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SUMMER 2022

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM WEST MERCIA POLICE FEDERATION

## NATIONAL FEDERATION CONFERENCE 2022



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**Cover photos:** A selection of images from this year's Police Federation conference. Conference photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.

Connect is published by West Mercia Police Federation, United House, Unit 1, De Salis Drive, Hampton Lovett, Droitwich WR9 0QE. Telephone: 01905 744500

Chair: Sarah Cooper  
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# A VIEW FROM CONFERENCE

The dust has now settled on another Police Federation annual conference and once again pay and conditions dominated the agenda.

The theme for this year's conference was Fighting for Fairness and no one who attended was left under any illusion that the Police Federation has a tough battle on its hands to make sure we get the best possible outcome when it comes to police pay and conditions.

The Federation position is quite clear: the balance has to be restored after more than a decade of meagre or non-existent pay increases which in real terms equate to a 20 per cent pay cut.

It will keep pushing the Government until it comes up with a sensible offer that properly recognises and rewards police officers for the difficult jobs that they do, often in the most challenging of circumstances.

It is quite unbelievable that police officers are having to turn to food banks in order to feed their families, having to borrow money from family and friends to pay the mortgage, struggling to find the money to put petrol in their cars or, in too many cases, quitting the police to find better-paid jobs.

The Home Secretary's speech didn't fill delegates with confidence and she seemed to think the Police Federation was somehow at fault for withdrawing its support from the Police Remuneration Review Body.

But she did make a commitment of sorts when she was confronted by police officers who have devoted their lives to the service and yet are still finding it difficult to make ends meet because of the Government's apparent lack of interest when it comes to looking after the people who keep the country safe and protect its citizens from harm.

The new national chair Steve Hartshorn will keep pressing for a fair deal for Federation members. His first keynote address as chair was well thought-out, measured and realistic and made it very clear to the Home Secretary that things have got to change.

Steve told Priti Patel the Police Federation wanted to see the creation of a fully independent body to assess police pay and make recommendations which are binding on the Government and implemented in full.

He reminded her that the Federation walked away from the PRRB because it was not being allowed to function as truly independent and that the decision to do so was not taken lightly.

And he invited Ms Patel to acknowledge and recognise the special responsibilities faced by police officers and the unique status they have with restrictions on their private lives and the lives of their families.

He told her the Government had to stop treating the police as the poor relation of the public sector.

So, as expected, pay and conditions

dominated much of the conversation throughout the conference but there are plenty of other challenges facing the police service at the present time - not least accusations of institutional racism and misogyny - and these were also addressed.

There was a fascinating break-out session on cultural awareness during which delegates were warned that police forces would fail many of the communities they serve if they did not try to understand or interact with them.

Paul Odle, chair of the Federation's race, religion and belief group, said it was time to stop playing the blame game and calling police officers racist but added there had to be an improvement, through additional training, in the way forces understood their communities.

There was also an important panel discussion on misogyny led by Sam Hawkins, secretary of the Police Federation's National Women's Group.

The issue has been put under the spotlight through a number of incidents over the past year or so and Sam said new measures were needed to bring an end to inappropriate and sexist behaviour within policing and said the Police Federation was already involved in important work developing new policies to stamp it out once and for all.

Another stand-out moment from the conference was an update on the campaign to create a new medal to commemorate police officers killed in service.

"I had the great privilege of meeting Bryn Hughes who is leading the fight for the Elizabeth Medal to be given posthumously to emergency service workers who lose their lives while on duty," explains West Mercia Police Federation branch chair Sarah Cooper.

"Bryn's daughter PC Nicola Hughes was murdered by gunman Dale Cregan who ambushed her and colleague Fiona Bone as they responded to an emergency call.

"I told Bryn I would urge all West Mercia Police Federation members to support his tireless work to ensure that our fallen colleagues receive the recognition that they and their loved ones deserve. We should do whatever we can to help him achieve his goal.

"Our members put their lives on the line every day to serve and protect the public and it is only right that officers who pay the ultimate price in carrying out their duty are honoured.

"Their sacrifice should never be forgotten and their families deserve to know that the courage and service of their loved ones is properly recognised and acknowledged by the state.

"The Home Secretary has pledged her support to ensuring that such sacrifices are recognised and I think it is time she put her words into action."

# NATIONAL CHAIR CONFRONTS HOME SECRETARY ON PAY



Newly elected national Federation chair Steve Hartshorn.

## Steve Hartshorn makes first keynote address to the Police Federation's national conference

Police Federation chair Steve Hartshorn urged the Home Secretary to address the pay crisis facing police officers as the cost of living continues to soar.

Steve, the newly elected national Federation chair, used his keynote speech at the annual conference to highlight the key issues facing officers.

Speaking to the conference in Manchester, which included Priti Patel, and to the audience online, Steve said that after years of real term pay cuts, officers were struggling to make ends meet and even having to use food banks to feed their families.

Steve said: "Over the last decade, we have seen a real term pay cut of around 20 per cent. Other costs haven't stood still – gas, electric and fuel costs all continue to rise, and National Insurance contributions increased.

"Yet the very people who put their lives on the line during the pandemic, alongside other key workers, were told they deserve nothing extra to help with these costs.

"They are told they are brave; they are told they do a unique job. They were thanked for putting themselves and their families in danger as Covid gripped the country, and yet that acknowledgement – amounted to nothing.

"It's frustrating to see and hear from colleagues who are struggling to feed their families and going to food banks.

"It angers me to hear good and experienced people talking about leaving

the job – not because they want to, but because they can't afford not to.

"This cannot go on. It's time for change."

He called for a fully independent body to assess police pay and make recommendations which "are binding on Government and implemented in full".

He said the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) wasn't truly independent and the decision by the Federation last year to walk away wasn't "taken lightly".

"We're not asking for special treatment," he said, "We're asking that you remember and recognise our special responsibilities and unique status with the restrictions on our private lives and the lives of our families.

"Government cannot continue to treat the police as the poor relation of the public sector."

Pay was one of four key areas Steve focused on during his speech, with pensions, presence and pride also highlighted.

"Pay – we need fair pay and fair terms and conditions of service for all police officers," he said.

"Pensions – it's not unreasonable to have long-term clarity over pensions so that people can plan for their futures with certainty.

"Presence – Government, police leaders and the media must listen to us and hear what we say, because we are the undisputed voice of policing.

"And pride – I want police officers to be

able to have pride in what they do and be treated with the respect they deserve."

Steve urged the Home Secretary to look at the issue of firearms and greater protection for colleagues "as a matter of priority".

He said: "There's no legal entitlement for officers to possess Pava or Taser under the Firearms Act, off duty, on call or in between shifts when they may be required to complete work at one place and re-parade at another, without returning to a police station.

"Our resolution is for a change of legislation under the Firearms Act to specify what can be permitted to be carried off duty, on call, and under what circumstances."

He also highlighted the frustration felt by detectives at the changes to Crown Prosecution Guidance on charging.

"We understand the need for disclosure, yet the need for full trial-ready files is often unnecessary, especially if there is already a guilty plea," he said.

Steve turned his attention to protracted misconduct investigations and the negative impact they have on officers and their families.

Currently, there's no time limit on an investigation before proceedings are taken, he said, adding: "We regularly see cases taking years to conclude. The impact this has on officers and their colleagues cannot be underestimated."

