 20s and I had huge issues in the private sector work environment.

I wasn't protected by legislation.

Someone told me: 'You could really go far if you could be a little less gay.'

But there has been progress in the workplace. Outside, however, there is still prejudice and hate crime.

I was walking down the street holding my partner's hand when a man came up and spat in my face. And children throw stones because of who you are. It is vital that the police are dealing with all hate crime and they employ staff who are familiar with the issues and the needs of those affected.

I had my own difficulties with an individual officer when I reported a homophobic threat and the officer tried to argue this wasn't a crime - but I was able to quote the legislation to him.

Budget cuts mean equalities posts are being lost and hate crime units closed. They are seen as 'luxuries'.

I spoke about this at our recent conference: It's not just the impact on members' jobs but a further knock-on effect on the work culture and conditions of all our members. Specialist officers also have a role in dealing with internal bullying and harassment.

It is also vital for how the police do their job. You might be dealing with a woman from a muslim background who is reporting domestic violence. A specialist will know who to contact in the community and what the issues are. But if these roles cease to exist it will just be the next officer available who deals with the case.

I was moved by Neville Lawrence talking about the painstaking struggle to bring his son's killers to justice. But he felt the police had learned to engage with the community as a result of this and they did so with the use of specialists.

Police forces worked hard on equalities after Stephen Lawrence, including West Mercia, but many forces are cutting equalities specialists. Diversity training for every one to level I was once a given but that has all gone. ”

Budget cuts mean equalities posts are being lost and hate crime units closed. They are seen as 'luxuries'

Skyping into the future



As Scotland moves towards a single police force UNISON plans to use the latest electronic technology to ensure maximum participation in the all-Scotland branch.

It is 270 miles from John O'Groats to Glasgow and journey times and distances are even greater for island-based staff.

The Strathclyde Police and Fire branch has already had to deal with huge distances. But it has used a move to new offices to tool up with the leading edge Skype facilities – onscreen teleconferencing – to accommodate the new Scotland-wide structures.

Stevie Diamond, branch chair says: 'One activist comes from Grampian in the far north. That's over three hours on the train and it means she needs an entire day to do to a meeting in Glasgow.

'We don't know where we will be with facility time. At present that depends on individual forces.'

There are now police staff UNISON skype facilities in Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee

and Edinburgh in addition to Glasgow. Up to 10 people can take part at the same time. But the technology is highly flexible and Stevie, Raymond Brown the branch secretary and deputy Norma McKenzie all regularly use skype on their ipads to keep in touch.

The union is only following a path which the new all-Scotland force is expected to adopt to overcome the logistics of a geographically spread organisation.

Stevie recognises that for some people IT is a 'magic art' but he insists: 'we are planning for the future and this will make an enormous difference.'

What is skype?

Voice over internet protocol (Voip) allows you to make phone calls over an internet connection. It is generally free to make calls to other users of the same service, and calls to landlines and mobiles often have cheap rates. The best known Voip service is Skype. You can talk to other Skype users anywhere in the world for free and see each other (also free) if you both have a webcam.

Down to the wire

UNISON was pressing for an enhanced voluntary redundancy and early retirement package as Scotland moves towards a single police force in April.

But the discussions come against a background of high level wrangling about who has ultimate responsibility for police staff. Chief Constable Stephen House has been in conflict with Vic Emery, chairman of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), about personnel and budget issues. The Justice secretary Kenny MacAskill has declined to intervene.

As a result talks about the future of staff were held up for two months before Christmas. This has been massively unsettling for members who are trying to plan for the future and make significant life decisions. There is a promise of no compulsory redundancies but only for 12 months. Discussions have now started again.

There is at least some sense being talked at the highest levels about policing numbers. Stephen House has stated publicly that the 17,234 minimum number of officers mandated in recent legislation is 'not mathematically possible'.

Mr House says the 'significant financial savings' Police Scotland has to make mean he can only maintain the commitment for the first financial year.

We know he is worried about the impact of maintaining these levels on police staff levels. That is encouraging.

Stevie Diamond
Chair, UNISON Police Staff
Scotland

Fighting privatisation in Police and Justice

UNISON's police and justice conference was held at a momentous time as issues around criminal justice and outsourcing came to a head

Signs that the private sector cannot deliver on its promises gave added strength to police and justice delegates at the recent UNISON service group conference in Cardiff.

This was the second conference for the new enlarged service group embracing police staff, probation and Cafcass.

The union has argued for years that cost cutting, shareholder-driven business could not provide the criminal justice system Britain needs and wants. It has also sounded an alarm about the savage front-loaded cuts imposed by a government obsessed with credit ratings.

Senior police officers, candidates in the run-up to the PCC election, the public and MPs also raised their doubts. These were underscored by the private sector's inability to offer full security at the Olympics.

But it has been left to UNISON to state the many flaws. A key motion on privatisation plans listed: no business case, no public consultation, no interest in staff proposals for cost effective services, loss of accountability, loss of operation control, no IPCC oversight and refusal to wait until PCC elections.

