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North Wales Police Federation



June 2020

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Cover photo: **An officer checks on the use of the beach during the pandemic lockdown.**

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## Secretary's foreword

# Do as I say and as I do

By Mark Jones  
Secretary of North  
Wales Police  
Federation



In my last secretary's foreword I referred to Eleanor

Roosevelt and her coining the phrase: "Damned if you do, and damned if you don't".

It seemed to be relevant to the circumstances we were, and are, in with police officers getting lambasted no matter what they do.

It led me on to another quote that has been running around in my mind these last few weeks and months: "Do as I say, not as I do". For you history buffs, this phrase was believed to be first used in John Selden's Table-Talk c. 1654.

John Selden (16 December 1584 – 30 November 1654) was an English jurist, a scholar of England's ancient laws and constitution and also a scholar of Jewish law.

Perhaps this quote is slightly more provocative than Mrs Roosevelt's. However, we have all seen behaviour over recent times where Selden's words are entirely relevant.

This can range from taking a long drive to test one's eyesight through to more under-the-radar small decisions which inevitably, in the cold light of day, would be seen as 'unwise' at best.

Police officers, of all ranks, should be held accountable for the decisions they make. Nobody would disagree with that, I am sure, but when decisions are made that are pungent with hypocrisy then that does concern me.

Locard's principle, more recently reinvented by the inspirational former Metropolitan Police commander and now author John Sutherland, says: "Every contact leaves a trace." In a greater context, this tells me that every decision has a consequence; it leaves a lasting impression somewhere. This can sometimes be physical but, undoubtedly, will always be emotional.

In the strange times we find ourselves in, moving around supermarkets like an ostrich's neck if someone comes anywhere near our two-metre space, human beings are understandably stressed and maybe not thinking as clearly or focussed as they should be.

Nobody should be exempt from accountability, after all, all police officers hold the Office of Constable. We should all take a step back and look at ourselves in the mirror. We should ask ourselves the question: "Is this really the right thing to do?" If there is any element of doubt... STOP and take stock.

One of the worst tragedies is when someone says something but then does the complete opposite. The untold misery it then inflicts upon individuals is unforgivable. But sadly, we still see this. We hear a lot about 'wellbeing' and 'welfare' and virtually everyone signs up to it; individuals nodding enthusiastically when it is discussed. But then, in a blink of an eye, the very same individual makes a decision which is complete polar opposite to the wellbeing of the person concerned. That cannot be right can it?

The emotional scars of coronavirus will be with us for a generation. If ever there was a time to ensure personal integrity was maintained it is now. Let's change Selden's view and make it our collective view of: "Do as I say, do as I do." Our legacy will be the better for it.



WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES THE QUESTION: "IS THIS REALLY THE RIGHT THING TO DO?" IF THERE IS ANY ELEMENT OF DOUBT... STOP AND TAKE STOCK.

# A taste of what real policing is like

*By Nick Hawe, chair of North Wales Police Federation*

Having recently become chair of North Wales Police Federation, I reflected on the fact that it had been a long time since I worked a shift in uniform. It had been many, many years in fact, simply because of the path my career has taken. In order to properly represent the officers who are the first line of response, who work long and anti-social hours, who keep the wheel on, no matter what the circumstances, I needed to refresh my memory of what real policing is like.

So, at the end of last month, I spent a day with a rota in Deeside, North Flintshire. Apart from some rooms housing different departments, the station had not changed much. I got there just before 7am, arriving with the sergeant and was introduced to the team, who made me feel very welcome. I don't know if the sergeant saw fear in my eyes but he clearly decided that I needed some support and we doubled up for the shift. I will list some highlights of what seemed to me to be a busy shift.

At 08:46 there was a 999 call from an off-duty paramedic who had come across a male outside the ice rink in Deeside. He was volatile and kept walking into the traffic. He was described as 5ft 8, wearing black trainers and 'cammo' shorts so he was much smaller than me but with similarly awful taste in clothes. Other officers got there first (no quips please!) but he had made off.

I bravely split up from the sergeant so that we could perform an area search down side alleys and the back of houses. A later description added that he had a tattoo on his leg. This changed things, as he clearly had a higher pain threshold than me so I went to find my colleague. By 09:01 officers had detained the male, while another crew had recovered his bike and bag which contained a lock knife and other cutting instruments. The man was checked out by the NWS and later interviewed and dealt with in relation to the knife. In a short space of time, the rota had prevented and detected crime, while also safeguarding the man and ensuring his safety.

In between calls, we visited another local station and I chatted to the staff there. We also came across a VW van parked



*Nick Hawe spends time on a shift with members.*

unoccupied along a country road. We spoke to some people walking by and the residents of a nearby house but nobody knew who it belonged to so we started making some enquiries.

We found the rear door to be insecure and, on further inspection, I saw a camera hanging by the strap from the front seat. Unhappy to leave that unattended, we made some phone calls and soon the owner was with us. He had been walking his dog nearby, although he lived some seven or eight miles away. So, while we Engaged, Explained and Encouraged about the COVID-19 regulations, the male was very grateful that we had protected his camera – which he said was worth £1,000.

At 12:44 there was a call to a domestic dispute over a child involving the estranged mother and father. The father was at the mother's house to collect the child but the mother was not having any of it. Warning markers on both parties meant that it was necessary for a couple of units to attend. The female was reported to have been hostile and aggressive towards officers the last time she was dealt with. Perhaps she felt sorry for the grey haired officer who was left chatting to her while other officers dealt with the

male and his dog because, on this occasion, she was well behaved. There followed numerous lengthy phone calls to various Social Services departments, which meant that two officers had to remain at the scene for some considerable time. The male was removed to his home address as positive action.

Between 13:11 and 14:30 there were a couple of calls which meant that Shotton High Street got some police attention. One was a report of a wanted person cycling around the area. In order to increase our chances of finding the fugitive cyclist, we left our marked police vehicle in a side street and searched on foot. We were soon engaged in banter with some locals, and it was evident that most people were very pleased to see us.

Due to the fact that there were a couple of incidents and persons to trace, the police helicopter came to assist. These extra eyes, with their elevation and equipment, were very welcome and they scoured the High Street and surrounding areas, performing a thorough check in minutes – the type of check which would have taken us hours and hours.

What was disappointing, however, was a comment made by one of the helicopter

occupants as they departed, that two of the officers on foot had broken the North Wales COVID rules in the way that they had approached members of the public. I think they were referring to when we spoke to a woman who was trying to cross a busy road to talk to us. We advised her we would come to her. She wanted to speak about her neighbours who, in her view, were breaching COVID rules (ironically).