"Our solution is that 12-month explanations should be mandated in all cases that have not been finalised at that point. LQCs (legally qualified chairs) should be able to scrutinise these explanations and provide direction.

"We accept there may sometimes be circumstances when this might not be possible, but these should be few and far between. And there must be some redress when investigating authorities do not comply with the rules and regulations, they themselves are charged with upholding."

He added: "My colleagues are often the focus of vexatious complaints, and this would go some way to protecting the protectors."

Concluding his first speech to conference as chair, Steve urged the Home Secretary to carry out change for the good of members.

"I make no apology for this being such a long list of asks," he said. "Some come at a cost, but others are free, and while they cannot happen overnight next week is a great time to start.

"And this is all I ask of you today, Home Secretary, so on behalf of my colleagues across England and Wales, it's time for change."

# PRITI PATEL SAYS SHE IS PROUDLY PRO-POLICE

*Priti Patel giving her keynote speech to conference.*



## Priti Patel highlights provisions of Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act

The Home Secretary says she's proud to see Harper's Law coming into force following a campaign backed by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

Priti Patel praised Lissie Harper for her campaign for mandatory life sentences to be given to the killers of emergency services workers following the death of her husband, PC Andrew Harper.

And she acknowledged the "full-throated support" of the Federation for the change in the law, which will come into force next month.

Speaking to the annual conference of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), Ms Patel said: "I am especially proud that Harper's Law will come into force from the end of June.

"Harper's Law means mandatory life sentences for people who kill an emergency worker while committing a crime.

"There will also be an increase in the maximum penalty for assaults on police officers and other emergency workers - from 12 months to two years in prison for common assault or battery."

Ms Patel said Harper's Law was one of a

number of measures in the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act requested by the Federation. It also includes a new test to assess the standard of officer driving.

"Should an officer be involved in a collision, the courts will now be able to judge their standard of driving against a competent and careful peer with the same prescribed training, rather than with a member of the public," she said.

"I want our highly trained officers to have the confidence they need to fight crime effectively."

Ms Patel said that the new act would "better balance the right to protest with the rights of everyone else".

She said: "As ever, you have not hesitated to put yourselves in harm's way, while a selfish minority of protestors have used guerrilla tactics such as blocking motorways and locking on to oil tankers. I know whose side I'm on."

Ms Patel told delegates in Manchester that she was "proudly pro-police".

"Anyone who feels differently should certainly vote for someone else," she said,

adding: "The leaders I admire stood up for law and order. Human rights are not just for criminals, but the law-abiding majority. And that means standing squarely with you - the police."

She also told conference she was relaxing the five conditions on the use of stop and search powers under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in areas they anticipate serious violence.

Ms Patel wrote to police forces at the start of the week outlining her proposal, saying: "I stand wholeheartedly behind the police so that they can build on their work to drive down knife crime by making it easier for officers to use these powers to seize more weapons, arrest more suspects and save more lives."

And she confirmed the plans at conference.

"I listened carefully, and you were very clear: stop and search is a vital tool in getting knives off our streets and saving lives," she said.

She also announced that Special Constables could be given powers to carry and use Taser.

She added: "Your voices called for these changes, and having waited too long for a Home Secretary to be on your side and listen to your calls for change, I listened and have acted."

On the issue of pay and pensions, Ms Patel said that following the reform to the police pension scheme following the recommendations of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission, it "remains one of the most valuable available in the UK".

"It is one of the most valuable available in the UK and doesn't just provide a pension, it is also financial cover for families during a police officer's service," she said.

Ms Patel urged the Federation to engage with the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB).

The Federation withdrew from the pay review body last year, describing it as "not fit for purpose".

She said: "It is imperative that Steve (Hartshorn, the Federation chair) and I work together on pay and pensions. I promise you that I will continue to champion your cause in Whitehall."

Ms Patel said that the Government's Uplift Programme to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers was "well on track".

"At the end of the second year of the Police Uplift Programme, we have recruited more than 13,500 additional officers," she said. "Thank you for the example you have set, which has helped make this an attractive career path."

She added that the programme was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to increase police diversity improve workforce data, engagement, and the sharing of best practice.

**“ I WANT OUR HIGHLY TRAINED OFFICERS TO HAVE THE CONFIDENCE THEY NEED TO FIGHT CRIME EFFECTIVELY. ”**

# BRYN RESPONDS TO HOME SECRETARY'S SPEECH

Father steps up campaign for posthumous medal for police and other emergency service workers



*Sarah Cooper, West Mercia Police Federation chair, with Bryn Hughes during conference.*

A father whose daughter was murdered while on duty says that by next year's conference he hopes to be wearing a medal in her honour, as he continues the campaign for an award to recognise emergency service workers who are killed on the job.

Bryn Hughes is leading the fight for an Elizabeth Medal to be given posthumously to emergency service workers killed while on duty, after his daughter PC Nicola Hughes (23) was murdered by gunman Dale Cregan in 2012.

Having attended this year's annual conference and heard the Home Secretary's brief mention of the award during her address to the auditorium, Bryn says he now hopes to meet with Priti Patel, so they can drive his ambition forward.

"Next conference, I want to be wearing a medal in Nicola's memory," said Bryn, "We were waiting to see what the Home Secretary said at the conference before we decided our next steps."

During her speech at the conference, Ms Patel spoke briefly about such an award, saying: "In relation to death in service, there is no doubt that every life lost in the line of duty is a tragedy. I am resolutely determined that, in the future, this sacrifice will be recognised."

Bryn said he was surprised by her comments, adding that the Home Secretary could have said a lot more to "show she cares about" the campaign, which uses the hashtag

#MedalsForHeroes.

"It would have been nice if the Home Secretary would've acknowledged the bravery and potential sacrifice these police officers make on a daily basis," he explained.

"When I speak to others, they're surprised such an award isn't already in existence. I'm hoping to meet with the Home Secretary and when I do, the question I will be asking her will be simple, 'Why can we not have this award?'"

"This award will never bring our loved ones back or change things, but it will honour their memory."

During conference, Sarah Cooper, chair of West Mercia Police Federation, met with Bryn and offered her support for the creation of the medal.

"It was an absolute privilege to meet with Bryn and to be able to personally offer our support for the tireless work he is doing to ensure that officers who die in the line of duty are properly recognised. The Home Secretary pledged her support to ensuring that such sacrifice is recognised and now is the time for these words to be put into action," says Sarah.

"Our members put their lives on the line every day to serve and protect the public. It is only right that officers who pay the ultimate price in carrying out their duty are honoured in this way; their sacrifice should never be forgotten and their families deserve to know that the courage and service of their loved ones is properly recognised and acknowledged by the state.

"I would urge all our members to support this campaign to ensure that our fallen colleagues receive the recognition that they, and their loved ones, deserve."

Nicola, who worked for Greater Manchester Police, was killed alongside her colleague Fiona Bone (32) during an ambush, following a routine burglary call.

The award is based on the Elizabeth Cross,

which was first awarded in 2009 and is given to relatives of members of the armed forces who have been killed in action since the end of World War Two or as a result of a terrorist attack.

"The financial cost of this award would be insignificant, compared to the personal grief we're all going through," Bryn added.

"We're all on a journey, from the moment we open our eyes to the minute we close them, we struggle – this award would show us the Government cares, that they recognise the journey we're all on."

Bryn has also launched a charity in memory of his daughter, the PC Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund, which aims to provide learning opportunities and pre-employment skills in the form of support through grants or services to children who have experienced the death of a family member through violent crime, such as murder or manslaughter.

