

# federation



West Midlands Police Federation

April/May 2017



**Stress and sickness  
- are we feeling the  
strain?** - See Pages 15 - 25

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# Welcome

Welcome to the April/May edition of *federation* -the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role – though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

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Federation is printed by Heron Press UK on behalf of the Joint Branch Board of the West Midlands Police Federation.

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# PC Keith Palmer: a brave officer whose sacrifice will never be forgotten

“ He was someone who left for work today expecting to return home at the end of his shift and he had every right to expect that would happen. ”



Photo courtesy Express & Star

By **Tom Cuddeford**, interim chairman of West Midlands Police Federation

Those were the words of the Acting Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Mark Rowley speaking just hours after the horrific stabbing of PC Keith Palmer at

Westminster on 22 March 2017.

I think everyone can relate to those words but they somehow have added significance for police officers. Front-line officers never quite know what their shift will bring but they all join up knowing they could well have to put themselves between the public and life-threatening dangers.

PC Palmer acted in the finest traditions of policing. He faced danger, put himself in harm's way and sadly made the ultimate sacrifice.

In the words of MP Tobias Ellwood who tried to save the brave officer, PC Palmer 'gave his life in holding the line against terrorism and defending democracy'.

His bravery will never be forgotten.

Our thoughts are with his family. They too had every expectation that he would return from his shift as normal and they now face the reality of re-building their lives without him.

The horror we all felt as we realised the gravity of the incident as news reports started to filter through is nothing when compared to their loss, and that of the families whose loved ones were also killed in the attack. We extend our sympathies to them, and we wish those injured, many

of whom suffered life-changing injuries, a speedy recovery.

I think as a nation we all knew that an attack of this kind was likely to happen. Our security status was clearly affected by the terrorist attacks in Paris and elsewhere in Europe with the Westminster incident coming a year to the day since the three co-ordinated suicide bombings in Brussels, two at the airport and one at a Metro Station. These despicable acts really meant it had become a case of 'when, not if' in terms of the likelihood of a terrorist attack on UK soil. Yet, the Westminster atrocity somehow still felt really shocking.

The response from the police and other emergency service workers was incredible and it was heartening to hear the words of praise from the Prime Minister, police leaders, MPs and the public.

All too often, as police officers we find ourselves criticised but I think, on this occasion at least, people were appreciative of the very real dangers we face and the incredible role we play in society as we face danger while others run away.

Days after the attack, it was revealed that the whole incident – from the time the attacker drove his car into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge to when he was

shot in the grounds of Parliament – was over in just 82 seconds, showing, I believe, just how quick officers were to react.

Of course, it also highlights why it is important for us to have fully trained armed officers not just in key locations but also around the country so that they can respond should such an incident occur outside of the capital. The level of terrorist threat in the UK remains at 'severe' so I am sure firearms training and recruitment is going to stay under discussion by all involved in counter terrorism.

Just two weeks before the Westminster attack, Home Secretary Amber Rudd said that only in exceptional circumstances would authorised firearms officers be suspended for using their guns, saying their decision must be based on an assessment of threat to life, including their own.

There had been concerns that officers were reluctant to put themselves forward for firearms training due to the long suspensions others have faced after firing their weapons in several high profile cases.

I welcome the Home Secretary's comments on this issue as we are all aware of forces struggling to find officers willing to become firearms trained.

I am also pleased Ms Rudd has approved the new X2 model of Taser so that officers will have an effective means to protect themselves and the public. We are waiting to hear how the roll-out of this piece of kit will be funded but hopefully this is something that can be resolved.

Turning attention to another issue, I am pleased to report that the Force is now actively considering issuing an appropriate spit guard to provide better protection for officers.

I called for personal issue spit guards when I presented to the Force's executive team earlier this year and chief officers have now agreed to scope this issue. Spit guards, I believe, are part of essential kit now for police officers who are being assaulted, spat at and bitten on an almost daily basis.

The health risks associated with spitting make it a particularly vile type of attack so I am sure members will welcome the fact that the Force is now looking into allowing them to use spit guards.

## 'The reality of terrorist attack was still shocking'

The terrorist atrocity in London was still shocking, despite the fact that everyone knew an attack on UK soil was highly likely, national Police Federation chairman Steve White said a few hours after the incident.

As people were watching the incident unfold, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) issued a statement saying the news that a police officer had been killed, defending the safety of others, had left both colleagues and the public numb.

"No words can capture how members of the policing family will feel after today's horrific events," Steve said.

The Metropolitan Police confirmed that one of their officers died after confronting a man in the grounds of Westminster Palace, shortly after 2.30pm. Three other police officers were also injured – two seriously it later emerged – after a car struck a number of people on Westminster Bridge.

Steve explained: "We have lived in the knowledge that an attack on UK soil has been highly likely for nearly three years. Everyone is firmly aware of this fact but it makes it no less shocking when it becomes a reality.

"This incident highlights the very real risks that police face each and every day. Officers will tonight take the opportunity to hug loved ones and seek comfort in the company of friends and family. But one will not. The pain of that officer's family, friends and colleagues will be shared by us all.

"Our hearts go out to their family and our thoughts are with them and their colleagues at this terrible time along with others who have been injured today."

Just a few hours later, the Met confirmed that PC Keith Palmer (48), an officer with 15 years' service, died after being stabbed as he tried to stop the terrorist outside the Houses of Parliament.

A father and husband, he was an unarmed member of the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Squad who had served for 15 years.

Prime Minister Theresa May was among those paying tribute to PC Palmer, telling fellow MPs 'his actions will never be forgotten'.

At 9.33am the morning after the attack, a minute's silence was observed in Parliament and in front of New Scotland Yard.

## 'Every inch a hero'

Prime Minister Theresa May led tributes to PC Keith Palmer telling the Commons on the morning after the Westminster attack: "He was every inch a hero."

His family described him as a 'wonderful Dad and husband' while Cressida Dick, the incoming Met Commissioner, said: "We will never forget his courage."

A fund set up in his memory by PC Palmer's colleagues in the Metropolitan Police reached the £700,000 mark within a week of his tragic death. The money will be given to his wife and young daughter.

As a mark of respect PC Palmer's shoulder number - 4157U - will be retired and not re-issued to any other officer.

## Brave officers to be honoured

Two West Midlands Police officers have been nominated for this year's national Police Bravery Awards.

PCs James Neilson and Ryan Patel, who are based at Digbeth Police Station, have been put forward for the prestigious award for bravely tackling armed robbers as they fled after raiding a corner shop.

In praising the two officers, PS Lee Wigan says: "This incident demonstrates the dangers faced by police officers on a daily basis. The officers demonstrated extreme levels of bravery, selflessness, composure and commitment to the

safeguarding of their community. No officer should have to experience what they experienced on that night and their efforts are no doubt worthy of recognition."

PCs Neilson and Patel will join brave officers from across England and Wales at this year's bravery awards which will be held in London on 13 July.

They and their partners will attend a Downing Street reception attended by the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and the police minister before the gala awards evening at The Dorchester Hotel.

# 'Good' rating for Force after HMIC 'effective' inspection

**W**est Midlands Police Federation has welcomed a watchdog inspection report that grades the Force as 'good' in terms of its effectiveness at keeping people safe and reducing crime.

The report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) highlighted several areas where the Force was performing well, saying it was 'good' at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe, 'good' at how it investigates crime and reduces re-offending and 'good' at tackling serious and organised crime.

However, the watchdog was concerned over how the Force protects those who are

vulnerable from harm, and supports victims, something Tom Cuddeford, interim chairman of the Federation branch, agrees with.

"This report shows that, on the whole, the Force is maintaining an effective service for the people of the West Midlands and is managing to do that despite the huge cuts to its budgets," says Tom.

"This is testimony to the hard-working officers and police staff who remain committed to serving their communities despite the pressures they face through dwindling resources and increased demand.

"They are working long hours in

demanding roles and as the pressures intensify they are increasingly suffering stress related illnesses which we are working with the Force to try to reduce.

"While they are enabling the Force to perform well in terms of its main priorities – fighting crime, dealing with anti-social behaviour and protecting the public – I am concerned that it is not always supporting victims or vulnerable people in our communities as well as it should."

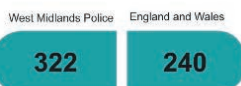
Of particular concern to HMIC was the Force's response to domestic abuse, with inspectors saying the Force's policy 'does not provide confidence that risk is always

## FORCE IN NUMBERS



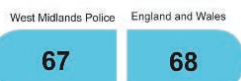
### Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016



### Crime (excluding fraud)

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016



Change in recorded crime 12 months to 30 June 2015 against 12 months to 30 June 2016



Change in recorded crime for the 5 years to the 12 months to 30 June 2016

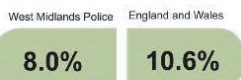


### Crime outcomes\*

Charged/summonsed



Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action



Investigation completed but no suspect identified

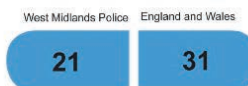


\*Figures are shown as proportions of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016.

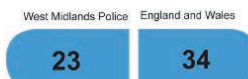


### Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

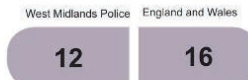


Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015



### Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016



Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2016

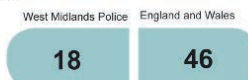


Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015



### Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 1 July 2016



### Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 30 June 2016



# Force 'ness'



HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams.

assessed appropriately.'

The report states: "This is an enduring cause of concern from HMIC's report on vulnerability in 2015 and is one of the recommendations from HMIC's report on its domestic abuse inspection in 2014 that still needs to be implemented."

