

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

June/July 2019

'More Taser trained officers needed' – see Page 4

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Welcome

Welcome to the June/July 2019 edition of *federation* - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

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

Just get in touch and let us know.

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

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We still need more Taser trained officers



By **Rich Cooke**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

By the end of this year just under half of our front-line officers – and mainly PCs – will have been trained and equipped with Taser.

This represents great progress and I am pleased, and grateful, with how far we have come in terms of rolling out these devices since they not only enable officers to effectively protect the public from potentially dangerous people but also allow them to protect themselves.

Statistics back up our contention that often just drawing Taser is enough to defuse

a threatening situation so it's understandable that in a routine arming survey carried out by the Police Federation of England and Wales in 2017 82 per cent of West Midlands officers said they would like to have access to Taser at all times while on duty. At that point, only 15 per cent of our respondents, for whom it was relevant to their role, actually had that access. It is perhaps worth noting that in the same survey less than half (42 per cent) said they were in favour of routine arming, although 63 per cent said they would be prepared to carry a firearm at all times while on duty.

It would be interesting to see the results if this survey was carried out now. While I am sure we would see an increase on that 15 per cent of our officers with access to Taser, I am afraid that number might plateau.

The current uplift of Taser trained officers will come to end later this year and, as I said at the outset, I am pleased at how far we have come. We have kept the focus on officer safety at a high level in our Force and I want to ensure that continues.

But let's be clear, I won't be satisfied until all our front-line and custody officers have the opportunity to carry Taser. As the recent widely shared video of officers in Wolverhampton, who were being subjected to a vicious attack from a suspect shows, Taser can prevent far more serious injury and end a violent incident quickly and safely.

However, I don't only want to see our front-line PCs equipped with Taser but also their sergeants, inspectors and chief inspectors. We need supervisors fully able to support their bobbies and genuinely leading

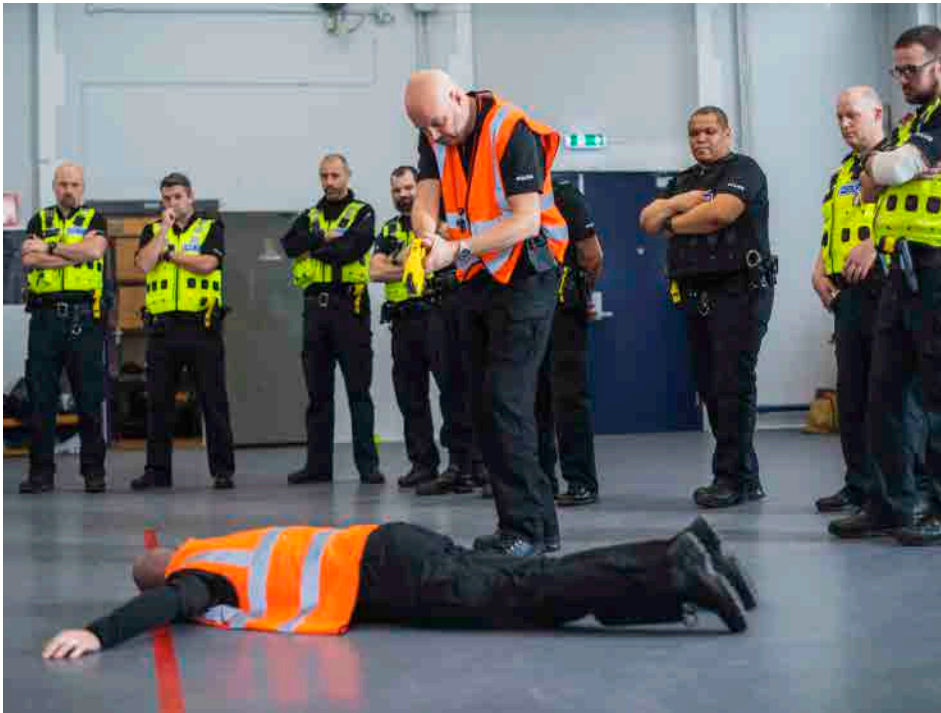
In a routine arming survey in 2017 82 per cent of West Midlands officers said they would like access to Taser at all times while on duty.

from the front where the occasion demands.

Only last week a sergeant based at Stechford was attacked by a deranged man armed with a metal bar who was eventually Tasered. This type of incident where officers are attacked with weapons is alarmingly regular. We all deserve the tools to defend ourselves.

So, I will be continuing to call for an increased roll-out of Taser until all front-line and custody officers have received the training and been issued with the devices and I strongly believe the Government should be providing the funding to enable forces to do this, for the benefit of police officers and the communities they serve.

Moving on from Taser, I would just like to raise awareness of the great pressures Force CID is under right now.



Taser training.

The department is engaged in short notice changes. Demand is far outstripping supply. The volume of murders, shootings and other serious incidents has continued to increase. We have 11 unsolved murders from the past 12 months, including eight which are gang-related. We also have other very serious crimes that remain unsolved.

Changes, which will be disruptive and unsettling to officers, are being made in an effort to make sure we are effectively servicing critical areas of business. But this will have a knock-on effect on other areas affecting our service to the wider community.

The Force is committed to maintaining a focus on burglary dwelling and robbery but inevitably the investigation of other offences may be adversely affected. Of course, funding is a primary cause of this, but there are arguably others factors coming into play too.

The Federation has long argued the current operating model is not fit for purpose and leads to mass de-skilling of officers in areas which are no longer their day job. Hence we have response officers well drilled in handling and managing a scene but losing basic investigatory expertise. Then, on the other hand, we have investigative officers who are no longer emergency drivers and have been off the streets for some time.

I believe, if we are going to maintain the current structure, we need to find a way of ensuring there is an ongoing exchange of knowledge and experience between specialisms.

Pensions challenge

The Government has set aside almost £30 billion to cover the potential cost if it is not granted the right to appeal a Court of Appeals decision on judges' and firefighters' pensions, a decision which could impact on police pensions.

Incidentally, we still don't know whether the Government will be allowed to appeal.

The background to this is that on 20 December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled the Government's transitional pension arrangements offered to some judges and firefighters amounted to unlawful discrimination. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced this ruling could cost around £4 billion a year if extended to all applicable public service pension schemes.

The Government challenged the Court of Appeal's decision. The Pension Challenge group, acting on behalf of a number of police officers, asked the Treasury whether this was being treated as a contingent liability. It explained that schemes have made provisions of £29.5 billion in respect of a potential increase in liabilities.

If the Government appeal went ahead and was then lost, the Treasury would not expect that to affect scheme contribution rates until beyond the period to 2023 which are in the process of being set. As such, this case represents a longer term fiscal risk rather than one that would be likely to affect the public finances within our current forecast horizon.

I have always believed the Federation should be supporting the Pension Challenge

and all affected members. I continue to raise this issue at the Federation's National Council and challenge the current view at every opportunity. But I remain of the view that should the challenge (of which I am a member) succeed, the likelihood is all affected members will benefit although what I would like to see is the Federation nationally try to guarantee this by instituting claims on behalf of all members now.

Stop and search

Earlier this year, aiming to empower officers tackling the ever-growing knife crime crisis, Home Secretary Sajid Javid decided to relax the 'Best Use of Stop and Search' protocol, introduced by Theresa May in 2014, for several forces including ours.

You would be forgiven for thinking chief officers would jump at the chance of once again allowing rank and file operational officers to use enhanced search powers, known as 'S60', dynamically to suppress and tackle emerging threats of serious violence.

Sadly, in my opinion, the Force has decided it would be altogether safer to retain the authorising rank at Mrs May's preference, that is chief officer level. Greater Manchester Police has done something similar insisting on an authorising rank of superintendent. This will ensure enough barriers remain so the power is rarely used. This is partly down to fears of 'perception' on the ground and concerns young people stopped and found with drugs might be 'unnecessarily criminalised'.

I have clearly communicated my views to the Chief Constable. For me, this represents a problem of trust. Increasingly we see a 'top down' approach to policing, a risk aversion which is denying rank and file officers the ability to act dynamically and decisively to suppress crime.

Fears of 'perception' and worries about 'reputation' weigh far too highly in my view and, in actual fact, they are likely to find that once we start empowering our rank and file officers they will deliver in the positive on both of those things.

Pay and morale: have your say

All Federation members are being urged to complete a survey on pay and conditions and officer morale. The Police Federation of England and Wales conducts a national survey on these issues each year with the findings being used as evidence in its submission to the Pay Review Remuneration Body (PRRB).

“While I appreciate that officers are busy and it can be hard to find time to fill out the various surveys circulated throughout the year, I would say this is one of the most important,” says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

“It should only take around 20 minutes to complete but the findings could have a real bearing on officers’ pay and conditions for years to come. The more officers who fill out the survey the stronger the arguments of the Federation on their behalf will be.”

The survey will close on Monday 29 July. All Federation members will be emailed a link to the survey but if you do not receive yours, please email the Federation office.

Three quarters of officers unhappy over pay

More than three quarters (77 per cent) of West Midlands officers who took part in last year’s pay and morale survey said they were dissatisfied with their overall remuneration package – including basic pay and allowances.

And a similar number (76.1 per cent) said they felt they were worse off financially than they were five years ago.

A total of 1,016 responses were received from West Midlands Police Federation members.

The West Midlands results also revealed:

- 41.8 per cent of respondents reported worrying about the state of their

personal finances every day or almost every day

- 10.9 per cent reported never or almost never having enough money to cover all their essentials
- 64.5 per cent their morale was currently low
- 97.6 per cent felt morale within the Force was currently low
- 74.5 per cent said they would not recommend joining the police to others
- 11.8 per cent said they intended to leave the police service either within the next two years or as soon as possible.

Comparison of 2018 and 2017 figures for the pay and morale survey in West Midlands Police is provided in the table below.

	2018	2017
Do not feel fairly paid for the stresses and strains their job	88.8 per cent	88 per cent
Dissatisfied with total remuneration	77 per cent	75.6 per cent
Dissatisfied with pension	69 per cent	66 per cent

41.8 per cent of respondents reported worrying about the state of their personal finances every day or almost every day



Tim welcomes breakthrough on response driving legislation



Tim Rogers who has led the hard-fought campaign.

The Home Office has issued a Written Ministerial Statement announcing plans to change the law to give police drivers better protection from prosecution.

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the Federation's national response driving lead, has led the campaign for legislative change and welcomed the Home Office's announcement on 2 May.

"We are pleased and reassured by this move. For far too long, police officers have faced conduct proceedings and criminal prosecution for simply doing their job; a situation putting them, and their families, through stressful investigations and often taking them away from their roles serving their communities.

