

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

August/September 2020



'A strange time to be joining the police service' – See April's story on Page 12

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Welcome

Welcome to the August/September 2020 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.

Cover photo: PC April Baker has joined the Force after volunteering as a Special but her initial training has been very different to what she expected. See Page 12 for her story.

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'It doesn't seem to me that justice has been served'



By **Jon Nott**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

When the news started to break in mid-August last year that a police officer had been killed on duty, I don't think anyone could have expected the horrific circumstances of his death that slowly came out over the next few days.

PC Andrew Harper was just 28 when he died. He had only been married for four weeks. The release of some of his wedding photos in the aftermath of the tragedy only compounded the heart-breaking nature of his brutal death.

But during the trial of the three teenagers involved in the incident more details came out that would only serve to make everything seem so much worse, at a

time when, to be honest, it didn't seem that they could be.

A week before I wrote this piece, news broke that the three teenagers had been cleared of the brave PC's murder but had been convicted of manslaughter.

PC Harper's widow, Lissie, slammed the jury for their decision saying it was 'utterly shocking and appalling'.

As I write this, the sentencing has just been announced. Jessie Cole and Albert Bowers, both 18, each received 13 years in prison. Getaway driver Henry Long (19) was given 16 years after a 25 per cent reduction in his sentence as he had pleaded guilty.

In all honesty, I was surprised they were cleared of murder. But, at that point, I reserved judgement – or comment – in the hope that the sentence handed down by the judge would reflect the horrific nature of PC Harper's death.

The judge, Mr Justice Edis, said: "Manslaughter cases range greatly in seriousness. Sometimes death may be caused by an act of gross carelessness, sometimes it is very close to a case of

murder in its seriousness. That is so, here."

Yet, the maximum sentence for manslaughter is life in prison. They could have been given life sentences.

But instead it is PC Harper's widow, Lissie, his parents, his family and his friends who have the life sentence. Our hearts go out to them.

It does not seem to me that justice has been served, and Lissie clearly feels the same. A few days after the sentencing, she launched a campaign for 'Andrew's Law' to ensure those convicted of killing police officers and other emergency service workers face life in prison.

I do not find myself agreeing with former Prime Minister Theresa May too often but back in May 2013, when she was Home Secretary, I was at the Federation's annual conference when she said that criminals who kill police officers would face compulsory whole life sentences.

She stressed that to kill a police officer was 'to attack the fundamental basis of our society' and I couldn't agree more.

It is for this reason that, as a Federation,

“As a Federation, we have pushed so hard for tougher sentences on those who assault police officers and we believe those who kill police officers should get a life sentence. And we believe life should mean life too.”

we have pushed so hard for tougher sentences on those who assault police officers and we believe those who kill police officers should get a life sentence. And we believe life should mean life too.

We believe these attacks are an attack on society too.

It would appear that the current Home Secretary Priti Patel agrees with us too. She has started a consultation period on plans to increase the maximum sentence for these attacks from one year to two years in prison. We welcome this development.

However, it is going to be completely meaningless if the sentencing powers are increased and yet the courts and judges don't use the maximum sentences available to them.

As a Federation, we will continue to push for this to be the case.

In more positive news, and as you will read on Page 6, we will receive a 2.5 per cent pay rise from 1 September this year.

To bring us back up to the right levels of pay after years of below inflation rises, we needed a bigger boost to our pay packets. But, given the current pandemic and the pressure the country is under financially, with thousands of people losing their livelihoods and so much uncertainty about jobs, I think this is a good result.

I have also welcomed the commitment of the Force to achieve the uplift in officer numbers allowed by the Government's pledge to take on 20,000 new recruits in forces across England and Wales over the next three years. As an aside to this, it is good to see that we are still managing to get recruit numbers in at the levels required. When media headlines scream about all the things wrong with policing, it is encouraging that we are attracting these new people to the job and I hope to see this continue going forward.

Finally, I have to mention pensions. We appreciate the real anger and frustration around the pensions issue. The Government has now put forward its proposals on a possible remedy to the discrimination found in provisions around the 2015 scheme. As a Federation, we have set up our own working group to consider this, and other related matters, further and we will be making a submission to the consultation on behalf of all members – though you can also make your own submission too.

We will keep you updated on the working group's meetings.

Finally, I want to put on record my thanks to all members for their work during the pandemic. It has been a tough time but, as ever, police officers have done their best to look after their communities, even when it put them at risk.

Stay safe.

Office staff returning to Guardians House

The Federation's office administration team has been making a staged return to Guardians House since the start of August.

The move comes after Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced an end to the Government's 'work from home' guidance and stated that staff who had been working from home during the pandemic should now consider returning to the workplace.

The phased return to the office started on 3 August and will build to a full return during week commencing 31 August.

Initially, there will only be a limited

number of people at Guardian's House at any one time so, while calls can once again be made to the office, an improved answerphone service will be in operation.

Members are advised not to visit the office without making an appointment first.

In the event of a local lockdown, the team will revert to agile working.

Throughout the pandemic, the Federation's full-time officials have continued to use Guardians House as necessary but adhering to social distancing and other guidelines.

Force considers bonus for tutors

The Force Executive is considering the introduction of bonus payments for officers who act as tutors to new recruits.

West Midlands Police Federation has long argued that tutors must receive extra pay for their critical role in helping train, support and advise new recruits in their early days with the Force.

"I don't think you can really put a value on the contribution an effective tutor can bring not just to the students themselves but also to the Force as a whole," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, "They can make the difference between a new recruit progressing to become an omniscient police officer and them not reaching the standards we would expect of them. They help ensure that the significant investment the Force makes in terms of recruiting new officers and putting them through their initial training is then backed up with on the job guidance from a tutor.

"Without the skills and expertise of a tutor to guide and train a student officer, there is a risk that they won't make it through their training and then the Force's initial investment has gone to waste.

"As such, we need to attract the right officers to the tutor role and a financial incentive will help that. In recent years, we have seen some officers mandated to be tutors just because there has been a shortage of volunteers for a role which can be incredibly demanding, particularly when you consider it is something that officers do on top of their existing role. We don't believe that is a good way to find

the right people."

A paper is with the Force Executive with a decision being imminent. The Federation is calling for any payment to be backdated to reflect the fact that officers have been tutoring Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) students for some time.

The matter is being considered as the Force is undertaking its largest recruitment campaign for over a decade as part of the Government drive to take on 20,000 new officers over three years.

Tutors were among the roles that used to receive Special Priority Payments of up to £1,200 a year. These were abolished in 2012 following the publication of Part 1 of Sir Tom Winsor's review of police pay and remuneration.

But DC Chris Smith, a Federation workplace representative who has acted as a tutor for around 23 years, interviewed for our Federation magazine earlier this year, believes something needs to be done.

"Ideally, the Force would have a cadre of skilled and willing volunteers. The role should be attracting the right people for the right reasons and, as an organisation, we should be able to retain those officers and their skill sets. Tutors used to be rewarded for their tutoring efforts and I think this is something the Force should look at again for recruitment and retention in the role," he explained.

"Mandating officers to perform the role of tutor could result in an unmotivated workforce providing poor standards of learning."

Pay increase is a step in the right direction, says Fed chair

A 2.5 per cent pay award is a step in the right direction in terms of getting police officer pay back to where it needs to be after years of below-inflation salary increases, says the chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Jon Nott says that given the current crisis the country faces due to the pandemic there were positives in the Government announcement on pay which will see officers across the ranks receiving a 2.5 per cent increase in their wages from 1 September 2020.

"The Home Office has accepted in full the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body, which advises the Government on officer pay. This has not always been the case so this is to be welcomed," says Jon.

"In our joint submission to the review body with the Police Superintendents' Association in February this year, we had called for a five per cent increase but, of course, this was before the pandemic. When you consider the financial pressures we are now facing as a country, we have to take this pay award as a step in the right direction.

"However, as a Federation, we will continue to fight for more substantial increases in pay in the future when the economy allows due to the unique role police officers play in society.

"For far too long, their pay has not reflected the real dangers they face, day in, day out as they serve and protect their communities and this has been clearly

evident during the pandemic when they have been on the front-line maintaining public services.

"Over the last decade, they have seen their pay reduced by 18 per cent in real terms so I am pleased that we are starting to see signs that the Government wants to put this right. However, it seems that this increase has to be funded from existing police budgets so I hope we are not going to see cuts in other areas so that forces can afford the increased wages bill."

Jon's views were in line with those of the national Federation chair, John Apter, who said: "With the economic vulnerability we face as a country, many colleagues will be relieved to receive a 2.5 per cent pay

increase - anything lower would have been completely unacceptable."

The pay rise will mean a constable will receive an extra £1,100, taking into account salary and allowances, of pensionable pay a year from 1 September this year.

The Government also announced:

- **London Weighting and the dog handlers' allowance would increase by 2.5 per cent too**
- **The lowest point on the sergeants' pay scale would be removed**
- **The maximum rate of London Allowance would increase by £1,000 to £5,338 a year for officers appointed on or after 1 September 1994 and not receiving replacement allowance.**

“In our joint submission to the review body with the Police Superintendents' Association in February this year, we had called for a five per cent increase but, of course, this was before the pandemic. When you consider the financial pressures we are now facing as a country, we have to take this pay award as a step in the right direction.”



The factors considered

The Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) said that while COVID-19 changed the context of the report as it was prepared it considered its remit in the usual way and focussed on longer-term trends in the data and information relevant to its evidence-based process.