The report also flagged concerns over the way missing and absent children are dealt with, saying the risk assessment was 'inappropriate' in some cases.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said: "The Force is performing well in some areas, however, needs to make some improvements in others.

"It still needs to make substantial improvements to how it protects vulnerable victims from harm. Although it is working well in some areas, the Force's response to domestic abuse is a particular cause of concern for HMIC.

"It needs to improve how it assesses risks posed to victims, in order to get them the support and protection they need. There are still recommendations that we made as far back as 2014 that the Force is yet to respond to.

"The Force needs to urgently address this. I would also like the force to improve how it assesses risk in missing children cases and ensure it makes full use of all available information to keep children safe."

# Here For You...

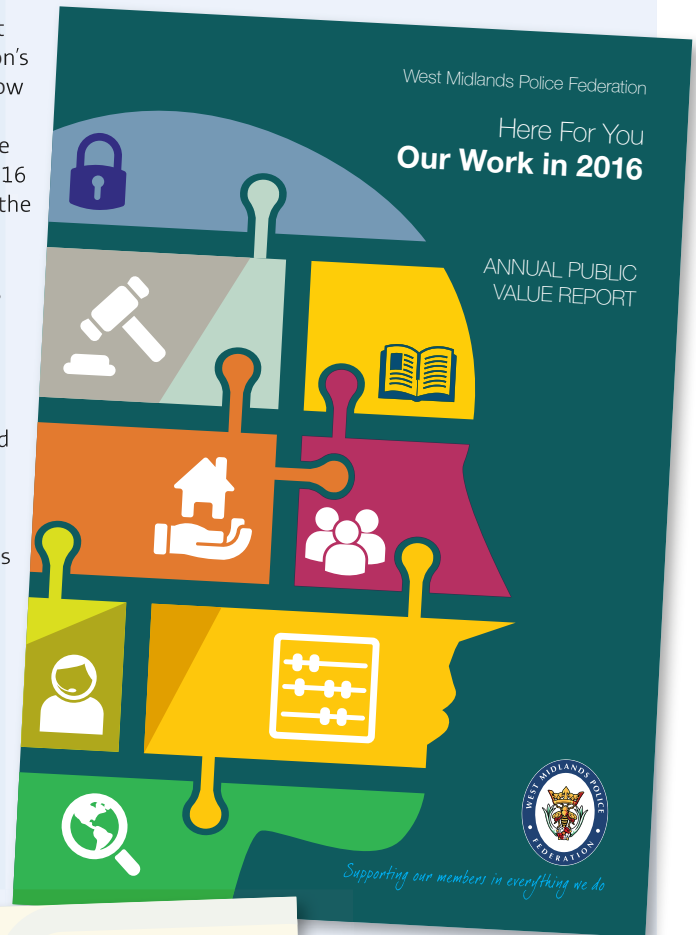
The latest edition of West Midlands Police Federation's Here For You booklet is now available.

The booklet covers the Federation's activity in 2016 and gives an overview of the advice offered, representation given and communications streams used.

It also sums up the activities of its three committees – Personnel and Equalities, Health and Safety and Conduct and Performance Liaison Officers.

It include facts, figures and information on the Group Insurance Scheme and donations and sponsorship.

The new booklet is available on the [westmidspolfed.com](http://westmidspolfed.com) website and is also being posted out to members' home addresses.



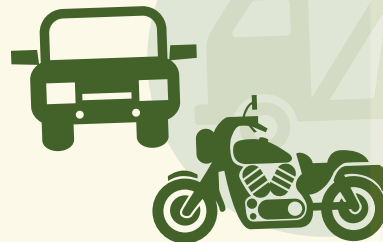
## Group Insurance Scheme

More than 80 per cent of West Midlands Police Federation members are covered under the Group Life Insurance Scheme.

	2015 Claims	2015 Amount	2016 Claims	2016 Amount
Life	16	£269,500	7	£245,000
Critical illness	16	£150,000	5	£43,000
Personal accident	42	£14,023	14	£11,311
Sickness	58	£156,589	37	£109,843

In 2016...

- 194 members helped with civil claims
- 407 claims under the gadget insurance scheme
- 258 members helped with travel claims totalling £266,000
- 1,573 members assisted by the RAC Scheme in 2016.
  - Calls attended 1,573
  - Average recovery distance 78.6 miles
  - Patrol fix rate 88 per cent
  - Customer satisfaction 96.6 per cent
  - Average response time 46.7 mins
  - Level of service in one hour 75.1 per cent which means three quarters of jobs are completed within the hour
  - Right resource first time 94.5 per cent



## Our Communications

262 new followers on Twitter in 2016 @westmidspolfed  
3,288 followers

1,106 tweets in 2016

1,893 members regularly download our magazine 'Federation'

479 new followers on our Facebook page in 2016  
2,393 likes

87 news items posted on our website in 2016  
[www.westmidspolfed.com](http://www.westmidspolfed.com)

1,885 members subscribe to our bi-monthly electronic newsletter 'eZine'

# Pensions update



The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has published two updates on pensions.

The two documents, FAQs based on regular queries from members, and a timeline setting out the background to the current situation, were issued at the start of March.

Both documents can be read in full on the Federation website but here are a few of the key points.

## What did the PFEW do to prevent the CARE pension scheme?

There was nothing the PFEW could do to prevent the scheme from being implemented. It was the only scheme proposed by the Government and was in line with the CARE schemes proposed for other public service workers. The Government is not required to negotiate with the PFEW on pension provision. It informed us of its proposal to introduce the scheme in 2012, as it needed a 'long-term solution to the

increasing costs of public service pensions that is fair to public servants and other taxpayers'.

We opposed its introduction and its application to existing officers, but it was introduced by the enactment of new primary legislation. The Government has the mandate to govern in the way it sees fit.

## Why did the PFEW not challenge the Government?

The PFEW sought legal advice throughout the process and was advised that there were no grounds to successfully challenge the introduction of the new scheme.

All avenues regarding the legality of overall scheme introduction have been considered, including public law (judicial review); European law, human rights and discrimination.

A group of police officers decided to put in a legal challenge to the transitional protections in the 2015 CARE scheme. The PFEW has not followed this course because

we are aware of the potential detrimental risks and because we believe that transitional protections are a good thing as we aim to achieve a positive outcome for as many of our members as possible.

In the judges' Employment Tribunal (ET) ruling it was found that the transitional protections in the judges' scheme did not represent a proportionate means of

## PENSIONS TIMELINE

2011

**March 2011** – The final report of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission, led by Lord Hutton, is published. In his report, Lord Hutton spoke of a need for comprehensive reform in order 'for public service employees to continue to have access for the foreseeable future, to good quality, sustainable and fairer defined benefit pension schemes'.

At Budget 2011 the Government 'accepts Lord Hutton's recommendations as a basis for consultation with public sector workers'.

**May 2011** – Home Secretary Theresa May announces at the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) annual conference that she has asked Thomas Winsor to consider police pensions in the second part of his ongoing Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions.

**December 2011** – Danny Alexander, the chief secretary to the Treasury as part of the coalition Government, lays out plans to change public service pensions, with the aim of saving money for the taxpayer. An increased cost to public service pensions of £32 billion a year was behind the proposals, and they led the way to the introduction of the 2015 CARE Scheme.

2012

**March 2012** – The second part of Thomas Winsor's review is published, and includes a section on pensions, including backing for Lord Hutton's call for a 'normal pension age' of 60. The Home Secretary writes to the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) chair with proposals for the 2015 CARE Scheme. PFEW was part of the staff side of the PNB, which engaged in the consultation to try improve the proposed terms rather than fight the introduction of the scheme, as the Home Secretary could implement the original terms of the proposal regardless. The PNB was dissolved in October 2014 and police pensions now fall under the remit of the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales (PABEW), of which the PFEW is a constituent part.

**June 2012** – The then PFEW general secretary Ian Rennie – in his capacity as Staff Side secretary – responds to the Home Secretary with key concerns including: the importance of pensions in terms of recruitment and retention; the unique nature of being a police officer and the unusual features of the police pension arrangements which reflect the unique nature of policing. He suggests the new scheme should only apply to new recruits and highlights concerns around the transitional arrangements, the

'significantly too high' proposed level of member contributions, the proposed accrual rate and the proposed normal and deferred pension ages.

PFEW seeks legal advice on the proposals including on the legality of the introduction of the scheme bearing in mind the 'no worsening' protection contained within the Police Pensions Act 1976. This advice said there was no legal basis to challenge the introduction of the scheme and that the effect of the relevant section of the Police Pensions Act 1976 could be negated by means of primary legislation.

**September 2012** – The Home Secretary announces the Reform Design Framework for the 2015 CARE Scheme, laying out the key details of the scheme, including improved transitional arrangements and access to the pension from age 55 (subject to it being reduced for early payment before age 60). The PFEW issues FAQs on the key details of the new scheme.

**November 2012** – The PFEW issues FAQs around miss-selling of pensions and similar claims.



achieving a legitimate aim and were therefore discriminatory in protecting some members too well.

The subsequent ET ruling in the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) case ruled in their case that while the transitional arrangements in the firefighters' pensions were discriminatory they were justifiable as they represented a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

#### **Did you influence the scheme at all?**

Yes. We ensured that:

- Officers have the ability to retire at 55 from the CARE scheme (with their pension actuarially reduced from age 60).
- There was an extension of those covered by full transitional protections and also those within four years of full protection received tapered protection, therefore avoiding a 'cliff edge' scenario. This enabled more members to be covered than was the case in the Home Secretary's initial proposal.

