

Discounted breaks

Suffolk Police Federation has bought a new welfare lodge which will be available to book for relaxing, away from it all breaks later this year. See Pages 12 and 13 for more information.



Could you support your colleagues?

The Police Federation elections will run from 1 July this year, giving members the opportunity to vote for the colleagues they want to represent them at a local and national level.

Federation workplace representatives and full-time officials support and advise members in matters such as conduct, pay, allowances, terms and conditions, equality, professional development and operational policing issues.

Elections for Federation reps are held every three years with interim elections being organised if positions become vacant. The 2018 national elections were the first held under new procedures introduced after the Independent Review of the Police Federation.

Each force has a Federation Branch Council made up of its workplace reps. Branches then elect a Branch Board, including a chair, secretary and treasurer. **Find out more on Page 3.**

Chair's foreword

By Darren Harris, chair of Suffolk Police Federation

Welcome to the first edition of our members' newsletter for 2021.

As I write this column, we are just taking the next tentative steps out of lockdown with a number of rules being relaxed. The 14 months since the first national lockdown have been tough for everyone, and our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones.

The pandemic has proved to be incredibly challenging for policing. Officers, and staff, have been on the frontline throughout, serving and protecting their communities, facing all the usual dangers and threats but also risking their own health while also concerned about catching Covid-19 and possibly passing it onto their own families.

They have been subjected to abhorrent attacks by individuals who have sought to weaponise the virus by claiming to have Covid and then spitting or coughing over officers.

They have also had to deal with a number of high-profile protests, some of which ended in violence.

Rapidly and repeatedly changing guidelines and legislation have made their job even more difficult and yet some elements of the media have been quick to criticise. But, despite all this, my members have done a great job in the very challenging circumstances they have found themselves in and they should be commended for their commitment to serving the public.

Many are feeling drained and exhausted and I just want to remind everyone that help is available if you feel your mental health is suffering. There are a wide range of organisations that can offer support and the first step to getting back on form is to admit you are struggling and seek help. Simply contact the Federation office or your workplace representative and we can do the rest. You can also contact us on behalf of a colleague if you think they are not themselves.

All of this brings me to a reminder that in July we are holding the Federation elections. So if you believe you could offer support to other officers, please consider standing for election.

We want to ensure our Federation Board is truly representative of the Force and, as such, we are particularly looking for female sergeants to stand in the elections.

You can find out more details about the elections and the Reps@Work campaign on Page 3.

Finally, I would like to end on a positive note and wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer.

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Reps@Work

Campaign promotes role of Federation reps

As part of the election process, the Federation is promoting its Reps@Work campaign to highlight the vital and incredible work Federation reps do to support members locally and nationally.

It is hoped the campaign will encourage others to consider a career as a Federation rep by showcasing the stories behind what made members want to become a rep and how the rewarding role can support career development.

You can find out more at polfed.org/campaigns/rep-work/

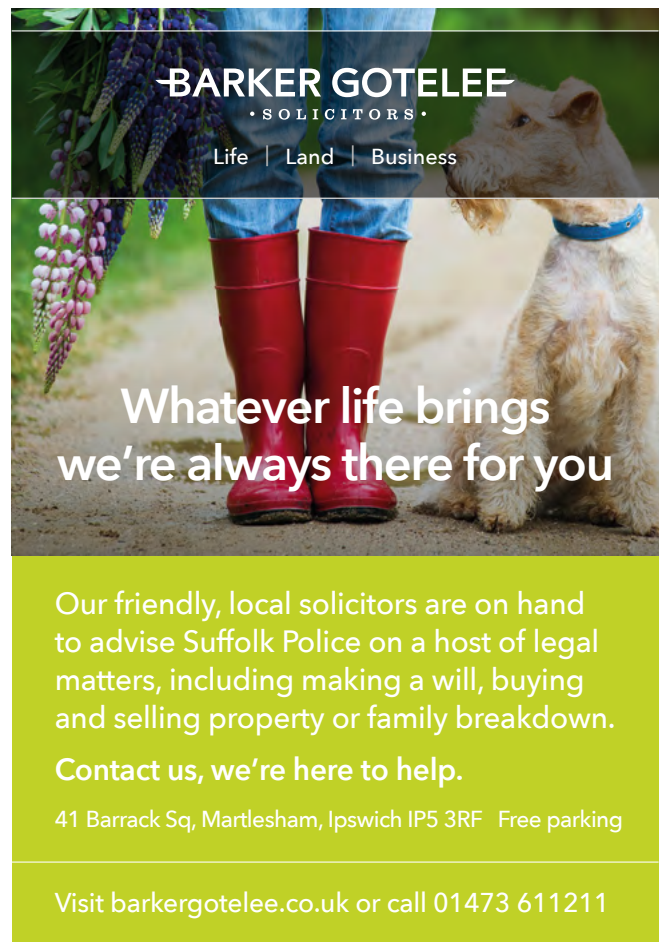
But three of our current workplace representatives give an insight into the role, and their motivation for taking on the role, on Pages 4 to 7.