"Nicola wanted to help everyone, that's exactly why she became a police officer in the first place, something I'd like to think she got from me," said Bryn.

"If Nicola would want anything, it would be to help someone who has experienced the loss of someone close to them. To know that we're providing some sort of basic help to people who need it, I know she would be overwhelmed."

One person the charity has helped is a widower in his seventies, who became the legal guardian of his three grandchildren after his son-in-law killed his daughter.

"I remember walking in, and this gentleman in his seventies was ironing his grandchildren's school uniform. His wife had died just 12 months before and he had spent a fortune on school uniforms because he didn't know where to shop. It was at that moment, he said to me, he hadn't even grieved for his daughter because he didn't have the time," explained Bryn, "We've been supporting him by sourcing school uniforms for him since."

"He had been grieving in private every night, so he didn't show emotion in front of his grandchildren. In some ways, I can relate to what they're going through."

Bryn says that for him, the charity and the Elizabeth Medal campaign give him a reason to get up every morning, adding: "I could definitely have just spent my days in bed after Nicola died but doing this, in her memory, gives me a purpose."

"I'd like to think that what happened to Nicola doesn't define me but instead, what I've done since then."

**“ WHEN I SPEAK TO OTHERS, THEY'RE SURPRISED SUCH AN AWARD ISN'T ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. ”**

# STRUGGLING MUM CONFRONTS HOME SECRETARY

## North Wales detective reveals realities of police pay crisis

A struggling single mum who has resorted to visiting food banks, asking her pensioner parents for money and now fears she will lose her home due to financial difficulties, stood up and challenged the Home Secretary at this year's annual conference.

DC Vicky Knight, who is a North Wales Police Federation representative, challenged Priti Patel during the keynote session at the two-day event, asking her "Could you live on £1,200 a month? How about £1,400?"

Vicky, who has been in the Force for 23 years, described how she has to borrow money from her 69-year-old mother to help pay for petrol, with her comments sparked by Ms Patel's insistence that she is committed to improving pay and conditions for police officers.

"I work with the most vulnerable members of our community and I love my job, but if the rates of interest go up, and I can't pay for my mortgage and I can't pay for my fuel, I am not going to be able to continue to go to work," Vicky said, in front of a packed auditorium.

"I went to see an accountant, and the advice was: leave the police, work for 22 hours a week, and claim benefits, and you will be better off.

"I tell this story not because I'm here for sympathy, I just want to be heard. I stand here to represent myself and many people in the Force that are like me.

"We are desperately struggling to do the job that we love and to make ends meet at home. So, I need you to be on our team and to help us, to represent us, to get us fair pay."

Responding to Vicky, Ms Patel said: "I think it just really illustrates so strongly and powerfully why we need to actually find solutions to pay issues and actually give you the support that you rightly deserve. We have to move this forward. You have that commitment from me, you absolutely do."

Speaking after the session, Vicky, who works in the child protection and vulnerable



DC Vicky Knight addresses conference.

adults department, said: "I was reaching out to the Home Secretary, professional woman to professional woman. But she looked dumbfounded, I don't think she knew what to say.

"I've never struggled this much. The cost of living just seems to be going up, as the wages go down.

"It's embarrassing. I'm a professional woman and I'm begging my mum to let me have some of her pension pot, just to make ends meet."

**“ I’VE NEVER STRUGGLED THIS MUCH. THE COST OF LIVING JUST SEEMS TO BE GOING UP, JUST AS THE WAGES GO DOWN.**

If mortgage rates increase as anticipated, Vicky says she will have no other option than to sell her home.

"When it comes close to pay day, I literally haven't got any money. I have to think about everything, including how much petrol I have and where that will allow me to go.

"How embarrassing, I'm 46-years-old and I might have to ask my parents if I can move back in with them."

She has a growing 13-year-old son, who regularly requires new school clothes and sport kits.

"My son needs feeding, he needs clothes on his back – and it's not cheap, he's a growing

lad," she explained.

"I'm at that point where I literally search for change around the house, so I can pay for petrol. And, by the end of the month, me and my son have to eat whatever we have in the cupboard – literally beans and rice.

"I've been shopping in the supermarket before and one of my friends has actually paid for my shopping because he overheard me telling my son we couldn't afford certain items.

"This is real. This is a real example of what's happening. The system is totally broken, something has gone majorly wrong."

Despite struggling to make ends meet, Vicky says her passion remains for the job, which is why she continues to work in the police.

"I love what I do and that's the sad part. It's the people I help on a daily basis, they're the ones that keep me going," she added.

"Honestly though, I have looked at job vacancies online and seriously considered going for one of them. I have sleepless nights, worrying about how me and my son will eat. It's a highly emotional time."

Vicky's comments come after it was revealed police officer pay had suffered a 20 per cent real term pay cut in the last decade.

"What can be done going forward? The pay needs to be linked to inflation. Even if we're not better off, we won't be worse off – like we are now," she said.

"At the minute, I feel like we're on the Titanic, you know that bit at the end, when it's sinking and it's just about turned – I feel like the scales have tipped and we're now on a sinking ship."

# KRISS AKABUSI PRAISES POLICE DURING INSPIRING OPENING SESSION



*Kriss Akabusi delivering his highly animated, entertaining and inspirational session.*

## Athletics champion gets conference off to a lively start with uplifting story of his life

Former world athletics champion Kriss Akabusi MBE has thanked officers for the “selfless work” they do as he helped open this year’s Police Federation of England and Wales annual national conference.

The British athlete referred to the police as the “glue that holds this community together”, as he addressed the auditorium for the first session of the two-day event in Manchester.

The Olympian and five times gold medallist enticed the audience with a series of

inspirational anecdotes from his life.

He told of the time fellow athlete Derek Redmond was hit by heartbreak when his hamstring tore while running the 400m race during the 1992 Olympics. Determined not to give up, Derek was supported over the finish line by his father, Jim.

“Think how many times you get people across the finish line,” Kriss said to those attending, “When I think about British policing, I think about how many times do you get people

across that finish line.

“Whether it’s road traffic collisions, reports of domestic violence, murders, robberies and rapes, you are there, getting people over that finish line.”

He continued to say that while every now and again, we open the newspapers and it is full of negative news, imagine if we could be talking about how the police get people across the finish line.

“You the British police, I believe you’re the very best at what you do,” he added.

“SO MANY TIMES, WHEN I SEE A POLICE OFFICER I WANT TO SAY TO THEM ‘GOOD JOB’. IT MUST BE SO TOUGH WHEN YOU WORK SO HARD EVERY DAY BUT THE ONLY TIME THE POLICE GET MENTIONED IS WHEN THEY DO SOMETHING WRONG.”

“But we need to remember, the past is always for reference, not for residence.”

Kriss also spoke of the people who had influenced him over his lifetime, stemming back to when he was in the Army and his talent of running was discovered.

“All of a sudden, I was recognised for doing something right,” explained Kriss, who revealed he had a challenging childhood, which resulted in him getting into mischief at school and coming away with no qualifications.

“I wonder how many times you get recognition for doing something right?” he asked the audience.

“So many times, when I see a police officer I want to say to them ‘good job’. It must be so tough when you work so hard every day but the only time the police get mentioned is when they do something wrong.”

Kriss reflected on his time as an athlete, mentioning some of the key milestones from his career, which included him re-living the Tokyo World Championships, when the 4 x 400m relay team famously clinched the gold medal after taking a huge risk by shaking up their traditional tactics.