PFEW was in favour of transitional protections. Part of these protections have ensured that there is tapered protection for some of those officers in the previous pension schemes, to avoid a 'cliff edge' of

protection – by which officers could miss out on being able to remain in the old schemes by just one day of service or by being born just one day later. This allows those officers to benefit from continued membership of their earlier scheme for longer.

More than half of members were able to either have full protection or tapered protection, while previously accrued rights were also protected for all officers with Police Pension Scheme (PPS) 1987 and/or New Police Pension Scheme (NPPS) 2006 service.

Unprotected members and those with tapered protection who transfer to, and remain members of, the new scheme also benefit from the application of 'final final' salary in the calculation of their accrued pension and members who were in the PPS 1987 also benefit from weighted accrual.

#### **If Federation legal advice is wrong, will you fund a legal challenge for all officers?**

No. The legal advice is just that – advice – and, while we have taken that on board, we do not believe that a challenge based on transitional protections is in the best interests of most members. The debate is not confined to a legal argument, with a number of factors to be considered. The

judges' ET ruling was against the transitional protections put in place, stating that those given the protections had been treated better than could be justified based on the evidence.

#### **How many colleagues are protected/ partially or not protected?**

In total, more than 67,000 of our 121,000 members had either full protection (more than 49,000) or tapered protection (just over 18,000).

#### **How many members were affected, to a detrimental effect, by the pension changes introduced by this Government?**

It is not possible to pinpoint this as not all of those officers in the new scheme will suffer an adverse effect to their future pension accrual. Some people in the new scheme might actually be better off.

#### **What happens next?**

We will continue to monitor the situation with public service pensions and await further information on both the appeals which have been lodged. We have chosen not to challenge because we believe that transitional protections are a good thing.

2013

**April 2013** – The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 is enacted. Section 18 prevents further pension being earned in the Police Pension Scheme 1987 or the New Police Pension Scheme 2006 from 1 April 2015, other than in accordance with transitional arrangements. It also bypasses the 'no worsening' provisions of the Police Pensions Act 1976 by enabling the 2015 CARE scheme to be created under new primary legislation, which the Government was entitled to do.

**September 2013** – PFEW continues to receive legal advice around the possibilities of challenging the proposals.

**November 2013** – Home Office Circular 14/2013 gives further details of the new scheme and the transitional arrangements. The PFEW issues FAQs.

2014-15

**October 2014 - February 2015** – The draft Police Pensions Regulations 2015 are issued for consultation with the PABEW. PFEW continues to seek legal advice.

**March 2015** – The Police Pensions Regulations 2015 are laid before Parliament, 27 days before they were implemented. PFEW issues FAQs on the new scheme.

**April 2015** – Officers without transitional protections are officially moved over to the 2015 CARE Scheme. Officers with tapered protection are moved over when their tapered protection ends. The PFEW continued to receive legal advice around any possible challenges.

**August 2015** – FAQs are issued by the Federation on the 2015 CARE Scheme legal position.

**October 2015** – General secretary Andy Fittes answers a range of questions on the 2015 CARE Scheme in a video FAQ. A group of officers instruct lawyers Leigh Day and form the Pensions Challenge Group. The grounds for their challenge to the transitional protections goes against the legal advice the PFEW has received. A response is issued explaining why the PFEW is not backing this challenge.

2016-17

**August 2016** – The PFEW issues FAQs on the purchase of additional benefits.

**January 2017** – An Employment Tribunal brought by judges ruled that the Government's transitional pension arrangements for judges amount to unlawful age, sex and race discrimination because they could not be regarded as being a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. The PFEW details the possible implications for police pensions, and the differences between the judges' and police schemes.

**February 2017** – The Fire Brigades Union's (FBU) Employment Tribunal ruling is handed down and the ruling is in favour of the Government, stating that the discrimination inherent in the transitional arrangements used in this scheme was justifiable on the grounds that they were a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. The FBU announces it will appeal the ruling.

**March 2017** – The Ministry of Justice announces its intention to appeal against the ruling in the judges' Employment Tribunal. The PFEW issues further FAQs relating to police pensions. These are summarised above and published in full at [westmidspolfed.com](http://westmidspolfed.com)



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# Millie Bea taking first steps towards independence

Millie Bea Hughes is taking tentative but determined steps towards walking independently.

Millie, who is three, has spastic diplegia cerebral palsy so has been unable to walk unaided. Her twin brother, Evan, is unaffected.

Her Mum, Wolverhampton based DC Natalie Hughes, started a fund-raising campaign to find the £40,000 needed to fund an operation to help her walk and was overwhelmed by the support she received from her colleagues, West Midlands Police Federation, the Force Benevolent Fund, family and friends.

The target has been met but while Millie will probably not have the operation until later this year or early next she has received a temporary boost that has got her on her feet.

"Millie had Botox injections in February, four very large injections in each leg. It wasn't a very nice ordeal for either of us. However, the benefits outweigh the pain. It's only temporary but will give a good idea of how she will be after the SDR surgery. Her range of movement is a lot better and she seems to be steadier on her feet," says Natalie.

"I would like to say an enormous thank you to everyone at West Midlands Police and the Federation for the overwhelming support and generosity that we have received for Millie Bea. I don't have the words to express how grateful we are. We would never have reached, let alone exceeded, our target without their help."

Sadly, for West Midlands Police, Natalie is transferring to Cumbria at the end of April, a move prompted by her husband's job.

"It's such a weird feeling, I have had so many wonderful times and made some great friends at WMP, I'm really going to miss everyone but we need to live all together as a family so there really isn't another option," says Natalie.



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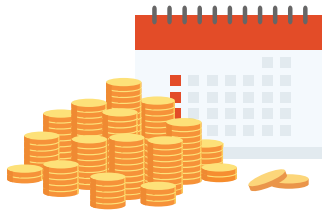
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To help members in need of financial advice and assistance



To provide loans at competitive rates



## Financial welfare:

**33%**

of people develop mental health issues where debt is a struggle

**20%**

of employees take time off work due to debt worries

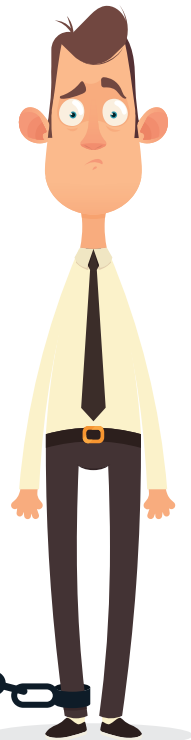
**58%**

of enquiries† report severe anxiety and depression as a result of pay day loans

**3 in 5**

were receiving medical treatment as a result of debt problem

More than  
**91%**  
of people‡ reported health problems from  
**DEBT**



Source:  
Chartered Institute of  
Payroll Professionals

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PCU established  
**2003**

More than  
**£200m lent**



**Payroll facility**  
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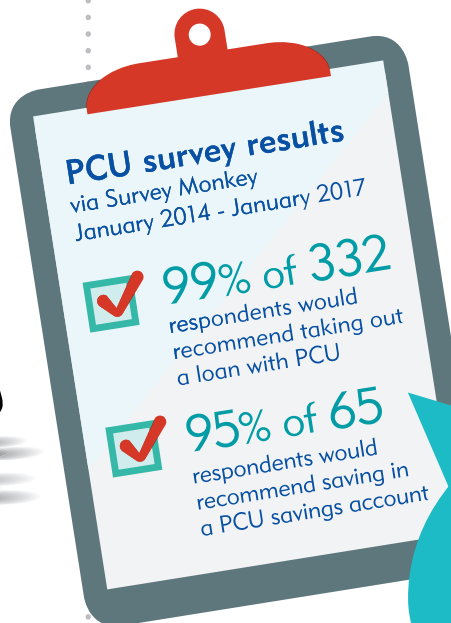
Membership grown from  
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**2017**

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John M, POA member.  
November 2016.

*I've never taken a loan out before but it's been so easy and fuss free, I will recommend PCU to my family and colleagues.*

Nina L, Police Officer.  
November 2016.



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# Federation concern as sickness levels rise

**A**t a time when workforce numbers are declining, the number of officers and staff off sick is rising – and this is not a coincidence says Federation representative Paul Ford.

During the first week of January 2017, 681 police officers and staff at West Midlands Police were off sick. And on Monday 27 February, a total of 651 officers and staff were off ill.

Paul has been looking after the Regulation 28 Half Pay/No Pay Panel since the summer of 2016 and says that over the last few months the number of officers reporting sick and the complexities of sickness within Force are more apparent.

He explains: "The numbers of officers that are reporting unwell is considerable and this percentage is increasing with the Force police officer establishment shrinking.

"The complexity of the illnesses also seem to be getting more challenging for line managers and those trying to support colleagues who are off.

"With police budget cuts, we see a shrinking work force, increased stress and more pressure on those expected to

continue to do more with less."

And Paul is concerned about the number of colleagues who are not members of the Group Insurance Scheme and therefore do not have Regulation 28 insurance cover which provides £165 a week for 12 months.

There are currently around 1,000 West Midlands officers who are not part of the scheme.

"For those colleagues who are not in it if they fall outside the very strict criteria to be retained on full pay, namely an injury on duty, a life-threatening condition, such as cancer or where the Force has been unable to provide a reasonable adjustment for a disability, they will be reduced in pay," he says.

"For people who suffer from everyday illnesses associated with modern living, broken bones, heart disease, some pregnancy related conditions, gall bladder, kidney issues and mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, that are not work related, half or no pay is a real issue.

"Clearly, these colleagues are under even more pressure to try to get better before they trigger no pay. This could also have

implications for retirement and pensions. What is really evident is that time moves very quickly for those off long-term sick in terms of reducing pay."

So, what is the solution to solving an increasingly sick workforce?