Interested in finding out more?

If you are considering standing for election as a Federation rep, please contact Suffolk Police Federation secretary Ben Hudson by emailing ben.hudson@polfed.org

The election process is as follows:

- Members vote for workplace reps (Branch Council)
- The Branch Council votes for the Branch Board members
- Members elect the local branch chair
- The Branch Board elects the local branch secretary
- Branch Board chairs and secretaries make up the National Council
- National Council votes to elect the National Board
- Members vote to elect the national chair
- National Board selects the general secretary
- National Board votes in the remaining national officers.



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A challenging but rewarding role



Matt Paisley

Matt Paisley took on his role with the Police Federation for the same reason he joined the force: a deep-seated desire to help people and fix problems. Matt joined the Force in 2004 after wanting to be a police officer from a young age and believes the greatest highlights of his career have been the people.

He said: "The teams I have worked with have been mostly small and made up of real personalities - great people with a shared willingness to make a difference to the communities we police. It is the people I have worked with that really make the difference to policing.

"I first became a rep because it fits in with my personal ethics - supporting others, assisting the learning culture of the organisation and wanting to have an influence on how the organisation treats its officers."

"And I believe I bring a considered, thoughtful and supportive set of skills to the role. I am approachable, easy to talk to and prepared to do all I can to assist our members in the best possible way.

"I also enjoy the variety and diversity of my role supporting discipline cases and post-incident management."

Matt's special areas of interest are professional development and post-incident management. He has undertaken PIM and conduct training already and would like to complete the equality course too.

He said: "We are likely to see a much younger demographic in the Force. The national picture shows that with this comes additional pressures around conduct with younger in service officers perhaps not fully understanding their requirements under the Code of Ethics.

"Also, officers' mental health has been a large topic of conversation and with limited resources, I believe we could see an increase in support required for long-term sickness related to mental health as well as the time and personal investment that comes with supporting someone struggling.

"In terms of issues for the Force, I think budgets will potentially shrink as the Government looks to recoup finances invested in the Covid recovery plan."

"I first became a rep because it fits in with my personal ethics - supporting others, assisting the learning culture of the organisation and wanting to have an influence on how the organisation treats its officers."



Emma Arthurs

Suffolk Police Federation equality lead Emma Arthurs has been with the Force for more than 17 years and became a workplace representative after her experience of being investigated left her feeling 'broken'.

Emma joined the Force in 2003 and worked on response in Felixstowe for five years before transferring to Avon and Somerset.

She returned to Suffolk in 2014 but was diagnosed with cancer three years later and is now a professional development officer.

She said: "My career on response took a back seat after my diagnosis. I worked in learning and development in the professional development unit while I recovered and now I really enjoy working with student officers and developing innovative training packages around tutoring."

Emma said she had always wanted a career in the services and, having grown up in a violent home, wanted to put her experience to good use by helping victims and children.

She said: "I wanted to turn what happened to me into a positive. I also enjoy meeting people and want to make a difference, no matter how small. I truly love my job and, so long as my health allows, I will continue to invest in policing in whichever way I can."

Emma lists her career highlights as being involved in Op SUMAC as a young officer, a Crown Court commendation in Bristol for the capture of a rapist, participating in the design and running of the first Covid-19 friendly online tutor course in April last year and being part of a cancer workgroup to help officers and staff living with cancer or caring for others with cancer. But it was her experience of being investigated that led to her joining the Federation in 2016.

She said: "I wanted to provide the same support to other cops that my Fed rep afforded me after I was investigated for three years following a death in custody.

"Back in the day there was very little structure regarding post-incident management (PIM) and it broke me at a key point in my life.