We spoke to her next to what was a busy road, with cars continually passing. She was not keeping still and was leaning in to be heard. We were maintaining a distance, as you could imagine but, for two officers to keep two metres apart from each other and the person who wanted to talk to them on a pavement next to a busy road, this was almost impossible. That is without mentioning the other pedestrians and people on bicycles that went past during this conversation. After spending a short time



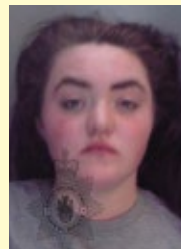
with us, she went on her way, happy to have spoken to someone about her issue and having been given some advice. Sadly though, it appeared that the benefits that the height and speed of viewing things from the police helicopter bring also meant something else – that they were removed from the reality of being on the ground. This was exactly what I wanted to address by spending a shift on Response.

I feel like I had a very decent – and very enjoyable – reminder of what life is like for our fantastic Response officers. Unlike me, they are not on specialist departments. They do not work office hours and they don't spend most of their time sat in front of a computer. They are out there, every day and every night, responding to whatever gets called in, as well as whatever they come across.

They are the first line of defence, the first port of call and the first thing the public see in their moment of need. What I saw during that one shift was enthusiasm, skill, compassion, intelligence and camaraderie (yes I did have to look the spelling up). I went back to my roots and I got my taste of real policing but, more importantly, I was able to confirm what I already knew - those tasked with serving the public of North Wales in their hour of need are very much up to the job.

# Woman jailed for deliberately coughing on officer

A Holyhead teenager has been jailed for six months after deliberately coughing on a North Wales Police officer while claiming to have COVID-19.



*Kelsey Gouldie.*

Kelsey Gouldie (19) was jailed in May after pleading guilty to a S.39 Assault, Breach of Covid Regulations, as well as the assault of an emergency worker while in custody in Caernarfon.

North Wales Police Inspector Neil Jones said: "Far too frequently, officers are the subject of assaults in the custody suite, where those who have been arrested think it is acceptable to behave in a dangerous and violent manner.

"With the added worries surrounding the COVID pandemic, this will not be

tolerated and we will continue to put such individuals before the court to be dealt with appropriately."

North Wales Police Federation secretary Mark Jones said: "This is yet another example of where our members have had COVID-19 weaponised towards them. To deliberately cough at a police officer, or any other emergency worker for that matter, and then claim to have COVID is, quite frankly, filthy and despicable.

"I am glad to see that a custodial sentence has been imposed although we are continuing to see a growing trend of these types of incidents so clearly the message isn't getting through so we implore the Government and judiciary to work on introducing sentences that actually act as a deterrent to would-be offenders."

# North Wales Police Federation thanks its members

It has been, and continues to be, a really challenging time to police, and our members are on that 'front-line'; protecting us and keeping us safe.

We wanted to say a huge 'THANK YOU' and 'DIOLCH' to each and every member from us all at North Wales Police Federation, so we've commissioned a video to do just that.

Mark Jones, branch secretary, said: "It's really important that we recognise the challenging work that our officers are doing, particularly during this unusual and difficult time. The strict restrictions and regulations affecting us all have changed – and will continue to do so, and they differ between Wales and England. Our officers continue to adapt allowing

them to Engage, Explain, Encourage and, where necessary, Enforce, protecting the people of North Wales and keeping us all safe.

"Sadly, some officers have been assaulted and spat at by people using the virus as a weapon.

"We, as a Federation, wanted to thank our members, while showing how amazing all our officers are. We hope all our members enjoy the film."

You can view the video on our website and social media platforms, or by visiting <https://youtu.be/FxQKljwmsYQ>

Huge thanks to CREAD Cyf / SLAM Media 2020 who helped us put this together in super quick time.

# Federation launches pensions FAQ video

At the time of publication around 30,000 people have so far applied to join the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) Group Action for compensation due to changes to members' pensions caused by the launch of the new pension scheme in 2015.

The figure was revealed by Alex Duncan, the national secretary of the Federation, in a new pensions FAQ video.

Alex, who is interviewed by Federation vice-chair Ché Donald in the video,

answers a number of questions asked by members since PFEW announced it was taking action on 15 May. He explains the processes to be followed and also sets out an idea of the timescales involved.

PFEW launched the compensation claim against the Government on behalf of members who were victims of discrimination and suffered any 'injury to feeling' as a result of changes to their pensions.

[Watch the video.](#)  
[Find out more.](#)

# Keeping you safe



*Stickers on desks help maintain social distancing.*

Facilities and logistics staff have been busy making changes to the buildings from which we work to incorporate the two-metre social distancing rules as well as providing as safe a working environment as possible.

The green and red desk stickers are currently being rolled out across the Force and are to help with the easy identification of which desks staff can use while maintaining the two-metre social distancing.

Invariably, the desk that is the further most from the door is the starting point to determine which desks are deemed to be OK to use and which are not.

Staff involved in the changes try to take on board, as best as possible, the needs of the offices ie: who is in work most frequently, height adjustable desks or specialist computers that require access.

Not everyone is back in the office and some departments are operating a rota system. The stickers are intended for when the office is full. There will be some staff whose desk is marked red but their location on that particular rota may enable them to remain at their workstation, as the surrounding desks are not occupied.

Rest rooms and meeting rooms are also being looked at. The logistics team, under the guidance of the Programme Management Office, has visited the VA rooms and provided 'socially distanced'

compliant lay-outs.

In some of the larger buildings, a one way system has been installed and previously alarmed fire doors have been disarmed to reduce the two way footfall through busier entrances and exits. Some staircases have been designated 'one directional'.

Clearly, there are areas where people will need to go in both directions and it is hoped, as has been seen on so many occasions, that staff will wait for someone else to pass and then proceed along the corridor or stairwell. As the buildings become busier, these one way routes will become more important.

Wall-mounted hand sanitisers have been ordered for the buildings. These will generally be placed at the point of entry of the building and other key locations. Colin Jones, Force health and safety manager, has written a Health and Safety Risk Assessment and a checklist for staff to complete.

All staff need the reassurance that every reasonable measure has been considered and put in place where



*Stairs are one way.*

practicable to mitigate against the possibility of contracting coronavirus from within the workplace.

Social distancing will become even more important with the 'Test, track and protect' and it is not only the responsibility of the Force to provide a safe working environment but also each of us to continue to stay two metres from each other and regularly wash our hands or use hand sanitiser where soap and running water is not available.

# Wellbeing packs distributed to front-line officers and staff

A North Wales Police Federation (NWPF) initiative aimed at boosting morale in the ranks with a delivery of free welfare packs to officers was so well received that more have been sent out.