The key factors taken into account when reaching the main pay award recommendation were:

- **The continued high demand on the police with no reduction in the range of crime types or the complexity of cases**
- **The priority being given to achieve the uplift in police officer numbers, including the need for pay to:**
 - facilitate recruitment
 - encourage retention of those with skills and experience
 - reward those in supervisory chains who will have the additional responsibilities in delivering workforce uplift and supporting the new intake of officers, and
 - acknowledge the part played by all officers in continuing to deliver a service in a demanding environment, given that it will take some time for the benefits of the uplift programme to be realised
- **The state of police morale, including the frustration of officers who told PRRB they were not able to do their job properly and of their concerns about the volume and complexity of their work**
- **The evidence provided on affordability, noting that views on this are driven by both budget and demand but that ultimately it was a matter of judgement**
- **The state of the wider economy, including indicators of pay settlements**
- **The relationship to pay reform.**

New recruits

The PRRB concluded that pay flexibility for new constables' starting salaries should be retained but it urged the National Police Chiefs' Council to consider this as part of its benchmarking work as part of pay reform.


It states that the pay progression available to apprentices once they qualified as PCs was an important element in addition to the starting salary.

Looking ahead

"We note that the current economic data means that this year's pay recommendation will be a real-term increase for officers in our remit group but assess that this is justified given the evidence presented to us and the demand, complexity and level of risk and responsibility placed on the police. We recognise that the environment for next year's review will be influenced by a number of factors," the report concluded.

It said it would continue to monitor the longer-term implications of COVID-19 and the impact of the UK leaving the European Union on policing. It would also await an update on the uplift programme and pay reform.

The Home Office would need to provide clear parameters in its remit letter if PRRB was to consider a multi-year deal.



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Appointments to take place over the telephone

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See what your colleagues say:

"Caroline helped me put things into perspective and come away with a plan that will allow me to get back control of my finances. I feel in a good place to move forward." Serving police officer, 2019

"I am very grateful for Caroline's support. She could see I found the whole situation stressful but she took that pressure from me and was wonderful. She's a fantastic lady"
Serving police officer, 2019

"Not only did she help me to understand how the new pension will affect me but she also helped save me money!"
Serving police officer Bennett, 2019

"Visiting Caroline Harris was well worth the time. She helped put my mind at rest with informed information rather than guess work" Serving police officer Skidmore, 2019

"Caroline cleared up any doubts about my pension and helped me understand my tax code better, which has resulted in a tax refund. I highly recommend any officer who is close to retirement come and speak to her." Serving police officer Shippam, 2019



GeorgeBurrows 

Working group will consider pensions challenge

A working group of West Midlands Police Federation representatives has been set up to consider the current situation whereby some members are in the Leigh Day pensions challenge and others have now joined the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) group action.



Steve Grange.

West Midlands Police Federation's Branch Council held its regular meeting on Friday 10 July and the pensions issue was discussed at length. It was agreed to

establish the working group to look at the two pension challenges in more depth.

The working group will report its initial findings to the next Branch Council meeting in September.

More than 2,300 West Midlands officers have applied to join the PFEW group action for compensation after the introduction of the 2015 pension scheme. The deadline for submitting applications was originally Friday 17 July but this was then extended to Friday 31 July to give Federation branches more time to manage the high level of enquiries they are receiving.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) announced in May that it was launching a compensation claim against the Government on behalf of

affected members who suffered any 'injury to feeling' as a result of the transitional protections afforded to some officers when the 2015 pension scheme was introduced.

The Government has accepted that it must rectify any detriment suffered as a result of those transitional protections. Work is ongoing as to how that remedy will be applied across the whole of the public sector pension schemes, including the police service.

The PFEW launched its action to ensure those who have not already submitted a claim in respect of the discrimination are also considered for any compensation the court considers appropriate for the distress caused by the transitional protections.

Consultation on remedy

The Government has announced the consultation process on the proposed remedy to the discrimination found in the implementation of the 2015 Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Police Pension Scheme.

West Midlands Police Federation's newly established pensions working group will consider the consultation paper and submit a response on behalf of the branch and members.

Members can also submit their own individual responses.

HOW TO RESPOND

The consultation runs for 12 weeks and will close at midnight on Sunday 11 October.

Responses can be submitted by email to:

PensionsRemedyProjectConsultation@hmtreasury.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can send responses by post to: Pensions Remedy Project Team HM Treasury 2/Red 1 Horse Guards Road London SW1A 2HQ.

When responding, please make it clear which questions you are responding to. Additionally, you must indicate you are replying as an individual.

HM Treasury

Important Choice for Public Servants – Your Pension

In 2015 most public service pension schemes were reformed. These reforms included 'transitional protection', for people closer to retirement. The Courts have ruled that this directly discriminated against some younger pension scheme members.

The government's proposals to remove the discrimination will apply to all pension scheme members who were in service on or before 31 March 2012 and on or after 1 April 2015, including those with a qualifying break in service of less than 5 years.

Many affected members will benefit from this change.

Changes to the judicial and local government pension schemes are being consulted on separately. For everyone else, the government will provide affected members with the option to choose between their old (mostly final salary) and new (career average) pension scheme benefits for service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

The government is seeking views on how this choice might work. There are two different proposals:

- 1. An Immediate Choice Exercise**
The choice will be made by members as soon as practicable.
- 2. A Deferred Choice Underpin**
Members would remain in, or be returned to, the old schemes for service between 2015 and 2022. At the point of retirement (or when benefits become payable) or as soon as practicable (for members who have already had a pension award), members would be then able to choose to instead receive new scheme benefits for that period.

Are you affected?

- Were you in service as a member of a public service pension scheme on or before 31 March 2012 and on or after 1 April 2015?
 - No: You are not affected (unless you held a right to return within 5 years to your previous scheme on 31 March 2012).
 - Yes:
 - Have you retired or are you planning to retire (including partially) before 1 April 2022?
 - Yes: You will receive a choice between old and new scheme benefits for service between 2015 and your retirement date.
 - No: You will receive a choice between old and new scheme benefits for service over the period 2015-22.
 - Immediate Choice: You will need to make a choice reasonably soon after April 2022.
 - Deferred Choice: You will need to make a choice when you retire (or when benefits become payable).

You can read the consultation paper at gov.uk – simply type in public service pension schemes consultation in the search

Assault on Police Employees

10 Point Plan



1

Assaults on police officers and police staff should be investigated with the same care, compassion and commitment as an assault on a member of the public. *This sounds obvious, but too often our response to assaults on officers and staff can be rushed or treated as secondary to other offences.*

2

The assaulted officer / staff member must never be the OIC for the investigation into their own assault. *This is not appropriate on any level and even taking statements from witnesses may be inappropriate. The integrity of the investigation and the impartiality of the officer could be called into question, which could undermine the case and/or heighten the impact on the employee.*

3

The assault is to be raised as a discussion point at the next available local DMM. *The DMM chair is to ensure that early welfare support is put in place and confirm that the Employee's Supervisor is aware.*

4

Colleagues recover better and more quickly if they receive the right welfare and supervision. *This also helps to avoid long-term negative consequences. The assaulted person's supervisor should contact them as soon as it is practical to do so, preferably within 24 hours. The employee may play down the impact on them, but supervisors must recognise the potential effects of the incident.*

5

The iCASS report must be completed by the supervisor along with, where practicable, the employee, for all assaults regardless of severity. *If the employee is not available, that should not delay the completion of the report.*

6

The supervisor must ensure that the Local Command Team is informed, should the Police Employee be hospitalised then the on call chief officer is to be notified. *This will allow them to provide continuity of welfare support, and to ensure it is discussed at the DMM.*

7

The supervisor must ensure that they notify the Police Federation or Trade Union Representative. *The Staff Associations and trade unions can provide additional valuable support to the employee.*

8

All assaults on police officers and police staff will be treated seriously and WMP will seek to ensure appropriate redress through the criminal justice system.

Charges relating to the assault of a police officer or staff member should not be dropped because charges relating to more serious crimes are being brought. This can send the wrong message to offenders and doesn't recognise the effects the assault could have had on public confidence in the Police Service.

9

To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented.

Victim personal statements should be used and whoever is investigating the assault needs to fully understand the 'points to prove' for assaults on police officers or staff. An officer's self-written statement provided straight after the event could be made in haste and might not contain all of the key facts. As a result, cases sent for prosecution sometimes fail to meet basic evidential needs.

10

The Victim Code applies to all victims and therefore to assaults on police officers and staff. *Complying with the Victim Code means keeping the employee updated, discussing outcome options, and taking account of the employee's point of view before imposing an outcome.*



'Mental impact of assaults has to be considered'

More emphasis needs to be placed on the psychological impact of assaults on officers, says the deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

John Williams, who represents the Federation at the Force's assaults meetings, said the Force needs to realise that it is not always the physical injuries an officer receives that have a lasting impact on them.

"We speak to officers who may have only received a minor injury and yet it has a profound effect on them mentally," says John, "It can affect their confidence when carrying out their duties, play over and over in their minds, cause sleep disturbances and anxiety. This can then affect their relationships with their families, friends and colleagues.

"At the other end of the scale, you can hear of officers who receive far more serious physical injuries but bounce back and are largely unaffected. The point is you can't assume anything. Each officer's individual circumstances and feelings have to be taken into account. There is no one approach that you can take and the Force has to be mindful of this."

The Federation has urged the Force to also consider an appeals process when an investigation into an officer assault results in 'no further action' and has welcomed the fact this is going to be discussed in more detail.

"When officers are unhappy with the

decisions taken by the CPS they have a victim's right to review and this should not be forgotten," says John, "Sometimes we are seeing charges for assaults on the police being dropped as if they are less important than other allegations but I think the words of Rory Stewart when he was justice minister should be in everyone's minds.