"It is clearly absurd that a trained police driver is currently judged by the standards of the careful and competent member of the public in terms of their driving. Members of the public are not asked to respond to emergency and life-threatening situations.

You would not expect them to have to use the skills of a professional police driver nor have their driving experience.

"Members of the public would expect police officers to use their skill and training to respond to calls for assistance and this change in the law will enable officers to do that without fear of prosecution for simply doing their jobs.

"We now need the Government to be bold, prioritise this issue, find Parliamentary time and fulfil its promise to police officers and the public."

Tim has also praised the Home Office, the Department of Transport, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and a number of members of the National Police Chiefs' Council for their support.

The Home Office wants to change the law to ensure that highly trained police drivers, chasing suspected criminals on the roads and driving to the very high standard required by their training, are better protected from the risk of lengthy investigation and potential prosecution.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid will look to introduce a new legal test aimed at giving them greater confidence to pursue suspects, including those on mopeds.

He said: "It's vital police officers feel confident and protected when pursuing suspects on the roads or responding to an emergency. It's also crucial that we send a clear message that criminals – whether in cars or on mopeds - cannot escape arrest simply by driving recklessly. These proposed changes will strike the right balance – giving

trained officers the confidence they need to fight crime effectively and ensure our roads are safe."

Current laws do not recognise police response drivers' training and the tactics they are taught to employ to respond to emergencies and pursue criminals.

Police drivers are instead held to the same standards as members of the public and have to rely on the discretion of the IOPC and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to avoid misconduct investigations and criminal prosecution.

Any changes will make it clear that officers should not be held accountable for the driving of a suspected criminal attempting to avoid arrest, providing the pursuit is justified and proportionate.

The move follows a public consultation which saw the overwhelming majority of respondents back the proposals.

In summary, the changes will aim to:

- Introduce a new legal test so that an officer's driving is compared to that of a competent and careful police driver with the same level of training performing the same role, rather than a member of the public
- Apply to all police officers trained to response driver level as well as advance driver level, therefore cover those pursuing criminals and also emergency police responders.

The Government also wants to review the various emergency service exemptions to traffic law to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

See the timeline of key dates in the campaign on Pages 8 and 9.

“It's vital police officers feel confident and protected when pursuing suspects on the roads or responding to an emergency.”

Campaign timeline



Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) lead on

response driving, tells delegates at the national Police Federation conference in Bournemouth: "Emergency response drives and pursuits are still measured against the standard of the careful and competent driver. You know, the driver that doesn't drive above the speed limit, through red traffic lights, respond to incidents?"

"In my Force, there are around 2,500 immediate response incidents each week – that's 2,500 occasions when police drivers put themselves at risk of prosecution as they go about their duties serving the public of the West Midlands."

He continues: "We are not being alarmist, and I concede that prosecutions in context are few and far between. But spare a thought for Officer Few and Far Between who is mendaciously pursued through the criminal court only to be acquitted one, two, three or four years later and then told 'you were just doing your job'."

"We are merely pointing out what our members, chief officers, MPs and the public need to know. There is a flaw in the system, and a risk to our members - and the public."

"I am sure the public would expect police officers to use their skills and professionalism to respond as quickly as possible to a call for assistance; they do not expect us to be obstructed by legislation."



The Police Federation steps up its campaign for a change in the law to protect police drivers following the presentation on the issue to the annual conference earlier in the year.



As part of the campaign for a change in the law, Tim seeks the support of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for pursuits – who has

said he would only support a partial change in the law.



The Police Federation of England and Wales writes to all of its members to remind them that 'there are no legal exemptions from the offences of careless or dangerous driving' for officers responding to calls for help from the public.

The letter was sent to more than 120,000 Federation members across England and Wales and was intended to correct the assumption, also held by many members of the public, that police officers can break traffic rules.



The Home Office announces a review of the law and guidance surrounding police pursuits and response driving after the hard-fought

Federation campaign.

Police minister Nick Hurd confirms the review will involve the Federation, the Department for Transport, the Department of Health, the Attorney General's Office and the IPCC, as well as the relevant national policing leads, representatives of the other emergency services and groups representing other road users.



Norfolk MP Sir Henry Bellingham puts forward his Private Members' Bill in the House of Commons which could lead to a change in the law surrounding police drivers.

Sir Henry introduced his Emergency Response Drivers (Protections) Ten-Minute Rule Bill on 20 December, and won cross-party support.



Sir Henry Bellingham.



An 11th hour delay with the new bill is described as a 'bitter disappointment' and 'further extends the threat of prosecution to our members', according to Tim.

He spoke of his frustration on learning the expected second reading of the Emergency Response Drivers (Protections) Bill due to be discussed in Parliament on Friday 16 March had been stalled. The bill, which had been put forward by Sir Henry Bellingham, won cross-party support when it came before MPs before Christmas 2017.

But the Government has called a halt to the process until an ongoing review 'into the

law and best practice regarding police pursuits' was complete.

Tim explained: "To get this disappointing news just hours away from a key legislative milestone, which had already secured cross-party support, is a bitter blow – and all the more devastating. What are our members and fellow emergency response drivers to do in the meantime? How many more lives could be ruined going through lengthy legal proceedings – ultimately criminalising officers for just doing their job?"



Federation members across England and Wales were encouraged to lobby their local MPs to call on them to support the pursuits bill so it can make its way through Parliament.

The Federation campaign on the issue also led to Tim writing a blog for the national Federation website ahead of the planned second reading of the bill on 16 March which was then cancelled.

He wrote: "Current legislation leaves police officers and other emergency service responders vulnerable. This is because there are no exemptions in the current legislation that take into account the high level of specialised training officers are given. All are measured against the common standard of a non-trained 'competent and careful driver'. According to the law, 'dangerous driving' includes speeding, ignoring traffic signals, or overtaking dangerously. Officers can also be held liable for causing others to drive dangerously. Talk about trying to do your job with one hand tied behind your back!"

And he added: "The bill is categorically not a charter for blue light drivers to act irresponsibly. We would never endorse that. We only seek to protect our officers and other blue light responders who are following their training and exercising their professional judgment. They already do a difficult job under stressful circumstances and they deserve our support and that of the law."



Tim gives no more than a 'cautious welcome' to news that the Government is to consult on proposed changes to the law in relation to trained pursuits drivers.

Yet, while he said the announcement was a step in the right direction, he voiced concern over the amount of time it was taking to reduce the threat of prosecution for officers in pursuit of dangerous threats.

"This has been an issue we have been campaigning on now for seven years, and although it is a positive step that the

Government has finally agreed that a legislation change is required, it must now act quickly to prevent more officers suffering unnecessary and often mendacious prosecutions. It is crucial we protect the people who protect us and give them the confidence to be able to do their jobs and keep the public safe."

2018
August

In a confident statement, Tim says there will be a change in the law to offer better protection for police drivers and says the issue will be resolved when Parliament reconvenes in the autumn.

"We are almost there," says Tim, "Later this year we will either see the bill outlining the legislative change we require put forward by Norfolk MP Sir Henry Bellingham making its way to law or the Government will lay down its own plans to change the law.

"This will be a victory for this campaign, for police officers and other emergency service drivers but also for common sense. It cannot be right that police officers doing

their jobs, protecting their communities, following their training and current guidance, acting proportionately and responsibly are prosecuted or put through conduct proceedings."

2018
December

Tim expresses his 'bitter disappointment' that the Private Members' Bill proposing better protection in law for police drivers was delayed once again.

The second reading of Sir Henry Bellingham's Emergency Response Drivers (Protections) Bill, put forward on behalf of the Police Federation, was put back from Friday 23 November to March 2019.

"While the lack of progress for Sir Henry's bill is, of course, a bitter disappointment, we have to take stock of where we have come from and what has been achieved over the past two years. It's certainly not all bad," said Tim. "Our focus was, and always will be, to get the current legislative flaw remedied to ensure that our stretched professionals can do simply what society expects without the reserved right to prosecute them.

2019
January

The Government must be bold and put out a statement saying precisely when it will make the amendments to the law it has promised to ensure police drivers get the legal protection they need when carrying out their job, Tim told the Federation's roads policing conference.

Calling the current situation an 'irreversible position of agreement', Tim tells delegates Brexit was no excuse for delaying legislative change and that nothing should have greater importance than giving officers the tools they needed to serve and protect the public.

2019
2 May

The Home Office issues a Written Ministerial Statement announcing plans to change the law to give police drivers better protection from prosecution.

Tim welcomes the news but urges the Government to prioritise the issue.



Brave officers put forward for national award

Two West Midlands officers who were still in training when they confronted a group of men armed with knives have been nominated for the national Police Bravery Awards.

PCs Lorna Walsh and Adam McWalter were still student officers, when on 15 June 2018, they were left fearing for their own safety.

The two officers were put forward for the prestigious awards by West Midlands Police Federation.

Federation chair Rich Cooke said: "These two brave officers may be relatively young in service but both showed they have the qualities and skills of great police officers. They acted in the finest traditions of policing, seeking to protect the public from danger despite putting themselves at risk of injury or worse.

"They should be very proud of themselves and I am pleased their actions will be recognised at the bravery awards which are one of the most important events in the policing year."

The pair had volunteered to change their shifts and take part in a plain clothes operation tackling prostitution when on Ninevah Road they came across a group of 20 men - one of whom was holding a knife with an eight-inch blade to the stomach of another.

The officers got out of their vehicle, identified themselves as police officers and told the man to put down the knife. They



PCs Adam McWalter and Lorna Walsh.

draw their batons and spray but the man with the knife started to run towards PC McWalter with the knife held out in front of him in a threatening manner, before discarding it over a wall.

Unaware if he had any other weapons, PC McWalter chased after him when a second man pulled a large knife out of his waistband and, holding it in the air, ran towards PC Walsh. PC Walsh shouted at the man to put the knife down but he ran off, following her colleague and shouting: "Police won't get you brother."

PC Walsh, fearing for her colleague's safety, screamed to warn him of the threat from behind. PC McWalter activated his

emergency button and managed to keep both men in sight, even though the second offender ran at him with the knife. Colleagues with Taser arrived on the scene quickly and both men were red dotted and subsequently arrested.

This year's awards ceremony takes place on 18 July in London. PC Walsh will take her fiancé, Tony, as her special guest while PC McWalter will be accompanied by his wife, Amanda.

The bravery awards honour some of the finest officers in England and Wales who have performed incredible acts of bravery, while on or off duty. The event is now in its 24th year.

'Government must act on crime'

The Government needs to stop trying to maintain its argument that cuts to policing have not affected crime levels and re-invest in the police service, says West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich was speaking after the latest police-recorded crime figures released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) revealed crime is continuing to increase in all but a few categories.

