

CIVIL NUCLEAR POLICE FEDERATION

Established by Act of Parliament



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Baroness Neville –Rolfe DBE CMG
Minister of State Energy and Intellectual Property
Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy
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02/08/2016

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Dear Lady Neville – Rolfe,

On behalf of the Civil Nuclear Police Federation I warmly congratulate you on being appointed to a Ministerial position in the newly created Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy. Among your many responsibilities is the Civil Nuclear Constabulary. As Chief Executive of their Federation I represent 1250 fully warranted operational police officers, the vast majority of whom are authorised firearms officers, from the rank of Constable to chief inspector.

I appreciate that your in-tray is no doubt already filling up but I need to make a pressing case for a meeting.

Your DECC Ministerial predecessor, Ms Andrea Leadsom, was due to meet my colleagues to discuss our concerns regarding an appropriate retirement age for our authorised firearms officers on the very day (Thursday 30th June) that she announced her candidacy for Prime Minister. Our scheduled meeting, unsurprisingly and understandably, became a lesser priority and was cancelled at 30 minutes' notice.

The problem is rooted in pension's regulations being framed under legislation which does not recognise the special circumstances of a police service. The Federation is currently being consulted on new pension's arrangements for CNC officers which will

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be introduced under Section 10 of the Public Sector Pensions Act. This legislation may be suitable for the general public service but the inclusion of a police service within its application is totally inappropriate as it envisages a universal public service retirement age of 65 rising in due course to 68.

As already detailed in previous correspondence and submissions to your predecessor the overwhelming professional and objective evidence from our Chief Constable and from our Police Authority is that Civil Nuclear Police Officers will find it physically impossible to serve beyond 60. Corporately this Force has the highest standards of physical fitness and weapon competency of any UK police service. Our Chief Constable, Mr Mike Griffith, is on record to the Director of Nuclear Resilience and Assurance Richard Westlake as stating "that in normal operational circumstances it is not sustainable from a capability, reputational, risk and public confidence perspective for AFOs to carry lethal weapons and continue in AFO roles beyond the age of 60."

Our standards of fitness and weapons proficiency have been independently set by the College of Policing which has also offered to assist the pension negotiation parties with an appreciation of our armed role. CNC officers are routinely tested including live exercises and test failure may ultimately lead to dismissal. Unlike the rest of the UK police service, where being an AFO is an entirely voluntary position which can be given up at anytime, there are extremely limited roles for our non-deployable operational officers.

The rest of the UK Police service was permitted a retirement age of 60 by the then Home Secretary, Ms Theresa May, in 2011. All the expert advice and experience is that it is inconceivable that the CNC, which has the most physically demanding role of protecting our civil nuclear assets and is now a major player in the Government's anti-terrorist surge response, should find itself, uniquely, the only police force burdened with a retirement age which very few officers and certainly, no female officer will ever achieve.

I can understand that the Government may wish to hold the line on a retirement age of 65/68 but a one size fits all cannot be blindly applied. Discussions on how an earlier

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retirement age could be funded might be appropriate and is not without precedent in other parts of the public service. Unfortunately our negotiations are more or less stalled until we have a decision on a retirement age to anchor the content of the regulations which need to be in place by April 2017.

I can only repeat what we have said previously. The members of this Federation are very proud of their mission and professionalism. We understand the insistence on the highest performance standards as an enduring career requirement if we are to be effective against the increasingly real threat of a terrorist attack. We are prepared, as all police officers are, to put ourselves in harm's way to do our duty. In return for making that personal commitment we would like to share with our other police colleagues the more realistically attainable retirement age of 60.

I would welcome the opportunity for an early meeting with the Minister. As before my chairman, Mark Nelson, and I would wish to be accompanied by our Deputy Chief Constable, Simon Chesterman, who is the National firearms Lead for the National Police Chiefs Council for the Police Service.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Dennis
Chief Executive
Civil Nuclear Police Federation

Copy –Sir Philip Trousdell - Chairman CNPA
Mike Griffiths – Chief Constable CNC
Simon Chesterman Deputy Chief Constable CNC
Rt Hon Amber Rudd Home Secretary
Lord Grantchester Shadow Spokesperson - House of Lords - Energy
Sarah Thornton National Police Chief Council

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