Welfare boxes, supported by the Federation, were sent out in early April to key locations and stations across North Wales to give members a small treat as reward for their incredible work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The boxes included chocolate bars, crisps, squash, bottled water and cans of diet pop.

The gesture went down a treat and provided a real boost to the front-line cops who enjoyed a nice surprise.

As word of the packs got around, the Force, UNISON and PACT offered to get involved to provide a small gesture and morale boost to the front-line and new boxes were made up to be distributed.

Packages of wellbeing goodies (cans of Pepsi, KitKats, bottles of water, Cadbury Easter eggs\* and tissues), providing a small treat as reward for the incredible work of our public facing colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic, were delivered during the second week in May. And all other staff, who don't work in a public facing role, received a Cadbury Easter egg.

North Wales Police Deputy Chief Constable Richard Debicki said: "These packs are part of our overall wellbeing package for our people across the organisation. Right from the outset, we were really clear that we would do everything possible to support our staff through the COVID-19 situation and we have put in place a series of things recognising the huge lengths that people are going to in order to keep our communities safe and protect the NHS.

"People in North Wales Police really have gone the extra mile and made personal sacrifices. This aspect is only a small gesture but recognises that it might be more difficult to access provisions during the period of social distancing and given that people are so busy. Thanks to everyone in our workforce for what you are doing."

Nick Hawe, chair of NWPF, said: "We received some fantastic feedback from our colleagues when we delivered our welfare packs to officers last month. Because of the success of those deliveries, we have been joined by North Wales Police, UNISON and PACT to provide a well deserved thank you to all public facing roles.

"It's really important that we continue to recognise and support our colleagues at this difficult time, and this is a great way of giving something back and showing our appreciation."

Liz Mitchell of UNISON said: "We wanted to say a sincere thank you to you all for everything you are doing during this time".

PACT project manager Dave Evans added: "I am delighted that PACT has been able to be a part of this initiative to support our officers and staff during these challenging times."

*\*The Easter eggs were very kindly donated to North Wales Police officers and staff by Cadbury.*



Getting the packs together.



Mark Jones, Federation secretary, with the Easter eggs.

# New recruits show how Force has adapted during pandemic



*Federation secretary Mark Jones uses Skype to welcome new recruits.*

When Boris Johnson took over as Prime Minister in July last year, he quickly announced a three-year programme to boost police officer numbers by 20,000 over a three-year period.

And, just a few months later, each force in England and Wales was given an allocation of new recruits from the 6,000 to be taken on in Year 1 of the programme.

North Wales has given an allocation of 62 officers and has started the recruitment process although, of course, the training process has had to be adapted due to the

restrictions in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.

North Wales Police Federation, which usually gives a face to face input to each cohort of new recruits, has taken to arrange a group meeting via Skype with secretary Mark Jones and communications and case officer Jayne Humphreys outlining the benefits of Federation membership.

So far, they have spoken to three separate intakes of officers and one for PCSOs.

"There were 22 people in one of the

most recent intakes in May so that was a big one for us as they're normally for 18 recruits. The Force certainly isn't taking its foot off the pedal as far as recruitment is concerned," says Jayne.

Mark said the pandemic had impacted on the way the Force works, with new recruits being particularly affected.

He explained: "There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic has turned the way we do things upside down; none more so than the initial police officer new recruit training. It would have been unheard of to even contemplate this training being done away from the training department let alone via Skype.

"Forces have had to find new ways, pretty quickly, to keep up with recruitment and, while they have achieved this Skype training, we need to be very cognisant of the fact that receiving intense training in your living room, kitchen or bedroom must be treated with some caution.

"We are expecting our newest colleagues to do the same job as other police officers but with one big difference in the delivery of training. It is our hope that this is a resounding success but also we are not naïve enough to know that far more additional support and consideration for circumstances they find themselves in is needed."

We also asked a few of the recruits who started on 4 May to give us their views on starting their careers during the pandemic.

## Special enjoying regular role

PC Jack Lynch is no stranger to North Wales Police after beginning his service in 2018 as a Special Constable.

Now he's one of the Force's new recruits and is enjoying the challenge of training remotely during the coronavirus crisis.

"I'm finding training interesting to say the least," said Jack. "I would, however, much prefer to be in a classroom with my colleagues.

"Thankfully, I've spent three years studying a degree in policing and criminal investigation so my knowledge is fairly good as it is."

Jack acknowledged that training remotely can create issues for new recruits.

"I think the hardest part of training remotely is, for some people, not having experience in role plays such as stop and

search will cause some nerves on the street," he said. "However, I believe that is completely natural and fair.

"I also think the lack of the social aspect, including classroom discussion, is hard. Despite this, I think the trainers are doing a fantastic job given the circumstances, they are engaging and welcoming to each of us," he added.

After the introduction to the Federation from Jayne Humphreys, communications and case officer, Jack said: "I understood the Federation to be the representatives of the police. I've worked with a Fed rep as a Special Constable and regretfully didn't ask him more about it."

"I took away from the input there are some good insurance deals which, when they were presented to us, showed how much we would save.

"I also got a better understanding regarding their role."



## Tutors have adapted

"More fool you" if you don't join the Federation, says PC Shannen Finnerty after finding out about the work of the North Wales Police Federation branch.

She says 'there's no downside' to Federation membership following an introduction from Jayne Humphreys, the Federation's communications and case officer.

Shannen, who admitted not knowing anything about the Federation beforehand, said: "More fool you if you don't join really. There's no downside to it for the level of service provided."

Shannen's initial training is being carried out remotely over the internet because of the impact of coronavirus social distancing measures.

"So far so good," said Shannen. "Our tutors have adapted their delivery really well."

"The hardest part of learning in this way is staying focused at home with the family milling around," she added.

"The daily delivery from the tutor is going really well and, even though we're not together, we can ask questions and still get some great insights and banter."

## New PC rises to challenge of juggling home and training

PC John Kelham admits juggling home life and his first few weeks of training with North Wales Police has been a challenge.

John is another of the new recruits to begin his training on 4 May.

The coronavirus pandemic has meant that initial training has taken place remotely over the internet and, with his children also at home, John says it's been a test.

"It's a challenge but I'm trying to work around the home life and work together with the children being home as well," he said.

"The hardest part of learning in this way is having the children at home and not being able to completely differentiate work and home life.

"The instructors are really helpful and having a video link now is really helping," he added.

John admitted he didn't know anything about the Federation before being introduced to it by branch communications and case officer Jayne Humphreys.

"I took away a lot of useful information about the help they provide and we're able to access," he said.

