

# federation



West Midlands Police Federation

February/March 2021



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# Welcome

Welcome to the February/March 2021 edition of *federation* - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

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

Just get in touch and let us know.

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

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# Glimmers of hope as toll of pandemic is felt



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

**W**ith the nation still struggling to overcome the pandemic despite the nationwide lockdown and the death toll having just tipped over 100,000, it is hard not to feel that everything appears very bleak.

And yet, there is justification for feeling a little more optimistic about the months ahead. The coronavirus vaccines are being administered at an apparently growing rate and, up to 21 January, more than a quarter of a million jabs had been given in our region (Source: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>).

The Number 1 priority has understandably been to get the most vulnerable people in our communities vaccinated first, the over 80s, those in care homes and NHS and care home staff.

As it stands, and some areas are already vaccinating the over 70s, everyone will receive their jab according to the age group they fall into. Estimates vary in terms of when each of those age brackets will get their vaccination.

But I think it's fair to say that those in the 20 to 30 age range will be waiting for a few more months.

So, it follows that many police officers – teachers and frontline keyworkers such as the supermarket staff who have also worked throughout this pandemic – will not be vaccinated for quite some time.

But the Federation has been campaigning hard for the Government to reconsider its priorities.

Surely, police officers – and a number of other professions – on whom the public has been reliant since the start of the pandemic – should be given some kind of priority rather than waiting to be called for a job according to their age?

We are not saying that the most vulnerable in our communities should not come first. It is right and proper that they are at the very front of the queue when it comes to protecting them from Covid.

But police officers are putting their health at risk each and every day when they

carry out their duties protecting the public. They cannot always adhere to social distancing guidelines. They have no idea if the people they are dealing with have been taking sensible precautions in terms of protecting themselves and they can't even use any of the measures employed in other sectors. For example, they can't really do a temperature check before arresting someone.

But, of course, it's not just their health that is being put at risk. Officers return to their families at the end of their shift not knowing if they are taking the virus back to their loved ones. And, as they go about their daily duties, moving from job to job, they could easily be passing the virus to members of the public too.

The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has backed the Federation on this and has won the support of the Health Secretary. But we are now awaiting the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation to decide whether frontline police officers and staff, teachers and other key workers should be given a higher priority in the vaccination roll-out programme. We will keep you posted.

In other positive news, the three-year recruitment programme, instigated by Boris

“ In other positive news, the three-year recruitment programme, instigated by Boris Johnson in 2019, is also gathering pace. So far this year we have already welcomed 96 new recruits to the Force and this level of recruitment is expected to continue throughout 2021. ”

## THIS EDITION: IN NUMBERS

1,688

The number of offences recorded between 1 April and 30 September classed by the Crown Prosecution Service as assaults on emergency service workers.

287

The number of reported hate crime incidents connected to football matches in England and Wales last season.

83

The percentage of West Midlands officers who said there weren't enough officers in their team/unit to do the job properly when responding to the annual Police Federation demand, capacity and welfare survey.

77

The percentage of West Midlands officers who said they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months, when responding to the annual Police Federation demand, capacity and welfare survey.

35

the percentage of members who said they worried about their finances on a daily basis when responding to the pay and morale survey.

Johnson in 2019, is also gathering pace. So far this year we have already welcomed 96 new recruits to the Force and this level of recruitment is expected to continue throughout 2021.

These officers will help boost our numbers but we all understand that it will be some time before they make a real difference in terms of helping share the workload. Our numbers declined over a long period of time under the austerity measures and over that same period we saw an increase in demand. This demand was due to surges in what we would consider traditional crimes, new and emerging offences and, it has to be said, the fact that we are the service of first and last resort, there to pick up the pieces when other organisations did not, or could not, help due to cuts to their own funding.

In another bit of good news, I would like to let you all know that we have agreed to jointly fund a welfare van for officers. This initiative, in partnership with the Force, will mean we have a vehicle on hand for those involved in policing major events and incidents or stuck at scenes or cordons.

It will provide toilet facilities, a place to take refreshments – with hot drink-making facilities on board too – and somewhere for officers to wash their hands or just take a break.