Paul says: "We need more people. We need colleagues looking after each other. We need more investment in occupational health facilities and better training for supervisors in understanding how they can support and access help within Force.

"Supervisors also need to be given the time to deal with colleagues who are off sick and maybe the Force could provide the flu jab, like the NHS who proactively immunise their staff before the winter flu hits."

Some officers reminisce about the days when the Force would reward people with 100 per cent attendance with an 'always there day' or £60 in gift vouchers.

Could it be a possible solution?

- For more information or to join the Group Insurance Scheme, visit [westmidspolfed.com](http://westmidspolfed.com) or contact the Federation office.



# Sickness procedures

## How to report sick

If you're unwell and unable to come to work you should report sick to a supervisor as soon as possible on your first day of absence and before your normal start time.

You should tell them:

- The reason for your absence.
- How long you expect to be off.
- Any urgent work, meetings or court dates.

In most cases, the Force will expect you to make contact, rather than a relative or friend.

## Keeping in touch

While you're off sick, you should keep in regular contact with your supervisor. Ideally, you should agree the next call or meeting each time you speak.

## Visiting your GP

If you're off for eight days or more you'll need to visit your GP to get a Fit Note. The Fit Note will explain if:

- You're not fit for any work and for how long. Or,
- You may be fit for some work; in some cases coming back to work can help your recovery and help maintain your general wellbeing. If you think there are aspects of your work, even if it's not your full role, that you could be doing, you should talk to your GP, and your manager, about it.

When you receive a Fit Note, you need to discuss the contents with your supervisor and send it to them soon as possible. If you become long-term sick your GP may decide to refer you to the National Fit for Work Service in which case you should inform your manager.

## Visiting occupational health

While you're off your supervisor may refer you to occupational health, the purpose of this is to:

- Understand the impact your health has on your ability to do your job.
- Understand what further support can be provided.
- Understand what adjustments could be made to your role.
- Seek specific work-related advice that your GP may not be able to give.
- Allow you to discuss your health with someone who understands the likely impact of your ability to do your job.

## Return to Work Discussion

When you come back to work after any period of sickness, your supervisor should hold an informal Return to Work Discussion with you. This discussion is an important part of supporting your return to work. This

will be an opportunity for:

- Your supervisor to welcome you back.
- You to talk to your supervisor about your absence and anything else you want them to know.
- For you both to discuss and agree what support the Force may provide.

## Sickness on public holidays and rest days

There's no entitlement to compensation, either as time off, payment or another day in lieu, if you're sick on a public holiday, a rest day or a rest day in lieu.

## Attendance at court during sickness absence

If you're absent from duty due to sickness, you will still be required to attend court.

## Sickness during annual leave

If you become ill during annual leave, you should follow the normal sickness reporting procedures. You will need to get a Fit Note or equivalent proof of illness if you're away from home.

Your absence will be treated as sickness absence and the annual leave will be re-instated if your absence is covered by a doctor's Fit Note and you've followed sickness reporting procedures.

Sometimes GPs may be reluctant to provide a Fit Note for short periods of absence. Or they may make a charge. You should explain to your GP that you're on annual leave and need to provide a Fit Note so that your annual leave can be reinstated.

Where your GP makes a charge for a Fit Note then, in these circumstances and where you produce a receipt, the Force will reimburse this cost.

## Carrying over annual leave entitlement not used due to sickness absence

If you're off on long-term sick leave then you're permitted to carry forward up to one year's accrued statutory holidays to the next leave year.

You should use this as soon as possible but within 15 months of the end of the leave year. Carry forward of annual leave is based on statutory entitlements and not your contractual leave. Statutory leave is 28 days, including bank holidays.

## Ill-health retirement

You can ask to be considered for ill-health retirement at any time, if you meet the eligible criteria.

## Officer's sick pay

This is governed by Regulation 28 of the Police Regulations 2003. This provides for:

- Full pay for the first six months' cumulative absence, then,
- Half pay up to 12 months of cumulative absence.

For calculation purposes, the period of entitlement for sick pay is based on the cumulative sickness absence for the period in the year prior to the first day of the current period of sickness absence.

## Extensions to sick pay

The regulations are mandatory but give the Chief Constable (delegated to the head of HR) a discretionary authority to extend pay which may be exercised considering each case on its merits. Although each case will be considered individually, a case is likely to be given favourable consideration in the following circumstances:

- The officer's incapacity is directly attributable to an injury or illness that was sustained or contracted in the execution of their duty.
- The Force Medical Officer advises that the absence is related to a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and the chief officer considers that it would be a reasonable adjustment to extend sick pay, to allow (further) reasonable adjustments to be made to enable the officer to return to work.
- The officer is suffering from an illness, which may prove to be terminal or life-threatening.
- The officer has been referred for consideration of 'permanent disablement' as part of the ill-health retirement application process.

Each case is assessed entirely on its own merits and is personally reviewed by the head of HR before a decision is made. All cases where discretionary pay decisions are made will be monitored and may be reviewed if the circumstances change.

## Recuperative duties

Whether it's recommended by your GP on your Fit Note or not, before you come back to work your supervisor should discuss whether you need any temporary adjustments to help your recovery. They may seek advice from occupational health.

Recuperative duties might include:

- A phased return to work.
- A change to the hours or shifts that you work.
- A change to the duties you do or your role.
- Adaptations to your working environment, and/or
- Working from a different location.

You and your supervisor should explore all of the reasonable and possible options. Any changes will be agreed on a temporary basis.





# Support on hand through Federation insurance scheme

**D**id you know the Group Insurance Critical Illness Scheme includes support assistance for you and your family if submitting a claim?



The service is provided by Red Arc, which specialises in welfare-based services and provide a listening ear, practical information, and emotional support both for the patient and the family.

Personal nurse advisors are on hand to help guide patients and their families. They are highly experienced, registered nurses who will tailor the support you need to your particular circumstances.

They are available on the phone in normal business hours, and

will be able to provide information and support for as long as needed.

Where appropriate, they can commission additional services such as a home visit by a specialist nurse, counselling or therapy.

Red Arc also has links with many charities and can often direct people to self-help groups that will help them come to terms, and cope better, with their problem.

Home adaptation and special equipment to aid everyday living are other important areas where they can provide guidance.

For more information on the Critical Illness Scheme and Red Arc contact the Federation office.



## CICA claims

If an officer has been assaulted, they can claim from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA).

The Government introduced a new version of the CICA scheme in 2012.

This means certain injuries are no longer classed as being serious enough to warrant a claim through the scheme.

Examples of physical injuries no longer in the scheme include:

- Bruising
- Black eyes
- Minor scarring
- A broken nose

- Broken/loose teeth, and
  - Broken ribs.
- Other injuries like fractured fingers, a broken hand, ligament damage and dislocation are still eligible for compensation but only if a 'continuing significant disability' can be shown.

For psychological injuries there must be a psychiatric diagnosis.

More information can be found on the CICA website where you can also make a claim - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/criminal-injuries-compensation-authority>



# A guide to half pay for police officers

By **Peggy Lamont**, secretary of the West Midlands Police Federation Personnel and Equalities Committee.

**P**olice officers have the advantage of a generous payment scheme for sick leave consisting of, in general terms, six months at full pay, six months at half pay and then finally moving onto no pay at 12 months of sick leave.

Police Regulation 28 provides the legal basis for this benefit and informs the Force as to how it should manage pay for officers who are on sick leave.

Essentially all officers will move onto half pay after having six months off sick. An element of confusion sometimes arises though when officers are informed they are being considered for half pay after a shorter period of sickness than they expect.

This is normally because for pay considerations all periods of sickness in the 12 months prior to the date the officer reports sick are counted.

So, for instance, if an officer has three months off sick and then returns to work for a month before reporting sick again, in order to calculate when half pay will commence the Force will look at sickness history 12 months prior to that date, which will encompass the previous three months' sick leave.

West Midlands Police holds a panel to decide sick pay decisions and these are held some time in advance of the officer actually

being eligible to be moved to half pay. This is done so the Force can make any necessary interventions to allow the officer to return to work and also so it can move them onto half pay at the specified date.

The Force is obliged to inform an officer they are moving onto half pay and also to consider each case in order to ascertain whether there is any reason to retain the officer on full pay for a period of time.

Retention on full pay is entirely at the discretion of the Chief Constable and he can decide to retain whoever he chooses on full pay or equally decide that no one should be retained on full pay.

In practical terms, the Force generally makes use of Home Office Guidance with regards to retention on full pay. This guidance suggests that the chief officer might wish to consider retaining an officer on full pay if, for instance:

- They are injured in the execution of duty (i.e. a broken arm sustained by arresting an officer or PTSD arising from a work incident which has been diagnosed as such by a treating clinician).
- If the officer has a critical or terminal illness.
- If they have applied for ill health retirement (AND had a certificate of disablement from the Selected medical practitioner).
- If they are awaiting adjustments in the work place for a disability.

While this is not an exhaustive list and the panel can make decisions outside this, generally speaking this is adhered to by the Force.

The Force has an obligation to make officers aware they are being considered for reduced pay before they are moved to half pay but officers should be aware that this is often by means of a verbal conversation with a supervisor rather than any formal process.

Officers can, and do, make representation to the Force if they wish to be considered for remaining on full pay. This is normally a written submission submitted via a line manager.

Each submission is considered in full by the panel and, as such, it is helpful to include any supporting documentation (i.e. Oasis log detailing the incident for an execution of duty injury or evidence of diagnosis from a treating clinician).

The Force will also ask for comments from the SLT the officer reports to. A submission to the panel is not always required for a decision to retain on full pay because of this.

