

CONNECT



SPRING 2023

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM WEST MERCIA POLICE FEDERATION



CONTENTS

- 2** Chair's introduction
- 3** Calls for 17 per cent pay rise
- 3** Queries about Police Regulations?
- 3** Financial support available
- 4** Student officer calls Federation a 'lifeline' when no one else listened
- 6** Force has second lowest morale in the country
- 7** Guide available for inspecting ranks
- 7** New maternity guide
- 7** Federation welcomes plans for joint police and fire HQ
- 8** Fancy a stay at Federation House?

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

Secretary: Pete Nightingale

Every care is taken to ensure that advertisements are only accepted from bona fide advertisers. The Police Federation cannot accept liability incurred by any person as a result of a default on the part of an advertiser. The views expressed within this magazine are not necessarily the views of West Mercia Police Federation.

Contact the Federation
E-mail: staff@wmpf.polfed.org
Tel: 01905 744500

FOREWORD

Welcome to this first 2023 edition of *Connect*, the magazine for members of West Mercia Police Federation.

The magazine provides a snapshot of the issues affecting police officers over the last couple of months and is part of a communications strategy aimed at keeping members up to date.

We would urge members to also check in on our website - polfed.org/westmercia - for regular news updates and follow the branch on Facebook and Twitter.

While being a police officer is challenging at the best of times, the last few years have been particularly difficult with barely a week going by without negative headlines around policing.

We accept there are some issues that need to be tackled head-on. But the actions of a shameful minority who bring policing into disrepute should not sully the reputation of the vast majority of officers who remain committed to serving and protecting the public.

Officer morale is low - particularly here in West Mercia (see Page 5) and that is hardly surprising given the damaging media headlines, the pay crisis and the ongoing strikes by other workers which can have a knock-on effect on us all, both professionally and personally.

But, please remember, the Federation is here for you and do not hesitate to get in touch if you need help, advice or support.

PETE BECOMES BRANCH SECRETARY

Pete Nightingale has pledged to work with the West Mercia Police Federation team to support officers after becoming branch secretary.

He takes over from Steve Butler. "I would like to thank Steve for his contribution to the members of the Federation and for his efforts as secretary. I wish him all the best in his new role following his promotion. Steve will remain a work-based Federation representative, enabling him to carry on helping officers."

Immediately before taking up the secretary role at the end of February, Pete, who was previously vice-chair, spent a month as interim chair, taking over from chair Sarah Cooper.

"I would like to thank Sarah for her hard work and dedication in the role and I know many members are hugely grateful for her efforts over a number of years," said Pete.

Pete has more than 17 years' service, predominantly within South Worcestershire, and has worked in patrol, the dog section and custody. He has spent time as a temporary inspector on patrol and problem-solving and most recently has served as a sergeant in workforce planning at Force Headquarters.

Having been a Federation workplace representative for several years, he has predominantly dealt with disciplinary matters involving misconduct, gross misconduct and criminal investigations.

Pete explained: "I am passionate about making this a great place to work and working together to improve morale. Prior to being a Federation representative, I



signed up to the Police Pension Challenge against detrimental changes to our pensions. I hope this demonstrates that I am willing to stand up for what I believe to be morally right in the future."

At last year's Federation conference, he voted against an increase to Federation subscriptions, concerned about the financial pressure members were already facing.

He has also vowed to ensure the Force adheres to Police Regulations and to keep the focus on pay and conditions, officer morale and the great work carried out by officers daily.

Local workplace reps continue to be available to members for advice and support and general information is available throughout the [branch website](#) where you can find a [Quick Reference Guide](#) to regulations which answers many members' queries.

CALLS FOR 17 PER CENT PAY RISE

West Mercia Police Federation secretary Pete Nightingale spoke of his anger at the treatment of rank and file officers as new research reveals they've had a 17 per cent pay cut since the turn of the century.

Pete called for a substantial pay increase for officers to counter the "massive decline" in officers' pay since 2000.

He said serving officers deserved to be treated with "respect" and rewarded for their unique role in society.

And he added that the best new recruits would be put off from joining the service.

His comments came as new figures from Social Market Foundation (SMF), a non-partisan think tank, revealed that pay for UK police officers declined by 17 per cent in real terms between 2000 and 2022.

According to the report, policing is an outlier among emergency services workers, public sector workers and all workers.

The report said that all these groups saw their pay rise in real terms over this period – by a total of one per cent, fourteen per cent, and five per cent respectively. The research showed MPs' salaries saw a four per cent rise in total over the period.

"This report makes for horrible reading," Pete said. "It makes me so angry that our members are being treated with such contempt by the Government and have experienced such a massive decline in their pay since the turn of the millennium.