## Making the best of the situation

PC Jamie Organ says everyone involved in training North Wales Police's new recruits is making the very best out of a bad situation.

Social distancing measures brought about because of the coronavirus pandemic mean that initial training has had to take place over the internet.

And Jamie said: "It's a little bit of a struggle with not seeing anyone other than the trainer. Having the relationship build up is very minimal and having to self-motivate can be difficult on occasions.

"The hardest part of learning this way is not being in a classroom environment."

He added: "I don't have to travel to various places from home so I save on time and money but with the current situation with COVID, I think the Force, the trainers, all of the people involved with various Skype/Lync inputs and the students have done fantastically to make the best out of a bad situation."

Jamie started his training as an officer after 12-and-a-half years as a member of staff.

And Jamie said he had some knowledge of the work of the Federation from his time working as a custody detention officer but has still been struck by what's available, particularly with the benefits available for personal use and work-related use.

## Communication is working well

PC Ellis Thomas says there are pros and cons about starting his police training via the internet.

However, social distancing measures brought in because of the coronavirus pandemic means that their initial training is being carried out remotely.

"I'm getting on okay," said Ellis. "But not getting the physical interaction is a big miss for me. The hardest part of learning in this way is not getting hands on and it takes much longer to do tasks."

He added: "What I feel is working really well is communication with colleagues and tutors."

Ellis has already had an introduction to data protection, the Welsh Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit (WECTU) and the work of the Federation, something he knew nothing of beforehand.

"What I took away from the Federation input was the fact that they help us in a wide range of situations and the Group Insurance Scheme is a good deal," he said.

## Help and advice is on hand

PC Kevin Morris says it's reassuring to have the support and help of the Federation as he starts his training with North Wales Police.

Kevin also started his first day with the Force on 4 May and has already had an introduction to the work of the Federation by Jayne Humphreys, communications and case officer.

"Jayne really gave me a great insight to what's on offer," he said. "It was a great presentation of what's on hand and that there is so much support out there for us constables.

"It's very reassuring to have the support and benefits available."

Social distancing measures brought in because of the coronavirus pandemic mean that Kevin and his fellow recruits are having to do their initial training over the internet.

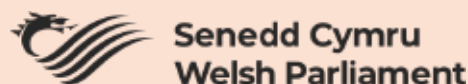
And Kevin said: "The training is going well under the current circumstances to think we are having to learn from home.

"The hardest part for me is doing the training on my own at home. It's hard to think we're missing out on the interaction side of training and I haven't met any of my fellow trainees in person yet."

Kevin added: "The interaction between the class and tutors is going well, to think it's all being done on Lync.

"My trainers Chris Davies and Chas Ford are very knowledgeable and thorough in what they do and are always at hand to help and to advise if and when needed."

# 'The police retain the overwhelming support of the public'



**A**nn Jones, Member of the Senedd (MS) for Vale of Clwyd and deputy presiding officer of the Welsh Parliament writes here in a personal capacity.

The coronavirus pandemic has seen a seismic shift in the way we all live and work; not least because of the temporary restrictions placed upon us during lockdown.

Overnight, police officers across the country were asked to do something that has not happened before in Britain: enforce strict limitations on movement and freedom of assembly – all to protect public health.

It is often said, and rightly so, that the police are the public and that the public are the police. The challenging nature of the lockdown has seen police officers across North Wales, and indeed across the UK, call on their excellent links with the community to explain the reasons for the lockdown, encourage people to follow the new rules and, where necessary, take enforcement action to ensure compliance.

North Wales is blessed with some of the most beautiful countryside and coastline in the UK and in normal times visitors would find a warm welcome. Enforcing non-essential travel rules has been a vital part of police officers' duties for the small number of people who feel able to disregard the safety of others. All such encounters carry increased risk and officers have not shied away from putting the needs of others at the forefront of their actions.

It would be extraordinary if such a rapid and drastic change to policing saw no teething problems. Despite the attempts of some of the media to portray the police in a negative light, I believe that officers have



*Senedd Member Ann Jones.*

acted proportionately and in the finest traditions of the service. Because of this, the police retain the overwhelming support of the public.

Unlike England, the lockdown continues here in Wales with the Welsh Government recently increasing the limit on fixed penalty fines to help officers better enforce the Welsh regulations.

As a former emergency service employee, I know the impact of these challenging times will not just be felt by police officers and support staff but also their families. Many officers will be separated from family who may self-isolating.

My gratitude, and that of the public at large, is extended to police officers and staff who continue to keep us safe during these unprecedented times.

## ABOUT ANN JONES

Ann Jones was born and brought up in Rhyl on the North Wales coast, where she has lived all her life.

She worked for nearly 30 years in fire control rooms in North Wales and Merseyside until her election to the National Assembly for Wales in 1999. She is currently its deputy presiding officer.

During her time as the Labour Assembly Member, Ann has chaired several Assembly committees and in the last Assembly term she was chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, the All Party Group on Deaf Issues and chair of the National Assembly Labour Group.

Ann successfully steered through the National Assembly legislation that requires all new homes to be fitted with sprinkler systems.

An active trade unionist, Ann served as a national official in the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for a number of years and sat on both the Welsh Labour Party and Wales TUC Executives. She is a member of UNISON and remains an 'out of trade' member of the FBU.

Before being elected to the Assembly, Ann served as a Rhyl town councillor and was mayor in 1996/7. She was also a Denbighshire county councillor.

While championing her local community, Ann has worked tirelessly with the Welsh Labour Government to attract major investment to the area with real success.

Long before entering politics, Ann spent much of her time following Rhyl Town Football Club and she remains a Lilywhites season ticket holder.

“ AS A FORMER EMERGENCY SERVICE EMPLOYEE, I KNOW THE IMPACT OF THESE CHALLENGING TIMES WILL NOT JUST BE FELT BY POLICE OFFICERS AND SUPPORT STAFF BUT ALSO THEIR FAMILIES. MANY OFFICERS WILL BE SEPARATED FROM FAMILY WHO MAY SELF-ISOLATING.

# Third time lucky for PC whose engagement plans appeared jinxed

**P**C Dan Hughes-McConnell could be forgiven for thinking it wasn't meant to be after the collapse of a travel firm and then coronavirus put paid to his plans to propose to girlfriend Emily Hands.

North Wales officer Dan had planned to fulfil Emily's longed for wish of a proposal next to the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Plaza in New York but the dream was ended when Thomas Cook went out of business.

Instead, he turned his attention to a romantic trip to Rome but the coronavirus crisis forced him to cancel those plans.