The auditorium came to life as members of the audience enthusiastically watched footage of Kriss, who was the last of the four-man team running the relay, winning gold as he crossed the finish line back in 1991.

“Thank you for your applause, thank you for your laughter,” he said, “Thank you for the selfless work you do.”

He ended by reciting the poem ‘Dream Big’, before concluding his motivational presentation with: “Success is the life you lead, the lessons you learn and the legacy you leave.

“With determination, hard work and the right tools you can do great things.”





Journalist George Pascoe-Watson (left) with Federation secretary Alex Duncan and deputy secretary John Partington.

## OFFICERS USING FOOD BANKS

### Warning about worsening financial problems for officers

Police officers are struggling to make ends meet and some are turning to food banks to feed their families, the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

National deputy secretary John Partington told delegates that the cost of living crisis and hikes in National Insurance contributions had left some members in dire straits in the wake of last year's zero per cent pay offer.

And he warned of worsening financial problems for many officers unless they were offered a fair pay deal this time round.

Speaking during a session on pay and pensions on the opening day of the Manchester conference, John said: "It's not just food banks, it's

going for pay day loans, it's going to family and friends to get extra money.

"We have evidence of police officers waiting outside the supermarket just before midnight before their pay goes into their bank account so they can do a shop."

John said the pay rise given to officers earning less than £24,000 a year amounted to very little in real terms.

He told delegates: "If you look at the pay award last year - £250 for the lower paid officers - and then start taking the tax and National Insurance and pension off that you are actually talking about £12 or £13 a month.

"With all the increases in the cost of living and

inflation, that is just eroded within a millisecond and it is not going to do anything for them.

"So, I think there are big problems ahead. We have relied on food banks for some time now and it is only going to get worse."

National secretary Alex Duncan told the pay and conditions session that police officers were being forced to quit the service for financial reasons.

He said: "I heard that a member of the Government has suggested one of the solutions for people struggling with the cost of living crisis was to go and find a better paid job.

"It would appear that with seven out of ten police officers already thinking about leaving, maybe that will be the outcome. But it doesn't sound great for the British public or the police service."

## CONFERENCE PANEL DISCUSSES ISSUES AROUND ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT

"There is a person at the end of the policy" agreed the panel as they discussed navigating ill-health retirement at this year's Police Federation of England and Wales annual conference.

The session involved National Board member Gemma Fox, South Wales Police Federation secretary Leigh Godfrey, senior solicitor for Taylor Law Mark Lake, and ill-health adviser at the Metropolitan Police Paul Turpin, all highlighting the need for forces to be more compassionate during the ill-health process.

Gemma reminded the auditorium that these "are people, our colleagues" and that the current process "leads to them feeling more undervalued".

"Currently, the ill-health retirement process is adversarial, leaving officers feeling even more devalued and more unwell at the end of the process. As a Federation, we need to understand the value of ill-health retirement," she said.

"Forces need to understand there are people at the end of the process, these are real people who are not going through this process by choice, they are going through it because they are unwell or injured."

Gemma said the best thing that could impact the process is an added element of compassion

and understanding that police officers need support.

She continued: "Forces need to step back and look at their own processes and really ask themselves, if they were going through that process, how would that make them feel?"

During the session, it was stressed that there is not simply one process that is followed by each branch but instead 43 different ways of approaching ill-health retirement, depending on the force.

Leigh, who is South Wales Police Federation ill-health retirement liaison officer, said: "The process has become really adversarial and the inconsistency across forces is just phenomenal.

"What I would ask forces and pension authorities to remember is that there's a person at end of this policy and it's an arduous policy and it really does damage the people going through it."

A video, which opened the session, showed Leigh urging those attending to remember the importance of ill-health retirement.

He said: "We need to help people retire with the dignity and respect they deserve."

He cited a case he is working on, where the officer was left with significant mental health issues.



National Board member Gemma Fox outlines the issues officers face.

"This officer was so unwell he couldn't put on police uniform, it made him physically unwell. They allowed him to come into work in plain clothes, but he was surrounded by uniformed officers, so it had a detrimental impact on his mental health.

"He is still too unwell to speak about his experience. Unfortunately, he has had to go through this really distressing process to get that assessment."

Leigh said: "If we're struggling now, how will we meet demands as the retirement age gets older? There's a person at the end of the policy, so let's start putting these people first."

# CALLS FOR MORE CULTURAL AWARENESS

Conference looks at the disproportionality within the conduct process



Paul Odle, chair of the Federation's race, religion and belief group

Police forces will fail their communities if they do not understand or interact with them, a session on cultural awareness heard.

Tiff Lynch, Police Federation National Board member and conduct and performance committee secretary, introduced a break-out session discussing how a lack of cultural awareness impacts on the disciplinary process.

She said: "These officers are referred to professional standards more often and more of them face management action as a result."

Paul Odle, chair of the Federation's race, religion and belief group, spoke about being a black officer of 31 years in service and said: "We were discussing these issues 30 years ago and I'm sick to death of talking about this agenda. If we can't treat protected characteristics correctly within the service, we can't treat the public correctly. We need to get actions so that we are not having these similar conversations ago in another 30 years."

"We can't keep playing the blame game and calling police officers racist," he said. "But we need to get better at understanding our



Tiff Lynch, Police Federation National Board member.

communities. If not, we create problems. I think we need to have that bit of extra training."

T/DCC Tyron Joyce of West Yorkshire Police talked about a plan coming forward from the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing to address the negative experiences of black people and with the intention of creating an anti-racist police service.

He said: "If the vast majority of police officers and staff say they would not tolerate racism, how can we explain some of the disparities in the way we act? This plan is not saying police officers and staff are racist but some of our policies and practices appear to be disproportionate.

"If the only time a police officer sees the black community is when they are in crisis, or the only time they see us is in crisis, I understand how prejudice can occur on both sides."

Sal Naseem, regional director of the IOPC, added that officers from marginalised groups need to be welcomed into policing and their difference valued. If not, then all the work that has been done in recruitment to make the service better resemble the make-up of England and Wales would be for nothing, he said.

## OFFICER WELFARE FOCUS NEEDED ON MUTUAL AID OPERATIONS



National Board member Steve Taylor.

Officer welfare should always be at the front and centre of mutual aid operations, the Police Federation conference has heard.

A panel discussion heard there was a need for deeper understanding of the issues faced by planning teams behind major operations such as the G7 talks in Cornwall and the COP26 event in Glasgow, which between them saw more than 15,000 officers deployed.

The Federation has a key role in supporting officers on mutual aid deployments offering services from providing refreshments and helping with accommodation to representing members in disputes about over-time, rest days and leave.

Federation National Board member Steve Taylor said the police service had made improvements in the way it dealt with issues around accommodation, food and welfare at mutual aid operations but said there was lots of room for improvement.

He said: "With these planning operations, being involved from the early stages will allow lessons learned from previous deployments, around accommodation standards, food provision and the wellbeing of our officers, not to be repeated again.

"We need to understand that many, if not all of our members, are volunteers and the public won't see that. So, we need to make sure that our volunteers are taken care of while they take care of us."

Essex Police Chief Constable Ben-Julian Harrington acknowledged the need for a new framework covering mutual aid.

He said: "There needs to be clarity from the get-go for people who will be going on deployments. If the officers who are deployed are well taken care of, you will see that morale lift."