"I was trying to transfer out of Force and it caused me financial issues as I had two mortgages to pay, having already been successful in my transfer application prior to the incident.

"I believe I bring my experience of being investigated by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (then the IPCC) to my current role and I have good knowledge around the Regulation 13 process and of half-pay matters. I also have 17 years of policing with good relationships with senior leaders and want to see fair treatment for all."

"I wanted to provide the same support to other cops that my Fed rep afforded me after I was investigated for three years following a death in custody."



Iain Forbes

Iain Forbes put himself forward to become a Fed workplace representative around three years ago and has a passion for protecting officers.

Iain, who is a DC at Ipswich CID, joined Suffolk Constabulary in 2017 after a 10-year stint with the Metropolitan Police and became a workplace rep in 2018 after seeking support from the Federation himself.

He said: "I am passionate about protecting officers' rights under the regulations and in supporting officers undergoing misconduct or complaint investigations."

Iain, whose priorities include supporting officers in misconduct hearings or meetings, sits on the Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum, which he hopes strengthens the link between his local branch and the national Federation.

He said: "I try to bring the concerns from the branch to the national Federation, which hopefully will improve the lot for detectives. The detective role carries a lot of long-term risk and increasing workloads.

"Looking forward, I expect we will soon see moves similar to the austerity decisions, a drawing back on police budgets and potentially strengths. This means less people doing more. The work for the Federation will only increase as more and more officers are overworked.

"The police precept has now gone up, but I expect that budgeting for the Force is going to be much tougher. The pressures on officers are higher than it ever has been and we are relying increasingly on younger officers who need more support and assistance."

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Jane Coe

Jane Coe decided to become an officer after five years working in police staff roles and is now 19 years into a successful career.

Jane joined the Force in August 1997 as a traffic warden before becoming a dispatcher in the control room the following year and a police officer in 2002.

Her first posting was as a PC with Ipswich response. Other roles include response sergeant, custody sergeant and Safer Neighbourhood Teams sergeant leading to promotion to response and SNT inspector, and now control room inspector.

Jane became a Federation rep in 2012 and is now the branch's deputy chair, professional development lead and deputy conduct and performance liaison officer (CAPLO).

She said: "I believe everyone should be treated fairly and given the opportunity to develop and be supported.

"The Federation role has given me the opportunity to support and help my colleagues from all over the constabulary.

"It's a very rewarding role helping and supporting colleagues usually through difficult times in their lives. But it can be very challenging and frustrating with balancing expectations, your time and the final conclusion of any investigation.

"I have 19 years' experience as a police officer in a variety of roles and ranks and the last 12 years as an inspector.

"I have nine years' experience as Federation rep dealing with numerous discipline cases from low level misconduct to hearings and appeals. I am equality and post-incident procedures (PIP) trained and have supported officers in these areas."

"I believe everyone should be treated fairly and given the opportunity to develop and be supported."

"The Federation role has given me the opportunity to support and help my colleagues from all over the constabulary."

The Federation has got your back

For any new police officer, joining the Federation often seems like a sensible financial decision – thanks to its Group Insurance Scheme and raft of special offers and discounts.

That was definitely what attracted Jon Alcock, who is now retired, to sign up.

Another remit of the Federation, and something Jon didn't need at the very beginning of his career, is help and support for any members who fall foul of regulations, face disciplinary action or become either physically or mentally unwell and, in turn, unable to fulfil their duties. But this was something he later came to rely on.

"I first became aware of the Police Federation in 2002, at the end of my 12-week term at the now defunct Ashford Police Training college in Kent," he explains.

"My intake had returned to the classroom at Martlesham HQ for the final time. We were there to receive our 'last words' of advice and caution before we were sent off to meet our tutor constables and assigned our respective areas.

"It was there that we were introduced to a Federation rep who showed us a very emotive video, then went on to explain the benefits of becoming a member. I signed up and that was that, on to getting started with the role."

Jon joined Suffolk Constabulary at 34 having previously worked in a number of different jobs including several years in the prison service. He felt confident his age, experience, physical fitness and robust nature would serve him well as a response officer on the busy streets of Ipswich. He joined the 4 Section response team working out of Ipswich Police Station.

"Back then there were up to 20 officers on the team which allowed us the opportunities to not just firefight but to be proactive too," Jon says, "This approach almost inevitably led to members of the team receiving complaints from the criminal fraternity, which were almost all malicious and unfounded.