"He said an assault on any individual or citizen in our society is terrible but an assault on an emergency worker was an attack on everyone since these people are society's constituted representatives, protecting it and delivering services on its behalf. Therefore he argued these attacks should be punished more severely than an attack simply on an individual victim.

"I think that is true and that is why we need to see these offenders receive tough sentences as a punishment but also as a deterrent to others."

During the assaults meeting, John raised the Federation's concerns about a Force 'awareness video' which shows officers how to stop vehicles safely. While welcoming the video, the Federation is concerned that the film only relates to drivers who are compliant.

John also asked if there was any intention to incorporate vehicle extraction into the Force's personal safety training but was told this was difficult due to the time involved and funding issues.

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the national

Federation's response driving lead, is currently working on plans for an amendment to the Police Powers and Protections Bill, which is due before Parliament in the autumn, which will give police powers to require a driver to get out of their vehicle after a police stop.

Sentences could be doubled for officer assaults

Doubling the maximum sentences for offenders convicted of assaulting police officers will only be effective if the courts use the powers available to them, according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott.

Jon was speaking after the Government launched a four-week consultation that could lead to the maximum sentences for assaulting emergency workers being increased to two years in prison.

The review into the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 was launched on 13 July by the Justice Secretary, Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland and Home Secretary Priti Patel.

New recruit April gives insight into training during the pandemic

April Baker had volunteered as a Special for 18 months before joining the Force as a recruit on the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship scheme.

That role, she has found, has stood her in good stead as she started her police officer training but, nevertheless, she has found the remote learning element of her course challenging.

April acknowledges that her cohort of 28 new recruits has had a better experience than other intakes in recent months.

Split into two classes of 14, they have just completed four weeks of face to face training at Tally Ho; as the only groups in the building due to the coronavirus restrictions.

"We had our induction days on 21 and 22 May and then completed four weeks of online training, 8am until 3pm daily delivered by Staffordshire University," explains April, who previously worked as a higher level teaching assistant working with vulnerable children and children with special educational needs at a Smethwick primary school.

"We were the first class to be allowed back to Tally Ho for training in person and we have undertaken our personal safety training, working with a partner throughout. After this we worked with uniform trainers who delivered sessions, developing our learning by providing us with definition checks and arrest role play scenarios. The trainers have been supportive and adapted learning around us.

"The whole set-up is really well thought out. There is a one-way system in place, social distancing, gloves and masks have



April Baker.

been available and there are hand-washing stations around the building.

"It has been a really strange time to be

joining the police service. Tally Ho, which would normally be a hive of activity, has just had our group in it but everyone has made the best of the situation.

"For me, my time as a Special has also given me a great advantage since I have had real life experiences to relate to when being taught something and I have been able to share knowledge with the others in my group."

April's time as a Special involved a posting to Brierley Hill where she said the officers and staff team were supportive and keen to ensure she got a good grounding in

“There have been some changes to our schedule along the way due to coronavirus but, as a group, we are taking each week as it comes and we are all learning that we need to be flexible.”

terms of the life of a police officer.

"The team at Brierley Hill knew that I had applied to be an officer and knew I really wanted to get stuck in and learn the job, so they took the time to work with me and support me as a Special Constable. In return, I volunteered over the 16 hours expected each month and worked full-time during school holidays," she says,

April had originally considered policing as a career when she was at school but instead went into education. Having had a change of heart, she joined the Specials to get a taste of policing and then applied to join the regulars.

The recruitment process took about 18 months.

Despite no longer working at the school, she hopes when she starts working in the community that she can visit the primary school where she worked to serve as an inspiration to the young pupils.

"I want to show them that you can do anything if you put your mind to it," she says, "I have worked closely with vulnerable children and their families and I hope that when they see me in my uniform, working as a police officer, I can inspire them and show them that the police are here to support and help our communities."

For now though, she is back to online training which she says is quite difficult because you miss out on the conversations with trainers and the interactivity with the rest of the class.

She will then move onto the investigations team at Wolverhampton for eight weeks, before taking annual leave, embarking on another two weeks of university training and another eight-week placement on response at Brierley Hill.

"There have been some changes to our schedule along the way due to coronavirus but, as a group, we are taking each week as it comes and we are all learning that we need to be flexible," she explains.

While working within the Force, the students will be given protective learning weeks so that they can keep up to date with their studies and the onus is on them to make sure they keep their tutors up to date with the deadlines they are working to with their course work.

"You really do have to manage your own time," says April, "But I am very grateful that, having been a Special, and knowing others who have already been through the recruitment process, I already had an understanding of how the Force works and what is expected of you."

Aware of the work of the Federation, she also signed up as a member as soon as she could.



Roads policing 'inadequate'

Cuts to roads policing budgets leading to a drop in the number of dedicated roads policing officers have been blamed for a gradual increase in road deaths after more than 30 years of steadily declining fatalities.

A new report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) called "Roads Policing: not optional" highlights the fact that £120 million cuts to roads policing budgets between 2013 and 2019 were reflected in a 'substantial decrease' in police enforcement activity in particular the targeting of the Fatal Four of drink and drug driving, not wearing seatbelts, excess speed and driving while distracted, for example, by using mobile phones.

It found roads policing in some forces was inadequate, that often capability and capacity did not meet demand and that a lack of co-ordination hindered effective engagement with partners and the public. It also called for roads policing to be standardised and accredited, as one of 13 recommendations to improve the effectiveness of roads policing in England and Wales, and also urged the Government to include roads policing within the Strategic Policing Requirement.

"Sadly, this report does not come as any great surprise to me at all," says Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and response driving lead for the Police Federation nationally, "The inspectors' views echo what we have been saying for some time. Roads policing has been allowed to slip down the list of priorities. It has been under-funded meaning that it has become under-resourced and people have been paying for that with their lives.

"I am not sure what it is going to take for the Government, chief officers and Police and Crime Commissioners to realise what a critical role roads policing officers play in helping ensure that people can use

our roads safely. Between 2015 and 2018, an average of just over 1,600 people lost their lives each year on our roads network and many more were seriously injured. That should be impactful enough in itself to make police leaders decide to take action.

"This report is putting the blame for these figures squarely down to cuts to funding and an apparent decline in the priority given to roads policing. So will this be sufficient to prompt a reinvestment in roads policing? I really hope so. We need chief officers and Police and Crime Commissioners to act on the recommendations in this report to halt the steady increase in deaths on our roads and also tackle the criminal elements making use of our roads network."

Tim acknowledged that West Midlands Police was one of only two of the seven inspected – the other being the Met – where HMICFRS praised strategic leaders, officers and staff for demonstrating a strong commitment to roads policing and the positive effect this had on road safety but called on the Force to properly analyse its commitment to roads policing and continue to further improve. The other forces inspected were Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Humberside, Staffordshire and South Wales.

Only 19 of the 43 forces in England and Wales listed roads policing or road safety as a priority in their police and crime plans.

The report concluded: "There is a clear, and pressing, need for government, Police and Crime Commissioners, chief officers, and the College of Policing to recognise the importance of roads policing in reducing death on the roads."

Read the full report and recommendations at <https://tinyurl.com/y7ssen84>

More details will appear in the next edition of our *Federation* magazine.

- Read the views of some of our roads policing officers on Page 14 and 15.

Root and branch overhaul needed

Road traffic policing needs a 'root and branch overhaul', according to a West Midlands roads policing officer.

The officer, who wants to remain anonymous, was speaking out after the HMICFRS report found roads policing was 'inadequate'

The West Midlands officer pulled few punches as they revealed a number of issues facing roads policing.

He said: "Management of collision scenes is a real issue at the moment. Scenes are not secure and through this we lose evidence. The standards of police driving have got worse; it is like Keystone Cops. While the training product is good, they are then immersed in a culture of the excitement of the chase, greater good and not driving to the standard that we would expect and nor would the public.

"The standards of driving for road police officers here are poor."

The officer added: "It needs a root and branch overhaul. The review was engineered. The senior management selected officers for interview, gave them the questions and also the answers."

Another officer said: "The review is a good step though and it is forcing chief constables to examine roads policing. This will hopefully get to the truth, albeit slowly."

We spoke to a third officer who said

they moved to roads policing because they wanted to get rid of drink-drivers and reduce fatal collisions.

"I wanted to specialise and learn new skills," he said, "In my day I thought some traffic officers were lazy. I wanted to get the skills and use them, which I did."

And the officer said a lot had changed since they moved to road policing.

"The introduction of a dedicated collision investigation unit was a good step forward," he explained. "We had an inconsistent approach to road death investigation which needed addressing. Even now, though, we've seen an influx of inexperienced staff on the collision units which has been a backward step.

"There is no glide path to the unit as traffic officers do not investigate or gain the experience prior to joining the unit. The quality of recruits has gone downhill. They're not interested in gaining the requisite skill to perform the role to a high standard. Key safety issues with regard to vehicles on our roads are ignored or even go unnoticed.

"Officers are more interested in sneaking around in plain cars dressed in black. Marked cars that offer a good visible and reassuring presence to the public are seen as a lower level of policing."

Another officer said that recruitment and training would help to resolve some of the issues.

"There does need to be more specialist roads policing officers," they said. "But you need to skill them correctly and have them motivated to work in a way that delivers value. There are never enough officers at serious collision scenes."

Despite all that, they said there are still enjoyable parts to the role.

"The most challenging part is the pressure of court," he said. "Having the evidence scrutinised and the accountability to the family. The emotion. But I most enjoy gathering evidence, finding answers and assisting the families. Also, securing a conviction, working on our own time and having played a huge part in seeking the truth; getting thank-yous from the family or the judge."