"Where has the money gone, because it's certainly not been invested in the police service or wider society?

"We rely on our brave police officers to serve and protect us but with such huge cuts to their pay it's no wonder they're leaving or contemplating leaving – and it makes it even harder to recruit the best candidates as well.

"The Government can change it all in a stroke and treat officers with the respect they deserve with a pay increase that reflects their unique role.

"Which is why, as a Federation, we're calling for a 17 per cent rise for officers to bring them back to the levels of 23 years ago. It's the least they deserve," he added.

The SMF report said officers decline in pay was likely to be linked to the restrictions on their right to strike compared

to all other workers, including other emergency service personnel.

It also found that police constable starting salaries have lagged behind earnings as a whole across the economy by a considerable amount.

SMF has calculated that if these trends continued over the next five years, police pay would see a further real-terms decline of four per cent by 2027 compared to private and public sector worker pay, which is expected to rise over the same period.

“ THE GOVERNMENT CAN CHANGE IT ALL IN A STROKE AND TREAT OFFICERS WITH THE RESPECT THEY DESERVE WITH A PAY INCREASE THAT REFLECTS THEIR UNIQUE ROLE.

A key factor in police pay discussions is the P-factor which SMF has suggested should be offered in addition to its findings.

The P-factor is an element of police pay that reflects the unique responsibilities police officers experience relative to other comparable roles.

This includes their risk of exposure to physical and psychological harm, alongside the restrictions that are placed upon their private lives.

The P-factor payment does not feature in SMF's report, highlighting that the actual figure of degradation of police pay is even greater.

National Federation chair Steve Hartshorn labelled the research a "wake-up call for policy-makers".

QUERIES ABOUT POLICE REGULATIONS?

The Federation has produced a [Quick Reference Guide](#) in line with its current understanding of Police Regulations 2003 and determinations, Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012, Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 and Police (Performance) Regulations 2012 as at February 2023.

This replaces the issue dated February 2022.

This summary of officers' main terms and conditions is not intended to be exhaustive, nor

can it be considered a substitute for the original regulations and determinations which govern the terms and conditions of appointment. An updated version will be produced as and when regulations change.

Please take a look at the guide to find the answers to your queries on regulations.

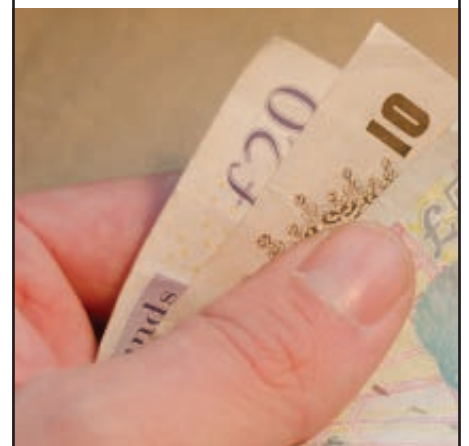
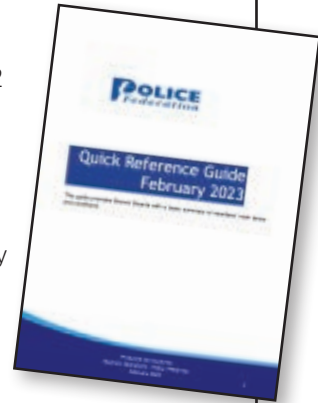
FINANCIAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE

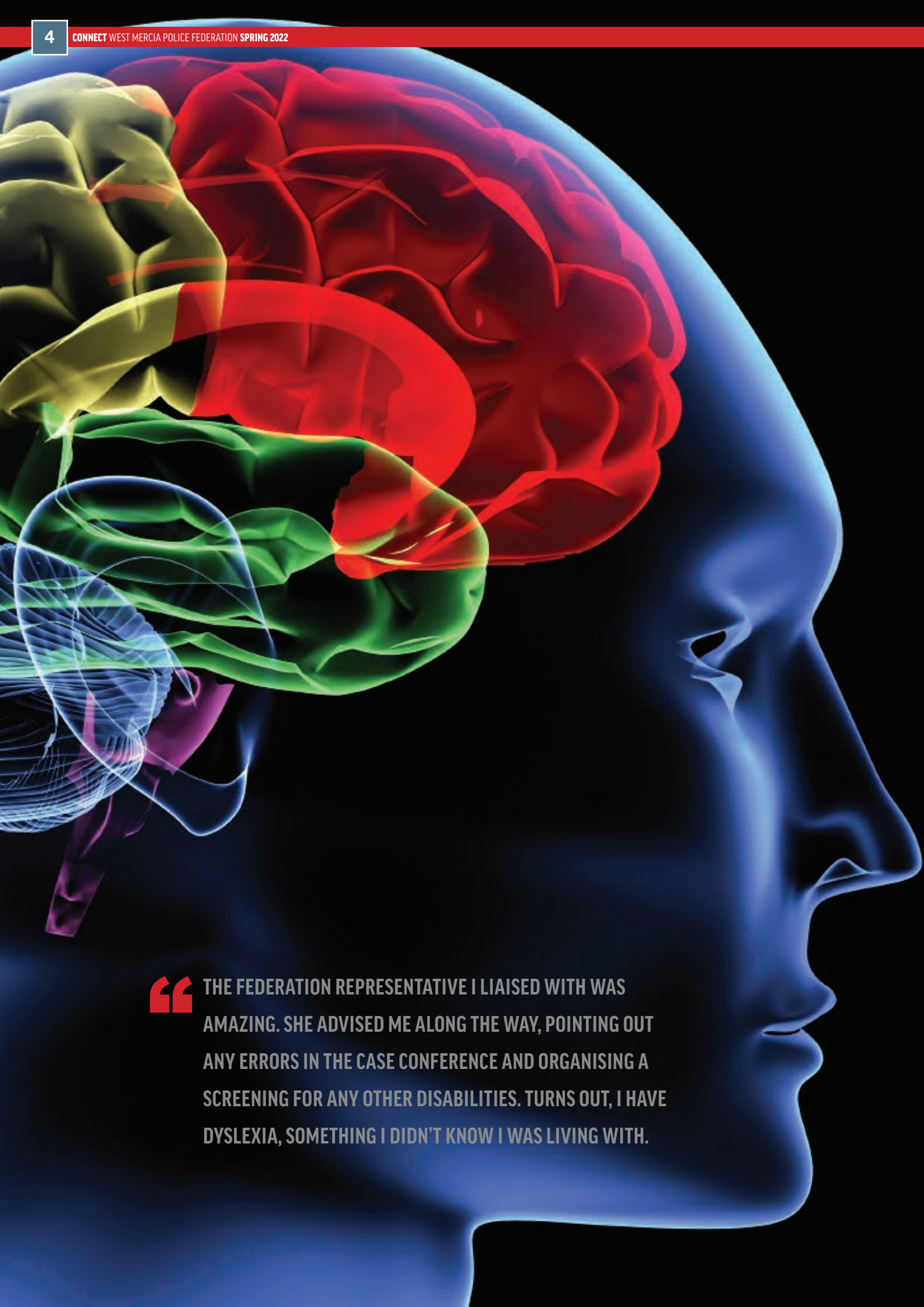
If you are a member of the Welfare Fund and you are going through hard times, you may be able to get some help.

Simply [email the fund administration team](#) in confidence.

To get support, you may be required to complete an application form and submit other details that will help the committee decide how best to help you.

All applications are anonymous. [Find out more.](#)





THE FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE I LIAISED WITH WAS AMAZING. SHE ADVISED ME ALONG THE WAY, POINTING OUT ANY ERRORS IN THE CASE CONFERENCE AND ORGANISING A SCREENING FOR ANY OTHER DISABILITIES. TURNS OUT, I HAVE DYSLEXIA, SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS LIVING WITH.

STUDENT OFFICER CALLS FEDERATION A 'LIFELINE' WHEN NO ONE ELSE LISTENED

A West Mercia student officer who lives with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has told how they felt like the Federation was 'the lifeline they needed' and the 'only ones listening' after finding themselves in the middle of a case conference.

Having joined the Force as part of the Government's uplift of 20,000 officers, the Federation member, who will remain anonymous, said their experience continues to knock their confidence, as they tell how their focus is now just 'being the best response officer possible'.

The officer chose to share their story as part of this year's Neurodiversity Celebration Week (13 - 19 March), which aimed to bring about worldwide neurodiversity acceptance, equality and inclusion in schools and workplaces.

"Following a breakdown in the relationship between me and my first tutor, I was appointed a new one. At first, everything seemed to be going well but, within months, I began to feel like everyone was against me. I felt like I was being constantly put in unfair situations, and as a result, my coursework was really suffering," they said.

"I honestly felt like people were out to get me sacked, like I was being set up to fail. The stress and pressure was really impacting the job. I found myself physically and emotionally in a downward spiral.

"I was desperate, I needed help, I needed support. I was really struggling. I even started to question whether this was the job for me."

In the summer of last year, they were taken to a case conference, which they explain is when they decided to reach out to the Federation.