The headline figures for the crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2018 report showed:

- A six per cent increase to 40,829 in the number of police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments

- A six per cent increase in the number of homicides to 732, a four-year high
- A 12 per cent increase in fraud offences
- A 10 per cent increase in sexual offences
- A 46 per cent increase – the largest increase of any category of crime – in stalking and harassment, and
- A 28 per cent decrease in computer misuse.

Rich said the Government owed it to police officers and the public to put money into policing so forces could tackle crime.

He explained: "Police officers are doing their best and forces are trying to prioritise how they use their reduced resources, but

policing has been severely under-funded for years now and there is only so much we can do.

"Since 2010, we have lost almost 22,000 police officers across England and Wales and we have seen no corresponding fall in demand, in fact, I would say the opposite is true.

"We need to see a re-investment in policing so that we can provide our communities with the visible police presence we know they are crying out for. Effective community policing is the cornerstone we need to build on. Community based officers provide reassurance to the public but also act as the Force's eyes and ears in terms of getting the intelligence it needs to tackle all crimes."



Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, presents Sophie Clement with her award.

Sophie wins Police Officer of the Year Award

Sergeant Sophie Clement admits her role as Wolverhampton's sex offender manager is stressful and challenging.

But it is clearly a role in which she excels since, at the Force's Diamond Awards Ceremony in March, Sophie was presented with the Police Officer of the Year Award which is sponsored by West Midlands Police Federation.

Sophie was one of three officers put forward for the award.

Her nomination details in the Diamond Awards programme stated: "A natural leader, she has created a committed team who are focussed on excellence and will do anything to help one another.

"Her gut reactions are second to none. An offender's chance comment was enough for Sophie to ask the forensic examiner to look for evidence of what she correctly suspected as downloading of child porn and breach of a sex offender prevention order.

"Her dogged determination also saw her challenging the CPS to gain a successful European arrest warrant for an offender who had been missing for five years."

Sophie also currently supports the management of very high-risk offenders at a national level.

The runners-up for Police Officer of the Year were PC James Bradley of

Wolverhampton NPU, praised for his encyclopaedic knowledge of offenders and his city centre patch, and DC Tom Keady of the Public Protection Unit who was described as a highly experienced and effective role model with an infectious sense of humour despite challenging times.

The Force's annual Diamond Awards were hosted by Chief Constable Dave Thompson and the compere for the evening was BBC Midlands TV presenter Joanne Malin.

The Police Officer of the Year Award recognises outstanding service by individuals, over and above what is required as part of their normal duties.

Federation's conduct lead looks back on his career as he heads into retirement

Looking back on a 29-year policing career, John Tooms says one piece of advice stood him in good stead: 'If in doubt, ask.'

And it is the same advice he would pass on to a new recruit joining the Force today – along with the words of an infamous Professional Standards Department (PSD) inspector who told him: 'It's not what you do – it's what you do next.'

John, who has been the West Midlands Police Federation full-time conduct lead since 2010 and retired from the Force in mid-June, is certainly well placed to offer a wealth of advice to student officers.

Like so many Federation officials, he first put himself forward to represent his colleagues when, having faced a malicious and unjustified complaint, he underwent a six-month PSD-led inquiry.

"There was no local Federation discipline rep on my OCU/LPU at that time so, once my complaint was resolved, I thought 'why not have a go?' And the rest is history," he said.

John became a work-based LPU rep in 2003 and then a work-based discipline rep (now CaPLO – Conduct and Performance Liaison Officer) three years later. He has no regrets about taking on the full-time role despite the stresses and strains it brought.

"Effectively you are on duty or on call 24/7 and never off duty – fortunately, I have a very patient and understanding family. But I stuck with it as I felt it offered the opportunity to make a real difference by supporting and helping officers, the vast majority of whom were only striving to do their very best. This has been a real privilege and, most of the time, a pleasure too," John said.

While he has seen much change in policing terms during his career – not least the increased use of IT, including Airwave, hand-held devices and telematics in vehicles, Taser, body-worn video and the advent of social media – it is in the world of conduct where the Police Federation has tried to drive change. John is cautiously optimistic there will be a shift towards the learning and development ethos of the new (2019) conduct regulations if there is a buy-in from



Steve Grange, Federation secretary (left), presents a retirement gift to John Tooms.

chief officers, PSDs and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

He explained: "The only thing in the world of policing that doesn't change is constant change. There have been two major legislative changes to the conduct regulations in my time as a rep (2008/2012) with another just around the corner (2019) – along with many regular amendments to the regulations and guidance."

"The introduction of independent, legally qualified chairs of misconduct hearings has been a big step forward with regard to fairness and transparency."

But nevertheless he still has concerns about the length of time taken to conclude conduct investigations and the detrimental and horrendous effect they have on the mental and physical wellbeing of officers and their families, especially when they are exonerated at the end of the process.

"For far too long the welfare of an officer under investigation was forgotten or ignored. To be fair, WMP has made some recent improvements in this area – e.g. contact plans and welfare Spocs though, perhaps due to budget cuts and staffing challenges, some officers still don't get the support they

require," said John.

"The 'blame culture' adopted by PSDs and the IPCC now IOPC for a number of years has more often than not resulted in officers becoming demotivated and suspicious – this hasn't helped them as individuals, or the Force in general.

"The 2015 Amendment Regulations brought in by Theresa May - fortunately now replaced by the 2017 Former Officer Regulations - that prevented any officer under investigation for gross misconduct resigning or retiring were, to be honest, a disaster – for the officers caught up in this and for the Force.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that the Home Office is finally trying to get to grips with these issues, having failed in 2008 and 2012, via the proposed 2019 (probably 2020 due to Brexit) new conduct regulations and associated guidance.

"These new regulations are intended to deal with the majority of complaints as learning or performance, as opposed to blame or misconduct, and leaving only the most serious complaints or corruption allegations to be dealt with as misconduct or gross misconduct. Current figures would suggest investigations are being conducted in

a more timely way but there is still a long way to go – there are still many examples of officers being under investigation for years - and it only needs the wrong change at the top of a force, PSD or the IOPC for any progress made to be reversed very quickly

“There will also be a return to the potential sanction of ‘reduction in rank’ though I’m not sure this is fair to constables who, for obvious reasons, can’t be subject to this. The use of this sanction will have to be closely monitored.

“I genuinely hope chief constables, PSDs and the IOPC buy in to this. Recently our Force and PSD have moved in the right direction towards the NCC approved ‘ethos’ of the 2019 regulations even though they haven’t been implemented yet. Sadly, experience has shown over the years that it only needs a certain type of senior manager to lead PSD or the IOPC and all the progress made towards a learning culture can swiftly be reversed to one of blame and suspicion.”

John’s policing career began in Class 10/90E in October 1990. Leicestershire Police and civil engineering’s loss was West Midlands Police’s gain.

He had wanted to join Leicestershire Police Cadets when he was 16 but, since they weren’t recruiting, he stayed on at school and eventually got a civil engineering HND and degree at Trent Polytechnic.

His first police posting were in the G2 D Unit at Wednesfield and then Bilston where he started his first independent foot patrol. His career threw up a number of highlights.

He recalls: “I have worked with lots of amazing, hard-working, committed people who I won’t embarrass by naming - including one or two at PSD (!), having an attachment to AO1 and getting promoted to sergeant - ‘the best rank in the job’ according to the then Chief Constable Ron Hadfield and I have to agree – were all high points.

“Leading a small team at the Merry Hill Shopping Centre was also a pivotal moment and then becoming a Fed rep and being able to make a real difference to the lives of members and sometimes their families.”

But, of course, there were also a number of low points, most significantly the loss of serving colleagues and friends Mick Swindells in 2004 and Mick Chapman in 2014.

He also came to the realisation, very early in his career, that if a supervisor doesn’t like you they can make your life and career very difficult.

“Through no fault of my own, I was unfairly criticised by a certain supervisor who, after I challenged them back, made it their goal to make my first two years as uncomfortable as possible. Fortunately, I had great support from my team supervision and I completed my probation successfully,” John said.



John Tooms early in his career.

“I also remember being criticised by a senior manager for supporting my officers/ team during a PDR and I quote ‘I have concerns you have a greater loyalty to your officers than to the organisation’.

“And then, of course, I was subject to a malicious and unjustified complaint which meant I was under investigation by PSD for six months.

“Another frustration was having my team disbanded for no other reason than to assist others officers’ promotion applications and aspirations.

“And then in recent years I have witnessed first-hand the negative effects long investigations have on officers and their families.”

While reluctant to name a single person or a number of people he most admires in policing, he instead says he is full of respect for the police officers who work hard and do their very best for the public and in support of their colleagues in very difficult and sometimes challenging circumstances.

He has enjoyed supporting members with genuine issues, ‘sparring’ with supervisors and managers – ‘especially when you’re right’, working alongside other Fed reps, some of whom are committed and highly motivated and who regularly put members’ interests before their own, and working closely with a number of solicitors, legal reps and barristers who, he recognises, have regularly gone the extra mile to help and support officers.

But, John acknowledges, the role has not been without its challenges.

“There’s the old saying – ‘Accept the things you cannot change, have the courage to change the things you can – and have the wisdom to know the difference. This has been very true throughout my career and I haven’t always got it right,” he explains.

“As with all large institutions, there have been major frustrations with how things (the police and the Federation) are managed and

operate but many changes for good either can’t be made or are very slow to happen due to all the red tape, rules and regulations. And then there are individuals in the Force, the Federation - and in Government - who seek only to promote themselves and their own misguided views and ideas, while making zero impact or worse having an adverse effect on the the world of policing, which helps neither the Force, its officers or the public we serve.

“The other major challenge has been to attempt to influence PSD and the IOPC decision-makers to adhere to the law and regulations, to be consistent in their decision-making and to make objective decisions based on all the available evidence - as opposed to subjective decisions based on assumptions and conjecture.

“Managing expectations is another key challenge for any rep and one that is sometimes difficult to explain and get right.”

While he is leaving the Force at a time when he is hopeful the conduct regulations will finally be fit for purpose and that the IOPC and PSD adhere to them, John also genuinely welcomes the current Chief Constable’s drive for the Force to be more diverse, inclusive and representative of the communities it serves.

He is also not the first to argue that the police service itself is facing a crisis and will continue to struggle to meet all the demands placed on it if there is not a significant increase in funding and investment.

“For the Government to say reducing police funding hasn’t led to a rise in crime is, quite frankly, outrageous and total nonsense,” John said.