"It was during this time that a serious allegation was made against me and several other officers which in turn led to me being interviewed under caution by officers from Norfolk's professional standards team."

Jon was given his first insight into how the Federation moves fast to support officers facing misconduct allegations.

"I was immediately contacted by a Suffolk Fed rep who insisted on having full disclosure from the interviewing officers, offered me free legal advice, which I refused, and sat in on the taped interview. To my great surprise, the representative also admonished the interviewing officer several times on his interview techniques and line of questioning, all this despite the officer being senior in rank," he recalls.

"I am pleased to say I was cleared of any wrongdoing but was glad to have had the support of the Federation throughout the process."

As Jon's career progressed, so did his involvement with the Federation.

"In 2012 I joined an estimated 30,000 serving officers on a march through the centre of London in protest against the then Home Secretary Theresa May and her proposed changes to the police service on the back of deep and damaging budget cuts," says Jon.

"I was proud to be part of the Federation's open act of defiance. Little did I know then that in a few short years I would reach both the pinnacle of my career and be suffering with crippling mental health issues that would ultimately lead to me battling the organisation and the end of my career in the police service in 2017.

"Looking back the signs were there several years before and I had periods of what I believed were

depression, which led to an increase of sick leave, medication and counselling via occupational health and, of course, this also led to attention and pressure from some senior officers and human resources.”

Determined to return to full duties, he was offered a specialist role as street drinking liaison officer in Ipswich in 2009 but this turned out to be a double-edged sword.

“I am not boasting when I tell you that I fitted into this role perfectly and was good at what I did with, of course, the help and support of my managers and the trust that was placed in me by partner agencies and, more importantly, by the street drinking and homeless community,” Jon explains.

“It is fair to say that I loved the role and threw myself into it fully, however, what I didn’t account for was the effect that the role, which often brought me face to face with great tragedy, would have on my already frail mental health and contribute to the undiagnosed PTSD from which I was suffering.

As time passed, Jon began to falter and lose control of both his personal and professional life. He suffered a major breakdown at home and was off work for a considerable period of time.

During this time, he independently attended an appointment at The Nuffield Hospital and was diagnosed with Complex PTSD by a psychiatrist and advised that a return to full duties would be potentially very dangerous to his health.

“After some time, I returned to work at HQ in an office based event resolution team on light duties. I was still very unwell and it was while I was working in this office that I was informed that I had been awarded the Queen’s Police Medal in the 2015 New Year’s Honour’s List,” he says.

But what should have been a very proud moment was clouded by his illness and, at the time, being awarded this honour actually made him feel worse.

“I do recall that the first letter of congratulations I received, and I still have it, was from the national chair of the Police Federation,” Jon recalls.



Jon Alcock

Things continued to get worse for Jon and he was put under pressure to move from the office environment back out to the streets to undertake enquiries for other officers.

“Despite my protests that I was reluctant to do so, and that I had real fears of returning to certain places, the decision was made for me and I was given little choice. The result was disastrous for me and after a few short weeks I suffered a second and catastrophic breakdown and from that moment I never returned to work in any capacity,” he says.

From this point, a Federation representative got in touch with Jon to support him with the next steps.

He explains: “Luckily, Mark Green volunteered to work with me and help me through the process of applying for medical retirement and I am eternally grateful that he did. I could write a whole book on the battle I had with the organisation’s HR and more particularly their Senior Medical Practitioner (SMP) over the following 18 months after my proposed retirement but it is fair to say that I was treated poorly.

“I was at various times ignored, accused of fabricating my illness, threatened with having my pay cut in half and then altogether, placed on an unsatisfactory performance scheme - aimed at either forcing to me resign or being sacked.

“These events on top of my frail and worsening mental health caused real fear that I would lose my job, family

and home. It pushed me to the very brink of taking my own life, believing that ending my life while I was still employed was the best way to ensure that my wife would be financially secure by receiving the death in service payment.

“It was due to the diligence and determination of my wife to fight this battle and the belief in me and the stubborn doggedness of Mark, who questioned and fought every decision made by the SMP, plus the Federation paying two thirds of my wage when the organisation had withdrawn it, that the tide began to turn in my favour.”

Jon believes Mark went above and beyond to fight his corner and to openly challenge and refuse to bow to what he believed was an injustice.