They added: "The Federation representative I liaised with was amazing. She advised me along the way, pointing out any errors in the case conference

and organising a screening for any other disabilities. Turns out, I have dyslexia, something I didn't know I was living with.

"She ensured that reasonable adjustments were put in place in accordance with my disabilities, including specific software on my computer. This also forced the Force to take my disabilities into consideration going forward, which meant it was OK for me to take my time when working and to do things a bit slower, which made a huge difference.

"She also signposted me to other

**“ I WANT TO SHARE MY
STORY AS MUCH AS I CAN
TO GIVE HOPE TO OTHERS
WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN
A SIMILAR SITUATION.**

organisations and people for extra support.

"I want to share my story as much as I can to give hope to others who find themselves in a similar situation."

They found that nasty rumours had spread about them, and as a result, are still trying to 'shake off' what they feel is a 'tarnished reputation'.

"I want to grow but unfortunately reputations stick and people talk," they said.



"I have spent the past few months trying to unpick every little thing that has been said about me, and to prove that it's not true. I am determined to do whatever I can to get past this, even if that means moving to a different station or even another force."

They recalled how they were inspired to join the Force, having grown up surrounded by crime.

"I wasn't in good company during my childhood," they continued, explaining that their mum made the decision to move location, by way of trying to get them out of trouble.

"My big wake-up call was my mate getting killed, as a result of gang-related crime in the Midlands. That could've been me. Becoming a police officer was my way of helping to bridge the gap between the Force and local communities."

If you think you are neurodiverse and feel that you need support from the Federation, then [get in touch](#) with the branch's conduct and PIP lead Lesley Williams.

FORCE HAS SECOND LOWEST MORALE IN THE COUNTRY

Federation members believe morale across the Force is low or very low, according to a new report.

The findings of the Federation's annual pay and morale survey highlight record levels of dissatisfaction across the Force.

The survey revealed that 93 per cent of respondents felt morale was low or very low and that almost two thirds (64 per cent) said their own morale was either low or very low.

This placed West Mercia second on the list of forces with the lowest personal morale with only Dorset Police showing a higher percentage of dissatisfied officers.

The West Mercia survey results also revealed:

- **95 per cent did not feel respected by the Government**
- **79 per cent would not recommend joining the police to others**
- **74 per cent did not feel valued within the Force**
- **17 per cent intend to resign within the next two years or as soon as they can.**

Pay and conditions remain a top concern for most West Mercia Police Federation members with 85 per cent saying that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their overall remuneration, including basic pay and allowances.

Nearly all respondents (98 per cent) reported that their cost of living had shot up in the last month with soaring food prices being the main reason for the increase.

Almost nine out of ten (86 per cent) felt that they were worse off financially than they were five years ago and one in five (19 per cent) admitted they were struggling to make ends meet and never or almost never had enough money to cover all their essentials.

FACTORS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING MORALE

	West Mercia Police %	England and Wales %
Pay	90	87
Workload and responsibilities	72	64
How the police are treated by the Government	96	95
How the police are treated by the public	81	81
Your pension	67	68
Opportunities for development and promotion	42	39

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORKING IN THE POLICE

	2022 %	2021 %
I would not recommend joining the police to others	79	8
I do not feel valued in the police	74	66

OFFICERS' TREATMENT IN THE POLICE

	2022		2021	
	'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' %	'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' %	'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' %	'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' %
I am respected by the Government	1	95	2	93
I am respected by the public	6	80	9	77
I am treated fairly	25	46	27	44

Around half (49 per cent) found their job very or extremely stressful but more than eight in ten (83 per cent) indicated they had experienced feelings of stress,

low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months.

[Read the full report.](#)

GUIDE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTING RANKS

West Mercia Police Federation is offering advice for the Force's inspecting ranks on their conditions of work.

The branch is highlighting online guidance which talks inspectors and chief inspectors through their working conditions.

The Federation, which has produced the [guide to the working conditions of inspecting ranks](#), says the guidance will provide accurate information and clear up any myths.

It covers the conditions of working for inspectors and chief inspectors that were agreed by the then Police Negotiating Board and introduced on 1 September 1994, and the impact they've had.

The guidance covers areas including rest days, flexibility, part-time working, working time and on-call.

West Mercia Police Federation conduct and PIP lead Lesley Williams said: "Ever since the conditions were introduced in 1994 there's been a lot of misunderstanding about what it actually means for inspecting ranks.

"This guidance from the Federation aims to arm our colleagues in the inspecting ranks with reliable information, to clear up those misunderstandings, and to bust a lot of myths that have grown up around them."