He is now planning to take some well-earned time off to travel, relax, spend time with his family (and go fishing!) but knows he will greatly miss ‘the vast majority of people’ he has worked with. After six months’ ‘rest’, he plans to look for part-time work away from policing.

But he can rest assured that he has left a Force and Federation legacy of which he can be proud.

“I’m happy that the CaPLO Committee (discipline reps) I leave is in a position to continue to professionally and competently represent our members, sometimes at their greatest time of need,” John said.

“I know that the full-timers now leading the committee, George McDonnell, Dave Hadley and Alan O’Shea, will more than continue the successful legacy of previous leads. A professional and competent CaPLO Committee not only supports its Federation members but also ensures fairness and transparency for everyone – the police and the public it serves - while holding PSD and the IOPC to account – long may this continue.”

TRiM: ensuring a consistent approach Force-wide

A review of the trauma risk management (TRiM) support offered to officers and staff and the subsequent identification of a lack of awareness of what it does and doesn't entail has led to new policies and procedures being put in place.

These will be backed up by the recruitment and training of more TRiM practitioners, the roll-out of awareness training sessions and the provision of extra information on the Force's wellbeing portal as well as an input to CPD events.

"We have found that the delivery of TRiM support is patchy across the Force. We have some pockets of best practice where officers' and staff's individual needs are being identified and met but then we have also heard of instances where the TRiM processes have just not kicked in," says Lorraine Horner, the Force's wellbeing manager.

"There seems to be a lot of mystery surrounding what TRiM does and doesn't do as if it's some kind of dark art so we want to tackle that and also ensure there is a more consistent approach throughout the Force. We want to give people clear expectations of what TRiM should deliver."

TRiM is not intended to be a diagnostic tool but should be used to gauge someone's reaction to an incident based on assumed symptoms of trauma and then review those reactions in the short, medium and long term.

The aim is to provide the person involved with a means to manage their own reaction and understand it in the context of what is considered normal in the circumstances. It is not intended to actually provide support or advice but should identify if someone does need extra support and signpost where that may come from.

"There seems to be a misapprehension that TRiM is something that is instigated in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic incident with people perhaps rushing to the

scene. But this is not the case at all. It usually comes into play some time between 48 hours and a week after the event," says Lorraine.

"Once a TRiM practitioner has spoken to the individuals involved, they will use their assessment to generate a score which will help identify if further help or a follow-up will be needed. The process is confidential and details of the sessions are not shared although a line manager may be made aware if urgent support is needed."

Under Force policies, trauma is defined as:

An event which includes exposure to death, threatened death, actual or serious injury or actual or threatened sexual violence.

The exposure may occur directly (through witnessing the event in person) or indirectly (learning of a close friend or relative's trauma - this should be a considerably close relationship and the trauma will have linked to an on duty incident).

However, Lorraine, who took on the wellbeing manager's position in May this year after two years as the occupational health service delivery manager, points out much depends on the people involved: "Individuals' reactions differ so for TRiM it is not only defined by the event but also defined by the individual. This would be identified at a de-brief with the line manager having a conversation with the individual.

"It is easy to focus on major incidents and tragic outcomes but TRiM can be used for near misses and a collection of smaller incidents which have taken a toll on the member of staff equally as much as in response to a major incident."

A major incident earlier this year highlighted an inconsistent approach to TRiM prompting a review of the processes and the subsequent regeneration of the initiative.

"While there was a policy this wasn't aligned across a wider wellbeing strategy and wasn't clearly understood," says Lorraine, who has worked with senior managers, line managers, TRiM managers and practitioners and others – including the Force chaplains – to help develop clearly defined procedures to ensure there is an over-arching support mechanism for officers and staff.

TRiM should be used, she explains, to identify the need for management support, encourage a self-referral to the 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme or trigger a de-brief session based around normalisation which, in turn, will allow individuals to understand if their feelings fit within the 'normal' range given the circumstances.

There is an in-built acknowledgement that the very nature of policing means those working in the service will be faced with traumatic situations but with that comes a means of supporting those struggling to come to terms with what they have seen or dealt with.

"It can involve a potentially challenging conversation led by a line manager who will be trained to ensure their language is appropriate and sensitive and therefore not adding to the stress of the individual," Lorraine says.

"Conversations will be centred around how can we help them and how they can help themselves."

The process also involves a period of what is termed as 'watchful waiting'. After a period of 28 days from the date of the incident, a psychological screening questionnaire will be sent to officers and staff affected and this will be used to see if any further actions or referrals are required.

"We do not want to see anyone slip through any nets," explains Lorraine, "Ultimately, wellbeing should be everyone's job but we do need a formalised process for helping people who, due to their job, have been faced with a traumatic situation."

There are currently five TRiM managers across the Force area backed up by a larger team of TRiM practitioners. Refresher courses will be offered and a recruitment process will begin with training factoring in the need for those offering the support to be resilient themselves due to the vicarious trauma they may suffer.

“It is easy to focus on major incidents and tragic outcomes but TRiM can be used for near misses and a collection of smaller incidents which have taken a toll on the member of staff equally as much as in response to a major incident.”



New survey reveals one in five officers has PTSD

One in five police officers is suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), according to the results of a new survey.

And Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, believes the Home Office and police leaders, now need to act on the findings before more officers start to suffer.

"Police officers join the Force to serve and protect their communities," said Rich when the survey results were announced.

"But, in return, they should be protected and supported themselves. All too often, police officers are succumbing to the pressures of the job and the traumatic incidents they deal with.

"I believe their mental health and wellbeing has increasingly suffered since the cuts to policing. With fewer officers to meet the demand, they are being run ragged, trying to maintain an effective policing service for their communities but barely having time to process their

thoughts, let alone come to terms with some of the horrendous things they have seen.

"The Government needs to take notice of these findings and act by re-investing in policing and in police officers."

Policing: The Job and The Life is a survey of 17,000 police officers from 47 forces in the United Kingdom, carried out by Cambridge University from October to December last year with funding from Police Care UK. The results show:

- 21 per cent of police officers who responded reported symptoms consistent with PTSD or the more severe Complex PTSD (CPTSD)
- 73 per cent of those with PTSD or CPTSD will be unaware they have it
- 66 per cent of those reported a psychological or mental health issue which they felt was a direct result of police work

73 per cent of those with PTSD or CPTSD will be unaware they have it

- 69 per cent of officers feel trauma is not well managed in their force
- 93 still go to work even when suffering from a work-related psychological issue.

The survey's findings echo the Police Federation's latest Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey which also found evidence of widespread, repeated exposure to trauma within the police workforce.



Photo courtesy of Dean Wainwright Photography

Knife Angel leaves the city

The Knife Angel's stay in Birmingham has been a resounding success in terms of raising awareness of the dangers of knife crime and reminding people of the impact of violent crime, according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

The Knife Angel, which was in Victoria Square in the city centre from the first week of May until 12 June, is a 27 foot sculpture comprising of 100,000 confiscated and surrendered knives. It was created by artist Alfie Bradley and has been touring the country.

"We have seen a shocking rise in the number of crimes involving a knife or another sharp weapon and in the last year alone there were 50 murders in the West Midlands perpetrated by people using knives," says Rich.

"The Knife Angel is hugely impactful and people who have seen the sculpture during its time in Birmingham and before that in Coventry have spoken of finding it very moving."

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson has said: "Knife crime has now got to the stage

where it should be classed as a national emergency by the government. In the West Midlands knife crime has risen by 85 per cent since 2012 and shows no sign of abating."

And he added: "It is a similar story across the country."

Before coming to the West Midlands, the Knife Angel visited Hull and Liverpool.

For more information about the Knife Angel, please visit the British Ironwork Centre's website -

www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk

PM must act on knife crime

With the number of people caught with knives and weapons reaching a nine-year high, the new Prime Minister must put tackling serious violent crime at the top of the Government's agenda, says Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Rich spoke out after new Ministry of Justice statistics, released on 13 June, reveal the extent of the violent crime epidemic.

"With the political storm surrounding Brexit, it appears the upsurge in knife crime has fallen off the news agenda but that cannot be allowed to happen," says Rich.

"We are seeing too many people being killed and injured in our communities for that to be allowed to happen. We need the Government to prioritise dealing with this issue and one sure way to start would be for it to invest in policing so we can get more officers onto our streets."

The new figures show in the 12 months to the end of March 2019, 22,041 possession offences were dealt with by police and courts – 34 per cent up on 2015 and the highest total since 2010.

The police recorded crime figures for the same period show, over the year to December, offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by six per cent to 40,829, the highest since records began.

John Apter, national Federation chair, said: "While I welcome the slight increase in those responsible being sent to prison, we still see situations where violent offenders who carry knives are let off with nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

"In addition, we see a significant increase in violent crime being reported but the fact is there are nearly 22,000 fewer officers on our streets since 2010.

"More offences and fewer officers is a dangerous combination and it is frustrating for me and my colleagues to witness the lives of so many being blighted when we know what can be achieved when we are a properly resourced service."

The statistics also show offenders are also now more likely to receive an immediate custodial sentence for a knife and offensive weapon offence and for longer.

In 37 per cent of cases a prison sentence

In the 12 months to the end of March 2019, 22,041 possession offences were dealt with by police and courts – 34 per cent up on 2015 and the highest total since 2010.

was given straightaway compared with 22 per cent in the year ending March 2009. The average length of custodial sentences received increased from 5.5 months to 8.1 months.

Force receives more funding to tackle violent crime

West Midlands Police is one of 18 forces worst affected by violent crime to be given a share of the final part of the £100 million fund allocated by the Government to tackle the knife crime crisis.

The Force will receive £7.62 million, the second highest amount behind the Met which will get £20.6 million.

Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, has welcomed the funding but says the Government needs to do more than just come up with a 'quick fix'.

"It is time the Government realised that it needs to invest in long-term solutions. The cuts to police funding have led not only to a massive reduction in police numbers but also to the closure of scores of police stations and police bases," Rich explains.

"Those combined factors have meant that the visible policing presence our communities want, and need, has all but disappeared. In recent years, policing has been dominated by the need to save money and, inevitably, forces have had to prioritise what they deal with.



"Today, unless you report an incident which poses an immediate or significant threat, the likelihood is you won't see us for days - if at all. That's the lamentable truth, and no-one in policing is happy about it. The public miss that policing presence and the only people who benefit are the criminals, those intent on anti-social behaviour and those causing disturbances in our communities."

In announcing the allocation of funding, Home Secretary Sajid Javid claims forces can take urgent action to tackle violent crime

and put more officers into the worst affected areas.