We will keep you updated on progress with this and hope that you are soon able to see the benefits of the welfare van.

On Page 6, you will see the preliminary report as a result of the pensions survey I instigated having set up our Pensions Working Group. While there is a way to go before we can make a final decision, I would like to thank all members who took the time to fill out the pensions survey. The working group will continue its focus on this work and we will report back again after the May Branch Council meeting.

Finally, I would just like to put on record, once more, my thanks to everyone at WMP for their sterling work during the pandemic. It has been an incredibly challenging time with the lockdown laws, regulations and guidance changing over and over again. Police officers – and our police staff and Specials – have been at the forefront of the nation's response to the pandemic, often putting their physical health at risk and impacting on their mental wellbeing.

If any officer is feeling the strain or struggling due to the ongoing pressures of policing the pandemic, please contact your Federation representative or the full-time team. You are not alone. Support is available whether you need help with your physical, mental or financial wellbeing.

Stay safe.

## Federation calls for inflation linked pay rise

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has requested a three per cent pay rise as part of its annual submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB). The submission is made jointly with the Superintendents' Association.

Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "Police officers have risen to the challenge of policing the pandemic and their pay should be kept in line with inflation. They have been, and still are, on the frontline dealing with this pandemic, risking their own health and wellbeing as well as their families.

"Not only have officers being responding to all the usual demands for their help but they have also been trying to work with the public to ensure that they are complying with the latest Government guidance and restrictions during the various stages of lockdowns and this has added to the pressures they are under.

"They are continuing to do all they can to protect communities and keep them safe so rewarding their efforts with a financial 'thank you' would be a tangible sign that the Government recognises their critical role in the nation's response to Covid-19."

National Federation secretary Alex Duncan said asking for an increase in officer pay after public sector pay has been frozen

may be pointless but was necessary.

He explained: "Police officers have been at the forefront of this pandemic and continue to put themselves and their families at risk, working long hours every day to keep the public safe during these unprecedented times."

The Federation is also questioning the Government's decision to freeze pay when the Spending Review awarded forces budgets to include officers being recognised for their work over the last 10 months.

Alex added: "The Home Secretary states in the remit letter that the Government only took that decision in extraordinary circumstances but this is the fifth out of seven PRRB rounds that vital evidence has been completely disregarded.

"Vital work goes into informing submissions made to the PRRB and it is disheartening to see this being ignored time and time again. You cannot blame us for questioning whether this process is effective."

The Federation will seek the three per cent pay rise for all officers and a 'thank you' payment on the basis that an uplift is feasible in budget terms and that the private sector has rewarded key workers with a similar payment.



# Federation considers outcome of pensions survey

**A**lmost 80 per cent of members who responded to our pensions survey would like West Midlands Police Federation to make some kind of contribution to those officers who had signed up to the private pension challenge with just over 50 per cent stating the full fees should be paid.

Nearly 20 per cent of the membership filled out the survey, which ran from mid-November to 18 December last year, with a good mix of those in the private pension challenge and those who were not.

“As a Federation, we were keen to find out members’ views so we set up a pensions working group which then commissioned this survey,” says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

“In January, the working group met for an initial discussion of the findings and to consider the views of those who responded. A total of 78 per cent of people want us to make a financial contribution to members who will incur legal costs as a result of joining private pension challenge while just 17 per cent said we should not do that.

“So that is a clear outcome but there is still some way to go before we can make a firm decision on the best way forward and

if any payment is agreed it will be financed solely from West Midlands Police Federation’s own reserves.”

The pension challenge was launched after the Government introduced the Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Police Pension Scheme in 2015.

It has since been ruled that there was discrimination in the way the scheme was introduced and the Government is now considering how to remedy that discrimination.

West Midlands Police Federation’s Branch Council discussed the outcome of its Pensions Working Group survey at its latest meeting on 27 January and also discussed the wider implications of the Government remedy.

“There are issues around whether those originally in the 2006 pension scheme will be better off moving back into that scheme or staying in the 2015 scheme in the longer term and if this would have an impact on the fees incurred by individuals in the private challenge,” says Jon.