“Key safety issues with regard to vehicles on our roads are ignored or even go unnoticed.”

Increased scrutiny

The criticism and scrutiny of roads policing by management has increased 10-fold in recent years, according to another West Midlands roads policing officer.

Having joined roads policing around five years ago, he said the way in which the unit targets offenders has improved though and the Force does appear to have realised the importance of the RPU.

But, he admitted, the mental health management and treatment of officers when they have made a decision that is 'questionable' has not improved.

"The most challenging part of the role for me is dealing with the mental health aspect of the role. Managing your performance, being able to self-criticise and reflect while still performing to the top of your game," said the officer.

"We need more roads policing officers. In such a large force as WMP, a team of maybe eight double-crewed cars across three cities cannot be enough. The arrests and prosecutions that RPU and CMPC produce, with such limited numbers, I imagine would be relatively high. With increased numbers would come increased results.

"We also need more investment in roads policing and that would allow technology to move with the times; increased ANPR cameras and access in-car to results, mobile statements and prosecutions and tickets."

The officer moved to roads policing due to a keen interest in pro-active policing and the genuine opportunity it provided to target offenders.



'We need re-investment'

There needs to be a reinvestment in roads policing to allow more officers to move into this specialist area.

That is the view of a member of the West Midlands roads policing unit (RPU) with almost 20 years' service under his belt.

"I'm forever being told by family and friends that you don't see many traffic officers on the roads anymore. We do need more specialist roads policing officers but newer traffic officers should also be given training and input into investigation and upskilled with a vehicle examiner's course, PG9, driving grades," he said.

"Road policing, in my opinion, is an important part of policing. Everyone uses the roads and focus should be given to this area. Traffic officers should not be dragged away to deal with other areas of policing unless there is an operational need. Bearing in mind we had 21 OCUs with approximately one sergeant and 12 officers per area or OCU and I think my old area is now lucky to get one traffic car as and when, thinking we would have two traffic cars every shift 24 hours a day.

"We need re-investment for public confidence, visibility, enforcing and educating motorists in all areas of traffic law, dealing with collisions from slight to fatal.

"The role of a traffic officer has been watered down over the years and drawn into more crime-orientated duties. What I

mean by that is not that traffic officers should avoid crime but in that courses are fewer, training is poor and the attitude of some newer officers, but not all, is not traffic-orientated.

"The traffic officer basics are not understood by newer officers, what was once dealt with by one department has been split into several departments although some of this is a good idea - SCIU/ road harm.

"But technology, equipment and vehicles – with ANPR, digital cameras and mobile devices - and dedicated SCIU and FLO have improved - although some would argue this deskills officers in some areas of investigation."

The most challenging parts of the role, he said, is case times taking years not months now, with sentences given still under par for the offences, coping with the pressure from not only managing the caseloads but also CPS wish lists and family expectations and balancing each investigation.

"Non-stops are still the same with no continuity in assistance at times, and little or no support from senior management; we feel like the poor relation nowadays."

But he enjoys being allowed to get on with my job and getting the investigation completed to a high standard leaving no stone unturned to get the answers for families of loved ones killed on the road.

“ We need re-investment for public confidence, visibility, enforcing and educating motorists in all areas of traffic law, dealing with collisions from slight to fatal. ”

Roads policing: have your say

Federation members should make the most of an opportunity to help shape the future of roads policing, says West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Tim Rogers.

Tim, who is the national Federation lead on response driving, has successfully campaigned for a change in the law to give police drivers better protection in law and is also seeking legislative reform that will give officers the power to make someone get out of their vehicle following a police stop.

But he now wants as many officers as possible to contribute to a call for evidence launched by the Department for Transport (Dft) as part of a review of roads policing also involving the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Home Office.

Tim believes the fact that there has been no significant fall in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the nation's roads in the last 10 years means roads policing has to be prioritised and that the review could lead to a re-investment in an under-resourced area.

"It is a shocking reality that there are currently around 1,800 deaths a year on our roads. When you take into account that is twice the number of deaths from homicides and acts of terrorism combined you get an idea of the scale of the problem we have," says Tim.

"The cuts to policing have had a devastating impact on the police service as a whole but they have been particularly felt in roads policing where the number of dedicated officers has fallen, in relative terms, by far more than the overall reduction in police numbers.

Dedicated roads policing officers make up just four per cent of total force strength with a significant number being double-hatted too."

Find out more and give evidence at <https://tinyurl.com/yddoa5fw>



New Federation representative puts focus on fairness

Peri Dhesi is committed to increasing fairness across the Force.

One of the newest officers to join West Midlands Police Federation as a workplace



representative, Peri has only been in the role for a few weeks but he is already enjoying being able to offer colleagues advice and support.

"My over-riding goal as a Federation representative is helping people," he explains, "I enjoy helping people and if there is something I can do for anyone, I will try my best to do it. Now I am a Fed rep, as long as I can help people, I will continue to do it as best as I can.

"I've always been a people person so I feel that's a strength. I am fortunate as my role gives me regular access to SLT and I feel I have made good relationships with them prior to becoming a Fed rep. Hopefully, that can continue and I can look after member interests within the organisation.

"I'm busy and I enjoy being busy. It may be difficult balancing my day job with my Federation duties although this is something I feel I will manage.

"My key focus will be increasing fairness across the organisation. I really want everyone to be treated fairly across the organisation and particularly within FCID where I imagine most of my duties will occur."

He adds: "I just want to be the best Fed rep I can while I am in post. I want to try to help as many people as possible and increase fairness wherever I am. Really that's my main goal. I want people to be able to say they've all been treated fairly by the organisation and to ensure personal values don't influence objective facts. I've used the word fairness a bit but I do believe it's an important word in an organisation of our size."

Peri has been with the Force for 12 years. But before becoming an officer, he was employed in security at ASDA and worked closely with the police when dealing with shoplifters which inspired him to want to join the Force and try to have a positive impact on people during their darkest moments.

His first posting was A Unit Tipton on

Response.

"I learnt so much there and we had a great team including Andy Hedge, Steve Brown, Mike Bradbury and Sgt Hancock. I wouldn't have become a semi-decent constable without their guidance and it is something I am thankful for today," he explains.

He has since worked in Response, as a call handler and dispatcher in Force Contact and as a trainer in Learning and Development (L & D). Having left L & D to become an investigator, he became a detective in FCID in 2016 and is now a sergeant.

"I try not to focus on job highlights as I try to maintain a balanced mindset and ultimately do the best for victims and our people, however, leaving my role in L & D as a trainer with a goal to become a detective and a sergeant and achieving those both by 2018 was a personal highlight," Peri says.

"Another highlight is meeting my two best friends, Ade Davies and Mitz Parmar, and of course, meeting my wife, Aman Dhesi. West Midlands Police has been very influential on my circle and my life."

He is currently working in FCID Prevent which is closely involved with the planning team in FCID and he adds: "Needless to say my days are very random but I am in a fortunate position where I can influence some change and have my voice heard with SLT."

Since he only became a Federation rep in July, Peri is awaiting his initial training course, which he will undertake in August, but he is settling into the role, grateful for the support of Federation chair, Jon Nott, who has made himself available to him at all times.

“ I just want to be the best Fed rep I can while I am in post. I want to try to help as many people as possible and increase fairness wherever I am. Really that's my main goal. I want people to be able to say they've all been treated fairly by the organisation and to ensure personal values don't influence objective facts. I've used the word fairness a bit but I do believe it's an important word in an organisation of our size. ”

And he would encourage other members to consider putting themselves forward for the role.

"If it's something you have an interest in, put yourself forward. The worse thing that can happen is you stay where you are now," he says.

So what does he see as the challenges ahead for West Midlands Police Federation, the Force, officers and the wider police service?

"Well, the pension issues are obviously a challenge for the Federation. Fair play though, there is a West Midlands Police Federation working group now which will hopefully be able to work through some of the issues.

However, it is a complex issue, so members should be patient," he explains.

"For the Force, officer retention is a huge problem. With so many new officers joining us as well, it means we need to retain that experience so we can pass down good habits.

"In terms of officers and staff, I think safety is the main concern. My team puts together the FCID TRM document and I am always appalled with how many people in our organisation are assaulted on a daily basis.

"For the police service, our relationships with our communities are challenging. We need to change the way we police to match society's change. So, for instance, when I was a kid, if someone in authority told me to do something I did it. That's changed now and it's not necessarily a bad thing. We just have to ensure we continue to change with the times."

George receives Chief Constable's Award

George McDonnell, West Midlands Police Federation's conduct lead, has been presented with a Chief Constable's Award in recognition of his dedication to supporting members.

George, who became the Conduct and Performance Lead Officer (CAPLO) in June last year, was presented with the award by Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

"Supporting colleagues through conduct and performance processes is rewarding, and challenging," says George, "It's not a role you take on thinking you are going to get an award from the Chief Constable so I am really pleased that Mr Thompson has recognised the part I play not just in supporting officers but also in helping the Force.

"But, of course, I don't work in isolation. I share the role with Dave Hadley and we also have a CAPLO committee so I would like to pay tribute to their work too. We are all part of a team and we are committed to doing the best we can for members and for the Force.

"Having been investigated myself, with the outcome being an entry in a police notebook and an apology for the whole sorry episode not being concluded more quickly, I remember the experience being completely daunting so I have an understanding of how colleagues feel when they are facing conduct proceedings.

"This has helped me as I have developed this role," he says.