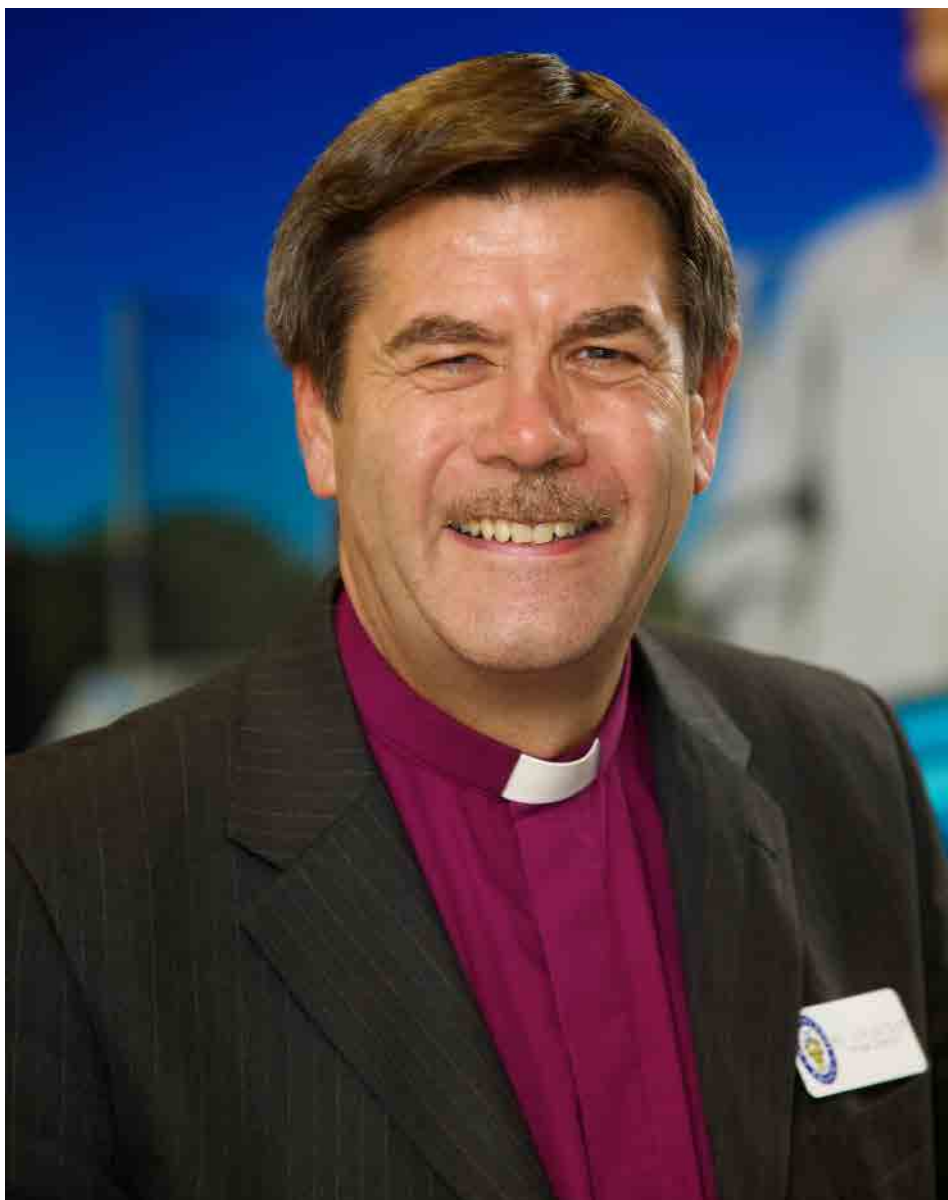
The £100 million Serious Violence Fund was announced by the Government in the March Spring Statement. Around a third of the funding - £35 million - will support the setting up of violence reduction units (VRUs) and other preventative activity across the country. VRUs are a multi-agency approach bringing together police, health agencies, local government and community representatives to tackle violent crime and its underlying causes.

Another £1.6 million is being spent on ensuring forces collect better data to help their planning and ensure targeted action.

But Rich argues more still needs to be done.

"The Government must rethink its spending priorities and divert proper resources towards public safety. Budgets may be stretched but our citizens surely pay enough in tax to expect a police station in their own town and the occasional officer patrolling the streets," he said.

Queen honours Force's lead chaplain



Honoured by the Queen, the Rev John Butcher.

The Force's multi faith lead chaplain has spoken of his joy and immense pride after being awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

And the Rev John Butcher has also admitted a sense of disbelief when he was

informed he would receive the honour which is given for outstanding military or civil service.

"It came as a huge surprise. When the letter arrived I had to ask my wife 'am I reading this correctly?' I couldn't believe what was written in the letter," he says.

"I'm due to receive the medal at a civil ceremony in Birmingham in September but we have also been invited to a Buckingham Palace garden party next year when we are looking forward to meeting the Queen. It's all very exciting.

"It sounds clichéd but I accept the award on behalf of all the fantastic chaplains and faith advisers who give up their time across the West Midlands to support police officers, staff and the wider community."

John, who is responsible for the delivery of chaplaincy services across the Force, has been congratulated by Chief Constable Dave Thompson who said: "John has been a brilliant chaplain drawing in many faiths to provide guidance and pastoral support to our Force. He has made our chaplaincy hugely supportive of the work of WMP. The medal is richly deserved and huge congratulations to him."

John spent seven years as a Force volunteer chaplain – after 10 years devoting time to the Met – before joining the Force as the chaplaincy lead in 2009.

He is available along with the voluntary chaplains to provide friendship and pastoral care to everyone in West Midlands Police. The chaplaincy offers another strand of help alongside all the other individuals and departments that provide help, encouragement and welfare within the Force.

"We endeavour to get to know staff through ordinary situations as well as in times of crisis. From time to time, as well as accompanying officers and staff on their duties, we may attend NPU and departmental meetings, award ceremonies and other social events," John explains.

Under his guidance, the chaplaincy team has developed from just a handful of volunteer chaplains to more than 60 representing all six major faiths. There also 20 faith advisers covering all the major faiths.

The chaplains – who collectively volunteer thousands of hours a year – perform an important pastoral role, supporting staff and officers at times of stress, concern or crisis.

But they also provide support for the Force around day to day business, helping with neighbourhood police networking and providing faith diversity training for officers and new recruits.

John and his wife, Angela, have two children and live in New Oscott. He is associate minister at Hockley's Life Community Church alongside his wife.

He comes from Rotherham in South Yorkshire and was the fleet parts manager for the Ford main dealer in Sheffield where he had worked his way up from being an



John has made our chaplaincy hugely supportive of the work of WMP. The medal is richly deserved and huge congratulations to him.



apprentice after leaving school.

But he left that position in 1986 to spend three years to attend theological college and train for the church ministry. His first church was in Hackney, East London where he was minister from 1989 to 2002 when he moved to his current church, then called Hockley Pentecostal Church.

His interest in force chaplaincy began in the early '90s while he was in London.

John explains: "It all started back in 1992 when I was invited to a clergy/police meeting in Hackney where we could discuss and tackle together some of the problems in the area.

"At that meeting one of the superintendents arranged for me to visit the local police station and suggested a late evening/early morning tour around the streets of Hackney in one of the patrol cars. I must admit that I probably learnt more about Hackney and its problems on that patrol than I had done all the months I had previously lived there and worked as a church minister.

"Not only did it prove to be of great benefit for my own local knowledge, but on that occasion I was able to share with the police officers some of the everyday problems they have to face on the beat. In both the patrol car, and in the canteen later on in their break, I was able in some small way to understand some of the stresses involved in modern day policing.

"After that initial visit, I wrote a letter to the Hackney station saying how much I appreciated the time they had given me and the welcome that I had received. The next contact came when I got a phone call from one of the superintendents asking if he could come to see me.

"When he came, he said that he had

What is multi faith chaplaincy?

Multi faith chaplaincy is available to any individual or group regardless of faith, religious tradition or no faith at all.

It provides a team of people who are committed to working together to offer pastoral and spiritual care and confidential support to those who work within the organisation and to their families. There is also a team of advisers from different faiths to help those who need support from a person of their own faith.

There are also a number of NPU chaplains who are recognised within their own faith community, and who volunteer their time and efforts to support specific NPUs and departments.

The chaplaincy team is committed to building up relationships within the organisation and to be alongside people in both the good, and the not so good, times.

Their ministry is threefold:

- To be a presence that reminds us of our humanity
- To be a pastor to assist people in times of need
- To be a prophet in speaking out against real or potential injustice in the structures.

Each chaplain will do that in their own way, depending upon their personality, circumstances and how long they can give to their NPU. The NPU chaplain may be at awards evenings or be seen out on patrol. They will certainly be available for support in times of crisis whether that is to an individual or to the management team. They will be a confidential listening ear and will accept all confidences without judgment.

Chaplaincy is never a vehicle for faith preaching. This is true regardless of the faith of the chaplain.

been asked to see if I would consider being the police chaplain for the Hackney Police. It wasn't until later when I had been appointed that I was told it was the police officers I had spent that initial visit with who had recommended me to the superintendent."

Up until the time the family moved to Birmingham in 2002, John continued to be the chaplain for the police in the Hackney

What do chaplains do?

Chaplains try to:

- Pray regularly for the Force in general and for the situations and members of staff they are involved with
- Be available to anyone of any faith or none who needs someone to talk to who is outside the structures of the Force
- Be an ongoing presence in the workplace, aware of the stresses and strains of life in the Force and able to be a critical friend to individuals and the organisation
- Visit, if appropriate, staff who are ill at home or in hospital and provide care to family and friends
- Provide care for the bereaved and be involved if a member of staff dies particularly if this is while in service
- Lead formal religious services as required by the organisation or individuals.

How do they do it?

Each chaplain will develop their own way of working but they will incorporate some, or all, of the following:

- Loitering with intent – many chaplains will just drop in, trying to be around at shift change or other times when officers and staff will be about
- Accompanying officers and staff on their duties to understand the stresses involved in modern day policing
- Attending LPU and departmental meetings to understand the issues affecting the day to day and longer term operations
- Attending awards ceremonies and other social events to meet people in a pleasant setting rather than at a time of crisis
- Providing input to training.

Find out more

If you want to contact a chaplain or a multi faith adviser, you can contact John Butcher at Lloyd House, on extension **7800 6265** or email him on **butcher_55029@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk**

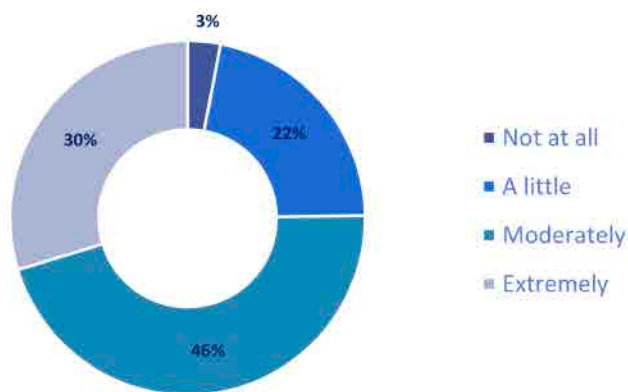
area and also regularly represented the Met at national chaplains' meetings where he met the late Bill Hopley who was the Force chaplain for West Midlands Police for a number of years.