“We are also asking questions as to whether members of the Group Insurance

Scheme who joined that challenge would have any kind of legal cover for that.”

The working group will continue to consider all issues and is aiming to report back with further findings at the Branch Council meeting in May.

“There will be a full discussion at this council meeting and members will be able to feed in to this through their local reps,” Jon explains, “If it is agreed in principle that West Midlands Federation should make a contribution to its members in the private challenge, there will still be other factors to consider. For example, at this stage it is not known what the final cost of joining the challenge will be or the value of any compensation.”

The current tribunal process in terms of the Government remedy is still ongoing and may not be completed until towards the end of this year.

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange has been hosting webinars for members who want to find out more. Please contact the Federation office if you would like to take part in one of these webinars.

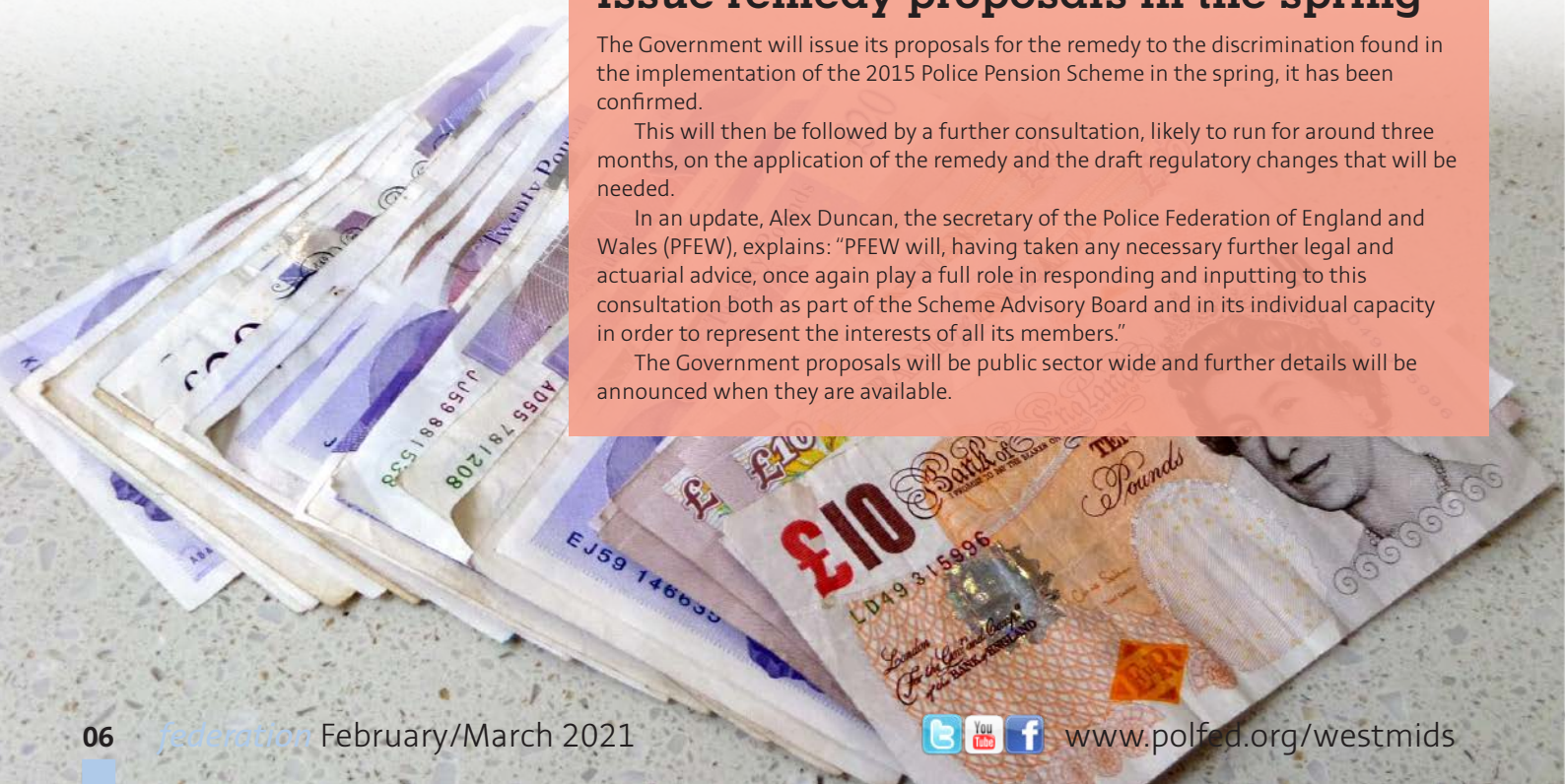
## Pension update: Government will issue remedy proposals in the spring

