

CIVIL NUCLEAR POLICE FEDERATION

Established by Act of Parliament



Mr. Jesse Norman MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Minister for Industry and Energy.
Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Cinnamon House,
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Dear Minister,

Following recent Ministerial changes I understand that the Civil Nuclear Constabulary has just been added to your portfolio of responsibilities in the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

I write not only to welcome your attention on CNC matters generally but to raise an immediate issue of police concern which has also been on the desk of your last three predecessors. The Department has extensive submissions and correspondence on this vexed issue so I won't rehearse it at length.

In short, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary comprises, in the main, 1250 Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) whose responsibility is to protect the UK's civil nuclear assets whether in situ at Nuclear facilities or in transit across the UK or being shipped to destinations abroad. More recently, because of our acknowledged firearms expertise the CNC has been entrusted with a major surge role in rapidly countering any UK occurring terrorist outrage.

Because of a legislative oversight in the drafting of the 2013 Public Services Pensions Act our officers were not included in the exempt employment sectors, ie along with the UK police service, firefighters etc. The judicial review last August at which we argued to be treated as the rest of the police service was unfortunately restricted to the lawfulness of the application of the Act to the CNC and could not consider the justice or wisdom of such a decision. As matters now stand our members will be expected to serve as fully effective AFOs until they reach 67/68 retirement age.

The difficulty for our Federation, for the remit of the CNC and for the Government is that there is little or no prospect of our AFOs maintaining the professionally mandated standards set by the College of Policing in physical fitness and weaponry expertise until that age. Our Chief Constable has warned previous Ministers that imposition of the later retirement age will render the CNC "unsustainable".

We believe that we are the fittest corporate body of police officers in the UK. However all the professional evidence submitted by our Chief Constable and supported by Chairman of the Civil Nuclear Police Authority (and his predecessor)

[All correspondence to Chief Executive](#)

and the College of Policing makes it clear that officers' fitness and effectiveness will inevitably decline despite best efforts as they approach 60. Put more bluntly, few officers and almost certainly no female officers will still be able to fulfil their expected role over the age of 60. The latter point by the way raises an equality issue which cannot be ignored.

Because of the specific and narrow remit of the CNC there are limited unarmed jobs for officers. Officers unable to maintain the mandated standards will have their employment terminated. This unforgiving approach is in contrast to the position of AFOs in the rest of the UK police service where AFOs can surrender their weapon authorisation at any time and switch to an unarmed role within policing. In 2011 the then Home Secretary and now Prime Minister agreed to 60 as the normal retirement age for the UK police service. We therefore had this same, reasonable expectation, until the 2013 Pension Act that we would continue to have retirement at 60.

Despite the weight of evidence we have been unable to get a response from the Department that they accept that the only sensible retirement age for our members should be 60. The most recent submission to the Department by the CNC following our meeting with your predecessor on 4th November set out the financial advantage to the public purse of the earlier age. The Federation has also accepted in principle that it may expect increased pension contributions from its members in return for a more realistic retirement age.

I urge you Minister to weigh the common sense of a retirement age of 60 against the legislative oversight which will impose a requirement for aggressively armed police officers to serve until their mid to late sixties. It is inconceivable that either Parliament or the wider public will accept that nuclear assets, their safe transportation and the protection of the civilian population against terrorist outrage should require the services of officers well over 60 years of age.

We would welcome a meeting with you to set out in more detail our case for a sensible retirement age. You might also find it helpful to view a two minute video of our work (<https://YouTube.be/NkidFOYOW7M>) which sets out succinctly our role.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Nigel Dennis
Chief Executive Officer
Civil Nuclear Police Federation.

Copy – Mr. Vic Emery OBE - Chairman CNPA

Mr. Mike Griffiths CBE – Chief Constable CNC

Mr. Simon Chesterman QPM Deputy Chief Constable CNC