Bill encouraged him to continue with the chaplaincy in Birmingham and linked him with D2 Sutton Coldfield OCU, near to where John lives, as its voluntary chaplain.



EveryonePause – menopause survey results published

Overall, how problematic have symptoms of the menopause been for you at work?



Three quarters of women who took part in the first nationwide survey on going through the menopause while working for the police said they found menopausal symptoms moderately or extremely problematic at work.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) carried out the EveryonePause survey over six weeks in October last year and has now published the results.

"Officers and staff do not feel they can be open about what they are going through and would rather struggle to come into work or take leave instead of report sick. The survey results show that there is less than adequate reporting facilities in forces," says Hayley Aley, a women's lead for PFEW.

"We need every force to recognise the impact that the menopause can have on health and just how unwell it can make you feel – every force should add menopause as an option in their sickness absence reporting fields.

"I'd like to say that our findings come as a surprise – they don't but we now have an evidence-base to push for positive change."

Key findings were:

- 76 per cent of respondents who had either gone through or were going through the menopause said that they had found symptoms of the menopause either moderately or extremely problematic at work
- More than eight out of 10 said that tiredness and sleep disturbances resulting from the menopause had been either moderately or extremely problematic for them at work
- The majority said low mood and lower confidence as a result of the menopause

EVERYONE PAUSE

had been either moderately or extremely problematic for them at work.

The survey was open to police officers and staff with 59 per cent of respondents being police officers and 40 per cent police staff (the remainder were in another role within the police service).

Different questions were asked depending on whether respondents had personal experience of the menopause and/or had managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

In fact, 45 per cent of respondents said that they either had gone through or were going through the menopause while 18 per cent said they had managerial responsibilities and 14 per cent fell into both of these categories. A further 23 per cent of respondents fell into neither of these categories and answered a set of broader questions concerning their awareness of the menopause.

One in five respondents said they had considered leaving the Force because they had found it difficult to deal with the menopause at work.

Only 11 per cent of managers said they had been trained to support someone going through the menopause.

And the majority of managers did not know whether their force had a formal policy or guidance on managing the menopause at work with at least two thirds of them saying they would find it useful to have this.

“We need every force to recognise the impact that the menopause can have on health and just how unwell it can make you feel – every force should add menopause as an option in their sickness absence reporting fields.”

Preparing for retirement?

Spaces are available on the West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminars.

The seminars are aimed at officers in the last 18 months of their service and aim to prepare them for life outside the Force, financially and generally.

Among the topics covered by the facilitators at the one-day seminars will be:

- **Managing change and uncertainty**
- **CV writing and interview techniques**
- **Transferrable skills**
- **Pensions and state pension**
- **How do I manage money and these financial changes?**
- **Budgeting**
- **Starting your own business**
- **Taxation**
- **New horizons (what's next?)**
- **Savings**
- **Investments and finances, and**
- **Protecting your wealth.**

The next available date is **15 August** with further seminars being held on **12 September, 17 October, 21 November** and **19 December**.

To book, email westmidlandspf@polfed.org with 'Retirement seminar' and the date you wish to attend in the subject title.

Include your name, work and personal email address, phone number, proposed retirement date, number of places required and dietary requirements in the email.

2020 dates

Dates have now been agreed for the West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminars next year.

They are, as follows:

- Thursday 23 January 2020**
- Thursday 6 February 2020**
- Thursday 12 March 2020**
- Thursday 9 April 2020**
- Thursday 14 May 2020**
- Thursday 11 June 2020**
- Thursday 23 July 2020**
- Thursday 20 August 2020**
- Thursday 24 September 2020**
- Thursday 22 October 2020**
- Thursday 10 December 2020.**

As ever, book early to avoid disappointment.

'Good' rating for Force in PEEL inspection



The Force has been rated 'good' in its latest inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

In 2018/19, the inspectorate adopted an integrated assessment (IPA) approach to its existing PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspections. This combined into a single inspection the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy areas of PEEL. This means it will now assess forces against every part of the IPA programme each year.

In a report issued in May, inspectors reported the Force is:

- 'Good' at effectively reducing crime and keeping people safe
- 'Good' at operating efficiently and providing sustainable services to the public; and
- 'Good' in the way it treats the public and its workforce.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said: "I am pleased with most aspects of West Midlands Police's performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime. I am particularly pleased with its efficiency planning. But it needs to make improvements in its effectiveness to provide a consistently good service.

"The Force is good at investigating crime and tackling serious and organised crime. However, the Force needs to improve how it protects vulnerable people. It needs to be more consistent in the way it assesses the risk and responds to vulnerable people."

However, Ms Williams expressed concerns about crime recording and, while acknowledging improvements had been made since the last inspection, said 'much more' needs to be done. She also remained concerned about how the Force responds to current demand.

She explained: "That said, the Force has a comprehensive understanding of its future demand. It is using this detailed

knowledge to inform its future financial planning and workforce development, aspects of which are impressive."

The Force was praised for upholding an ethical culture and promoting standards of professional behaviour but inspectors highlighted issues surrounding the backlog for staff vetting.

In conclusion, Ms Williams said: "Overall, I commend West Midlands Police for the progress it has made over the past year. This gives a good foundation for continuing improvement in the year ahead."

The Force was one of the first 14 to be inspected in the PEEL 2018/2019 inspections with the remaining 29 forces due to be inspected in two subsequent groups.

In a statement issued with the first set of inspection reports, HMICFRS found police forces were generally performing well but said the 'cracks are widening'.

The inspections revealed a relatively positive picture of performance being provided by a service straining under significant pressure with forces being affected in different ways across neighbourhood policing and investigations through to counter-corruption and workforce health and wellbeing.

The national report stated: "Given the current operational and financial context forces find themselves in, it is not clear for how long they will be able to maintain their current performance levels. For many of the forces inspected in this group, cracks in the system are widening."

HM Inspector of Constabulary Matt Parr said: "The patterns we are beginning to see emerge paint a picture of a committed

and capable police service that is starting to show signs of real strain in some areas. Many of the forces we inspected are in general providing a good service to the public, but all are faced with competing priorities that if not managed correctly could see this service deteriorate.

"Despite these worrying trends, there have been some areas of innovation and improvement. In particular, we are seeing forces getting better at identifying vulnerability, with officers now having a greater understanding of what to look for to provide the right service. We also found several forces developing innovative ways of using technology to better manage the demand on their resources.

"But the forces we inspected are trying to meet ever-more complex and high-risk demand with strained resources. We have previously reported that re-deploying neighbourhood officers, often to response, can damage their crime prevention work and limit their engagement with communities. We found that this trend has continued over the last year. Most forces also continue to have a large number of vacancies for detectives."

He said forces' methods for managing demand were having a knock-on effect in other areas – including their ability to root out corruption – and also having a negative impact on officers' wellbeing.

The inspector concluded: "If these trends continue, the service the police provide is bound to deteriorate. A discussion is therefore needed about what needs to change. There is too big a gap between what police can do, and what the public expect of them."

Putting the emphasis on quality training

The national Federation's learning and development team have liaised with workplace representatives and branch officials across the country to assess training courses and pinpoint their future needs.

And Zuleika Payne, who became a member of the Federation's National Board last September after last year's elections and now acts as the learning and development lead, has pledged to ensure the training provided meets the needs of both the branches and the wider membership.

"Since taking up the role I have been keen to help local Branch Councils identify their training requirements," says Zuleika, "Supporting the Branch Councils is key if we are to be successful in our mission to provide the most appropriate training.

"We have also consulted with practitioners as part of our commitment to re-designing the courses offered. We are keen to offer quality training packages that are current and relevant."

Zuleika, who has 27 years' policing service including two years as the full-time Federation chair in South Yorkshire, is part of the eight-strong learning and development team at the national Federation headquarters in Leatherhead.

Their priorities include answering to the overall strategy of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and identifying the objectives which will ultimately help the organisation achieve its goals.

Put simply, Zuleika explains: "We need to address the training needs among our reps in order to support them in their endeavours to support rank and file officers."

Her own Federation career began when she was working in the same department as her workplace representative. When they retired, she was approached and asked if she would be interested in the role.

Having previously sought advice and been supported by a Federation rep, she – in line with many other officers who find themselves in a similar position – saw it as an ideal opportunity to give something back and help her colleagues.

It was a career choice that, of course, gave her the opportunity to see what the Federation's training programmes had to offer.

Zuleika attended the initial workplace reps' course before going on to be trained to deal with equality matters. Ten years ago, she became the equality lead for her local branch and then underwent the course directors' training to become a trainer in equality matters.

"This also afforded the opportunity for me to be part of the consultation process when the equality training package was designed," she says.

On becoming the branch vice-chair in 2011, she completed the media training course in 2012. Her training has also enabled her to deliver courses to other reps within her region.

Zuleika believes she has received good quality training through the Federation: "I have always maintained that the training I have received from PFEW has been of an incredibly high standard. So much so, it certainly enhanced my knowledge and service delivery in my day job, before I became a full-time rep."

While enjoying her role within South Yorkshire, she has also relished moving onto the national stage.

"As a local chair you are the voice of rank and file officers. You are heavily involved in negotiations with senior leaders, presenting evidence and findings in order to illustrate your case; ultimately acting in the best interests of officers in their endeavours to protect and serve the public," Zuleika explains.

"I have learnt that if you have a particular interest or inkling in life and opportunities present themselves, then take them! I saw the opportunity to become a member of the National Board as one not to be missed. When a further opportunity came to put myself forward for election as the lead for learning and development, I took that one also.

"I realise the importance of providing quality training to our reps if they are to be successful and effective when representing our members. Reps deal with an assortment of issues ranging from health and safety, discipline and equality matters.

"I feel I bring enthusiasm, commitment and creative thinking. I also have a willingness to learn, share and explore new ideas but, above all, to do this with humility."

Higher level training courses

The new training courses being offered will ensure members are supported by more confident and competent workplace representatives and branch officials, according to the head of the Federation's learning and development department.

Mario Manelfi says the reps will also be able to access a wealth of online resources after completing their courses.