The Government will issue its proposals for the remedy to the discrimination found in the implementation of the 2015 Police Pension Scheme in the spring, it has been confirmed.

This will then be followed by a further consultation, likely to run for around three months, on the application of the remedy and the draft regulatory changes that will be needed.

In an update, Alex Duncan, the secretary of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), explains: “PFEW will, having taken any necessary further legal and actuarial advice, once again play a full role in responding and inputting to this consultation both as part of the Scheme Advisory Board and in its individual capacity in order to represent the interests of all its members.”

The Government proposals will be public sector wide and further details will be announced when they are available.



# Forces told to prepare for roll-out of vaccines to officers and staff

The Home Secretary says she has the full support of health minister Matt Hancock in pushing for police officers to be prioritised in the next wave of the roll-out of the Covid-19 jabs.

Priti Patel, interviewed by Nick Ferrari on LBC on 20 January, said that she had been working with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to push policing, firefighters, teachers and other frontline workers when it comes to getting the vaccine.

She explained the Government was 'absolutely working to achieve that'.

And she said she had been telling policing partners to get ready for the roll-out to their officers and staff once they

were given the green light, describing it as a 'massive logistical challenge'.

"While the JCVI makes the final decision on the order in which people will get the vaccine, it is good to hear that the Home Secretary is doing all she can to ensure that police officers are given some kind of priority," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"We all fully appreciate the need for frontline health workers, the elderly and vulnerable, those in care homes and care home staff to be the first to get the vaccine but I think it is also important for police officers and others on the frontline in terms of providing essential services to be pushed up the queue too.

"They have been putting their lives on the line as part of the nation's response to the pandemic and they should be given the protection the vaccine brings as a matter of priority – not just for the benefit of their own health but also to help maintain the resilience of the services they provide.

"The Home Secretary and the health secretary seem to understand that and we now just need to see the JCVI act."

Ms Patel's comments came the day after Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick told LBC she was "baffled" as to why officers were not nearer the front of the queue for the jab.

[Listen to the LBC interview.](#)

## PCC backs Federation calls for officers to be vaccinated as soon as possible

West Midlands Police leaders have urged the Government to make police a priority to receive the coronavirus vaccine.

David Jamieson, the Police and Crime Commissioner, has written a joint letter with Chief Constable David Thompson and Jon Nott, chair of the Federation branch, calling for officers and staff to have the jab as soon as possible once the vulnerable and frontline health workers have received theirs.

In the letter to Kit Malthouse, minister for policing and crime, and Nadhim Zahawi, minister for Covid vaccine deployment, Mr Jamieson said police regularly come into contact with the public which exposes them, their colleagues and families to greater risk.

He added that officers are also being

attacked by people claiming to have the virus, and that they can't make an arrest from a two-metre social distance.

Mr Jamieson said: "We are urging you to consider making police officers and staff the next priority group to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. We are fully supportive of the policy that the most vulnerable groups such as health and care workers receive priority access to the vaccine.

"The coronavirus pandemic is having a profound effect on our nation and has placed a significant strain on all of our public services. The recent news around vaccines being available to combat the virus is encouraging and indicates a potential end is in sight to the pandemic.

"During the pandemic, our police officers have given outstanding service to the public,

often in difficult circumstances, putting the welfare of the community first. Police officers are working on the frontline and are constantly coming into contact with members of the public.

"It is often observed that police officers cannot arrest an individual from a two-metre social distance. Furthermore, police officers work in a dynamic environment and often officers don't always have the option of putting on their PPE."