"I did feel somewhat jinxed with both holidays being cancelled," he said. "Especially with both New York and Rome being places we both were very excited to visit."

But love shone through during lockdown and Dan eventually proposed to nurse Emily on a beach near their home in Prestatyn.

Dan chose a bench commemorating Emily's best school friend, who died a few years ago, on which to propose.

But even then, Dan's proposal plans weren't without hiccup as Emily, who is expecting their first child in November, had morning sickness.

"We like to take advantage of the fact we live so close to the beach and so will often go for walks along the beach with the dogs," said Dan.

"Emily had been suffering with a bit of morning sickness on the day I had planned the proposal so, naturally, she wasn't too enthused by the idea of going for a walk on what was a very warm day. I had to use all my powers of persuasion to get her out."

**“ WE’RE LOOKING AT A 2022 OR 2023 WEDDING. LOCATIONS ARE YET TO BE DISCUSSED, HOWEVER, I’M FAIRLY CERTAIN IT WILL TAKE PLACE IN NORTH WALES.**

Dan had also been nervous about Emily finding out about his engagement plans before the proposal.

He said: "Emily wasn't very subtle when it came to hinting at rings she liked and would often send me screenshots of all types of engagement rings. She is highly inquisitive, so making sure that she wasn't aware of the delivery was my priority. I had to ensure the ring was delivered at a time when I knew Emily wouldn't be present."

Dan added: "She was definitely surprised by the proposal. I don't think she expected it to happen for some time, although she would often drop hints about not having a ring on her finger."

So, when and where will the wedding take place?

"We're looking at a 2022 or 2023 wedding," he said. "Locations are yet to be discussed, however, I'm fairly certain it will take place in North Wales."

Dan, who joined the Force in March 2019 and is based at Connah's Quay Police Station, met Emily, who works at Glan Clwyd Hospital, in 2018.

"It's always been an ambition of mine from an early age to join the police service," he said. "It's a fulfilling and rewarding line of work, where every shift will bring new challenges.

"It's a job that constantly keeps you on your toes. Being able to go home at the end of a shift knowing you've helped a victim of crime or



*Engaged couple Dan and Emily.*

had a positive impact on a person is a very rewarding feeling."

How has policing been during the pandemic?

"Policing has remained relatively the same for us during the pandemic," he said. "We still attend a high number of jobs and, apart from the additional precautions that come when dealing with the general public, it's been business as usual."

He added: "It's been harder to go to work and then come home to Emily knowing I could potentially pass anything onto her.

"I've remained vigilant during shifts in how I approach people and maintaining social distancing where possible."

The couple's lockdown love story was featured on the BBC website last month, and Dan said it has all worked out for the best.

"Absolutely it did," he said. "I saved money on two expensive holidays, which was then put towards our new home that we got the keys to in May 2020.

"And, of course, the money saved will also go towards our new addition in November."

# Specials set to gain access to Federation membership

**N**orth Wales Police Federation secretary Mark Jones, himself a former Special, says he is delighted that Special Constables will soon be offered the opportunity to be Federation members.

Specials cannot currently join the Federation but provisions for them to do so are included in the Police Powers and Protections Bill which is due before MPs later this year.

Mark explains: "I started my time with North Wales Police as a Special Constable based in Rhyl and I have experienced incidents during that time when being a Police Federation member may have been beneficial.

"We are asking our Special Constables to take on more responsibility but with no more protections in terms of staff association representation so I am delighted that, very soon, Special Constables will be offered the opportunity to join the Police Federation.

"When Special Constables join the Police Federation they will be offered the same full representation and legal support that regular colleagues have to ensure they are best protected as we ask them to police."

Delegates at the 2014 Police Federation national conference voted in favour of Specials being allowed to join the organisation. But the Home Office ruled this out in 2016.

## Great news

*Having been a part of NWP Special Constabulary now for 11 years, it's great that we will now have the same protection and representation from the Federation as our regular colleagues. I have always felt that the SC needed some sort of representation and, although it has taken a bit of time, there is finally some light at the end of the tunnel. I am sure that a number of SCs - if not all - will be happy to hear the news that we will have the opportunity to join the Federation.*

*Although we are volunteers, we are still police officers at the end of the day. We carry out the same role, complete training, carry the same PPE and attend the same incidents as our regular colleagues and therefore we should have the same representation. I know that a number of our regular colleagues felt that we should have the same representation as them too.*

*I am sure (Federation secretary) Mark Jones will be happy that this is happening as before he joined as a PC he was also part of the Special Constabulary and I'm sure he would have liked to have had the representation that we will be getting. I have worked with Mark and had the pleasure of having him as a sergeant and he has always appreciated the hard work and dedication of the SC. I am sure he will be looking forward to welcoming the SC to the Federation family and will be giving some sort of presentation to us all as soon as he can.*

**Jim Morris**

# Conference backs £2 rise in Federation subs

Police Federation subscriptions will go up by £2 a month from September this year.

The increase in subs, supported by delegates at a Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) virtual conference on 17 June, is the first since 2011.

It means members will pay £23.58 a month for the range of support, advice and services provided by the Federation but this will actually amount to £18.86 when tax relief is applied.

"This decision allows the Federation to continue to do the very best it can for our members and to represent them to the best of our ability," said national Federation chair John Apter and secretary Alex Duncan in a joint statement issued after a vote by Federation representatives from across England and Wales.

They explained: "PFEW's National Board recommended the increase after considering it was in the best interests of the members, and the organisation. Having avoided any increase in subscriptions for a decade when

colleagues suffered years of austerity and pay freezes, this increase was essential to allow current levels of support and assistance for members to be maintained.

"For a number of years, PFEW has bridged the gap between income and expenditure by using reserves. This is not sustainable in the longer term as costs continue to rise due to inflation.

"Increasing subscription rates for our members was not a decision we have come to lightly. In an ideal world we would have been able to continue as we had but, after almost 10 years of subscriptions being frozen, we reached the point that doing nothing was not an option."

Delegates voted in favour of three motions, all with effect from 1 September 2020:

- **The monthly voluntary subscription rate to PFEW to be £23.58**
- **Student officers who elect to subscribe to PFEW will be entitled to a 50 per cent discounted rate for the first year of their**

**service, thereafter they will pay the normal subscription rate**

- **Those who join the service on the Direct Entry Inspectors' Scheme will pay the full subscription rate.**

The virtual conference was organised after the annual national Police Federation conference which would have been held in Manchester yesterday and today was cancelled due to coronavirus. Last year's conference was also cancelled, as a result of a cyber-attack on PFEW.