Conference pledged to step up the public campaign against privatisation, as delegates warned that women, staff with disabilities and LGBT staff could see progress on equalities rolled back.



Sue Letts, Cleveland Police, also warned of attacks on facility time when private companies came in. Despite pledges of jobs Steria, which took over 500 police staff jobs, had already started talks on voluntary and compulsory redundancy.

'To say the future is bleak with Steria is an understatement. Privatisation is not the way forward, take heed.'

And Lauren Bleach, Norfolk and Suffolk Probation, warned: 'The Trust have Serco in the building working in "partnership" but this will lead, no doubt, to outsourcing. They will outsource everything they can.'

Andy Stenning, Sussex Police, said minorities always suffered under privatisation.

'Equalities in the public sector are stronger than in many private companies – that is the case in my own force. That has been built on hard and constant lobbying.'

In the private sector

Adam Hodgson, black members, warned of conditions in the private sector. He said UNISON members working in private companies in Merseyside were faced with minimum wage rates and periods off work due to stress.

He was backing a motion calling for all staff in police, probation and Cafcass to be paid at least a living wage and for UNISON to produce material to assist local campaigns.

'They are lucky to get a bathroom break let alone a lunch break.'

On industrial relations issues it could take a month getting a response from human resources.

They are lucky to get a bathroom break let alone a lunch break

Consultants

Delegates were warned about supposed cost saving reviews carried out at great expense by private consultants.

Staffordshire Police UNISON has been challenging recent recommendations. Their motion stated: 'Evidence has not been provided to UNISON. These companies are used by forces across the country and they have a one size fits all business model.'

Dawn Critchley said cuts had fallen disproportionately on police staff.

'No matter how many challenges (we make) to the recommendations, the force goes ahead to justify the cost of the consultants.'

Scotland

Scottish delegates sounded an alarm that VAT chargeable to the new Scottish Police Force equalled 20 per cent of the

cuts it had to make. This was equivalent to nearly 900 police staff jobs.

'The Government hopes to save money but this will cost £30 million. It is more than ridiculous and we need to campaign on this,' said Drew Livingstone, Tayside Fire and Police.

Delegates backed a motion calling for the same VAT arrangements that exist for the eight Scottish Forces and in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Strathclyde Police and Fire Branch stated: 'The Westminster Government cannot be allowed to not only cut back on policing budgets across the country, but to have a double whammy of clawing tax back into the Treasury.'

Conference also carried motions on police and crime commissioners, Winsor, PCSOs, pay and conditions, uniforms in probation and young members.

Damian Green

England and Wales police minister Damian Green paid tribute to the work of police staff when he addressed conference.

He thanked them for their 'vital' role in fighting crime including handling 999 calls and patrolling the neighbourhood.

There was a need to get policing and criminal justice working together, more effectively. That could include things like reducing unneeded movement of people around the system.

But Mr Green stressed that it was a challenging period: 'The police service is changing and change is never easy. It's never been more important to state that we have one police service made up of officers, staff and partners.'

'We have no agenda for privatisation by stealth. The police remain a public service accountable to the public.'

Worrying statistics

'A public service job is disappearing every 45 seconds.'



General secretary Dave Prentis defined the destruction of services in one simple stat.

He reminded delegates that international charity Save the Children was

now operating in the UK.

'Kids are going without hot meals, working families are struggling with rising prices, food banks are appearing in the north.'

He was upbeat, however, about UNISON's *Stop Police Privatisation* campaign.

'It is having an effect because of the work you have done – you have sown doubts in the minds

of chief constables, the public and police and crime commissioner candidates.'

He highlighted UNISON's own surveys, which showed even Conservatives against it.

ON probation, the Government intended fragmentation and the destruction of localism.

'There will be no local input as arms length bodies will do what the probation trusts are doing now. They are taking a sledgehammer to crack a very small service.'

'Even Cafcass is going through incredible uncertainty over which minister is actually responsible.'

He stressed however: 'Police, probation and Cafcass are all under attack so it is important to have our police and justice service group to give you a platform at the heart of our union.'

■ **Police, probation and Cafcass are all under attack**

Early intervention is key

Shelley Ripley is a PCSO working with young people in the Emsworth area of Havant in Hampshire.

She applauded Jonathan Mann from Cumbria who got the PCSO award of the year in the last ever Janes' *Police Review* event for running a junior PCSO scheme. But she points out that Janes missed Hampshire's earlier, longer running, scheme – featured previously in *Police Profile*.

PCSOs Jade Missen (who has left the force) and Mark Reynolds (now a police officer) worked hard to build relationships and ensure there were activities inside and outside term time.

The project promoted pride in the local community with litter picking, tidying up areas, painting and gardening.

There were talks on everything from hoax calls and water safety to bullying and energy waste, plus dozens of football, basketball and cricket sessions.



Today, Shelley points out that the scheme is mainstreamed throughout Hampshire and she and other PCSOs are doing complex and sophisticated work around children's self-esteem and confidence.