The PCC also highlights the risks caused by people spitting or coughing at officers while claiming to have Covid, putting them at risk but also having an impact on their families and colleagues.

The PCC said that vaccinating officers at the earliest opportunity would enable them to maintain effectiveness, keep the public safe and help reduce the spread of the virus.

● 'Jail sentences needed for those who weaponise Covid' - See Page 17.

“Police officers work in a dynamic environment and often officers don't always have the option of putting on their PPE.”

# Federation calls for more consistent assessment of driving standards

All police drivers must be assessed to a consistent standard to ensure they do not fall foul of a new law designed to offer them better protection in law, says the Federation's national response and driver training lead.

Tim Rogers fears a lack of knowledge and understanding among those assessing officers' driving and inconsistent practices both around the country and even within individual forces could still lead to conduct or legal action against officers when the Police Powers and Protections Bill, which is due before Parliament in the coming weeks, becomes law in the autumn.

"The Federation campaigned for police

drivers' specialist training and expertise to be taken into account under traffic laws," explains Tim, who is also deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, "We were seeing far too many officers facing years of conduct or criminal investigation for dangerous driving when in reality they had been using their skills and training to do the job they were asked to do.

"This has now been addressed and the new bill introduces a new test for police drivers."

This means officers will be regarded as driving dangerously only if:

- The way they drive falls far below what would be expected of a competent and

careful constable who has undertaken the same prescribed training or who has the same prescribed skills, and

- It would be obvious to such a competent and careful constable that driving in that way would be dangerous.

Tim, who led a five-year Federation campaign for a change to the legislation, explains: "We welcome this change but if we have people tasked with judging an officer's driving they must firstly be fully aware of the standard required but also ensure they are consistent and professional in their approach.

"As it stands currently, I am afraid we can have five similar driving matters being





reviewed with five different outcomes from a Chief's Commendation to a Notice of Prosecution and that cannot be right. We can see some officers getting words of advice while others are being suspended or being subject to conduct investigations."

West Midlands Police has drafted a new policy detailing how it will deal with incidents involving police vehicles and is looking to appoint four full-time staff in the Driver Standards Unit (DSU) who will be tasked with assessing matters of concern about officer and staff driving.

It is hoped this initiative, which is supported by the Federation, will make assessments more consistent giving officers and staff the confidence that if they follow their training they will be assessed against the standards they have been trained to, supported and treated fairly.

Tim hopes this approach, which follows a successful scheme in Kent, will be rolled out nationwide.

"We now have consistent driver training in place that has been approved by the College of Policing but we need to ensure there is consistent assessment of officers' standards of driving when the need arises," says Tim, "All police drivers have to drive and perform tactics in the way that they have been trained in driver training units.

"Your average driving member of the public probably never drives exactly as they did in their driving test but that is not an option for police drivers. The specialist training they receive sets the standard by which they will be assessed so to avail themselves of the protections set out in the law they must follow their training.

"The training is there for a reason. Driving a car at speed or contrary to any road signs or restrictions in place comes at a risk and that risk is only mitigated by officers following their training to the letter.

"Having people in place who can assess all police drivers' standards of driving consistently is now critical. They will also be impartial and will be expected to work in a timely manner, giving a proportionate response both within the Force and to external partners."

The DSU will also be able to identify trends in relation to drivers' behaviour, manage driver authorities, target bespoke training to help maintain driver standards and develop a programme of assessments and re-assessments.

It will also be able to prevent supervisors inappropriately suspending officers from driving and depriving the Force of a resource.

"But, of course, the other balance to this is that they will also be able to properly deal with officers who pose a risk through poor driver behaviour," says Tim.

"The Police Powers and Protections Bill is to be welcomed and I am pleased that officers' training and expertise can now be taken into account in law, however, we now need to ensure that we don't leave them at risk because of inconsistencies in the way in which their driving is assessed," says Tim.

"We are also seeking assurances from the Home Office that the new policy will not be criminalised which, of course, would be totally against the essence of this change in the law and more has to be done to ensure all forces have the same policies, and assessment standards, in place."