The online conference began with the national chair welcoming delegates to the Microsoft Teams event before national treasurer Simon Kempton outlined why it was felt necessary to increase subscriptions and how it was decided to seek a £2 a month rise. Delegates' pre-submitted questions were also answered before a series of votes.

[Read the Federation's FAQs on the subscription increase.](#)

# Diversity is not just a matter of policy

By PC Rae Ellis

I've been a police officer with North Wales Police (NWP) for around 12 years, mostly in the Western area. Being female, from a mixed heritage background and having an autistic child, I had a number of personal reasons for joining the Workforce Representation Team.

The importance of diversity is not just a matter of policy or of political correctness. In the light of recent world events, it is clear for everyone to see that on a moral level it is also the right thing to do.

As many of you are aware, we have been busy delivering training around recruitment and diversity across the Force. The response from both officers and staff has been really positive and we have been able to dispel some of the common misconceptions about diversity and positive action in NWP.

I've been pleasantly surprised by the number of messages from individuals wanting to do more to help and making suggestions for positive change. This is the kind of team spirit that makes me really proud to be a part of NWP.

The next police officer recruitment window opens at the beginning of July and front-line officers and staff from all across the Force are being asked to actively participate in identifying and encouraging individuals from minority and hard to reach groups to consider a career in policing.

The 'expression of interest' forms sent out to stations give front-line officers and staff a simple, effective, tool to enable people from under-represented groups to be offered the



PC Rae Ellis.

support and encouragement that may be all they need to join NWP. The new style online support sessions have just started and it's really nice to be able to help potential recruits from all backgrounds become more confident in considering a policing career.

This is very encouraging but, of course, this is only the first step in an ongoing

process. The welfare and support provided to NWP employees is already some of the best around but we are also reviewing the existing provision to ensure that it is suitable to the needs of the more diverse workforce we are actively recruiting.

One example is the NWP multi-faith chaplaincy service which is headed by our Baha'i Chaplain Gerald Williams and has been in operation for some time.

I've been working closely with Gerald, as well as a number of NWP departments including the diversity unit and wellbeing team, to expand and improve on the faith related services currently offered to NWP employees. Expect to see the visibility and profile of the multi-faith chaplaincy improved as well as the recruitment of additional volunteer chaplains. You may be surprised at just how much they can do to assist operational policing.

We are also working closely with the wellbeing team around the provision of multi-use 'sanctuary' rooms across the Force where officers and staff can go for quiet contemplation, relaxation and prayer.

These are in the early stages of development but you will be available to keep up with developments on Fy Llais and on the workforce representation and wellbeing sharepoint sites.

Anyone with any questions or suggestions is always welcome to contact us at: [PositiveAction@nthwales.pnn.police.uk](mailto:PositiveAction@nthwales.pnn.police.uk)



Force chaplain Gerald Williams.

# Mark develops role in ensuring the Welsh voice is heard



Mark Bleasdale, second from right, with (left to right) Gerald Jones, Labour MP for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, Ruth Jones, Labour MP for Newport West, Ben Lake, Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion, and Christina Rees, Labour MP for Neath.

From the coronavirus crisis to mental health and influencing new legislation, the Welsh affairs lead for the Police Federation of England and Wales has a wide-ranging remit.

Mark Bleasdale only began in the role in November but has already had some considerable successes.

Now he wants to build on those to establish the Federation as the country's professional voice on policing in the eyes of the Welsh Assembly.

"Whenever the Federation responds to anything with the Government, my role is to check this doesn't have a different effect in Wales or may not apply in Wales," said Mark, who leads the Federation's Welsh Affairs Select Committee (WASC).

"The advantage to the role is sometimes it's easier to get legislation through in Wales than it is in England. One example is the

Assaults on Emergency Workers legislation. The Welsh Government was ready to go with fast-track legislation that could potentially have embarrassed the Home Office and it would, in effect, have had to copy it.

"There's no doubt this pressure was in part responsible for the legislation going through as quickly as it did. So now I'm monitoring what the Welsh Parliament is looking at around mental health legislation. There may be parallels when the Federation wants to feed back to Government regarding police powers relating to the Mental Health Act and any new mental health legislation.

"I'll also be liaising with the Welsh Parliament as the Police Covenant develops. It will have a different process of implementation as health is devolved to the Welsh Parliament."

One of his first tasks on becoming only the second holder of the Welsh affairs lead

post, succeeding Steve Trigg of South Wales, was to represent members when the report of the Commission on Justice in Wales was published at the end of October last year. Effectively a public inquiry, the commission involved eminent lawyers and academics who, alongside the former South Wales Chief Constable Peter Vaughan, considered a wide range of justice issues. Police Federation officials gave oral evidence to the commission.

For policing, the commission recommended: "With legislative devolution, the governance arrangements for the police should be re-examined."

Mark explains: "In effect, this recommendation and the commentary in the report say that if justice and law-making were completely devolved to Wales then consideration should be given to devolving policing to Wales.

“So, in essence, it still seems to be some time away that this would get discussed meaningfully and many things would need to happen politically first. Having said that, the WASC has taken the policy position that policing could be devolved to Wales, but the question of whether it should be devolved is one for politicians, not the Federation.”

Following publication of the report and subsequent media interest, an engagement event was held in the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff with members of the WASC getting the chance to speak to elected Assembly Members.

Since then, he has been working his way around the Senedd speaking to politicians and examining their views on issues affecting police officers in Wales - including mental health, the ambulance service and arrival times and the use of Naloxone by police officers.

Mark admits that when first taking on the role he had to spend some time relationship-building just because people did not know him were simply unaware of the role. But the coronavirus epidemic forced the way in which both governments have had to operate and this has included the relationship with unions and staff associations.

This led to a significant success for Mark. He explained: “In the early days I was putting pressure on Welsh Government officials on the issue of testing. It resulted in the health minister in Wales agreeing that police officers and staff were front-line workers and needed to be included in the testing regime.

“This was a fortnight before it was agreed in England, which means officers in Wales who were isolating were able to go into the testing process to provide them with some reassurance that they were either fit to go back into work or their families knew whether COVID-19 was affecting them.”

Mark is a former chair of the Dyfed Powys Federation branch and the first officer from Dyfed Powys Police to be elected to the National Board. He says the role of the Federation in supporting members has evolved considerably during his five-year tenure.

“The Federation has to continually expand its remit to support members and that the perception we are only there for you if we were in ‘trouble’ has changed,” Mark adds.

But now, he sees a wider understanding of the fact that the Federation supports members on a wide range of issues. This has



Mark Bleasdale is pictured with Jessica Morden, Labour MP for Newport East.

also changed the way the Federation is perceived by the Force.