He was eventually awarded his medical retirement and pension in February 2017.

“I cannot overstate how important Mark and the backing of the Federation was in not just securing a fair and just decision for me but for also ensuring in part that I am still here and making good progress in my recovery,” says Jon.

“Without them I may have just walked away and lost everything or worse, made a terrible decision for those

who love me. Mark understood completely what I was going through and how the things I had experienced had adversely affected me, of course he did as he, like other officers, have walked in my shoes, proudly worn the uniform and dealt with terrible things.

“Almost four years on I have no negative feelings towards the sworn uniformed members of the constabulary. I am proud of my service, still proud to consider myself part of that unique policing family, and am still a member.

“I am also pleased that since my retirement there appears to be a greater understanding and empathy towards officers that suffer mental health issues and that policy has changed to accommodate them.

“I wish all of you still serving the very best and hope that you have no need to call on the Federation for anything other than a financial benefit or a discount scheme but, rest assured that if you ever did need support, help or professional advice, they have got your back.”

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H25JIP0375 03/20

‘This job description was written for me!’

With a policing career built on dealing with people with care, compassion and empathy, Suffolk Police Federation case handler Wendy Leah believes she has the perfect skills for her new role.

Wendy, who started work in the Federation office in April, has a wide and varied remit. She manages the administration and case work for sickness management, ill-health retirement, injury, accident and death and provides support to members involved in those processes.

“I also sign-post members in respect of any benefits they may be entitled to through Federation membership or their subscription to our Group Insurance Scheme,” says Wendy.

“I deal directly with members, work-based Fed representatives and others representing the Force and feel very privileged to have been selected for this role.

“I hope that I will be able to provide members with a personable service and want them to feel that they are supported. If any members would like a face to face meeting I am fortunate to have my own office where we can meet and have a cuppa and a chat.”

Wendy served for 30 years as a constable, the last eight as a DC on the major investigation team. In addition, she was a family liaison officer (FLO) supporting many families who were dealing with the loss of a loved one through murder or manslaughter.

Having retired on Christmas Eve 2019, Wendy worked for Kent Police in Hampshire in a FLO role before joining the Federation on 1 April this year.

She has extensive experience in suspect, witness and victim interviews; preparing files for court and presenting evidence at Crown Court for the most serious of crimes.

And how is she settling in?

Wendy says: “It’s a busy role but entirely what I expected and I am thoroughly enjoying it. When I read the job description, my immediate thought was I want this job, it was written for me!”



Enjoy a discounted break at our holiday home

Suffolk Police Federation is offering members the chance to book a relaxing low-cost break at its new holiday home.

It gives members the opportunity to take a well-deserved break and recharge their batteries without having to break the bank on an expensive holiday.

The lodge is on Kelling Heath Holiday Park which is set among 300 acres of woodland and rare open heathland in an area of outstanding natural beauty near Weybourne on the North Norfolk coast.

The holiday park features miles of woodland and heathland trails for walking and cycling or just enjoying the area's diverse wildlife which includes red squirrels, bats, rare butterflies and bees as well as many different species of birds.

Visitors are encouraged to enjoy the beauty of the Norfolk countryside and panoramic views of the Weybourne coastline by making the most of the glorious range of habitats, wildlife and history. There are brilliant beaches at Weybourne, East Runton, Cromer, Sheringham, Wells and Holkham and the holiday park is less than 30 miles from Norwich and its shops, bars and restaurants.

Visitors who want to spend more time at the holiday park can take advantage of its top-notch on-site recreational and leisure facilities which include a health and fitness club featuring gym, indoor and outdoor pools and tennis courts.





Kelling Heath also has its own Countryside Team which is dedicated to caring for the area's natural environment and has been recognised and commended by a number of national and international award schemes.

The lodge is fully equipped and furnished to an exceptionally high standard and has been designed to help guests make the most of the holiday park lifestyle. It has full central heating, luxurious and fashionable free-standing furniture and an amazing kitchen with a five-burner gas hob including wok burner, quality feel worktops, integrated fridge freezer, dishwasher and microwave and a full height pantry.