A constant challenge has been ensuring the line between officers making an honest mistake and being deliberately bad is maintained, something he hopes the new conduct regulations introduced earlier this year should finally resolve.

But he also believes officers need to play their part in helping improve performance.

"We all need to continually reflect on self-performance, ask whether we could have done something differently or better. As a Federation, we have to drive that reflection but continually hold the investigating authorities to account on behalf of all those who have been investigated or are under investigation," he says.

"We also have to encourage those same authorities to conduct their business more expeditiously, be more professional and to

“ We are all part of a team and we are committed to doing the best we can for members and for the Force. ”



George McDonnell.

adhere to the same standards against which we are often measuring our officers."

George joined the Force in October 2001 and was posted to response for five years, listing a rewarding posting to the professional development unit as a highlight, along with receiving several Commander Commendations.

He first became a Federation workplace representative in January 2014, formalising a role he had found himself undertaking quite by chance.

George's award from the Chief was greeted with supportive Tweets.

Solihull Alphege Neighbourhood Policing Team commented: "This is a man who thoroughly deserves this recognition and more... His dedication is relentless. He helps people daily and generally it goes unheard. Well done, George and thank you."

The Federation's national conduct lead, Phill Matthews, added: "Great to see a Chief who recognises the great work and huge effort that goes into properly representing members (particularly around discipline cases). Congrats, George, well deserved."

While Martin Plummer wrote: "Well done, George. Treasure that, it's rare for a force to recognise the essential work Fed reps carry out daily, especially the role of the CAPLO which is extremely stressful for all parties involved. Well done, many congratulations."

'I knew I had to get out of policing'

It was pretty much a normal shift. The gang trouble was once again flaring up. Once again the sergeant on duty couldn't find the resources to respond.

But this time was different. The sergeant, who had taken two short spells of sick leave in recent months due to the pressures of his role, just decided he couldn't do the job anymore.

For seven or eight years, he had tried to keep a lid on his emotions, stifle the crippling anxiety he felt; anxiety that, at times, led him to pull over his car on the drive into work just to try to pull himself together.

But this day was different. He couldn't go on.

"I knew he just had to get out of the building," he explained, "I was trying to do my best but this was the end of it. From this point, I knew I had to get out of policing."

That day was to lead to a 16-month process, a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) culminating in him taking ill-health retirement at the end of June this year.

It was not quite the way he expected or wanted his career to end but, all the same, he is quite relieved since he appreciates it could have been so much worse.

And, he wants to urge any officer feeling that their mental health is suffering due to work to seek help and speak up.

"The most important thing is to be honest with yourself," he says, "You know if you are not feeling yourself. You know if you are not sleeping properly. You know if you are short-tempered, angry or anxious. It does you no good at all to try to hide all these things. You need to seek help and the sooner you do that the better for you and for your family.

"Also be honest with the job and with the Force occupational health team."

He had wanted to join the police or the armed services from when he was at school and after five years in the RAF joined West Midlands Police in 1997 when he was 21.

After a spell in H Division, he spent a few years in response policing roles and

then worked in Operations for three years. On promotion to sergeant, he moved to J1 – now DY – and carried out various roles in response, neighbourhoods and partnerships and also in the drugs team.

But he admits that seven or eight years ago, he knew he didn't feel right.

"I wasn't sleeping, I was waking up in the night, I couldn't breathe, I would wake gasping for air. I was having nightmares, I was also constantly wired looking out of the window looking for potential threats. I was scared. My Dad, who has since died, had dementia and that was on my mind but I was also worried about my wife and our three children," he says.

"It was really tough. There is still a stigma about mental ill-health in the police service. It is getting better but it is still there. With a physical illness, people can generally see what is wrong but that is not the case with mental illness and someone taking time off with a physical ailment can seem justifiable.

"But it's different with mental health and yet the pain of mental illness can be so much worse. The pain and suffering of mental ill-health is the worst I have ever suffered, worse than any physical illness I have experienced."

Initially, he tried both online and face to face counselling to help him cope. Medication gave him horrendous side effects, including causing suicidal thoughts.

The incident where he couldn't get the officers he needed to deal with the gangs just took him to breaking point but he knows now that was just the last in a series of events that had together served to push him over the edge.

Like so many officers, he had dealt with many harrowing and traumatic incidents during his career with those involving the tragic deaths of children weighing heavy on his mind.

"I can't pinpoint any one incident," he says, "But they clearly had a cumulative effect and some had an impact on my home life. I attended an incident in which a young boy drowned and after that just

couldn't take my son swimming.

"The accountability element of policing also took its toll. If I went out with friends, I would be worried that something would happen that would lead to the police being called and I would somehow face a conduct inquiry. I could never relax."

During the seven to eight-year period while he was struggling, he did take some time off sick. The first time, he spoke to occupational health and completed a phased return to work, though he admits now that he wasn't really ready to get back to policing.

Within 12 months, he was off sick again.

But when he hit the same issues on returning to work once more and with the gang incident proving a critical turning point, he contacted Cliff Tomkinson, West Midlands Police Federation's personnel and equality lead, who he had been promoted with and knew well.

"It's only really because of the help Cliff gave me – and he was there every step of the way – to go through the ill-health retirement process that I am talking out about my experiences now," he says.

"I just hope this helps other people who go through similar things."

Up until Cliff's involvement, he felt people were not really listening to what he was telling them and that few managers had enough of an understanding of mental ill-health to be able to recognise the signs that he was so unwell. He also admits he perhaps wasn't as open and honest as he needed to be due to the stigma of mental health.

With Cliff's help and support, he was referred to counselling and was eventually diagnosed with PTSD when in the past he was thought to have an anxiety disorder or OCD.

"With PTSD, it can mimic so many other health conditions, you get so many symptoms that can be seen as being down to something else," he explains.

Now, away from the Force and policing, he is feeling better. He doesn't see his retirement as the solution to his problems – just part of the journey he is on.

He still has symptoms of PTSD including anxiety, fear, flashbacks, panic attacks and bursts of anger.

"Simple things can turn my day one way or another," he says, "I am a lot better now I am not exposed to the daily pace of policing. But I have a long way to go."

Part of a recovery group, he is following a life-coaching programme and feeling more positive about the future even taking up a new job mowing lawns.

“ The pain and suffering of mental ill-health is the worst I have ever suffered, worse than any physical illness I have experienced. ”



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Retirement seminars re-start

The Federation's retirement seminars programme has been resumed but with reduced numbers of officers being able to attend and social distancing and other safety measures in place.

Aimed at officers in their last three years of service, the seminars planned for April, May and June were all cancelled and any member who may have missed out as a result is being offered the chance to re-schedule or take part in a webinar that would cover many of the topics in a more condensed format.

"We are scoping the feasibility of putting together a webinar which might also be useful as a pre-attendance session for the full seminars and full details will be announced shortly," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police

Federation.

"We are also considering a pensions and financial wellbeing webinar that would be open to officers with more time left before they retire to provide information about their pension and also to help in making financial decisions that would be more beneficial by having a longer timeframe to take effect.

"Members interested in re-arranging a seminar or taking part in either of the planned webinars should just register their interest by emailing the Federation."

The existing seminar programme restarted in July. PPE will be provided for everyone attending with cleaning stations and hand sanitisers also available. Where possible, a one-way system will be in place.

Those attending are usually encouraged

to take their partners along too but for the remainder of this year at least, due to the restrictions on numbers to allow for social distancing, they will be open to officers only.

Among the topics covered at the seminars are:

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

Members are being urged to register their interest in attending retirement seminars in 2021 by emailing westmidlandspf@polfed.org

Please ensure you put 'Retirement seminar' and the month you would prefer to attend in the subject title and include your name, work email address, personal email address, personal phone number and proposed retirement date in the email.

“Members interested in re-arranging a seminar or taking part in either of the planned webinars should just register their interest by emailing the Federation.”

Virtual run aims to boost ACC's fund-raising appeal

A retired detective inspector has been so struck by the support for Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson he's organising a virtual run to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) and Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove.

James Larkin, who served with the Surrey, Metropolitan and Northamptonshire forces, is putting together the Virtual Two Counties run to support Chris, raise much-needed funds for charity and give fellow runners a goal to aim for after the pandemic forced the cancellation of a series of races.

He is encouraging people to complete a half marathon or 10K between Sunday 13 September and Sunday 20 September. People can also join together to run the half marathon distance as a relay.

It came after the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, in which more than 350 of Chris's family, friends and supporters from police forces across England and Wales were running to support MNDA and the Primrose Hospice, was twice cancelled due to the coronavirus crisis and lockdown.

Originally due to take place in May, it was rescheduled for October because of the pandemic but that event has now also been postponed.

James said: "I'd seen how hard and committed so many people had been in training for Liverpool to support Chris and his wife, Sharon, only to be disappointed not just

once but now twice with the event being postponed again."

James is a member of Desborough and Rothwell Running Club in Northamptonshire and race director for the Two Counties Half Marathon and Relay.

"Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions, I had to cancel my event and it was clear many runners needed something to keep themselves motivated with all events seeming to follow the same route," he said. "Therefore, I persuaded my club to offer a virtual opportunity to earn a bespoke medal and buff for anyone interested."

He added: "It was an easy decision for me to ask my club if we could give all profit from the event to #WMPMND while, hopefully, encouraging many of the group to take part to keep their training from being wasted."

"I currently have more than 50 per cent of our club signed up to do the event already," he added.

Chris, who has been a police officer for almost 29 years, was diagnosed with motor neurone disease – which affects the brain, spinal cord and nerves and stops muscles functioning – six months after being promoted to Assistant Chief Constable.