A Federation representative is able to attend and observe the panel's decision making and also to advocate on behalf of officers. The Federation representative is not a decision maker in the process and is there primarily to inform and ensure fairness.



# Could you manage on half pay?

Have you ever asked yourself the question, could I pay all my bills if my pay was reduced by 50 per cent, due to prolonged long-term sickness pay reduction?

Officers can find themselves on half pay due to being off work sick for six months. But officers who are members of the George Burrows Group Insurance Scheme are provided with £660 TAX FREE per month while on half pay up to age 65.

Having sick pay cover in place via the Group Insurance Scheme will help mitigate the risk and eliminate any nasty financial shocks of prolonged long-term sickness – it provides a safety net of income while on half pay, during your six to 12-month sick pay income reduction.

We can worry about the financial implications of being off sick, and also the additional stress this causes. The Group Insurance half pay sick scheme provides a cushion for long-term absence and the financial problems which in turn cause extra emotional stress. Simply having the right protection in place can greatly reduce the stress associated with being on half pay sick.

During half pay sickness, you may have seasonal demands - birthdays, holidays and Christmas. Also, emergencies costs such as car issues, kitchen appliance breakdown and costs of dependent children. This can make you more vulnerable to increasing debt in order to meet day to day needs and you fall into a 'debt trap' for which the ability to escape diminishes over time.

If you find yourself struggling with debt, don't ever ignore it as it may only get worse. Be aware George Burrows have a financial welfare specialist - Caroline Harris, who has more than 26 years' experience working alongside the Police Federation and can support you and make you aware of the agencies available to support and assist you.

Over the last five years, West Midlands Police officers have been paid out nearly £600,000 tax free from the George Burrows half pay sick scheme.

Did you know by paying into the Federation Group Insurance Scheme for just

£24.04 per month you are paid £660 per month tax free, while on half pay sick leave, plus also included:-

- **£115,000 life cover - 20 per cent terminal illness benefit.**
- **£10,000 critical illness cover.**
- **Child death grant.**
- **Best Doctors.**
- **Personal accident cover.**
- **RAC motor breakdown.**
- **Worldwide travel insurance.**
- **Mobile phone and gadget cover.**

Full details of cover and conditions can be found in the policy wording which is available to view on the Federation website.

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# Survey reveals poor mental wellbeing

**R**ank and file police officers in the West Midlands are severely affected by the stress of the job, with many suffering from poor psychological wellbeing.

This is the reality that came out following further analysis on results from a survey into police officer demand, capacity and welfare conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales last year.

A total of 1,030, (15 per cent) of West Midlands officers responded to the survey.

Seventy per cent of those said their workload is currently too high, compared to a national average of 66 per cent.

And 33 per cent of respondents said they often or always have unachievable deadlines, with 44 per cent saying they have to neglect some tasks because they have too much to do.

Of real concern is the fact that 80 per cent indicated they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months. And 89 per cent also indicated these feelings were caused, or made worse, by work.

Tom Cuddeford, interim chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "The results of this survey are proof of what we have been saying for a while. Officers are stressed, overworked and struggling to cope. Their welfare is suffering.

"This is all because of the cuts, and until we have more officers it is not going to change.

"When is someone going to listen to us? What is it going to take for someone to stand up for us and realise that we need change and we need it now?"

Among the findings nationally, 33 per cent of officers have been the victim of an unarmed physical attack at least once per month over the last year and, 36 per cent of officers reported having been attacked with a weapon at least once in the last year.

More than 70 per cent said their team/unit had a minimum officer staffing level and 53 per cent of officers reported they were 'never' or 'rarely' able to take their full rest break entitlement.

## Officers reluctant to seek help for mental health issues

More needs to be done to tackle the stigma associated with mental health and wellbeing in the police service, according to the Police Federation.

The Federation's Officer Welfare, Demand and Capacity Survey looked at the effects of working under increased pressure, the ability to cope and opinion on organisational support.

- 65 per cent of respondents said they had still gone to work despite feeling they shouldn't have due to their mental wellbeing.
- 51 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 'The police service encourages its staff to openly talk about mental health and wellbeing'.
- 57 per cent of respondents indicated that they would NOT feel confident disclosing any difficulties with mental health and wellbeing to their line managers.

Of those who reported having sought professional help;

- 42 per cent said that they were poorly or very poorly supported by the police service.

- 39 per cent felt that they had been given the right support.
- A startling 73 per cent of line managers said they had not been given any training on how to support a colleague who was having difficulties with mental health or wellbeing.

Sixty per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police reported one or more days of sickness absence with 32 per cent indicating that at least one day of their sickness absence was due to stress, depression or anxiety.

Almost 39 per cent of West Midlands Police respondents had previously sought help for feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety or other difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing, of which 47 per cent had done so within the last 12 months.

A total of 64 per cent of respondents reported they had disclosed seeking

mental health and wellbeing support to their line managers.

Respondents who did not disclose they had sought this support cited the following reasons:

- Not wanting to be treated differently.
- Feeling it was not affecting their work and therefore they did not feel they needed to.
- Not wanting it to negatively affect promotion or specialisation opportunities.
- Concerns about colleagues finding out.





# Officer assaults: what the welfare survey revealed

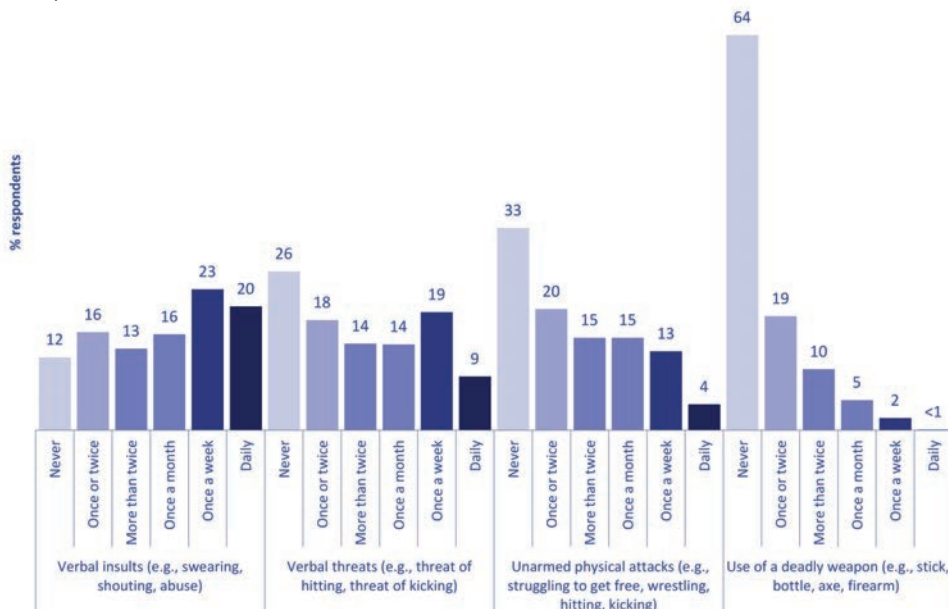
The Police Federation Officer Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey gave an overview of attacks on officers.

Verbal and physical violence was assessed using four questions regarding how often officers received verbal insults, verbal threats, unarmed physical attacks, and attacks with a weapon from members of the public over the previous 12 months.

A total of 18 per cent of West Midlands Police respondents reported that they had suffered one or more injuries that required medical attention as a result of work-related violence in the last year – losing more than 297 days in sickness absence.

In addition, 28 per cent of West Midlands Police respondents also reported that they had suffered one or more injuries that required medical attention as a result of work-related accidents in the last year – losing more than 873 days in sickness absence.

The graph below shows the frequency of verbal and physical violence from members of the public.



## IN THE WEST MIDLANDS:

- **69 per cent** of responses were from male officers
- **77 per cent** of responses were from constables
- **15 per cent** of responses were sergeants
- **70 per cent** disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were able to meet all of the conflicting demands on their time
- **86 per cent** disagreed or strongly disagreed that there are enough officers to manage all the demands made on their team/unit
- **56 per cent** reported being single crewed often or always over the previous 12 months, compared with 73 per cent of respondents nationally
- **75 per cent** reported having had two or more rest days cancelled in the previous 12-month period
- **29 per cent** reported they had not been able to take their full annual leave entitlement in the previous 12 months.



# Growing number of assaults impacts on officer sickness

**M**ore than 770 West Midlands Police officers were assaulted while on duty last year, with some of those officers being forced to take sick leave as they recovered from their injuries.

The impact of these on sickness levels – and the knock-on effect of this on other officers' workloads - has been one of the drivers for West Midlands Police Federation's campaign on officer assaults.

"Clearly we are concerned about officers being assaulted in the first place," says Tom Cuddeford, interim chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, "We have seen a rise in the attacks on officers and also the severity of the injuries they have received.

"We are not talking about officers getting caught up in the middle of a fracas we are seeing sustained and deliberate attacks on our members as they go about their duties serving their communities.

"Our primary concern is our members' safety but we also have to look at the wider picture. Even if an officer is only off duty for a few hours while their injuries are tended to they are away from their role and that has an effect on the people they are working with and the public we serve.

"Coupled with the effects of their physical injuries, there is also the psychological and mental impact of being the victim of an assault and that can also make it difficult for them to return to work."

Last year, due to concerns about the rise in attacks on officers, West Midlands Police Federation worked with the Force to launch a 10-point plan which sets out how officers and staff who are victims of assaults should be treated.

First and foremost, the plan says that officers and staff should be treated with the same care and compassion as any other victim of an assault.

