

The Police Federation of England and Wales

Media Release

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Police Federation calls upon MPs to support binding arbitration or officers will fight for right to strike

Following a decision by Staff Side of the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) not to appeal against the High Court judgment on police pay, the Police Federation of England and Wales is writing to every Member of Parliament seeking their support for independent binding arbitration. In the absence of binding arbitration the Police Federation will be left with no choice but to lobby for full industrial rights for the 140,000 police officers it represents throughout England and Wales.

The decision not to appeal was taken after legal advice and very careful consideration. It was decided that the fight for fair pay, binding arbitration and the pursuit of industrial rights is better served in parliament than the legal arena. Staff Side are seeking an assurance that any negotiated settlement or arbiters' decision be implemented in full by the Home Secretary and that she will not simply impose a multi-year deal based on a flawed index or reduce an award by staging the settlement.

Paul McKeever, Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales and of Staff Side of the PNB, says:

"We should never have been forced to take the issue of police pay to court in the first instance, but we were left with no choice. Over the past ten months we have seen a weak Home Secretary, bullied by a new Prime Minister, seriously let down police officers across the UK. Today we have made our position clear, and are calling upon all MPs to support binding independent arbitration. If the government want to restore any trust with the police service, we must have independent arbitration that is binding on all parties, and that includes the Home Secretary.

"We are already negotiating for the 2008/09 police pay award. We need to know there will be true negotiation at the Police Negotiating Board, and that the process is not just a sham with the Home Secretary's pen already poised over a pre-planned pay deal. We also need an assurance that if no agreement is reached and it goes to arbitration that the decision of the arbiters will be binding; otherwise there is absolutely no point to the entire process.

"Last month at the Police Federation conference we announced the results of a poll of police officers in England and Wales. The result gives the Police Federation of England and Wales a mandate to lobby the government for full industrial rights for police officers if arbitration is not binding. This is a route we do not want to go down but one we will follow if the government continues to turn a blind eye to our fair and reasonable request for binding arbitration.

"The fight for fair pay continues."