National Federation treasurer Simon Kempton said mutual aid had become so prevalent it was important to get things right for members and also the public.

Owen Weatherill, Assistant Chief Constable of Hertfordshire and National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) strategic lead, told the audience: "We need to show the public a unified front, one that shows we work well together, and this is a testament of the professionalism for everyone that is deployed."

The panel recommended a review of existing rules and regulations and called for work to be done on areas not fit for purpose.

**“WE CAN'T KEEP PLAYING THE BLAME GAME AND CALLING POLICE OFFICERS RACIST,” HE SAID. “BUT WE NEED TO GET BETTER AT UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITIES. IF NOT, WE CREATE PROBLEMS. I THINK WE NEED TO HAVE THAT BIT OF EXTRA TRAINING.”**

# WAS POLICING PREPARED FOR INFUX OF NEW RECRUITS?

## Panel session puts the spotlight on the Police Uplift Programme

Is the Police Uplift Programme more than a numbers game? This was the question put to a panel of experts on the opening day of conference.

The session was opened by Dave Bamber, National Board member, who said it was “impossible to argue” that the Government’s promise of a 20,000-officer uplift was not welcome, adding “the service needs more staff”.

However, Dave questioned whether policing was prepared for the influx.

“Having hollowed out the training departments and reduced tutoring to a minimum, were we ready take these officers in? Have they developed into an efficient and effective workforce, or have we just been playing a numbers game where we now have 20,000 more people but not necessarily 20,000 more police officers who are capable of doing the role?” he asked.

The question was picked up by the panel, which comprised of Mark Jones, secretary of North Wales Police Federation, Kurtis Christoforides from Police Now, Jo Noakes representing the College of Policing, Dr Sarah Charman a professor of criminology, and Sarah Davenport speaking for the National Police Chiefs’ Council.

Mark painted a picture of trainees who were stressed and struggling to cope with the pressures of a demanding full-time job, with full-time studying, plus poor pay and cancelled rest days. He said this reality contrasted with the



North Wales Police Federation secretary Mark Jones.

Home Secretary visiting forces and being told “what she wanted to hear” – that everything was well.

And he compared the uplift programme to the misselling of PPI: “We’re not being honest with people about the trauma they are going to see.

We’re not telling them that they are going to have to work night shifts, that they will have to work Christmas. In this drive to get people through the door, we’ve let slip the reality of what policing is.”

The session heard that the current 139,000 police officers in England and Wales includes 31,000 new recruits. This represents an uplift of 13,576 officers once those leaving or retiring are factored in.

Dr Charman, a professor at Portsmouth University, spoke about a four-year study she has carried out into police officer retention. The number of officers resigning had risen by 104 per cent at the end of 2020 compared to 2012, she said.

Reasons for this vary but include poor leadership, excessive workloads and a mismatch between expectations of the job and the reality. There were personal reasons for leaving relating to mental and physical health and stress, as well as a “sense of organisational injustice – officers feeling a lack of voice, autonomy, lack of progression and also bullying and harassment,” she added.

Kurtis, a director at Police Now, said the recruitment market is changing and the idea of a life-long career was increasingly a thing of the past.

“People want a portfolio career these days,” he said, “That goes hand in glove with a more flexible entry and exit into the service,” wellbeing of our officers, not to be repeated again.

“We need to understand that many, if not all of our members, are volunteers and the public won’t see that. So, we need to make sure that our volunteers are taken care of while they take care of us.”

## PENSIONS FOCUS

Police pension arrangements have failed to put all officers on the same platform and have caused widespread confusion and misinformation about how they are calculated, the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

Day one of the 2022 conference closed with a panel discussion on what has become one of the most contentious issues for police officers across England and Wales.

Simon Horgan, field officer for Metfriendly, which offers financial services and products to police officers and their families, said individual officers should establish an exit point to help them with their payment calculation.

He told delegates: “Being aware of your exit point is very important as we are dealing with lots of myths around pension calculations.

“Find out your exit points. Some are affected more than others. That is why it is important to know what is a good exit point for you.”

National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald said there was a disparity in pension benefits to police officers because of the changes to the pension scheme.

And national secretary Alex Duncan told the conference: “We have raised with the Government issues with the scheme advisory board. We think the Government can fix it in a number of ways.”

Speaking at an earlier session on pay and conditions, national deputy secretary John Partington said the police pensions system was not working.

He told delegates: “I think it is important to point out that the Police Federation position on this is very clear: that officers should have stayed on the pensions they joined because people plan financially and plan for the future and when things change it is not great.

“The Government then lost the court cases, as Federation reps know very well, but what they have been slow to do is actually put the proper mechanisms and legislation in place to enact it.

“They did the first bit of legislation to ensure all serving officers know if they are paying into a pension scheme or paying into the 2015 care scheme but what they have not done is put the mechanisms in place to address the more detailed problems of moving people across pension schemes

“So essentially the first legislation is a bit of paper saying as of this day you stop accruing in the scheme and move to this scheme and we’ll deal with the harder stuff sometime later on.

“All officers should have stayed in the original schemes and I think the Government is in danger of spending a lot of money to fix a problem which it created itself.”



National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald.



## **“It’s nice to relax knowing my divorce settlement is sorted.”**

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# CONDUCT SYSTEM 'COULD COLLAPSE' OVER INDEMNITY ROW

## Panel discusses modernising hearings and asks if change is needed

The misconduct process “could collapse” due to a legal ruling which means that panellists could be sued for their decisions, the Police Federation conference heard on the Wednesday morning of the two-day event.

In a session entitled ‘Modernising Hearings’, John Bassett of the National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs (NALQC) set out the view of his organisation that the Eckland case established that LQCs (and any other panellist) can be held liable and, so far, the Home Office has refused to indemnify them or provide immunity.

As a result, the NALQC has advised its members not to accept new appointments, which is contributing to a backlog in misconduct cases being resolved.

John said: “The advice we’ve given to our members is not something we took lightly. We have put forward a perfectly straightforward one-clause bill to the Home Office and they are prevaricating. Meanwhile, claims continue to be made.

“If the situation is not sorted out the present system is going to collapse because LQCs will not be prepared to put their livelihoods, their homes and their families at risk of financial ruin. If that is the situation then almost by default the position will return to what the National Police Chiefs’ Council appears to be seeking which is a return to misconduct hearings being presided over by chief officers.”

Chief Constable Craig Guildford of Nottinghamshire Police, who joined the session

Phill Matthews, Police Federation National Board.



via video link, said efforts to improve the timeliness of misconduct hearings – which is best for complainants, officers and families – was not helped by Covid or the NALQC stance, which he took issue with.

Mr Guildford insisted: “For avoidance of doubt, the officers on those panels are covered by chief constables. The delays caused by some LQCs not sitting are not helping officers or public confidence. I don’t know of cases other than Eckland where these [legal issues] are being raised. I think we need to get moving.”

But John doubted whether police forces would be legally able to indemnify their representatives on a panel. He said this was because of doubts about whether Section 88 of the Police Act applied to officers serving on a panel – and if not the reassurances from chiefs would count for nothing.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct

(IOPC) director of strategy and impact, Kathie Cashell, talked about the efforts the organisation has made to speed up the timeliness of its investigations.

She said: “We’re really proud of the improvements we’ve made. Our concerns now are less about the investigation timeliness and more about the proceedings that happen after the investigations. The IOPC improvements have not been replicated in those areas.”