“Things have certainly moved on now and members are seeing the developments in other important areas such as health and safety in the workplace, equality, wellbeing, injury on duty, pensions,” said Mark.

“Conduct is still often the most serious and stressful thing an officer is likely to see in their service, but now there’s a much wider range of issues that Federation reps have to be skilled at to effectively represent members.

“When I started, I found being a full-time rep was challenging as I had to lead the branch and deal with detailed issues representing individual officers.

“This was not fair to the individuals or to the branch. We were fortunate to be able to get the Branch Council to agree to a business case to recruit a part-time rep in the office. We appointed someone with significant experience in dealing with pension issues, equality and wellbeing in the Force.

“This has meant a better service for members and this benefits the Force with the sickness rate significantly reduced as officers off work regularly have contact from the Federation. This seems to get officers

back to work earlier.

“I was then able to look at the broader issues for the branch and engage with leaders and chief officers. This, in turn, will allow future chairs to lead the organisation and the service to members is better.

“I think this has changed the relationship that the Force leadership has had with the Federation for the better for our members. They now consider the Federation part of the solution and actively engaged in consultation rather than being part of the problem.”

Mark has been a Federation member since he joined the Force in 1990.

“I first became a rep some years ago when my Force was going through a reorganisation and I felt the voice of chief inspectors in that programme was not being heard,” he said. “Being on the Federation gave the chief inspectors a voice in the process.

“Having the broad range of experience in the Force, I felt I was well suited to representing officers of all ranks and a wide range of issues.”

Mark’s first job was as a trainee solicitor, but he wanted a career dealing with people.

“I applied to join the police when I saw a friend from university on the cover a police recruitment magazine,” he said. “On joining I could see I would never leave as it gives you so many diverse opportunities to show and develop skills, and I really feel that I have had 15 or so jobs within a career.”

And it is that experience across a range of posts that Mark believes equips him for his current Welsh Affairs lead role.

“I think I have a broad experience through ranks and front-line services in the police service to know how to influence policy-makers and police leaders on the issues that matter to members,” he said.

“ THE WASC HAS TAKEN THE POLICY POSITION THAT POLICING COULD BE DEVOLVED TO WALES, BUT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IT SHOULD BE DEVOLVED IS ONE FOR POLITICIANS, NOT THE FEDERATION.

# Make 2020 the year to improve your financial wellbeing

**A**re you struggling with your finances? We've teamed up with PayPlan to let you know how you can access their free and confidential service and improve your financial outlook.

## Debt and mental health

We know just how easy it is to underestimate the effects of financial worries on mental wellbeing. Last year, 85 per cent of our clients said that being in debt impacted their mental health; reporting feelings of stress (91 per cent), anxiety (84 per cent) and depression (68 per cent).

For those struggling with money, the hardest part is often admitting it's a problem. Being open about struggles to a professional, friend or family member is crucial in making sure the situation doesn't get out of hand.

According to the Money Advice Service ([moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://moneyadvice.service.org.uk)), there are a staggering 8.3 million adults, or one in six, in the UK reported as having problem debt. Being in debt can be a scary thing, but it isn't something to be ashamed of.

## The positive impact of seeking advice

Encouragingly, our research also shows the positive impact seeking advice has on mental wellbeing; 93 per cent of clients said that after seeking advice, their mental wellbeing improved and stress levels reduced. A huge 95 per cent also said they felt confident about managing their money after speaking to one of our advisers.

After taking that first step, 69 per cent of clients said they would then feel able to talk to their friends and family about their situation. Clients shared their number one piece of advice to others who are worried about their finances would be to seek support – 'don't bury your head in the sand'.

## How can PayPlan help me?

Advisers at PayPlan have helped thousands of people become debt free since 1992, and initially started out offering financial advice solely to the police. Our trusted experience and strong relationships with clients and public services mean we offer tailored advice to suit individual needs.



## Over the years, PayPlan has helped by:

- Reducing money worries
- Offering confidential advice over the phone, online and by email
- Providing tailored debt solutions
- Ensuring there is support during every step of the way.

When you come to PayPlan for help, we will listen. Our relationships with creditors enables us to speak to them on your behalf and offer you some initial breathing space while you work out a way to sort your finances – this can be by setting a budget or by deciding which managed debt plan is the best for you.

Our friendly, non-judgmental advisers will be there from the first call to the last and once you enter a plan, you will find that the contact from your creditors reduces significantly.

## Improve your financial wellbeing in five steps

- 1. Talk about your finances!** Money is still a subject that many people don't talk about – so it is no surprise that debt is often seen as taboo. If you're worried about your finances, you're not alone. Speak to a friend, family member or your line manager - they are likely to have some financial tips of their own or they will at least provide a good shoulder to lean on.
- 2. Create a budget.** Spend time to create a monthly budget to work out what you have coming in and what you need to pay for. This will help you to see what you have left at the end of each month to spend on socialising, paying off any

outstanding credit cards or to put towards savings.

- 3. Don't bury your head.** With so many internet banking apps and most people having access to a smart phone or computer, it has never been easier to check your bank balance. Make an effort to check your balance throughout the month and always view your bills. Information is the key to keeping in control.
- 4. Take note of your triggers.** Do you find that you spend more money when you're feeling particularly stressed or that you can't resist scrolling through the sales? Understand your spending triggers and, if it helps, unsubscribe from sales emails to avoid seeing unmissable deals or give your card to someone you trust when you feel under pressure.
- 5. Get free professional advice.** If you feel like you need further support then seek professional advice from a free advice provider. At PayPlan, you can contact one of our advisers either over the phone or online – whichever you are most comfortable with.

Get in touch with PayPlan via its online journey: [www.payplan.com/police-federations/](http://www.payplan.com/police-federations/) or call **0800 009 4146**.

As one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, PayPlan offers expert debt advice and support to anyone struggling with multiple debts. Since 1992, we've helped over one million people to take control of their finances. Originally starting out by helping police officers, we now support people who have been referred by charities, large employers and creditors.

We're funded in a rather unique way: rather than charging clients, we receive donations from the credit industry in the form of Fair Share contributions. Our advice is completely confidential and impartial, we will always recommend a debt solution that's affordable, sustainable and right for the individual's circumstances.



# What is outraging public decency?

By **Richard Black**, principal lawyer, criminal defence at **Slater and Gordon**



On 15 June 2020 Andrew Banks was jailed for 14 days at Westminster Magistrates' Court for the offence of outraging public decency as a result of him urinating next to the memorial for PC Keith Palmer, the Met officer stabbed to death during the Westminster attack in March 2017.