But it also states:

*Colleagues recover better and more quickly if they receive the right welfare and supervision. This also helps to avoid long-term negative consequences. The assaulted person's supervisor should contact them as soon as it is practical to do so, preferably within 24 hours. The employee may play down the impact on them, but supervisors must recognise the potential effects of the incident.*

And this is where the Federation is keen to ensure that officers receive proper support, through line managers and supervisors but also through Federation workplace representatives and its office based officials and staff. West Midlands Police Federation is also supporting the national Protect The Protectors campaign

which is calling for tougher sentencing of those convicted of assaulting police and emergency service workers.

- If you have been the victim of an assault while on duty and feel you need support please contact your Federation representative or the Federation office.

### Assault on Police Employees 10 Point Plan






- 1

**Assaults on police officers and police staff should be investigated with the same care, compassion and commitment as an assault on a member of the public.** *This sounds obvious, but too often our response to assaults on officers and staff can be rushed or treated as secondary to other offences.*
- 2

**The assaulted officer / staff member must never be the OIC for the investigation into their own assault.** *This is not appropriate on any level and even taking statements from witnesses may be inappropriate. The integrity of the investigation and the impartiality of the officer could be called into question, which could undermine the case and/or heighten the impact on the employee.*
- 3

**The assault is to be raised as a discussion point at the next available local DMM.** *The DMM chair is to ensure that early welfare support is put in place and confirm that the Employee's Supervisor is aware.*
- 4

**Colleagues recover better and more quickly if they receive the right welfare and supervision.** *This also helps to avoid long-term negative consequences. The assaulted person's supervisor should contact them as soon as it is practical to do so, preferably within 24 hours. The employee may play down the impact on them, but supervisors must recognise the potential effects of the incident.*
- 5

**The iCASS report must be completed by the supervisor along with, where practicable, the employee, for all assaults regardless of severity.** *If the employee is not available, that should not delay the completion of the report.*
- 6

**The supervisor must ensure that the Local Command Team is informed, should the Police Employee be hospitalised then the on call chief officer is to be notified.** *This will allow them to provide continuity of welfare support, and to ensure it is discussed at the DMM.*
- 7

**The supervisor must ensure that they notify the Police Federation or Trade Union Representative.** *The Staff Associations and trade unions can provide additional valuable support to the employee.*
- 8

**All assaults on police officers and police staff will be treated seriously and WMP will seek to ensure appropriate redress through the criminal justice system.** *Charges relating to the assault of a police officer or staff member should not be dropped because charges relating to more serious crimes are being brought. This can send the wrong message to offenders and doesn't recognise the effects the assault could have had on public confidence in the Police Service.*
- 9

**To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented.** *Victim personal statements should be used and whoever is investigating the assault needs to fully understand the 'points to prove' for assaults on police officers or staff. An officer's self-written statement provided straight after the event could be made in haste and might not contain all of the key facts. As a result, cases sent for prosecution sometimes fail to meet basic evidential needs.*
- 10

**The Victim Code applies to all victims and therefore to assaults on police officers and staff.** *Complying with the Victim Code means keeping the employee updated, discussing outcome options, and taking account of the employee's point of view before imposing an outcome.*



# A brief guide to ill-health retirement

By **Peggy Lamont**, secretary of the West Midlands Police Federation Personnel and Equalities Committee.

**I**ll-health retirement (IHR) for police officers is dealt with under Regulation H of the Police Pension Regulations.

In essence, the regulation allows the Force to ascertain whether an officer is able to carry out the full duties of the Office of Constable and, if that is not the case, to assess whether adjustments can be made in force to allow the officer to continue to work in a restricted capacity.

The full duties of a police officer are listed as:

- Run, walk reasonable distances, and stand for reasonable periods.
- Exercise reasonable physical force in restraint and retention in custody.
- Sit for reasonable periods, to write, read, use the telephone and to use (or learn to use) IT.
- Make decisions and report situations to others.
- Evaluate information and to record details.
- Understand, retain and explain facts and procedures.

In West Midlands Police, it is more usual for the officer to ask to be considered for IHR than for the Force to request the Force Medical Advisor (FMA) to make an initial assessment and recommend whether ill-health retirement is an option.

But it is important to note that both the Force and individual officers have this ability to start the process, after which there is no difference to the process.

Following the request having been

made, either by the Force or the officer, our FMA - Dr Bhogadia - will ask for an appointment with the officer to discuss and examine the individual.

At this point, an initial decision is made as to whether IHR is applicable. In order to do so, the FMA has all of the relevant medical records. If this is not the case he will ask for consent to be given for those records to be accessed.

Once all the information is available Dr Bhogadia will either reject the application or allow it to move forward to the next stage of the process.

Step 2 of an IHR application is an examination from an independent GP who is qualified in occupational medicine. This doctor is known as the Selected Medical Practitioner (SMP).

In essence, this is a very similar examination to the one the FMA will do – albeit the FMA usually has a more thorough knowledge of the officer as an individual. The SMP is appointed by the Force to determine whether the officer fulfils the criteria for retirement under the Pension Regulations. They will determine in the same way whether the officer is fit to carry out the Office of Constable.

There is a right of appeal at both the FMA and SMP stages of an IHR application. This is by way of the Police Medical Appeal Board and is a very structured and involved process where a panel of doctors, including a specialist in the area the officer presents as being unfit for the Office of Constable, effectively re-do the examination of the SMP. Following this, the panel will either uphold or overturn the decision. This is a final

appeal stage.

Should the officer be found by the FMA and SMP to be eligible for consideration for IHR, the Force then has a panel meeting to discuss the case and decide on the most appropriate outcome for the individual.

This may either be to retain or release the officer and there is no right of appeal at this stage. If the officer is retained, the Force is obliged to make any adjustments necessary to allow the officer to fulfil a meaningful role and consideration should be made to future career progression.

While the IHR Regulation can be applied to all officers, it is important to understand any financial benefit from ill health retirement is dependent on the officer currently paying into the pension scheme available.

If the officer is not part of the pension scheme, ill-health retirement can still be considered but will not have any financial reward, it will simply lead to the officer being retired from the Force. Where the officer is paying into a pension scheme the financial element of the regulation is dependent on the scheme they belong to.

At the moment in Force we have officers paying into the 1987 and the 2006 Pension Schemes as well as the most recent CARE Scheme introduced in 2015. As such, it is the Force which can advise on any financial implications of IHR.

There is a dedicated pensions team who handle all the pensions queries, however, most officers do not have access to the financial element of ill-health retirement until a decision is made as to whether the officer will be retired.

## Considering retirement?

Retiring from the Force marks a major change in any officer's life so, with this in mind, West Midlands Police Federation organises seminars to ensure members are properly prepared.

The seminars are open to officers in their last three years of service and are also open to their husband, wife or partner.

They are held at the West Midlands Police Federation office at Guardians House in Sheldon.

Topics covered include:

- **Managing change and uncertainty**
- **CV writing and interview techniques**
- **Transferable skills**
- **Police and state pensions**
- **Managing money and financial changes**

- **Budgeting**
- **Starting your own business**
- **Taxation**
- **Savings**
- **Investments and finances.**

The next seminars with spaces available will take place on 15 June, 27 July and 7 September 2017.

To book a place email [westmidlandspf@polfed.org](mailto:westmidlandspf@polfed.org) with your name, work email address, personal email address, personal phone number, proposed retirement date and number of places required. Please put 'Retirement Seminar' and the date you wish to attend in the subject line.

# Would you like a free Financial Health Check?



Let the Federation help you with a free confidential one-to-one Financial MOT.

Your meeting could help you manage the financial issues that may arise throughout your police career and into retirement.

If you're struggling to understand what workplace benefits are available to you and your dependants, George Burrows could help. They have arranged for Caroline Harris, a financial welfare specialist with over 25 years' experience, to work alongside the police Federation and provide detailed information on the range of pensions and schemes available to you.

Contact the Federation to arrange your free, confidential one to one support.

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Appointments take place at Guardians House

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See what your colleagues say:

**"Not only did she help me to understand how the new pension will affect me but she also helped me save money!"**

Wayne Bennett, serving police officer

**"Visiting Caroline Harris was well worth the time. She helped put my mind at rest with informed information rather than guess work."**

Ian Skidmore, serving police officer

**"Caroline came into my life with an air of calm and organisation."**

Helen Walker, police widow

GeorgeBurrows 





# Benevolent Fund: here to help

WMP Benevolent Fund was set up in 1974 when West Midlands Police was formed. Over the years it's helped thousands of serving and retired officers, police staff and their families through difficult times. With more than 6,300 members, the WMP Benevolent Fund offers police colleagues peace of mind that the fund is there to help in times of need.

**For just £2.00 per month members' benefits include:**

#### If you're off sick

- We will give you a £30 High Street shopping voucher (M & S or Love2shop) if you are off sick for more than 21 days.
- You are also entitled to a further £30 if you are off work through injury or ill health for more than four months.

For more information visit: <http://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/sickness-vouchers/>

#### Help with convalescence

- We will pay £350 towards convalescence at St Michael's Lodge in the Ribble Valley. We pay for you (and another adult) to

stay for four days, either as a long weekend or Monday to Friday. Limited physiotherapy is available if you stay during the week. <http://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/help-with-convalescence/st-michaels-lodge/>

- We will give you £60 for any out of pocket expenses if you attend the Police Rehabilitation Centre (Flint House).

#### Financial help

- Members can access interest free loans or charitable grants. Find out more here: <http://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/charitable-grants/>
- We offer debt a counselling service. Working in partnership with Payplan, members



who find themselves in financial difficulty can seek free confidential debt advice. For more details visit: <http://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/loans/>

#### Death grant of £3,500

We will immediately pay out £3,500 to your chosen beneficiary or beneficiaries in the event of your death. If you have children we will also pay them £25 per week until their 18th birthday.