Phill Matthews from the Police Federation National Board and the national conduct and performance lead has spearheaded campaigns to highlight the mental health effects and unfairness on officers (and families) due to long delays in completing investigations. He welcomed the involvement of LQCs as a way of “improving public confidence, trust and transparency”, and reiterated that the Federation supports their concerns around indemnity.

Phill raised concerns about a return to chief officer led misconduct panels – particularly fast-tracked cases – which run the risk of prioritising dismissals rather than fairness to the officer involved.

He added: “The Federation’s main thrust is timeliness. The IOPC has improved dramatically but there are still over 300 of their cases that exceed 12 months and are paused waiting for other processes to happen. That’s why we need letters to come into PCCs [which 2020 regulations now allow] so we can put the spotlight on where those delays are happening. Professional Standards Departments in a fifth of all cases that go beyond 12 months haven’t written the letter as they are meant to and there is absolutely no comeback.”

## SUBS RISE: ‘A TOUGH DECISION TO MAKE’

Delegates faced a tough decision when considering a motion to increase Federation subscriptions in line with any police pay rise, says the chair of West Mercia Police Federation.

Sarah Cooper was commenting after 221 delegates voted for the increase and 170 against.

“It was not something that I was personally able to support,” says Sarah, “I recognise that, just like everyone else, the Federation has been facing increased costs and there is a critical need for the organisation to remain financially viable so it can continue to provide the full range of services to members.

“However, the cost of living is unmanageable for many of our members and it just seemed to me to be the wrong time to add additional financial burden. I also want to be satisfied that all internal efficiencies that can be made by the Police Federation of England and Wales are implemented to assist with cost saving prior to this burden being passed to hard-working officers.

“There has only been one increase in subs in the last 10 years so I do believe that there needs to be a review of this going

forward to protect members from a sudden increase in rates. As a branch, we are exploring ways that we may be able to absorb the cost for our members should there be an increase in subs.

“Subs will only increase if officers receive a pay rise in September and will only go up by the same percentage as that rise. It is not lost on anyone that this is an awful time to be adding to members’ outgoings but the only alternative was to look at reducing outgoings and that could have impacted on the services we provide.”

Nevertheless, Sarah wants to see the continued use of virtual meetings to reduce the costs involved in staging in person meetings and training.

After the conference motion was supported a Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) statement was issued. It said: “With the current cost of living crisis, last year’s pay freeze and without knowing if our members will receive an increase in their pay this year or not, now is not the time to increase Police Federation of England and Wales subscriptions.

“PFEW, however, is also facing increased costs. Soaring inflation, upcoming litigation and the financial health of our National Reserves

Fund means we need to at least start to have an open and honest conversation on this subject with Federation representatives to make sure that there is a strong, viable Federation fighting for our members for years to come.”

The Federation said the conference gave the perfect opportunity to open the conversation surrounding subscription rates, which have only increased once in the last decade.

The statement continued: “On such an important issue, PFEW took the view conference delegates should be given the opportunity to hear the rationale for any proposed future increase in subscriptions immediately.

“We care passionately about the views of our members which is why hearing from delegates at conference – their representatives – on this matter was vital. On that basis, it was agreed to bring a motion to conference this year for discussion.” As a result of the motion, the conference supported increasing the rate of all types of Federation subscriptions effective from 1 September 2022, in line with the percentage uplift to police pay for 2022/2023.

# 'MISOGYNY MUST BE CHALLENGED'



The panel (left to right): Manjit Atwal QPM from the College of Policing, Zoe Wakefield and Sam Hawkins from the Women's Group and DCC Maggie Blyth.

The Police Federation is taking steps towards introducing strategies to help tackle misogyny within the service, the 2022 annual conference has heard.

Sam Hawkins, secretary of the Federation's National Women's Group, acknowledged new measures were needed to bring an end to inappropriate and sexist behaviour within policing and said important work on developing new policies was already being undertaken.

She said: "We are waiting for some more up-to-date information from the HMC but Durham University did a survey for the NPCC in 2019 on diversity and equality and that found 27.8 per cent of female officers reported experiencing derogatory remarks about their gender and 34.5 per cent reported experiencing sexist comments from someone in the force."

She continued: "This is something we are quite passionate about as a women's group and we want any of our colleagues and anyone involved in the National Women's Group to be involved in that so we can get some policies, some toolkits, whatever we need out there."

"We also need to make sure there is a reporting process as well so that people who do want to report or talk to someone about their experiences have more than the PSD or the confidential reporting line and can talk about those small things. If a female officer is made to feel uncomfortable they should be able to talk to somebody about it."

"Despite the horrific, awful things that have been in the media, we understand that

not all of our colleagues are predators and behave in that way but we do need men and women to speak out and just challenge that behaviour.

"It takes an awfully long time to change a culture but if we all play a part in it and all do our bit we can try and affect that change much quicker and make the world a better place and policing a better place for our daughters, granddaughters and any women coming into the organisation in future years."

Opening the panel discussion National Women's Group chair Sue Honeywill explained: "With half of the population being female, it is increasingly important that we understand how the issue impacts, not only within policing but in society as a whole."

She continued: "In simple terms, misogyny is a behaviour towards women which shows either a dislike, hatred or contempt towards women."

Sue told delegates she accepted discussing misogyny within policing was emotive and often divisive as it challenged both men and women to reflect on past and present behaviours and consider their own unconscious biases.

But she added: "We seek to raise the profile of the issues and consider how we can improve understanding and involve culture norms to build an environment where both sexes feel equal and individuals feel empowered and safe to speak up and challenge."



Jennifer Sharpling.

## INSPIRING MUM WINS WOMEN IN POLICING AWARD

An inspirational mother-of-four who juggles working as a police officer with raising her family was presented with the prestigious Outstanding Contribution to Women in Policing Award at this year's Police Federation of England and Wales annual conference.

Jennifer Sharpling, a sergeant in the Metropolitan Police, clinched the title after devoting much of her time to maternity-related issues in the workplace, using her own experiences to become a pioneer in perinatal mental health.

After having her first child in 2016 and suffering from significant mental health issues, Jennifer found there was not any specific support for police officers and staff with these conditions.

Prompted to take action and make change, Jennifer now leads a national team of officers from across the country, who are working together to write a national policy that will better support staff.

She also works closely with professors on research projects, so the police service can really understand the impact perinatal mental health issues have on police officers and staff.

Jennifer is also the co-founder of #BleepKind, a peer support group designed to offer a safe space for police officers and staff to share their concerns surrounding the bleep test, which comes annually for officers as part of a fitness assessment.

The Police Federation of England and Wales presents the Outstanding Contribution to Women in Policing Award to recognise a serving or recently retired officer who has gone above and beyond their job, while on duty.

**“ DESPITE THE HORRIFIC, AWFUL THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN IN THE MEDIA, WE UNDERSTAND THAT NOT ALL OF OUR COLLEAGUES ARE PREDATORS AND BEHAVE IN THAT WAY BUT WE DO NEED MEN AND WOMEN TO SPEAK OUT AND JUST CHALLENGE THAT BEHAVIOUR.**

# TACKLING THE STIGMA OF SUICIDE



The panel for the 'Fighting for your lives' session.

**'We need to fight the taboo and that stigma around suicide needs to go if we want to save lives' is the clear message that came from the Fighting for your Lives session at this year's annual conference.**

The hard-hitting, emotional and powerful session shined a light on the reality of officers taking their own lives, with Federation representatives urged to talk more openly about suicide, to make it more visible.