"The reps will have been accredited to a higher standard since we are moving from Skills for Justice (SFJ) Level 4 to SFJ Level 6/degree level as part of the Federation's three-year business strategy," he explains.

"They will have increased their know-how and skill set sooner than previously therefore enabling them to offer appropriate guidance and support at the right time for the members. This will be of particular benefit when members may be

experiencing distress or are vulnerable.

"The whole ethos will be about being able to provide the right support at the right time."

The Federation is also broadening the range of training on offer to enable reps to develop more skills. New courses will include mental health, strategic thinking and having difficult conversations.

In addition to new courses, and after feedback from members, the Federation has re-written the conduct and performance course to make it more relevant to the reps, and ultimately to the members.

As part of the new training programmes, Federation staff whose roles involve supporting the workplace representatives and local Branch Council members will also receive training through job-based competency development initiatives.

Clocking up the miles ahead of charity challenge

With his wife expecting a baby in September, two children to help look after, a dog to exercise and a full-time job, it's no great surprise that West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke is struggling to fit in enough training ahead of a 195-mile charity cycle at the end of July.

Rich is a member of the West Midlands Chapter of the Police Unity Tour (PUT), an annual sponsored cycle ride in aid of Care of Police Survivors (COPS) supported by officers and supporters from many police forces.

The various chapters of the PUT will set off from points around England and Wales on Friday 26 July coming together in Staffordshire to then ride into the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas for the COPS memorial service on Sunday 28 July.

Rich is looking forward to the challenge of taking part but admits he has his work cut out in building up his biking miles.

"I feel I'm progressing, certainly my average speeds are increasing but this challenge is all about endurance and I'm struggling to get longer, say 50-mile plus, rides under my belt which I see as the key area in the run-up to the tour," he explains.

"At present I don't feel like I am ready because, while I'm optimistic I can do this, it's just a question of making the time for more training - maybe doing a few early starts. It can be difficult, as many members will know, with a wife expecting a baby in September, two children to feed and entertain, a dog to be walked and a full-time job to hold down. At least I don't have shifts to contend with currently unlike most colleagues."

While the exact route has not been confirmed, as roadworks will have to be assessed, the provisional schedule is as follows:

Day 1
Hindlip to Leominster Police Station



Rich Cooke in training.

(morning stop) before heading to Ludlow. Ludlow to Bishops Castle (lunch stop). Then to Shrewsbury (park for ceremony and then to a hotel).
Around 100 miles, with one major climb.

Day 2
Shrewsbury to Newport (morning stop). Newport to Cannock Chase and Rugeley

(lunch stop). Rugeley to Tamworth Snow Dome and then Drayton Manor to meet other PUT Chapters. Around 75 miles.

Day 3
Combined chapters ride to the arboretum. Around 20 miles.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson will join

the West Midlands Chapter riding the tour along with Superintendent Scott Jones from the regional organised crime unit, Force academic researcher Gill Wall and police staff member Lisa Cummings. The chapter also includes riders from West Mercia, Staffordshire and Warwickshire, ensuring all four forces in the West Midlands region are represented.

About COPS

Care of Police Survivors (otherwise known as COPS) is a UK registered charity dedicated to helping the families of police officers who have lost their lives on duty. It aims to ensure survivors have all the help they need to cope with such a tragedy, and that they remain part of the police family as they rebuild their lives.

Only another survivor can fully understand what new survivors endure and that shared experience is the basis for the charity's peer support programme.

COPS enables survivors to help survivors, the extent of help provided will always be controlled by the new survivor. Sometimes an understanding listener is needed. Sometimes more practical help is required. Whatever the need, COPS will be able to put survivors in touch with those who truly understand.

COPS is independent of the police service and was founded in March 2003 by Jim McNulty and Christine Fulton (MBE). Jim was a retired police officer from Strathclyde Police. Christine is the widow of PC Lewis Fulton who was murdered on duty in Glasgow in 1994.

COPS makes contact with the survivors of every officer who loses their life on duty, explaining what COPS does and inviting them to make contact when they are ready for such support.

Survivors' weekend

Each year, usually in July, COPS holds a survivor weekend incorporating social activities and concluding with a service of remembrance.

It allows families to meet with other survivors, share experiences and learn how others have rebuilt their lives. Activities are arranged for the children and, where appropriate, childcare is provided.

The COPS service of remembrance is held on the Sunday morning of the survivor weekend at the National Memorial Arboretum. It is attended by representatives of the UK police service, staff associations and the wider police family. All are welcome.

This year's survivor weekend runs from 26 to 28 July.

New National Police Wellbeing Service

A National Police Wellbeing Service has been launched as part of an investment in improving welfare support in policing.

Oscar Kilo, first launched in 2017, will now operate this new service. All police forces in England, Wales and North Ireland subscribe to Oscar Kilo which hosts the Bluelight Wellbeing Framework and provides resources, information and guidance to help shape wellbeing provision, provoke debate and encourage collaboration and innovation.

As Oscar Kilo was developed, the Home Office, the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council worked together with the backing of £7.5 million of funding from the Police Transformation Fund over three years to help provide enhanced welfare support for policing.

The National Police Wellbeing Service aims to provide support and guidance for all police forces to improve and build upon wellbeing within their organisation. Everything about it is sector specific and designed to meet the unique needs of policing.

The aim is to help every member of the police service understand how to build personal resilience, to feel confident that they can speak up when things aren't going well and to get the best personalised support possible when necessary.

The key purpose is to provide evidence-based approaches to promote, prevent,

detect and treat workplace health issues.

Practical support will be offered in eight areas:

- Dealing with trauma, major incidents and disaster resilience
- Psychological screening
- Individual resilience
- Peer support
- Line management
- Leadership
- Wellbeing at work
- Outreach services – including Wellbeing Vans which will bring services to forces.

Future projects will include developing minimum standard for forces' occupational health services, medical and physical fitness standards, suicide prevention, HR policy review and work with the NHS to tailor services for police personnel.

Find out more

If you're interested in wellbeing in policing and you have .pnn email address, you can register with the National Police Wellbeing Service. You don't have to be a senior leader or a wellbeing lead – any member of the police service, no matter your rank or role, can login.

When you log in, you will be able to access to all of the toolkits, resources and training under the eight key areas above and find out more about how forces are being supported.

Visit www.oscarkilo.org.uk



Dame Kelly (second from left) with the Wellbeing Bus team at Flint House.

Dame Kelly Holmes officially opened the refurbished and extended gym at the Flint House police rehabilitation centre in May this year.

While at Flint House, she also visited one of the Wellbeing Vans and its team of support workers who were making a two-day visit.

How does a court deal with finances on divorce?

A real life story

By Chris Fairhurst, partner at McAlister Family Law

Often one of the first questions from new clients, faced with how to sort out arrangements after separation from their spouse, is a straightforward: "What will a financial settlement look like for me?"

The law relating to how a court decides that question is highly discretionary, to take account of the fact that no two families' circumstances are the same. You cannot look at a chart to get an answer.

Explaining to a client that the court uses several different factors set out in Section 25 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 including, but not limited to, the ages of the parties, length of marriage, earning capacity and obligations in respect of children or other family members, all of which depend on your particular circumstances, doesn't help in advising with any certainty of outcome.

What does matter is the experience of the lawyer who is dealing with your case. There is nothing like having someone who has represented people in a similar position. It doesn't guarantee getting exactly what you seek but it certainly helps, especially where a police officer is concerned, because of the nature of the police pension schemes, of

which officers are naturally protective.

It's easier to point to a real example of what can be achieved. Here is a true outline of a case settled very recently. The client, an officer, had tried to represent themselves for nearly two years. The other party was represented and had applied for several different applications in relation to the children and the home.

The client had managed to obtain an order to spend time with the children but the former spouse insisted they were the 'main carer' and thought that entitled them to a greater share of all the modest assets, consisting of equity in the family home, some savings and the pension.

The court tries to achieve 'equality' if 'needs' such as providing a family home are met; this doesn't necessarily mean equal, because that is hard to achieve when there are different assets and, in a case where there is limited capital, it is difficult to buy two properties when previously there was only one.

In our case the officer was faced with a former spouse seeking all the cash in the home and savings because they said their needs required it, as well as a share in the pension fund.

We were able to argue successfully that such an order would not be fair because our

client also had care of their children and could not borrow enough on a mortgage to buy a new home, without having some interest in the cash assets.

Our client had offered early on to 'offset' the former spouse's potential interest in the police pension and accept less than otherwise entitled to in respect of the family home, but this was rejected. The matter had to be dealt with at a final hearing, when the judge agreed with our 'open proposal' - that the house be sold and the cash be divided equally, in addition to a more limited pension share than had been sought, due to our successful argument that the pre-relationship pension accrual should be excluded.

Our client was very happy at this positive outcome and realised their position was much better than that which had been hoped for when representing themselves.

Don't be tempted to deal with matters without obtaining expert and experienced legal advice. You may find that you are settling your financial case for more than might be required.

Chris Fairhurst has more than 20 years' experience in the matter of complex divorce cases and is regarded as one of the UK's leading police divorce experts.

Support police widows

Retired and serving West Midlands Police officers are being urged to write to their MPs in support of a change to regulations that could lead to pensions for life for all police widows.

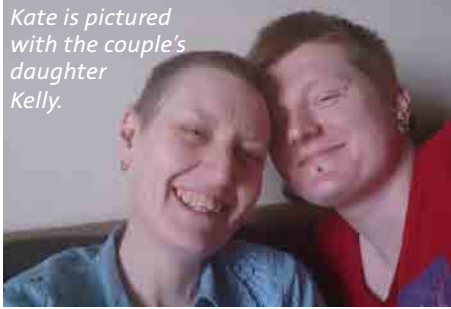
A template letter and a link to MPs' addresses can be found on the National Association of Retired Police Officers' (NARPO) website.

The plea for support comes after a Parliamentary drop-in at Portcullis House in London at the start of May organised by NARPO to raise awareness of the Widows' Pension for Life Campaign which calls for parity for police widows and widowers within the UK should they choose to re-marry or co-habit following the death of their husband or wife.

The campaign has been driven by Kate Hall, whose husband Colin died of a heart attack while working as a West Midlands Police dog handler in 1987 and who lost her police pension when she moved in with a new partner years later.

Holly Lynch, MP for Halifax, who successfully championed the Police Federation's Protect the Protectors campaign for tougher sentences for those who assault police officers, has tabled an Early Day Motion calling for widows and

Kate is pictured with the couple's daughter Kelly.



widowers in England, Scotland and Wales to retain their pension entitlement in full as is already the case in Northern Ireland.