He's had great support from officers, staff and friends from West Midlands Police and other forces nationwide.

They include Detective Sergeant Trudy



James Larkin.

Gittins, a West Midlands Federation workplace representative, who set up #WMPMND to raise funds for the charities.

Trudy said: "This is the policing family at its best. It's a real compliment to us that James has gone to such lengths to support us as a former colleague from another force."

Chris's wife, Sharon, who is also a West Midlands Police officer, added: "I think we all knew the October race would be postponed again for everyone's safety but that just gives us more time to raise awareness of MND and raise funds."

“ This is the policing family at its best. It's a real compliment to us that James has gone to such lengths to support us as a former colleague from another force. ”

"We're so proud of all we have achieved to date which includes raising over £23,000 with the added bonus of improving people's fitness and mental health.

"Chris is getting weaker down his left side and has to use the wheelchair around the house now. We have got occupational therapy coming out to measure him for a bed downstairs as it's hard work to get him up the stairs and I'm scared if he falls we will both go.

"I'm still running and loving it, my medal rack is getting bigger and I'm so proud of myself and honestly think I've found a new passion."

The initial fund-raising target was £12,000 and when that was reached, it was increased to £16,140 (Chris's collar number).

Recent efforts have now seen that figure surpassed too and the current target stands at a staggering £27,520, which is Sharon's collar number. At the time of writing, more than £23,500 has been pledged.

Chris, Sharon and the fund-raising team have been backed by Olympian and champion marathon runner Paula Radcliffe, Line of Duty actor Vicky McClure, Ruth Wilson, star of Luther, and TV personality David Walliams.

For more information about the Virtual Two Counties and how to enter, visit the Desborough and Rothwell Running Club website.



Sharon Johnson with a gift she made for the Primrose Hospice.

Have your say on pay and morale

Members are being urged to take part in the annual Police Federation pay and morale survey.

The findings of the survey are used as evidence in the Federation's annual submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) which advises the Government on officer pay.

"If members only respond to one survey this year, I would say that this should be the one," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"First and foremost, the Federation will collate the results and use them when submitting evidence to PRRB but locally we also use the findings in our discussions with the Force and the senior leadership team.

"This survey gives us a reflection of how officers are feeling about their pay, whether they feel their remuneration reflects the roles they undertake and also how they feel about working in the police service.



"The more officers who fill out this survey, the more weight it gives to our representations on their behalf nationally, locally and regionally."

Last year's survey revealed:

- **81 per cent of West Midlands respondents were dissatisfied with their overall remuneration, including pay and allowances**
- **75 per cent felt they were worse off financially than they were five years ago**
- **47 per cent reported worrying about the state of their finances every day or almost every day**
- **13 per cent reported never or almost never having enough money to cover all their essentials**
- **95 per cent felt Force morale was low**
- **59 per cent said their morale was low, and**
- **70 per cent said they would not recommend joining the police to others.**

The survey has been issued via the Federation's National Member Database and will close at midnight on Friday 11 September.

• If you need a link to the survey email the Federation office at westmidlandspf@polfed.org




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New policy on DSI

Officers involved in any Post-Incident Procedures (PIP) will now be given the protection afforded to those subjected to a firearms PIP.

This comes after the College of Policing yesterday launched a Death or Serious Injury Authorised Professional Practice (DSI APP) Policy.

The policy sets out the steps that should be taken by a force to protect officers legally, look after their welfare and support them during an investigation.

"We welcome this new policy," says Jon

Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, "For many years, there has been a death or serious injury policy in place for firearms officers. This has been thoroughly tested through the courts and sets a standard to ensure officers are protected but also helps them provide the best evidence.

"As the PIP processes are also used for any incident in which there is a death or serious injury following police contact, it makes complete sense for a policy to be in place for any officer involved in a PIP. I would advise all officers to read the APP guidance to

make sure they understand the new processes."

Steve Hartshorn, the national Federation's PIP lead, added: "We will continue to support our members who are involved in a PIP not only through our Welfare Support Programme but also by ensuring they have the right legal advice. We encourage anyone who finds themselves in this situation to contact their local Federation rep as soon as possible so we can get them the assistance they need."

Regs reminder: short notice change to duties

All officers should receive at least three months' notice to any changes in duties – unless the Force deems it to be due to exigencies of duty.

Before duties are published, the chief officer has to fully consult with the Police Federation at least once a year and all duty rosters have to be published no later than one month before the date it starts.

Each roster will set out for at least three months the following:

- **Officer rest days**
- **Public holidays on which they may be required to work**
- **The time at which their scheduled daily period of duty begins and ends**
- **Free days for part-time members of staff**
- **Intervals of at least 11 hours between the end of one shift and the beginning of the next**

- **An interval between rostered rest days not exceeding seven days.**
- **The only time these regulations can be waived from is due to the officer's own request, a previous agreement with the Federation or through exigencies of duty.**

The term exigencies of duty should be interpreted as relating to situations where a pressing demand, need or requirement is perceived that is not reasonably avoidable and necessitates a change of roster. In this context, the word 'pressing' relates to the expected situation at the time when the duty is to be performed rather than the time when the duty roster is changed, ie the reasons for a change may be known many months in advance but still be pressing.

Changes to rosters should only be made after full consideration of welfare,

operational and practical circumstances rather than purely on financial grounds. Because rosters are produced annually a number of unforeseen reasons for changes may subsequently arise.

It is clearly not possible to produce an exhaustive list of all of the potential reasons, which may necessitate changes. However, by way of example, unforeseen public order situations, court attendance and essential training would justify changes to rostered duties.

An officer should be told as soon as the requirement for the change is known and at the latest by midnight on the calendar day before the changed period of duty commences.

Find the answers to more Frequently Asked Questions on our website www.polfed.org/westmids under the Advice and Regs tab.

Specials set to be allowed to join the Federation

A move to allow Special Constables to join the Police Federation has been backed by West Midlands branch chair Jon Nott.

Jon applauded the work of Specials during the coronavirus pandemic and said he is looking forward to the day they could be welcomed into the Federation.

He said: "The contribution that Special Constables have been making alongside our members in the response to the coronavirus crisis has been amazing. We couldn't be more proud of their efforts.

"During this pandemic, just like at other times, they have given up their free time to work alongside our members and face the same dangers as they support and protect our communities.

"It's only right that they should have access to the same representation, support

and advice that their regular colleagues are afforded through the Federation.

"This is a welcome move and we look forward to welcoming them into the Federation family," he added.

Under current legislation, Special Constables in England and Wales are not allowed to be Federation members.

However, the Police Powers and Protections Bill, which is set to come before MPs later this year, will seek to change that.

In a blog for the Federation, the national Federation's professional development lead, Dave Bamber, said the change was not before time.

"I'm delighted that, following discussions with the Home Secretary and other Government officials to facilitate a change in law, Specials will be included as part of the

Federation's remit in the Police Powers and Protections Bill expected this autumn," he said.

"This inclusion will allow Specials to receive the same representation as full-time police officers and allows the vital work they do to be officially recognised. I am delighted we will be able to give Special Constables the protection in the workplace that they so richly deserve."

Dave added: "Time and again during the COVID-19 pandemic I have been impressed and humbled by the way in which Special Constables have stepped up and worked alongside their full-time colleagues to serve the public when they needed it the most."

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

'Tough and tenacious' – a tribute to former branch secretary Ernie and a life well led

Former West Midlands Police Federation secretary Ernie Hanrahan has died.

Ernie, who was instrumental in establishing Guardians House as the Federation offices, went on from West Midlands Police Federation to serve on the Joint Central Committee at the Police Federation of England and Wales' head office, which was then in Surbiton.

Here, Joe Tildesley, who was the West Midlands Police Federation chair from 2000 – 2002 pays tribute to his former colleague and friend.

It is a very great privilege to talk a little about the life and many achievements of Ernie Hanrahan. I appreciate for many of you currently serving his name might not even register but every operational officer owes him a debt of gratitude.

Ernie's police career began in the tough environment of Birmingham city centre in the 1980s. He was a larger than life character, tough and tenacious, never frightened to express his opinion and his previous trade union involvement swiftly marked him out as a future Police Federation representative.

Within a very short period, he was the West Midlands Police Federation secretary working from the then Headquarters in Garretts Green. He cared about people, would not tolerate bullying of any kind and every day he made a difference to the lives of those he represented.

I hope you will not mind me sharing a few personal recollections of him when he first burst over my horizon when I became the chairman in April 2000. It had been a difficult period for the Federation and our relationship with the Force. There were just four full-time officers looking after more than 8,000 officers and we were busy. Blimey, were we busy.



An effective partnership, at the opening of Guardians House are Joe Tildesley (left) and Ernie Hanrahan.

Ernie recognised our individual roles and over the next two years we forged a working relationship the like of which I had never experienced before or since. He was adamant that the whole organisation needed to move and single-handedly set about convincing both the Benevolent Fund and the Credit Union to join us on the journey to Guardians House.

With a cigarette in one hand and a mobile phone in the other, Ernie was determined to make the whole move a success. Kicking and screaming, he turned a vision into reality. Without him there would be no Guardians House.

On 16 November 2000 the move to the new premises was officially recognised by the opening ceremony being carried out by



At the opening of Guardians House by William Hague MP (centre) are (left to right) Stephen Lee, chair of the Benevolent Fund and member of the Inspectors' Branch Board, Joe Tildesley, Ernie Hanrahan and Gary Hyde, chair of the Credit Union. Gary was also a retired inspector and had been the general secretary of the Federation's Inspectors' Central Committee. Joe took over his national role from 1997 until 2000 when he returned as chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Lord Hague, the then leader of the Conservative Party. He warmly thanked Ernie personally for his outstanding contribution to the whole of the project.