Outraging public decency is an indictable common law offence which is punishable by unlimited imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. However, it is rarely prosecuted and often lawyers and police officers have little or no experience of it. So just what is outraging public decency and why was Banks charged with this offence?

'Public decency' is a level of behaviour which is generally acceptable to the public and is not obscene, disgusting or shocking

for the observers. Therefore to outrage public decency

1. You must carry out an act which is lewd, obscene or of disgusting character, which outrages minimum standards of public decency as assessed (by the jury).
2. The act must take place in a public place, or a place which is accessible to, or within view of, the public.
3. The act must take place in the actual presence of two or more persons who are capable of seeing it – it is irrelevant whether these people actually saw the act or were outraged by it.

The third element reminds me of a case dealt with a few years ago. In that case, my client was seen on a train in a very drunken state, naked from the waist down, masturbating. Only one train guard actually witnessed this but two off-duty train staff further down the carriage were capable of seeing it. The offence was made out and, on advice, he entered a guilty plea and received a suspended sentence of imprisonment.

Banks was not so fortunate. Sentencing him to 14 days' in prison, chief magistrate Emma Arbuthnot said: "I accept you were drunk and did not know where you were urinating. Your explanation is you had 16 pints to drink, you hadn't been to bed and a group of football supporters were coming up to protect the monuments. The irony is rather than protecting the monuments, you almost urinated on one. That was more by luck than judgement."

Section 5(3) Criminal Law Act 1977 preserved the common law offence of conspiracy tending to corrupt public morals or outrage public decency. A person can be found guilty of this offence if they make an agreement with another person to engage in conduct which outrages public decency, but which does not amount to or involve the commission of an offence if carried out by a single person otherwise than in pursuance of an agreement.

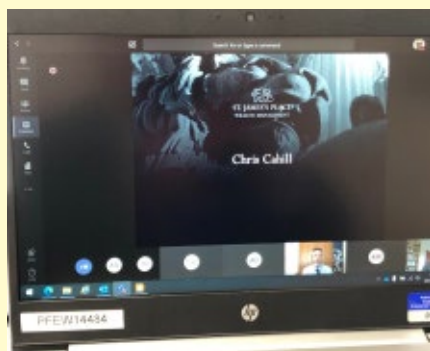
## Another first for NWP Federation

We're all adapting the way we work at the moment and in early June North Wales Police Federation, in association with Spillane & Co Wealth Management, delivered its popular members' pre-retirement course over two mornings via Skype.

Retirement is one of the biggest lifestyle changes any of us will face. Due to rising longevity, it is becoming increasingly important that officers prepare effectively for retirement, both financially and in terms of lifestyle provision.

We think that providing assistance to help officers plan for this transition is important to help them to make more informed decisions for a more secure and rewarding retirement.

Mark Jones, North Wales Police Federation secretary, said: "Good luck with your retirement to all who attended."



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# Child arrangements during lockdown

By Ben Evans, senior associate in family law at Slater and Gordon



The country was placed into lockdown in Boris Johnson's address to the nation on 23 March 2020 and this new regime only allowed people to leave their homes for one of four reasons:

- Exercise once a day
- Necessary travel to/from work
- Essential shopping
- Medical/care needs.

Government guidance provides an exception to the stay at home requirement by confirming that *'where parents do not live in the same household, children under 18 can be moved between their parents' homes'*. The President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane, issued guidance confirming that just because children could move between their parents' homes this didn't mean that they should; any decision about what was in a child's best interests was a decision that should be made by those with parental responsibility rather than the court. If the actions of a parent in stopping contact are questioned by the other parent in the Family Court, the court will look to see whether each parent acted reasonably and sensibly in light of the Government advice in place at that time.

Cafcass also issued advice, 'unless you or your child has any underlying health condition or other vulnerability, transporting them from one home to the other would usually be a legitimate journey'.

The starting point when considering arrangements for your children is that suspension of any existing arrangements should be a last resort. Whether these arrangements are set out in a Child Arrangements Order or not, if your children are in a routine of seeing both parents, the suspension of that time will have an impact on them.

We've set out below some questions that we've been asked during these times, for useful guidance:



## Can I stop contact between my children and their other parent?

Stopping contact between your child and their other parent should be a last resort. Whether there's an order or not, these arrangements have been considered to be in your children's best interests and therefore any change to these should only be made where you consider there are serious concerns, such that continuing the arrangements would risk your children's welfare. If there are alternative ways that contact can continue safely then these should be explored. If arrangements contained in a court order are changed without agreement, an application for enforcement can be made to court.

## Top tips when contact arrangements have been suspended

If direct contact can no longer take place between a parent and their children, there are a number of ways in which you can continue to play an important role in their lives while you're not seeing them face to face:

- **Video calls** - these should be encouraged as much as possible so that conversations can continue between children and their parents.
- **Online games** - there are a wealth of resources online which allow parents and children to play online games together. This could be done alongside a video call.
- **Reading bedtime stories** - you could record yourself reading a bedtime story to your children so this can be played to them in the evenings.
- **School work** - it's important that both parents are taking an active role in their

children's schooling while they're at home. Keep up to date with ParentMail or directly with the children's school. These can be the basis of conversations on video calls and you can involve yourself in some of their school work.

- **If contact can take place face to face** but they can't travel to your home or stay overnight and if they're old enough, you could go on a bike ride/walk together ensuring that social distancing guidelines are being followed.

The most important thing to remember is that any involvement in your child's day to day life will reassure them that you're safe and well, even when you're not seeing them and will continue to remind them of the importance of your relationship.

If there's a dispute between parents about what level of contact should be taking place, don't involve your children in these discussions. They'll already be anxious about what's going on and the impact on their lives, so don't worry them with adult issues.

## What can I do if contact has stopped without my agreement?

The first thing to do is to ensure there's consistent indirect contact (video calls/ emails) between you and your children. Make sure they know that there's nothing for them to worry about and that they can see and speak to you over video calls. You should then seek legal advice from one of our expert lawyers to discuss your options. If you would like specialist advice from a family lawyer please contact Slater and Gordon on **0808 175 7710** and we'll be happy to help.

## Now available - members' perks

North Wales Police Federation members, police staff, Special Constables and volunteers can now benefit from free exclusive access to more than 1,000 perks, discounts and freebies from big-name brands and local businesses.

The North Wales perks platform, powered by PerkJam, covers all aspects of life from entertainment, technology, travel, automotive and more.

All serving and retired officers, staff, Specials and volunteers

can benefit from the perks - including friends and family.

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\* These perks are correct at the time of publication. But please check our website for all current deals.





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