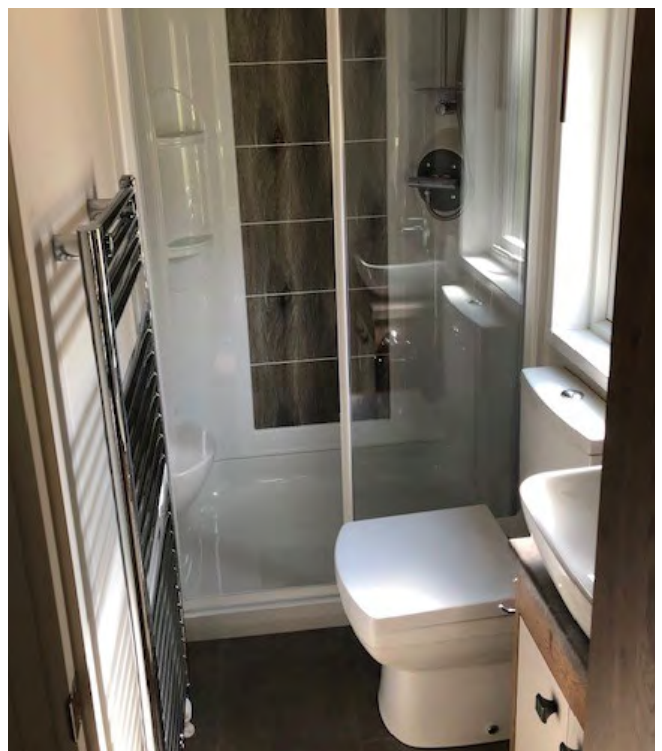
There are also plenty of TV points, power sockets and USB chargers and a satellite co-ax giving visitors the freedom to receive as many channels as they do at home.



Branch chair Darren Harris said: "We wanted to offer our members a chance to take a much-needed break and get away from it all for a few days after what has been an incredibly challenging year."

The holiday home can be hired by members of the Suffolk Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme on a first-come, first-served basis.

Further information will follow when booking opens and those who are not currently members of the Group Insurance Scheme will have an opportunity to join with an introductory offer for a limited period.



Comprehensive cover with our Group Insurance Scheme

Can you afford not to be a member of the scheme?

The Suffolk Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) offers comprehensive cover for as little as £27.46 a month for a serving officer.

Cover can also be extended, for an extra premium, to a spouse or partner, with some elements of the cover also including family members.

Most members are aware that the GIS includes RAC motor breakdown cover and worldwide family travel insurance but the policy extends to so much more including:

- Life assurance
- Critical illness cover
- REDARC
- The Best Doctors service
- GP Care on Demand
- Care First counselling
- Regulation 28 - sickness benefit
- Personal accident benefits
- Mobile phone/gadget insurance.

Best Doctors

The Best Doctors service provides the reassurance of a confidential expert second medical opinion if a member, partner or their resident dependent children up to age 21 (25 if still in full-time education) are facing a worrying medical condition.

Best Doctors work in conjunction with the patient and their doctor to ensure diagnosis and treatment are correct, providing an independent and comprehensive assessment report. They work with a worldwide panel of specialists.

Unlimited access to the Member Care centre is included, providing a confidential telephone based helpline, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout the year.

GP Care on Demand

The GP Care on Demand service provides the subscribing member and their resident family with

unlimited access to a GMC licensed practising GP from the comfort of their home or workplace.

You can conveniently schedule a video consultation or request a telephone call back consultation from an experienced GP who'll take the time to support your individual needs. Where appropriate, they will be able to issue an open private specialist referral letter or a private prescription.

If it is identified you will benefit from a second medical opinion the doctor will support you by connecting to the Best Doctors service which has a network of over 50,000 world leading specialists to review your case in full and help support some of the most important decisions you may have to make around your health. Provided by Teladoc Health, a world leader in virtual care, you can use the GP service when you are abroad to access doctors who can support patients wherever they are in the world.

REDARC

The REDARC service aims to support and help serving officers and their families cope with the practical and emotional effects resulting from the diagnosis of a serious illness.

As part of the service, the claimant will automatically be assigned to a member of the REDARC nurse team who, in turn, will contact the claimant to introduce the service.

In addition to providing ongoing advice and support, the personal nurse adviser may arrange extra help if clinically appropriate, for example, a one-off home visit from a specialist nurse, a course of physiotherapy or counselling, or similar.

The personal nurse adviser can also put the patient in contact with specialist charities and self-help groups, and give advice on specialist equipment to aid function. These services are provided free of charge.

Find out more about the GIS at polfed.org/Suffolk just click on the Group Insurance tab.

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