For more information visit: <http://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/death-grants/how-to-join>

You can join online via our website [www.wmpben.co.uk](http://www.wmpben.co.uk) or via the office by telephoning **0121 700 1212** or e-mailing [info@wmpben.co.uk](mailto:info@wmpben.co.uk).



## West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund

Emily Crick,  
Associate Solicitor



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# 'I had no idea of the crisis he was facing'

## DCI speaks out on brother's suicide



Toby Henderson.



Adam Henderson and his younger brother Dave ran the Chester Marathon to raise money for CALM, a suicide prevention charity.

**A** Birmingham DCI has spoken out about his own family experiences of suicide in the hope it will raise awareness of mental health issues and encourage colleagues to seek support.

Adam Henderson is the domestic abuse manager in Birmingham and lost his elder brother Toby, who was 33, to suicide in 2014.

Not only did he have to come to terms with losing his brother, but there was the added impact this had on his own mental health.

Adam is now doing all he can to raise awareness of mental health issues – with emergency service workers more likely than the general population to suffer from a mental health problem, but even less likely to seek support.

He explains: "Toby's story is sadly very common among young men; suicide is the single biggest killer of males aged 20 – 45 and about 75 per cent of all UK suicides

are men.

"One of the theories for why more men kill themselves though is simply that they are less likely to talk about what they are experiencing and less likely to seek life-saving support.

"Sadly, this was true in Toby's case and even the night before his death, the very last time I saw him alive, I had no idea of the crisis he was suffering.

"Losing Toby in these circumstances was indescribable and had a significant impact on my own mental health. From the detached, out of body experience of finding his last message and having to call my own Force to report him missing, to the overwhelming and all too real grief of having to say goodbye to my big brother and closest friend.

"After the funeral I threw myself back into work and it was some time before I realised just how badly I was coping; I too

was falling into the trap of bottling up my feelings and not getting help.

"Luckily for me I felt able to seek support but many people, perhaps even some reading this now, will not feel that they can do this and will continue to suffer in silence."

He continued: "I still have good days and bad days but the support I have received and the confidence to talk about it helps me cope on the bad ones and one of the positive things I've taken from my own experience is a passion for breaking down the stigma around mental health, especially in the workplace, so that people can feel more comfortable to talk about what they are experiencing and seek support.

"The nature of this work can be emotionally taxing and I realise that some of our colleagues will be feeling stressed, anxious and upset. This is nothing to be ashamed of.

"Sadly, attitudes towards mental health will not change overnight, but they will not change at all if people do not speak out against the stigma. If you are suffering in silence, or suspect somebody you work with might be, please reach out – I guarantee you will not be alone."

For help and support visit [mind.org.uk/bluelight](http://mind.org.uk/bluelight), see Page 13, or contact the Federation office.

“Toby's story is sadly very common among young men; suicide is the single biggest killer of males aged 20 – 45 and about 75 per cent of all UK suicides are men.”



## Mind offers support tailored for emergency service workers

A leading mental health charity is on hand to offer help and support to any emergency service worker suffering from mental health issues.

Mind's Blue Light Programme is available to all emergency staff and volunteers in the police, fire, ambulance and search and rescue services and aims to make emergency workers more aware and responsive to their own mental health issues, and those of their colleagues; more resilient and better able to manage their own mental health and empowered with more information and support.

It also wants employers to be more aware of the importance and value of employees' mental health, better equipped to support their staff's mental health and prepared to lead work to address mental health stigma and discrimination.

A survey by the charity showed that 91 per cent of police officers, staff and volunteers have experienced stress and poor mental health at work. The findings revealed that while police personnel are more likely than the general population to experience a mental health problem they were less likely to take time off work as a result.

It also highlighted that 71 per cent of emergency staff do not think their organisation encourages them to talk about mental health,

"The Blue Light Programme is tackling the stigma of mental health head-on and achieving some great results in raising awareness and giving access to support," says Tom Cuddeford, interim chairman of West Midlands Police Federation.

"I would urge anyone who feels they may be suffering stress or mental health issues to find out more about the programme. There are lots of ways officers can get involved to help not just themselves but also their colleagues."

Find out more at [www.mind.org.uk/bluelight](http://www.mind.org.uk/bluelight)  
If you feel you need information on mental health, advice or signposting to local support services, you can contact the confidential infoline on **0300 303 5999**, text **84999** or email: [bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk](mailto:bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk)



## Welfare support: helping officers in crisis

Officers are being reminded they are 'never alone' and can access welfare support at any time.

The Welfare Support Programme (WSP), provides help and support for officers in crisis 24/7.



It is open to any officer who it is felt is in need of the programme following consultation between the Federation and the Police Firearms Officers' Association (PFOA).

"Make use of us," says Stuart Haythorn, the programme's welfare officer, "We want to make it easier for officers to get the support they need."

WSP is a joint initiative by the Police Firearms Officers' Association (PFOA) and the Police Federation of England and Wales and is open to subscribing members of the Federation, PFOA members and their immediate families.

It is specifically for officers involved in incidents involving death or serious injury resulting in post-incident investigations and those suspended from duty or part of gross misconduct procedures but can also step in to support officers suffering Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or other stress-related illnesses.

The programme provides a 24/7 support line manned by trained professionals and a full-time welfare support officer.

The telephone staff have had training in police discipline and post incident procedures and are mental health first aid trained. With an officer's permission, they can evidence their needs and present them to the relevant force or the Federation so that they can promptly obtain the support recommended, such as NLP coaching, counselling or other therapies.

The West Midlands Police Federation lead on this programme is Tom Cuddeford. Please contact Tom on **07976 068273** or email [tcuddeford@westmids.polfed.org](mailto:tcuddeford@westmids.polfed.org) if you want to find out more about the WSP or if you feel you – or a colleague - would benefit from extra support.

# Could you be a foster carer?

**A**re you retiring from the police service or considering a career change? Would you like a new role that rewards as much as it challenges?

As experienced and skilled police officers you may already have many of the qualities that would help you to be a great foster carer. Are you a good listener, able to show resilience, be flexible and optimistic and be a great role model? Then fostering could be right for you.

Walsall Council urgently needs caring supportive homes for children of different ages and backgrounds, particularly sibling groups, older children and teenagers.

Children can come into the care of the local authority for many different reasons. Some will stay for a few weeks, some will stay longer, and some may even be cared for into their adult years.

The one thing they all share is that they need foster families who can support them

through difficult times, providing a warm, stable and caring home. If you can be a good listener, show resilience, be flexible and optimistic and be a great role model, then fostering may be for you.

There are many myths about who can foster and many people rule themselves out before finding out more. The fact is lots of people can become great foster carers. There is no upper age limit to becoming a foster carer, so as long as you're fit and able to care for a child there is no official age where you are 'too old'.

Foster carers come from all walks of life; all ethnicities and backgrounds. Married couples, single people, those living with a partner and people from the LGBT community can all apply to become foster carers.

Although you do need to provide a bedroom for each child you care for, you don't need to own your own home to foster.

As long as you have permission from your landlord to foster then you can be in rented accommodation.

You also don't need to have children of your own to be a good foster carer. Any time spent caring for nieces or nephews or working or volunteering with children is all valuable experience. You can also have pets in your home and we include these as part of our assessment so that everyone in the household is ready to foster!

If you are retiring from the police service or considering a career change, then why not find out more about fostering? Just picking up the phone could set you on an exciting new career path. There's lots of training and support available to help build upon your existing skills and knowledge, competitive fees and allowances and a job role that can reward like no other.

Coming along to an information session is the best way to find out more. Dates for Walsall Council's information sessions can be found at [www.fosteringinwalsall.co.uk](http://www.fosteringinwalsall.co.uk)

Find us on Facebook: [fosteringinwalsall](https://www.facebook.com/fosteringinwalsall) or on Twitter [@fosteringwalsal](https://twitter.com/fosteringwalsal)

You can also call the Fostering Team on **0800 923 3706** or email [fosteringinwalsall@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringinwalsall@walsall.gov.uk) for more information.

## Can I foster?

### You will need:

- A spare room available for each child you wish to foster.
- Time available to care for, and meet the needs of, a young person.
- To be able to drive, or be able to transport a child to school or to appointments etc.
- A good level of written and spoken English.

“Being a foster family is an amazing opportunity to make a positive change in a young person's life. You are the one who can show the light in the dark for these children.”

Irene, foster carer.



Walsall Council



## CASE STUDY

### 'I have had many positive experiences'

**Beth:** I have been fostering for just over two years and I have looked after four children aged between 0-4 years.

Like other jobs working with children, fostering can be very rewarding, even if it isn't always easy. It requires patience, dedication, consistency and security. I have had many positive experiences and so many happy times.

Some highlights for me have been seeing the look of excitement on a child's face when she visited a farm for the first time. We spent hours there looking at the animals but it was worth it to see the happiness it brought her.

Seeing the reaction of a child who loved her new shoes so much that she would not take them off, even at bedtime! Also watching a child experience her first trip to the seaside. How thrilled she was making a sandcastle, collecting shells and then going for a paddle in the sea. Happy times! To have the satisfaction of sharing and being part of these special milestones is wonderful.

The wide range of training courses that Walsall provides prepares you throughout each year for many of the challenges you may have to face. The support I have had from the team at Walsall Children's Services has been excellent.

Right from the moment I made the call to them they were supportive. I was quite anxious to start with as being a single parent I wasn't sure what response I would get and if I would be made to feel different. I need not have worried. They gave me great advice, assistance and encouragement and that has continued right up to the present day.