[Download the guide to the working conditions of inspecting ranks.](#)



NEW MATERNITY GUIDE

Officers planning to take maternity leave can now find out their entitlements by using a ready reckoner created by the Federation.

The calculator allows users to enter a due date and plan for other scenarios, such as early birth, extended maternity leave, or sickness for pregnancy-related reasons in the weeks prior to their due date.

Pete Nightingale, secretary of West Mercia Police Federation, explained: "The rules around maternity leave are different for police officers. For example, they are eligible for both Police Maternity Pay and Statutory Maternity Pay but not statutory maternity leave, only police maternity leave.

"I would definitely recommend using the calculator and forearming yourself with the knowledge of what your entitlements are.

"However, if you do need extra advice or support, the Federation is here to help."

A booklet has also been created to answer members' questions around maternity leave, returning to work and entitlements available to partners.

[Read the guide and access the calculator.](#)

FEDERATION WELCOMES PLANS FOR JOINT POLICE AND FIRE HQ

Plans for a joint headquarters in the heart of Redditch for West Mercia Police and the fire service have been welcomed by the Federation.

Construction firm Speller Metcalfe has been appointed to build the £17.6 million facility with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) covering just over 64 per cent of the costs and the rest coming from West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS).

The combined headquarters is intended to save taxpayers' money by splitting overheads and enabling emergency services to work more closely together.

Pete Nightingale, secretary of West Mercia Police Federation, commented:

“WE ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THE CONCEPT OF CLOSER WORKING WITH THE FIRE SERVICES. THIS HAS PROVED SUCCESSFUL IN OTHER AREAS AND IS GENERALLY GOOD FOR BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR PARTNERS AND MAKING THE BEST USE OF PUBLIC FINANCES.

"We are supportive of the concept of closer working with the fire services. This has proved successful in other areas and is generally good for building and strengthening relationships with our partners and making the best use of public finances.

"We hope that the new building will also pay dividends in terms of the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, being able to work in a building which is fit for purpose."

But Pete warned: "We will, of course, be scrutinising the detail to get the best for our members. For example, it is vitally important that police officers and staff are provided with adequate, secure parking, rather than being forced to pay to park off site with the expense, stress

and inconvenience that this brings."

West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said he had "heard loud and clear" from communities that they want a visible and accessible police force, adding that a new fit-for-purpose building in Worcestershire would see officers at the heart of the community again.

"I am delivering on my promises to reform West Mercia Police by investing in new projects, bringing the two emergency services together to ensure you, the public, get the service you deserve," said Mr Campion.

His words were echoed by Chief Fire Officer Jon Pryce who said the new facilities would strengthen joint responses to emergencies and build on a commitment to collaborate.

Superintendent Mel Paley, on behalf of the Force, said: "We're delighted these plans have been approved and look forward to the completion of the new hub and a new base for response officers, CID and the local safer neighbourhood team which will enable us to better support our communities."



FANCY A STAY AT FEDERATION HOUSE?

Federation members planning a weekend break in London should look beyond the capital's pricey hotels and book a room at Federation House instead, according to a recent visitor.

West Mercia Police Federation member Frances Thorpe and her fiancée Nicola Haines decided to try it out for themselves after hearing good things from colleagues who had stayed there.

The hotel, located within the Police Federation HQ complex in Leatherhead, Surrey, has 55 en-suite bedrooms, three self-contained two bedroom apartments and a large open atrium area with a restaurant and bar and there is also a gym.

Guests can be in central London in less than an hour and then head back out of the city when the hustle and bustle becomes a bit too much.

Frances said: "I'd heard feedback from colleagues who had stayed there about how convenient it was to get into London.

"It is literally five minutes' walk from Leatherhead station and then you just get the train straight into Waterloo.

"So I thought we'd give it a go and stay somewhere a bit different outside the hustle and bustle of London and everything worked out absolutely perfectly."

The couple enjoyed a meal at Monica Galetti's Mere restaurant on the Friday night to celebrate Nicola's birthday and spent the rest of the weekend sightseeing in the capital before returning to the Midlands via Windsor Castle.

Frances said she was really impressed with the hotel, its staff, facilities and sense of security it provided and wouldn't hesitate



Frances next to a wall decoration in the bar/foyer area which displays each force's badge.

recommending it to colleagues.

"It was quiet and it was totally safe and secure - you go in through barriers, there's an underground car park and you buzz to get let in so you feel that everything is secure," she said.

"There's a bar, a free pool table and the

breakfasts were brilliant. It wasn't really posh but it was very smart and very clean.

"We just felt really comfortable there, it was very convenient and a really good price."

[Check out the Federation House website.](#)