

CIVIL NUCLEAR POLICE FEDERATION

Established by Act of Parliament



ACC Richard Bennett.
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SUBJECT: RETIREMENT AGE FOR CNC OFFICERS

Dear Mr Bennett:

We are writing to draw to your attention a major issue which will impact adversely on the firearms capability of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, that is, the distinct possibility that members of the CNC may have an officer retirement age of 68 years old introduced.

You will be aware of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary mission, which is in partnership with the civil nuclear industry, national security agencies and regulatory bodies the CNC will deter any attacker whose intent is the theft or sabotage of nuclear material whether static or in transit. If an attack occurs CNC will defend that material and deny access to it. If material is seized or high consequence facilities compromised the CNC will recover control of the facility and regain custody of the matter

The retirement age for CNC officers has not as yet been settled and is part of current discussions between our Police Authority, the Department of Energy and Climate Change, Treasury and other relevant public bodies. Contrary to best practice there has not been an acceptance of the view that this Federation is entitled to be at the consultation table before proposals are formed.

All correspondence to Chief Executive

By way of background, the retirement age issue is compounded by the insistence of the Civil Nuclear Police Authority that the CNC is not a “police service” and therefore the recent Government approved agreements of retirement age of 60 for Home Office Forces, the Police Service of Northern Ireland Police Scotland and the British Transport Police do not automatically read across to our members. We are presently challenging this assertion by the Police Authority through judicial review in the High Court where we will be seeking a declaration that the CNC is indeed a police service (and that consultation with this Federation on the terms and conditions of a pension scheme should be underway

Setting aside the legal issue, a further difficulty for the Civil Nuclear Constabulary is that the imposition of a retirement age of 68, as is happening in non-policing parts of the public service, ignores the highly relevant fact that all but a few CNC officers are authorised firearm officers carrying weapons at all times when on duty. Many are trained beyond that of the COP AFO and deviate only slightly from the ARV module due to advanced driving elements. Officers are combat ready and mission focused at all times. From a national security perspective we are deemed an Anti-Terrorism Police Service. Unlike other police forces the requirement to carry and be proficient in arms until retirement age is obligatory and not optional. Repeated failure by a CNC officer to meet exacting firearms standards will eventually lead to early termination of his or her contract of employment. Unlike other police services we do not have posts for officers where they could continue in service until retirement age if they lose or surrender their authorised firearms qualification.

The inescapable human condition which is being carefully ignored by the Police Authority is that an officer’s ability to meet the exacting firearms capability begins to become more challenging from 50 onwards and for many officers it becomes a significant problem coming up to 60. Unfortunately the bodies formulating the retirement age proposals of our officers are bereft of the expert advice which might assist them to come to a sensible and thus sustainable decision. Frankly, the idea of officers still performing to the required CNC fitness and weaponry standards at 67 is simply not credible.

[All correspondence to Chief Executive](#)

Especially from 60 onwards, a health and safety issue of the CNC's duty of care must arise for both the armed officer and the public.

What is also missing from the pension age deliberations is an appreciation of the key role that CNC are playing through interoperability with other police services in the event of a national security incident. In dealing with a terrorist alert or incidents, such as recently happened in Paris, the highest degree of professional training, physical alertness and fitness will be required. It is inconceivable that CNC would be drawing upon officers nearing a retirement age of 68 to attend such occasions.

On the basis of this letter we hope you would share our concern. We certainly would welcome the contribution that the College of Policing could undoubtedly make to ensuring that any forthcoming proposals on retirement age are grounded on a realistic understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the CNC officer. To that end we would welcome an early acknowledgement of our concerns by the College of Policing, and to have a a meeting with you and other colleagues as appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Dennis
Chief Executive.
Civil Nuclear Police Federation

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Alex Marshall Chief Executive, College of Policing