Fostering is without a doubt the most rewarding job I have ever done. It has given me a real sense of satisfaction and achievement. To anyone considering fostering I would say if you can offer time and commitment then get in touch. It will probably be the best decision you ever made. It certainly was for me.

### Why foster for Walsall Council?

#### We can offer you:

- Regular placements. We try to place children within the care of our own pool of foster carers first. Foster carers from private agencies are only approached if we are unable to find a suitable match from our own council-trained carers.
- A commitment to making every placement work.
- 24/7 support from a supervising social worker and an 'out of hours' team.
- Competitive fees and payments for caring for a child in your home.
- Training and learning opportunities to support your own development.
- An active Foster Carers' Association, run by foster carers themselves. They can help with lots of things ranging from a 24-hour helpline, to arranging social get-togethers for carers and children.

### How do I become a foster carer for Walsall Council?

The first stage is to have a chat with us, either over the 'phone or at one of our regular information sessions. After applying, a social worker will come to see you at home for an 'Initial Visit'.

If you still want to proceed after this then we will ask you to come to our Skills to Foster Training, which all prospective foster carers need to do. Following on from this, with your assessing social worker, you will undertake a full and comprehensive assessment looking at your skills, background, family and lifestyle.

Your assessing social worker then submits a report to Fostering Panel who will make a recommendation on your approval as a foster carer. From the point of contacting us, the process takes around six to eight months, with the assessment phase taking around four months of this time.

“ We know there will be hard times and many challenges to overcome, but equally we know that there isn't another career out there for us that could offer the same level of fun and reward. ”

Luke, foster carer.

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PMGI12374 0117

# Single mum: Force support has improved



DI Vicky Lee and Connor.

**S**ingle parent Vicky Lee is hoping her story will encourage others to offer support and friendship to colleagues during difficult times.

The detective inspector gave birth to her son, Connor, in April 2013, after an incredibly difficult pregnancy and birth which left her son fighting for his life.

Yet when she returned to work six months later she felt there was little support and welfare offered by line management – but admits this has now changed.

She said: "I am pleased to say we have come a long way in just a few years. The introduction of the 'Family Matters' event is great. It's a chance to network and explore what support is available to you.

"Only this week my son was in hospital with a lung infection and my line manager was willing to come and hold my hand at the hospital. I was even contacted by Detective Chief Superintendent Bell to check I was OK.

"I will never underestimate the power and support teams show each other, and I am thankful to those that have helped me on my journey."

Vicky was told early on that her baby's growth was restricted and during the last three months of her pregnancy had to attend hospital every day for check-ups. During one such visit, she was told her baby had stopped growing and she needed an emergency caesarean.

She explains: "I went back to hospital to prepare for his birth in a complete daze. On reflection, it made me think about when we speak to victims in crisis and they often look at you blank and you're not sure if they are listening. I seriously had no ability to process what I was being told.

"I went to the ward and they put me in the family room to explain what was going to happen. As a child abuse officer of seven years, I had on many occasions stood in that same spot in a crisp suit holding my blue book waiting to speak to bereaved families.

"As police officers we often reflect on how we change people's lives. This experience has taught me that my experience as a police officer has left a lasting impression on me, and sometimes that isn't always a positive one. I didn't realise that it affected me until it did."

Just six months later, with Connor

weighing only 10lbs, with numerous health problems and on a three-hourly feeding regime, Vicky was back at work due to financial pressures.

She explains: "I was a single mum with no support. As a consequence, I felt an overwhelming sense of guilt leaving him.

"I didn't have much of a return to work conversation with my supervisors at the time. I was asked to manage an incident room which was 10 days into the investigation of a manslaughter/murder and I was in a mess. If I'm honest I don't think they knew where to post me and I didn't feel like my manager cared.

"On day one I joined the incident room and got back into my work mindset very quickly. I threw myself into the challenge and felt reassured doing something I knew and could control.

"I was judged by people for coming back too soon with a sick baby, and for simply just getting on with it. What people didn't know was that my home life was so stressful, so work became my sanctuary, I knew what I was doing at work whereas at home it was all going work.

"I didn't have any welfare chats with my supervisor. I was never asked by my line manager how I was. Only my team knew I had not slept in weeks and I was still in shock from the trauma of it all.

"Lots of women suffer from post-natal depression. I was lucky to pull myself through it, however, being thrown straight onto an incident room could have tipped me the other way.

"My experience has made me a better supervisor. I urge all supervisors to ask those difficult questions, show any interest and be supportive as you don't know what battles people have at home.

"I am hoping my story will resonate with others and encourage people to offer support and friendship not judgement when someone is in a period of crisis in their life."

## Menopause support

The Force's Menopause Support Group has been visited by an expert doctor to dispel the myths of HRT.

Doctor Louise Newson is a GP and menopause specialist who works in Solihull, as well as the author of several publications and has her own website, [menopausedoctor.co.uk](http://menopausedoctor.co.uk)  
Dr Newson is passionate about trying to improve awareness

of the safe prescribing of HRT to healthcare professionals and women.

Titled "Menopause – What's all the fuss about!" she delivered a frank and informative discussion on dispelling the myths of HRT and its prescription.

For more information please visit the Menopause Support website or contact Carol Brown via email. [menopause\\_support@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:menopause_support@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk)

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# Free hand gels

They say you never get something for nothing...but what do they know!

All response, neighbourhood and Force support officers will be able to pick up a free hand gel, following joint funding from West Midlands Police Federation and the Force.

The gels will be branded with a message about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - FGM, we're not washing our hands of it - and links in with the Force's current awareness raising campaign.

Officers will be able to pick up a hand gel, along with an FGM card containing information on spotting the signs of FGM and what to do if they come across a victim or someone at risk.

Detective Inspector Wendy Bird, Force lead on FGM, said: "We hope front-line officers find these hand gels and information cards useful. FGM is an under-reported crime, with little intelligence - but we know it is happening to girls here in the West Midlands.

"We want officers to be aware when they go to jobs, that there are signs they should be looking out for that could indicate FGM, and we want them to pick up on these and be confident that they know what to do if they have any suspicions."

West Midlands Police Federation interim chairman Tom Cuddeford added: "When approached by the Force to match fund hand gels for front-line officers, we thought it was a great idea as these officers don't always have the time to sit at a computer and read information about current Force campaigns.

"Therefore we were more than happy to work with the Force on this new and creative way of getting key messages out to officers." The gels will be handed out by nominated Federation reps from each NPU.



Handing out hand gels in Harborne (left to right): PCSO Lorraine Beddoes, PCSO Glen Moore, DI Wendy Bird, WMPF interim chairman Tom Cuddeford and PC Michelle Cheshire.

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# Your Police Federation Claimline

By **Richard Langton**  
Principal lawyer in  
personal injury at  
**Slater and Gordon**



Accidents happen, especially in police work. Injuries can happen at the worst of times and treatment can sometimes go wrong. And it may not only be you who's affected – your loved ones, your colleagues and even your finances may feel the pain too.

Over five decades working with Police Federation members we've gained a wealth of practical experience across a wide range of personal injury cases. We have detailed knowledge of the police service, including police pay structure, pensions, promotion prospects and issues related to medical retirement.

Through our successful partnership with the Police Federation we provide members with a dedicated PF Claimline for personal injury cases. The service is provided as a benefit of your Federation membership and covers you and your family members. We've put together some of the most commonly asked questions by Federation members about the PF Claimline.

## What is the PF Claimline?

The PF Claimline is a telephone and online based service provided as part of your Federation membership which members and their family can access to start a claim for any type of personal injury accident free of charge.

## Who provides the PF Claimline?

The Police Federation works in partnership with Slater and Gordon to provide the PF Claimline. We've been working with the Police Federation for more than 50 years. During that time we've developed extensive experience of the problems faced by police officers and have a proven track record of providing the guidance and support required as well as fighting and winning difficult cases.

## What does the PF Claimline cover?

You are covered for injuries and accidents both on and off duty, this includes members of your family injured in the same or separate incidents. Your cover includes:

- Road traffic accidents (either on or off duty)
- Fatal accident claims
- Defective equipment
- Dog bites
- Accidents in the workplace
- Training injuries
- Tripping or slipping

- Occupational deafness
- Clinical negligence claims.

## How do I start a claim?

If you have suffered a personal injury, either on or off duty you can simply call the PF Claimline and one of our advice team will take down the details and verify with the Joint Branch Board that you're a contributing member of the Federation. A lawyer will look at your case within 24 hours of you making the call. Your claim will be handled quickly and efficiently by a specialist.

## How much will I be charged?

You will retain 100 per cent of the damages we recover on your behalf. Most lawyers will charge up to 25 per cent of a client's damages if they bring a claim for injuries caused by other people's negligence.

By way of example, if the damages awarded were £4,000 then you may only receive £3,000, but through PF Claimline you would receive the full £4,000. We regularly speak to officers at Federation roadshows who are unhappy they lost 25 per cent because they had gone elsewhere.

If you or a family member wishes to bring a claim please contact PF Claimline on Freephone **0800 917 1999** or visit **pfclaimline.com** where you will get advice free of charge. We hope you don't need us, but if you do, we are here to support you.

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Official Government fuel consumption figures (Range): Urban cycle, Extra urban, Combined (litres per 100km/mpg) & CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km); Highest: New Citroën C3 PureTech 82 manual Feel/Flair 5.7/49.6, 4.1/68.9, 4.7/60.1, 109. Lowest: New Citroën C3 BlueHDi 75 S&S manual Touch 4.2/67.3, 3.1/91.1, 3.5/80.7, 92. MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions.

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