On the panel was former officer Ed Simpson who shared his own experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which resulted in him spiralling and ultimately considering taking his own life.

"I remember driving to work and thinking I wanted to kill myself. That should've been an irrational thought, but it was completely rational," said Ed, who worked for both South and North Yorkshire Police.

"I actually hated myself because I was still alive."

One week later, completely burnt out – both physically and mentally – Ed was diagnosed with shingles, which led to him visiting the doctor and being officially told he had PTSD, sparked by witnessing trauma after trauma during his career.

Ed spoke of one particular incident whereby he took a family to see their son in the morgue. He described how he will never get over the sound of the mother screaming when she saw her son. Little did he know, but this was the trigger event that would lead to his complex PTSD diagnosis years later.

Having been signed off work for a year, Ed received the devastating news that his salary would be docked to half-pay, leading to him

feeling "totally worthless".

"That same day, I fell out of love with policing," said Ed, who returned back to work after 12 months, before medically retiring three years later.

"The journey to get there ruined me. I will never be the same again."

Ed was joined by Oscar Kilo CEO Andy Rhodes QPM, Greater Manchester suicide prevention programme manager at the NHS Adele

**“ WE NEED TO GIVE PEOPLE THE COURAGE TO ASK OTHERS IF THEY'RE OK, BECAUSE THAT PERSON MIGHT BE DRIVING TO WORK THAT MORNING, WISHING THEY WERE DEAD. WELFARE STARTS AT HOME, WITH COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS.**

Owen QPM and facilitator of families against corporate killers at Greater Manchester Hazards Centre Hilda Palmer.

Hilda, who has conducted research on work-related suicide, explained her findings revealed 10 per cent of all suicides have a work-related component.

Adele, a former officer with Greater Manchester Police, said supervisors and managers need to be given suicide-prevention training.

"The word suicide isn't being used enough, we always fall back on the phrases mental health and wellbeing. We need to break the stigma and we need to start being direct with people," she said.

"The first thing we need to do, we need to talk about it, we haven't been talking about it. We need to fight the taboo and that stigma needs to go if we want to save lives."

Andy, who explained how Oscar Kilo is spending time working with national charity The Samaritans researching specific factors that are driving mental health issues, as well as how force can better support loved ones who are bereaved following a suicide.

"What I want to point out is that eight or nine years ago, people wouldn't have had the courage to stand up and talk about mental health. What we are seeing, people are more willing to speak out, especially young recruits," he continued.

"We're a long way off but we will get to a point where psychological risk and harm are treated the same as physical risk.

"Ultimately though, it's the employer's responsibility – the force's responsibility – to support these people."

Ed agreed, saying: "We need to give people the courage to ask others if they're OK, because that person might be driving to work that morning, wishing they were dead.

"Welfare starts at home, with colleagues and friends."

# POLICE DRIVERS GAIN BETTER PROTECTION IN LAW



Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation (left) and Simon Hill from the Metropolitan Police Federation.

All police drivers must be 'in ticket' with their training if they are to benefit from the new protections they will receive under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, conference was told.

Tim Rogers, national Federation lead on pursuits driving and driver training, has led a long campaign to bring about the change in law introduced by the act.

Police officers' driving will no longer be assessed by the standards of the careful and competent member of the public but by those of their skilled and trained colleagues.

He said: "We've had this catalogue of shame where officers were on the wrong side of the law, embroiled in lengthy criminal and misconduct

investigations which have caused untold stress.

"We are in a better position because we campaigned for eight years. It's a major achievement."

Tim stressed it was critically important for officers to demonstrate they were up to date with training so they benefited from the new protection and was supported by DCC Terry Woods, National Police Chiefs' Council driving lead, and driver training expert Roger Gardner.

DCC Woods said: "If they can't, and if some people in your forces have slipped out of date, or forces are behind, I would argue this needs to be put on the top of the list, because it's an area of high frequency and high risk. It is really important."

Mr Gardner added: "When this legislation comes through, if your members aren't in date - effectively you are driving against the law. You really need to get on to them and tell them they have got to be trained, and they have got to be in date - if they are not, they'll be committing a criminal offence."

Tim highlighted how officers' driving would be assessed.

"Without appropriate governance, we would have found our campaign for officer driving to be assessed against that of their similarly trained colleagues and it could have led to officers being at more risk of prosecution than less," he said.

"A breach of driving policy could be considered a breach of law, which is why we needed those assessing the drivers through this new legal process to have the professionalism, knowledge and expertise required, so officers have the confidence to use their skills and training in the way intended without fear of prosecution."

A panel of subject matter experts will consider cases where police officers' driving is questioned with DCC Woods and Tim being part of the process.

They will ensure that proper disclosure of all the evidence takes place, putting an end to previous failings whereby only selective information and evidence has been put forward. The panel's reports will be available to both prosecution and defence.

The break-out session also stressed the importance of standardised training in police driving units.

Driving schools will now be expected to submit self-assessment forms covering all aspects of their work and spot-checks will be carried out. The College of Policing will issue new Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

Delegates were urged to ask questions of their driving schools and find out if they had completed their self-assessment forms. They were also encouraged to check their chief officers were prepared for the new law.

## A TSUNAMI OF DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS

### Break-out session considers the impact of the Covid pandemic on claims

Barriers faced by disabled police disappeared overnight at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic but are returning and creating a "tsunami of new claims", the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

National Board member Ian Saunders said the number of Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) claims fell away dramatically during the pandemic but were now rising heavily and heading towards pre-Covid levels.

"We are seeing a return of what we used to see before in relation to UPP claims," he told delegates at a break-out session on disability discrimination.

"But the basic point is UPP is not, and has never been, a primary mechanism for supporting police officers.

"It is a performance-related mechanism which is very much unsuited to managing an officer with a disability.

"During the pandemic we saw the number of claims that came in and the number of cases that came in went right down.

"About 50 per cent of the employment budget that goes out of Leatherhead - about £3 million a year - is on disability-related claims and much of that went away during the Covid pandemic.



National Board member Ian Saunders.

"Hence the tsunami of claims. It's more than a blip that's coming now after a period of quiet, there's a lot coming through the door."

Ian said cases of disability discrimination did not come in isolation but were at the centre of a mechanical functioning adopted by line managers.

He told the workshop: "Line managers unlawfully discriminate against colleagues with disability absence on their record by using UPP.

"Even though unlawful, line managers are serving written improvement notices and asking colleagues to report to work against or without medical advice. UPP is not designed to manage disability related absences."

The Police Federation's in-house solicitor

Eleanor Porter said line managers should always refer to the Equality Act while dealing with disabled officers.

She said: "The discretion to initiate UPP must be appreciated as most regulations that follow are mandatory. However, there is nothing to stop the line manager from using their discretionary powers.

"What is really required, for an informed decision to be taken in a case of long-term absence through disability, is a process that requires medical evidence as to whether there is any prospect of the officer returning to work, in what capacity and consultation with the officer about the options, including alternative work, medical discharge and termination."



# 'DISCLOSURE GUIDANCE CAUSING CRISIS IN POLICING'



Ben Hudson (left) from the Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum with Assistant Commissioner Nick Ephgrave (centre) and Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill QC.

## New guidelines impacting on workloads and delaying justice for victims, conference is told

Delegates were told of a growing crisis in policing that is pushing officers to breaking point and delaying justice for victims.