Throughout this period and, indeed for the previous 10 years, the Federation had been fighting to be issued with body armour. Indeed we were the only Metropolitan Police Force that has not been issued with a piece of kit which today I am sure is taken for granted. Assaults on average were running at three a day and Ernie was adamant that the situation could no longer be tolerated.

With that same single-minded determination and energy, he set about convincing the Force, and indeed the wider public, that attitudes must change and, after a lengthy campaign, personal body armour was finally issued to every operational officer at the end of 2000.

Such was his success in the West Midlands that Ernie was then elected to the Joint Central Committee of the Police

Federation in London. Fearless in his views, his courage lay in the fact that, unlike the rest of us, he felt no overpowering need to be loved. That takes backbone and bottle. He was loaded with both.

Sadly, because it was the police service's loss, Ernie was not successful in becoming the general secretary of the national Federation. He lost out narrowly in a vote for the top job but for many years he was a highly effective deputy general secretary. I think modern policing would look very different today if Ernie had been able to put his own very individual stamp on the top role.

Yes, we argued on occasions; we had an armed truce never to discuss my appearances on radio and TV but he was magnificently honest and even-handed. I wanted to throttle him some days but I knew he was a man I wanted to have at my shoulder in the trench, when the foe was closing in on us across no man's land.

During my time with Ernie, it was wonderful to see that he found some happiness with his second wife, Chris, who worked in the Credit Union. There are few mysteries as complex as other people's marriages but should you require a textbook definition of devotion look no further than Mr and Mrs Hanrahan.

Sadly, Chris was taken too early and it coincided with the beginning of Ernie's final battle with the illness to which he finally succumbed. There is a sense of relief that his suffering has come to an end but he had looked death in the face for many years and nobody could have been more valiant.

For those of us who are linked to the Police Federation, there is a genuine pang at Ernie's passing because with him goes the strongest possible connection with so much of our own histories. No surprise then that it hurts a bit because part of our own past has died with him.

He will be mourned but much more than that he will be celebrated because he had more life, vigour, courage, individuality and sheer natural talent than just about anyone I have ever met. If God is looking for someone to represent him at his right hand side, then he has found the right man in Ernie Hanrahan.

It was a life well led.

Ernie joined the Force on 5 February 1979 and retired in June 2009.

“ With a cigarette in one hand and a mobile phone in the other, Ernie was determined to make the whole move a success. Kicking and screaming, he turned a vision into reality. Without him there would be no Guardians House. ”

Benevolent Fund benefits resume



As lockdown eases and we begin to see a steady return to normality, we're pleased to announce that many of the Benevolent Fund's membership benefits have also resumed.

Our holiday homes in Weymouth and Dartmouth are now ready and safe for members to visit. The COVID Secure Statement, which can be found on our website www.wmpben.co.uk, outlines everything we are doing to protect guests.

There are still weeks available for Court Cottage, near Dartmouth for October through to April 2021. This quaint two-bedroom residence is situated on the luxury Hillfield Village self-catering estate.

Sleeping up to four people, it provides a wonderful base to explore South Devon.

Weeks can also be booked at our second property, Peel's Retreat, Weymouth from December 2020 to April 2021. For full details of availability visit our holiday home pages at www.wmpben.co.uk. Holidays for May 2021 through to Spring 2022 will be available to book via our ballot in January 2021.

Convalescence and rehabilitation breaks

for members are also resuming. St Michael's Lodge, the holistic treatment centre in the Ribble Valley, Lancashire, closed its doors back in April in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

We're pleased to announce that the lodge began operating a phased re-opening from 27 July. Restrictions will apply and we will be publishing their full COVID Secure Policy on our website shortly. Members who had appointments cancelled will be notified by St Michael's Lodge staff to discuss options for re-booking. A further email will be shared with all our members about the planned re-opening in due course.

It was disappointing that we were unable to welcome members to our AGM back in July. We hope to announce a new date for later in the year. Instead Chairman, John Williams recorded a short video message providing a brief update on our charity's benefits and events. If you missed the video and would like view it you can still watch it here:

<https://wmpben.co.uk/2020/07/a-message-from-our-chairman/>

2020 has been challenging time for all of us and we want to reassure members that the Ben Fund is still here to offer help and assistance where it is needed.

If you are suffering financial hardship or distress please get in touch. You can apply for help online via our website, or email info@wmpben.co.uk or by calling us on **0121 752 4919**.

Thank you for your understanding, patience and ongoing support this year.

Stay safe and keep well.

West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund Team.



**West Midlands Police
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Survey reveals sleep deprivation

Almost half the officers who responded to the first national police wellbeing survey revealed they were getting less than six hours' sleep a night.

Around 35,000 people responded to the survey which was carried out by Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service, and the College of Policing.

The two bodies will now carry out research with experts from around the world to consider ways to reduce the growing issue of officer and staff fatigue and will involve practitioners and staff associations in the UK.

"This survey makes interesting reading and backs up what we, as a Federation, have been saying for some time. We are all aware those who work shifts are more likely to experience poor quality sleep and this survey gives us the evidence to support that," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"Policing is a demanding and challenging role. The decisions and actions taken by police officers can be critical so when they are having to make split-second decisions while feeling fatigued it is going to be even tougher for them.

"We also have to consider the long-term effects of officers experiencing fatigue. It will have an impact on their mental health and even their physical wellbeing so it is crucial the police service addresses this issue. I look forward to reading about the outcomes of this new research."

The wellbeing survey also found that police officers working in safeguarding and investigations reported lower levels of wellbeing, while police staff reported lower levels of wellbeing in

areas such as custody, contact management and incident management.

There were, however, many positive findings from the survey:

- **65 per cent of respondents reporting feeling satisfaction in their work.**
- **The majority of officers and staff reported they felt trusted in their roles and were able to act and make choices which reflected their own personal beliefs and values.**
- **Both police officers and staff reported feeling high levels of competence in their work, meaning they felt they could be effective, make important contributions and felt valued by their co-workers and supervisors.**

Chief Constable Andy Rhodes, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) wellbeing lead and service director for Oscar Kilo, said: "Looking at the results, we see some areas of progress, and other issues which strengthen our resolve to keep doing more.

"It's clear that many people feel valued by their peers and supervisors - but less so by the organisation and the public - a gap we see in every survey that is directly linked to trust. Fatigue also leaps off the page, and this has a lot to do with our cultural acceptance in relation to things like disrupted sleep and all the risks it can bring to our health and operational decision-making."

Chief Constable Mike Cunningham, CEO of the College of Policing, said the survey would provide a baseline which Oscar Kilo would use to measure progress and help prioritise work nationally and within individual forces.

Read the full survey on the Oscar Kilo website.

Family Matters moves into the virtual world

The Federation's equality and personnel lead took part in the first virtual Family Matters event at the start of July.

Cliff Tomkinson made the most of the opportunity to provide officers with guidance on maternity, paternity and adoption leave, flexible working and KIT days.

"I was impressed with how it went and I am looking forward to the next one in August," says Cliff.

The Family Matters events are usually held at the Tally Ho Sports Club each quarter.

Attendees include officers who are expecting, officers on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, together with their new born and other children and sometimes partners will accompany the officers.

The events allow officers to network and find out about issues that may affect them regarding pay, flexible working and all other issues regarding family leave.

They are very successful and numbers have grown over the years, with many officers returning on a regular basis, while on maternity leave, unpaid leave and career breaks.

The events include various guest speakers from the Force and the Federation including Caroline Harris from George Burrows, staff unions and sometimes the pensions department.

TFS adapts to pandemic

In line with businesses across the UK, our Member Services provider Thomson Financial Solutions Ltd (TFS) has adapted the way it does business to ensure it can continue to provide an effective service for clients.

TFS, which is based in Tamworth, was unable to hold its very successful will clinics for Federation members during the lockdown but has continued its 'free police wills' offer remotely by telephone, email and video calls.

"This has proved just as popular," says Bob Thomson, managing director of TFS, "We are also happy to meet people following Government guidelines."

The full range of services offered by TFS are:

- **Last will and testament drafting**
- **Property Protection Trusts**
- **Lasting Powers of Attorney**
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- **Pre-paid funeral plans**
- **DIY probate assistance and estate administration.**

Visit freepolicewills.co.uk or call **01827 65107** for an immediate response.

Dates set for online exams

West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott has applauded moves to hold sergeants' and inspectors' exams online because of the pandemic.

Jon was responding to an announcement by the College of Policing which has confirmed the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) Inspectors' and Sergeants' Exams will take place in the autumn.

The exams were postponed earlier this year due to the coronavirus lockdown. They are now set to be run online to reduce the risk to officers and investigators.

Jon said: "There is a lot of hard work put in and a lot of sacrifices made by officers in readiness for their exams, so to have that opportunity taken away from them because of the lockdown was tough.

"The pandemic has thrown up challenges right across policing, including the delivery of exams, so it's really pleasing to see the College of Policing coming up with an online solution.

"This will allow people to be able to sit their exams and maintain everyone's safety. I'm sure it will be welcomed by the officers involved."

Dates identified for the Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam are Monday 12 and Wednesday 14 October.

Dates identified for the Sergeants' NPPF

Step Two Legal Exam are Monday 9 and Wednesday 11 November.

Mike Cunningham, chief executive at the College of Policing, said: "We will be working at pace in the coming months to put all necessary steps in place to move to online delivery for exams.

"Candidates will need to reserve all of these dates in the event we're able to hold the exams on one day. We will advise of this as soon as we're able to.