As a result of repeated Government inaction on this issue, NARPO has reluctantly sought legal advice from a leading human rights barrister in an effort to get justice for those women, men and children who, it says, are victims of this archaic and unfair regulation, which severely restricts their life choices.

It has now received legal advice that indicates there is a sound case to pursue this matter under the Human Rights Act and, in particular, the right to fair proceedings under Article 6, the protection of property, under Article 1 Protocol 1 and the Right to Respect for Private and Family Life under Article 8.

Federation roadshow stops at Perry Barr

The successful West Midlands Police Federation Roadshow programme made its latest stop at Perry Barr.

The roadshow team of Federation staff and workplace representatives were in the atrium at Holford Drive from 10am until 3pm on Tuesday 30 April.

Federation representatives were able to answer members' questions while member services providers were on hand to talk to officers and discuss the services they provide.

Free Federation merchandise was handed out and members could also enter a prize draw for a £50 Amazon voucher.

Look out for details of the next roadshow dates.

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Does the common law spouse exist?

By Sandeep Sandhu, associate in family law at Slater and Gordon



Common law marriage hasn't existed in Britain since 1753, yet the belief that it does is widespread. No one acquires rights over someone else's property simply by living with them so it's important to consider your position before you decide to co-habit. Below is a short guide for anybody planning to move in with their partner:

Joint tenants or tenants in common?

If you own the property as joint tenants, the property is held in equal shares – one tenant cannot have a larger ownership than another. A key concept in joint tenancies is the right of survivorship. This means that if any one of the joint tenants dies, the remainder of the property transfers automatically to the survivor or survivors. The transfer happens even if the joint tenant provides for something different to happen with their property in a will.

If you own the property as tenants in common, the property doesn't have to be held in equal shares. For example, one tenant in common can own 75 per cent of the property and the other 25 per cent. There's also no right of survivorship for tenants in common and should one tenant in common die, their share of the property passes under the terms of any will, or the intestacy rules.

Do I need a Deed of Trust?

A Deed of Trust (also known as a Declaration of Trust) is a legal agreement that can be used to specify how a property is held between joint owners. They can include specific information such as each party's contributions towards the purchase price or their respective shares in the property, for example.

Moving in with a partner who owns property in their sole name or jointly with another?

- Consider what will happen if the relationship breaks down
- Does the legal title need changing?
- Will you be making financial contributions towards the property and will these constitute an interest? If there's no financial contribution, it's unlikely that you'll be able to establish any legal interest
- Do you have children with your partner? Will it be possible to bring an application for the benefit of the children upon separation, if no agreement can be reached?
- Is there anything else about the property that you need to know? This is particularly important if the property is held in joint names with a third party, such as a former partner or spouse.

Many people also ask whether there are any other financial claims upon separation. If there are children of the relationship, child maintenance will be payable by the 'non-resident' parent. Other than this, it is doubtful. The rules for separating co-habitees are very different to divorcing couples. Generally, you will only be looking

at assets held in joint names and claims are limited to those under the laws of property and trusts.

It's vital that careful thought is given to the above matters prior to co-habitation. While it may be 'unromantic' to plan for a possible separation, more couples are acknowledging that it's something of a necessary evil. It's far better to agree your respective intentions and plans from the outset, than to separate and face legal intervention and costly court proceedings.

The best way to ensure that you're protected when considering co-habitation is to:

- Consider the above points carefully and ensure you have frank discussions with your partner
- Consider entering into a co-habitation agreement which can detail how the property is to be dealt with both during the relationship and upon separation
- Prepare a will
- It's always best to seek legal advice.

For an initial consultation, please call Slater and Gordon on Freephone **0808 175 7710** or online and we'll be happy to help. Alternatively, you can make contact via the Federation office.



“ No one acquires rights over someone else's property simply by living with them so it's important to consider your position before you decide to co-habit. ”

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Ashley books a crime-fighting panda

A multi-talented West Midlands Police officer has been inspired by his day job to write a children's book giving an insight into his role on the front-line.

PC Ashley Crowley has used his 16 years' policing experience to create 'Officer Panda', a detective who encourages readers to help him follow a trail of clues to solve a mystery.

"A panda was my natural choice for a character as the British light blue and white police cars in the 1960s were known as 'panda cars'. The idea grew from there," he reveals.

"I'd say he is based on a mixture of the officers I have met throughout my career. In the first book he gets around on a traditional bicycle and I like to think he has the eye of an experienced detective," said Ashley.

In the first book Officer Panda is a fingerprint detective and during patrols he starts to notice giant fingerprints appearing throughout the town. The second novel sees the character take to the skies to follow a mysterious trail of clues, including confetti, balloons and a mysterious package. It is down to the reader to help solve the mysteries, which were inspired by Ashley's early career.

An author, illustrator and police officer may seem like a strange CV. But, he says each of these skills were introduced to him at an early age.

"As a child I loved drawing. I drew literally



PC Ashley Crowley with his book 'Officer Panda'.

everywhere, in the back of old books, on the 1980s green striped printer paper with the perforated edges and on used envelopes usually with an old Biro. Art was also my favourite subject at school," he explains.

Ashley did a foundation course in art and design at Warwickshire College and a degree course at Southampton Solent University. After graduating, he worked on London based magazines as a junior designer.

His uncle was a police officer, meaning as a youngster when he wasn't drawing he was attending an open day at the police station or playing with a toy police car.

In 2003 he joined the Force, working in the Chelmsley Wood and Solihull areas. He then transferred to Norfolk Police in 2013 before returning to the West Midlands last year as a response officer.

Ashley also became a father in 2010 and

it was while reading stories to son Frankie that he seriously thought about creating his own books. He enrolled on a masters in Children's Book Illustration at Cambridge School of Art and his final project was a book called 'PC Panda'. After a short exhibition in London, he was contacted by an agent in New York, and within two weeks he had a two book deal with publishers Harper Collins.

Ashley has since gone on to illustrate four other books and says his role still inspires him every time he draws while working on the books helps him deal with the stresses of policing.

"One book that I have illustrated deals with the emotions a child experiences when they lose a parent. As a police officer I definitely have to deal with people at times of heightened emotions and when people are sometimes at the lowest point of their lives so I definitely think that experience helps me convey emotion in a story," he says.

"When I am working on a book I will very much be immersed in the process, I can work for hours and sometimes very late listening to music and drawing. Drawing can be a very intense thinking process so I completely lose myself when I'm working and often forget about the stresses of my day job."

For more information on his work visit the ashleycrowley.com website.

I am able to have peace of mind for the future

Irwin Mitchell's family team has a wealth of experience in dealing with separation, divorce and financial matters. They have a long history of acting for members of the police force, with extensive expertise in police pensions and resolving disputes in relation to children arrangements.

The team can guide you through the legal process of dealing with your case and represent you in court proceedings, if necessary.

Initial advice is available free of charge at Irwin Mitchell in Birmingham.

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West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund

The West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund was set up in 1974 when West Midlands Police was formed.

Over the years it's helped thousands of serving and retired officers, police staff and their families through difficult times.

With almost 7,000 members, the WMP Benevolent Fund offers police colleagues' peace of mind that the fund is there to help them in times of need.

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- **Convalescence breaks at the multi-million pound health and wellbeing treatment centre, St Michael's Lodge** - offering stress management, relaxation techniques, pilates, yoga, swimming, complementary therapies, health

promotion, physiotherapy and full use of the extensive wellbeing facilities including hydrotherapy pool, swimming pool, steam room, hot tub, games room, gym and gardens

- **Financial help** - members can access interest free loans or charitable grants in times of hardship or distress
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West Midlands Police Federation Workplace reps - June 2019

Location	Collar	Rep(s)	Posting
Airport	776	Chris Cotton	Operations
	8322	Scott Davies	Operations
Bilston	4331	Lisa Bird	CTU
Bournville Lane	9533	Mark Hambling	Intel
	20186	Paul Welch	Force Response
	5456	Winston Christie	Force Response
	115	Archie Murphy	Force Intel
Bloxwich	1284	David Keasey	Response
Brierley Hill	6889	Chris Smith	FCID
	4575	Stephen Green	FCID
	9694	Roy Teague	Force Response
Cosford	8346	Paul Swan	Learning & Development
Coventry	3426	Alan O'Shea	CV - NHF
	2162	Dawn Murkett	NPU Coventry
	1329	Jason Sayers	Learning & Development
	4368	Julie Fleming	NPU, Stoke and Wyken
	6886	Narinder Sidhu	PPU
CTU - rep details not for publication		Check locally	CTU
Digbeth	6329	Simon Wheeler	NPU
	21420	Suky Bagri	Learning & Development
	633	Sean Gilsean	tbc
	20643	Matthew Fitzgerald	NPU
Harborne	8129	Warren Hines	Investigations -FCID
Lloyd House	2504	Donna Moore	FCID
	133	Eakbinder Kaur	FCID
	1978	Deano Walker	Birmingham Partnerships
		Check locally	CTU - Operations
Nechells	1687	Pete Snape	BWC & S - NHT
Newtown	7658	Matt Minton	Response
	6219	Lorayne Brown	Force Support
Oldbury	9898	Jason Durnall	FCID
Park Lane		Barrie Punshon	
Perry Barr	7665	John Stolz	CJC
	6979	Jon Nott	Investigations - FCID
	4993	Rod Rose	Investigations - FCID
	5008	Karen Geddes	NPU
	3000	Nick Simpson	Neighbourhood Co-ordinator
Shard End	667	Dan Wood	NPU
Solihull	1188	Steve Temperton	Response
	5512	Gary Haywood	Response
	698	Richard Ansermoz	Neighbourhood Task Force
Stechford/Sutton	5456	Winston Christie	Force Response
Stechford	6557	Stuart Whitehead	Birmingham EAST
Steelhouse Lane	29965	Dan Chappelow	ROCU
Tally Ho	2593	Adrian Ford	Learning & Development
	5454	Trudy Gittins	Learning & Development
Tipton	29997	Mike Horton	Force Support Unit
	20428	Christopher James	Force Support
Wednesbury	1876	Giles Dean	NHT
	8345	Jean Brennan	Information Management
West Bromwich	1353	Stephen Parkes	PPU
Wolverhampton	9233	Darren Neville	WV Organised Crime and Gangs
	5287	Sarah Thomas-West	WV - NHT
	21287	Lee Hayward	Force Response
Guardians House	3895	Steve Grange	Secretary
	9270	Rich Cooke	Chair
	8474	Tim Rogers	Dep secretary
	6906	John Williams	Dep chair
	9878	Dave Hadley	Custody
	4132	George McDonnell	CaPLO
	5583	Cliff Tomkinson	P & E
	5139	Peggy Lamont	Regional

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