Ben Hudson, secretary of the Federation's National Detectives' Forum, led the final conference session to highlight the impact of DG6 - the guidance on charging effective from January 2021.

It has added obligations to the officer in charge of an investigation and front-loaded the disclosure process amounting to a "hidden tax on policing", Ben said.

He played clips of investigating officers who told the real impacts of the changes, both to workloads and to delivering a timely service to victims.

Ben explained a survey showed 45 per cent of respondents felt the number of victims withdrawing from active participation with their investigation had increased due to the changes.

Previously, if officers submitted 100 cases to the CPS, around 75 would result in a charge and require completion of a full file. Since DG6, all 100 require a file, even though 25 will not result in a charge.

The Federation's concerns were put to Max Hill QC, Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), who insisted "I do get it," before adding: "DG6 came into force on 31 December 2020 not because I chose that date but when the Attorney General decided after a long conversation that there had to be a step change."

The DPP admitted the CPS had too often got it wrong when it came to disclosure and cases

were coming unstuck in court. He conceded the system is "front loaded" currently. However, he argued the police and the CPS were working more effectively now as "one team" even if staff on both sides were more tired or carrying more cases.

Also on the panel was Nick Ephgrave, assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, who said there was now "increased rigour" around the application of disclosure law, and an exponential increase in the volume of data.

He said: "I say to my people you've got to start thinking of disclosure from the minute you read the crime report. If you do that some of this workload will get spread across the time period - it's not the solution, but it's the other side of the coin of investigation."

The panel agreed an impending review of the impact of DG6 by the Attorney General's Office offered the possibility of reducing the burden on officers and speeding up justice.

Ben also highlighted the pressures officers were facing due to redaction requirements under the Data Protection Act.

He said: "We would urge the Government to address this immediately. An amendment to the act to allow the CPS and the police service to be treated as one entity would make a huge difference and save considerable time."

"An expert review of nine files found that the new redaction requirements involve, on average, an additional four hours per case. And this will be considerably higher for more complex investigations."

# FEDERATION STALWART RETIRING



National secretary Alex Duncan.

Police Federation stalwart Alex Duncan has attended his last annual conference as national secretary ahead of his imminent retirement.

Alex, who became a Fed rep in 1999 and has been national secretary since 2018, said serving the organisation had been a "real honour" and praised the work of colleagues across the 43 forces.

He told delegates: "Policing has been great for me and I have done a wide variety of different things and the Federation to me is the best of policing because it is people from within the service looking after their colleagues."

Alex joined Avon and Somerset Police in 1990 and before becoming a Federation rep had roles in response, community policing and the District Crime Unit. He was Avon and Somerset secretary from 2007 to 2014.

Alex then became a National Board member and held the position of chair of the conduct and performance sub-committee for more than two years.

Before becoming national secretary in 2018, he was chair of the legislation sub-committee and head of civil claims, responsible for the hundreds of claims submitted by members every year, including employment tribunals and discrimination cases.

Reflecting on his two 23-year involvement with the Police Federation, Alex said: "It's been great, it's been an absolute joy and a real honour."

# RIDING HIGH FOR PSUK

A keen competitive horse rider outside of work, West Mercia DS Lesley Fisher decided to act when she discovered that equestrianism was not recognised as an official police sport for UK police officers.

So in 2017, she not only took the lead in putting that right but now, five years on, coordinates - with the help of her police colleagues and a team of dedicated supporters and volunteers - two national PSUK Equestrian Championships - one in Solihull over two days in September and the other, again over two days in June, but in North Yorkshire.

The championships will see police officers from 13 forces across England and Wales compete in ridden and in-hand showing classes as well as dressage, showjumping and combined training, while also helping to raise funds for the PC Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund.

The charity fund was set up by Bryn Hughes in memory of his daughter Nicola, the Greater Manchester Police officer who was murdered alongside colleague PC Fiona Bone in September 2012.

"We take a donation from entry fees for all classes and donate it to the fund," says Lesley, who is PSUK equestrian section secretary.

**“ SO FAR WE HAVE DONATED AROUND £1,000 TO THE FUND AND WE HOPE THE TWO SHOWS THIS YEAR WILL ENABLE US TO BOOST THAT EVEN FURTHER.**

"The charity supports children who have lost a close family member due to a violent crime, such as murder or manslaughter, by helping provide learning opportunities or work skills so it seems very fitting to support its work. Bryn actively supports our events and will always attend the Blue Lights Horse Shows when he is able to.

"So far we have donated around £1,000 to the fund and we hope the two shows this year will enable us to boost that even further."

Lesley takes great pride in having ensured equestrianism is recognised and supported within forces and PSUK, by helping, through grants and external sponsorships, maintain its viability.

The Blue Lights Horse Shows, at which riders from the all emergency services and other UK Protective Services, can also compete alongside members of the public in different sections of the show have become a regular feature of the year and, Lesley says, competitors say they really enjoy them as well-spirited, friendly and supportive events.

But central to their success has been the support Lesley has been able to give to other forces without their own equestrian sections.

"Through Police Sport UK, "Team Police", we focus strongly on supporting and promoting wellbeing through sport for officers and staff in all



*BLHS 2021 Dr Champ Humberside.*

43 UK police forces.

"I have helped officers get their own force sports club sections off the ground, giving them advice and sharing my own experiences," she explains, "I am also more than happy to help anyone working within another force where they don't yet have an equestrian section to either establish one or to link them in with our events and other regional police riders. I can be contacted via my work email address which is available in the equestrian section on the PSUK Team Police website.

"Our previous Police Sport UK Equestrian Championships have seen numerous police forces represented with officers travelling from all over the UK. Last year we had a Hampshire officer and her horse boarding the ferry to join us from the

Isle of Wight and recently she attended the Royal Windsor Horse Show with the same horse and won an in-hand showing championship there."

Other forces represented have included Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Devon and Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, West Mercia, Gwent, South Wales, North Wales, Dyfed Powys, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Humberside and a visiting team from the Scottish Police Riders' Association.

2022 has seen a surge of interest from riders in more police force areas - all keen to join in the fun and camaraderie while riding to formally represent their force at an official Police Sports Equestrian Championship event.

All PSUK Team Police prize-winners ride within their own police section to compete for

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BLHS Solihull prize-giving.

championship trophies and riders placed first to sixth are awarded fantastic rosettes.

Lesley has been with West Mercia Police for 28 years and is currently a DS within the central vulnerability team within Protective Services at Force HQ. Away from work, she has been riding since she was a child and currently has three horses, one of which is retired.

Having competed at an amateur level in eventing, she now concentrates on showjumping

and dressage.

She is due to retire from the Force in just under two years but is working hard to leave a lasting legacy for the future of PSUK Team Police Equestrian with a keen team behind her making preparations to take over the reins!

Lesley is hoping between now and then both to support other horse-riding officers who would like to get involved in competing at PSUK events, and setting up their own equestrian sections if

necessary.

Follow the PSUK Team Police and Blue Lights Horse Show FB pages for event updates and entry information.

To find out more, contact Lesley by email at [Lesley.fisher@westmercia.co.uk](mailto:Lesley.fisher@westmercia.co.uk)

Read about the at [pcnicolahughesmemorialfund.co.uk](http://pcnicolahughesmemorialfund.co.uk)

You can find out more about PSUK at [teampolice.co.uk](http://teampolice.co.uk)



BLHS Solihull prize-giving.

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