"In identifying a date for the rescheduled sergeants' exam, we've considered the notice we need to provide to candidates for revision. We've also tried to identify a date that's least likely to impact on planned leave or those with caring responsibilities."

He said that the new system could mean that candidates receive their exam results earlier than usual.

"We will aim to have the results of the sergeants' exam issued by the end of November," he explained.

The NIE scheduled for 2020 will be held, as planned, on 8 September and 24 November.

The Direct Entry Superintendents' Examination will also be held, as planned, on 17 November.

Find out more at the College of Policing website.



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Helping the police family

Police Care UK is the national charity for all policing, providing dedicated, confidential support for serving and veteran police officers and staff, volunteers, and their families.

Formerly known as the Police Dependants' Trust, the charity relaunched as Police Care UK in March 2019 to better reflect the broad range of assistance provided throughout the UK and the needs of modern policing.

Research funded by Police Care UK has shown that more than 90 per cent of police officers will be exposed to repeated traumatic incidents during their career, and that one in five serving police officers and staff are currently living with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Police Care UK provides practical, emotional and financial support to serving and former police officers, police staff, police volunteers and their immediate families, who have suffered 'harm' as a result of policing.

The charity is independent and confidential and receives no statutory funding. Its small staff team is supported by a network of 100 volunteers across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

"Our volunteers assist us by representing us at local events or meetings or by providing a more local point of contact for those who

may need our assistance," says Dave Blundell, a former national Federation official who is now Police Care UK's engagement officer.

"We would like to have volunteers in every corner of the UK but sadly we were forced to postpone our volunteer recruitment campaign earlier this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is our intention to relaunch this campaign very soon, and this is open to anyone who has been part of a UK police force."

Since 2016 Police Care UK has provided £5.7 million in grants to improve the physical and psychological welfare of serving and veteran members of police forces and their families across the UK. In addition, the charity provides a confidential careline service giving access to confidential advice and support (including telephone support) for those needing a one-off chat with a trained counsellor. It can also provide face to face or telephone counselling for depression, anxiety, addiction, relationships, bereavement, stress or trauma counselling for those showing signs of unprocessed trauma.

Most recently, Police Care UK and the Police Treatment Centres (PTC) have begun work to establish a psychological wellbeing centre of excellence in Harrogate to better care for those who suffer psychological harm

because of their policing role.

The charity has seen an increase in the number of requests for help, and accordingly it has hugely increased the assistance it provides. A driver for this would appear to be people who have already registered with injuries, PTSD and similar conditions, who are finding that their mental health has been impacted by the negative effects of the pandemic lockdown.

The number of calls to the careline has increased substantially since the start of the year with more than 900 specialist therapy sessions being provided between April and June - 50 per cent higher than the number of sessions provided during the whole of the previous year.

Dave said: "We will provide as much assistance as we can afford. We are so grateful to all our supporters, past and present. Their donations assist us to help police families in need. Some make one-off donations, perhaps in memory of someone special, others set up monthly payments, and legacy giving is also a very good way we can raise funds. It all helps to enable us to continue providing our much needed services."

Officers, staff and volunteers can access help and support from Police Care UK for themselves or a colleague (although they must have consent) by visiting the charity's website, emailing hello@policecare.org.uk or ringing **0300 012 0030** during weekday office hours.

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through Flexible Autos and Holiday Autos, there are also separate hire for leisure offers through APH and Fly Park, the specialist in airport car parking.

You and your family can insure your vehicles through Police Insure, which specialises in offering insurance policies for members of the policing family. Police Insure also offer home and motorcycle insurance.

You can also access insurance deals with Motorfinity GAP Insurance and Police Mutual by visiting the vehicle insurance section of our Member Services vehicles page on the polfed.org/westmids website.

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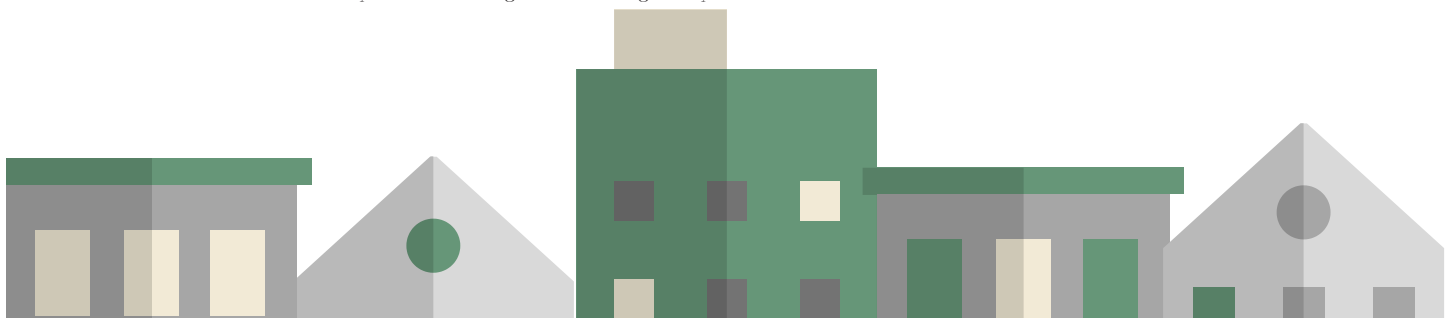
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Treatment of police pensions upon divorce

By Lorraine Harvey,
principal lawyer in
family law at Slater
and Gordon

The report of the Pension Advisory Group (PAG), 'A Guide to the Treatment of Pensions on Divorce' was published in July 2019.



Three recent decisions by the Family Court concerning the divisions of pensions have all referenced the PAG report as being influential on judicial decision-making.

The judgment of HHJ Robinson in *KM v CV* [2020] EWFC B22 and *RH v SV* [2020] EWFC B23 along with HHJ Hess' judgment in *W v H* (divorce: financial remedies) [2020] EWFC B10 can be drawn together to provide the following authority regarding the treatment of pensions:

- Expert evidence from a Pensions on Divorce Expert or PODE where proportionate and affordable is invaluable and often essential to provide evidence on the pension claim on divorce to achieve equality of income.
- The court is to determine the claim to a Pension Sharing Order taking into account the income - yield of pensions, as well as their capital value (CE), particularly in small to medium money cases, where needs are an issue. It will often be fair in such cases to aim to provide the parties with similar incomes in retirement by way of a Pension Sharing Order, rather than a simple division of CEs.

- When needs take precedence, the court will give less weight to contribution based arguments and excluding any portion of a pension as 'non-matrimonial' is unlikely to be justified where pensions are the sole or main asset to meet the parties' post-retirement needs.

Pensions cannot be compared as like for like value with other capital assets. Mixing categories of assets by way of offsetting, risks unfairness and often the appropriate method is to divide the pension separately from other assets.

How does this effect the claim on a police pension upon divorce?

The police pension is an unfunded final salary occupational pension scheme and the income from within the scheme per £ of CE is generally higher than annuity income outside the scheme per £ of CE. As such, subject to the CE being valuable, in a case where retirement is on the horizon and the case being one in which needs arise, the guidance from the PAG report is that the fair outcome would be for the Pension Sharing Order to be based on an equalisation of incomes on retirement and this approach requires expert evidence from a PODE.

This is different to adopting the approach of simply dividing the pensions by equality of capital value (CEs). Therefore, in the majority of cases, before the claim to a Pension Sharing Order can be determined, it's now more likely than ever that there will need to be a joint instruction to an expert pension actuary (at joint expense) to prepare a pension report and to calculate the Pension Sharing Order to equalise incomes.

Further, it's certainly not clear cut, nor

guaranteed, that the portion of the police pension accrued prior to co-habitation/marriage will be automatically ring-fenced from the pot for division. Where the pensions concerned represent the sole or main mechanism for meeting the post-retirement needs of both parties and where the income produced by the pension funds after division falls short in meeting needs, the court's approach is likely to be that no portion of the pension should be excluded and that all the pension provision, regardless as to when it accrued, should be taken into account in determining the Pension Sharing Order.

This is not to say that practitioners should stop asking the PODE to calculate percentages for Pension Sharing Orders on the basis of both the entirety of the pension provision as well as only that pension that has accrued during the relationship but, unless the latter calculation meets the needs of the receiving spouse, the likelihood is that the judge will order a Pension Sharing Order that is higher - thereby dipping into the pre-marital/post-separation pension contributions.

While there's no 'one size fits all' to the answer as to how pensions should be treated upon divorce and every case is decided on its own facts, at the discretion of the judge, the comments on pensions in recent case law referencing the PAG report should be treated as authoritative and persuasive.

When going through a divorce, it's imperative that you seek advice from a divorce specialist experienced in dealing with police pensions.

If you would like specialist advice from a family lawyer please contact Slater and Gordon on **0808 175 7710** and we'll be happy to help.

Federation seeks feedback on women's uniforms

Women officers are being urged to let the Federation know what they think of their public order and firearms uniforms.

The national Federation is assessing the suitability of both these uniforms used by female officers and wants to hear their views – both positive and negative.

"I am keen to hear the thoughts from women officers who currently wear the kit but also those who have tried public order and firearms, but encountered issues with the uniform and have therefore not continued with the role," says National Board member

Belinda Goodwin who is involved with this project, along with National Board colleague Gemma Fox.

"In particular, I'd like to know what people think of the fit. Have they been issued with male sizes, unisex or uniform specifically for women? It appears there is a lot of variance across the country. But to bring about change we must look at the evidence base. The more responses we can get the better."

Please email your comments to Belinda Goodwin at **bgoodwin@polfed.org**



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