'This has become an early intervention scheme reaching children who only see the police when they come to arrest a family member,' she says.

She is confident that PCSO numbers will not drop but she points out that work like this will not continue if they do. The cost does not all come out of the police precept and Shelley spends a lot of her time filling in

applications to various sources of grant funding.

The result is a rich mixture of personal development and social awareness for the youngsters. There are 'icebreakers' where the youngsters get to know each other and learn to speak in front of a group. They also spend time visiting elderly residents and understanding their needs. Like Cumbria, the fun side includes trips to the lifeboat station (pictured) and bowling. A birds of prey centre visit is planned.

National officer Ben Priestley said: 'It is important that all police staff work is recognised. Branches should be on the look out for award programmes and commendation requests and keep an eye on closing dates.

'PCSOs are now doing vital work in many stressed communities. The Home Office, chief constables and police and crime commissioners must recognise and support the professional input they make'.

Burning issue

A 30ft high 'fire sculpture' spelling out the words 'Keep Policing Public' was the stunning climax of a recent event held in opposition to the outsourcing of police staff roles in Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Police services.

The event was part of the on-going campaign against the privatisation of police services. Speakers included UNISON vice president Maureen Le Marinel, regional secretary Glyn Hawker and Herts Police UNISON branch treasurer Mark Watson. It was attended by police staff and representatives from the Police Federation, Superintendents Association, and local support groups.



National Officer report

Keep it public

UNISON has launched a *Keep Probation Public – Keep Probation Local* campaign to prevent the sell-off and break-up of the Probation Service.

In January, the Government published its plans for radical reform of the Probation Service in England and Wales. UNISON welcomes the big idea in the reform, which is to provide supervision and rehabilitation to those leaving prison after short sentences. However, the way the Government is doing this is so damaging. It wants to:

- Privatised up to 70 per cent of the work of the Service: including offender management for all but the most dangerous offenders, programmes and community payback.
- Parcel up this work into big cross-regional contracts and sell it off to whichever private sector company can do it most cheaply.
- Pay for the work via an untried and untested 'payment by results' model.
- Force the 35 local probation trusts to merge to form 16 'super-trusts'.
- Make these super-trusts set up complicated arms-length bodies to bid against the private sector.

UNISON's 'Keep Probation Public – Keep Probation Local' campaign aims to draw public and media attention to the flaws in these proposals. Probation

is a local service which gains its strength from local partnerships; the Government's plans for regional delivery will destroy this. The widespread privatisation of probation services which goes along with this regionalisation is all about a race to the bottom on quality.

UNISON will be working with our sister union Napo and other justice unions to fight these ill-conceived plans. We have developed the concept of 'Primary Justice' with the Local Government Information Unit to offer an alternative to regionalisation and privatisation. In this vision, Probation would work with public sector partners - local government, the police and the voluntary sector - to deliver the increase in supervisory capacity that the Government wants.

Trade union facility time

The Government is rolling out its long-feared attack on trade union facility time. In Probation and Cafcass, the Government has levied two totally arbitrary limits on the amount of facility time that UNISON and other unions can access: no more than one tenth of one per cent of an employer's total pay bill can be spent on facility time and no trade union representative can spend more than 50 percent of the working week on trade union duties.

UNISON representatives in Probation and Cafcass are granted a certain amount of paid time off work to represent

members, consult on employer change programmes, undertake health and safety inspections and negotiate your pay and conditions.

UNISON is working with the other Probation and civil service unions to fight off an attack which threatens their ability to carry out statutory duties on behalf of members in the workplace.

Employment charter

Police and Crime Commissioners elected in November are settling into their new roles. UNISON has written to ask all PCCs to sign our *Police Staff Employment Charter* to protect the pay and conditions of police staff in England and Wales.

Some police forces are investigating opting out of national collective pay bargaining and negotiating locally instead. UNISON will spell out to PCCs the negative consequences of going local on pay and will fight any force, which tries to go down this line.

College of Policing

UNISON is representing the interests of police staff in the work setting up the College of Policing. The College replaces the National Policing Improvement Agency and will hopefully offer police staff opportunities to enhance their professionalism and open up proper career pathways for our members.

Policing for profit?

Policing by consent is about to be replaced by policing for profit.
Our impartial, independent police service could soon be sold off to unaccountable private companies running vital functions such as crime investigation and forensics, answering 999 calls, providing custody and detention and a wide range of other activities. Police staff jobs will be sold off too.

STOP POLICE PRIVATISATION



STOP POLICE PRIVATISATION

- Privatising the police is wrong because:**
- it's all about cost cutting, not improving services to the public
 - there is no business case for it
 - local people have not been consulted
 - police accountability will suffer
 - chief police officers will lose operational control
 - private profit will be more important than community safety.

UNISON is fighting these dangerous proposals.
Get involved in our campaign at

unison.org.uk/stoppoliceprivatisation

Join UNISON online today at unison.org.uk/join
or call 0845 355 0845 or contact your local representative.

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