“Your average driving member of the public probably never drives exactly as they did in their driving test but that is not an option for police drivers. The specialist training they receive sets the standard by which they will be assessed so to avail themselves of the protections set out in the law they must follow their training.”

## Recruitment figures 'promising'

West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott described new police recruitment figures as a promising start after the Force had an uplift of 357 officers in the first year of the Government's campaign to boost officer numbers nationwide by 20,000 over a three-year period.

The figures released by the Home Office show there were 7,048 officers in the Force as at 31 December, up from 6,691.

"We welcome our new recruits and wish them well in their roles," Jon said, "It's encouraging to see an uplift in the number of officers on the Force as we face the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic.

"This is a promising start to the recruitment drive and more officers on the ground are always welcome. Already this year we have seen 96 new recruits start with the Force and this rate of recruitment is expected to continue through the year.

"My colleagues continue to deliver a day-to-day policing service at a time when we're also protecting the public from coronavirus.

"But there's a lot of work still to do to ensure the recruitment drive is carried out as quickly as possible to provide much-needed support to our colleagues, and also to ensure that we retain the skills and experience of existing officers as well."

The latest Home Office figures revealed that since April 2020, 42 per cent of new recruits to West Midlands Police have been female and almost 18 per cent who stated their ethnicity were from a Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic group.

Jon said: "It's important that our Force reflects the communities we serve. We need to do all we can to continue to attract recruits from across society to ensure a diverse service."

Nationally, the Home Office figures show there were 135,248 officers in the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales as at 31 December 2020 – an increase of 6,814 officers.

Federation national chair John Apter said: "With demands on police officers increasing and the continuing challenge policing the pandemic, it's good to see the number of new recruits increasing.

"There simply aren't enough officers at this time and the pandemic has shown just how fragile the resilience of the police service is as more and more officers report sick or self-isolate."

He added: "We need to ensure there's a consistent long-term recruitment programme and that everything possible is done not just to recruit, but also to retain those who join.

"We also need to see ensure that we don't drive down the average age of recruits and continue to attract people with life experience. In addition, we need to use this recruitment drive to ensure a diverse police service, so that forces fully reflect the communities they serve."

# Force moving in the right direction with new conduct regs – but more needs to be done

**T**he Force is making slow progress in embedding the culture of learning and development that was at the heart of the new conduct regulations when they were launched a year ago, says the Federation's conduct lead.

But George McDonnell, while acknowledging the progress that has been made, says Reflective Practice (RP) is not used anywhere near as much as the Federation feels it should be and that more training on the new regulations is needed for both managers and officers.

"I do believe the Force is making slow progress but I have to emphasise the word slow," George explains.

"The new conduct regulations came into play in February 2020 and the request for these to be used or in the spirit of learning and development rather than sanction and punishment was made a considerable time before then.

"However, despite that, last year was our busiest on record in terms of the service of Regulation Notices and conduct proceedings.

"There was, on the whole, little evidence that RP was used anywhere near as much as we believe it should have been."

The new regulations give officers the chance to undertake RP with their line manager if their performance requires improvement. This enables a discussion to take place around how the issue can be avoided in the future. The overall aim is that what happened is accepted, lessons are learned and then people can move forward. It should eliminate the need for punitive action for minor issues.

As well as introducing RP, the new regs also introduced a higher threshold for disciplinary action meaning that conduct proceedings should only be triggered if the wrongdoing warrants at least a written



*George McDonnell, the Federation's conduct lead.*

warning. Low-level outcomes were removed.

The harsher outcomes would then be balanced by the fact that more officers would be diverted away from the conduct area and only more serious matters would be escalated.

Where RP has been used, George says officers have benefited in terms of their matter having been dealt with expediently, hence saving them the stress of having to go through the misconduct process.

The Federation is continuing to push for RP to be used where it believes it should have been implemented.

But, George believes part of the reason

for the limited use of RP is that many managers simply don't know how or when to implement the new regs or understand where or why RP may be applicable.

"I can't see any evidence as to the ethos of the new regulations being fully embedded and neither can the rest of the Federation's conduct reps. This is because the evidence is just not there," he explains.

"A better understanding of RP is vital as is training for both managers and officers. This would include education around accepting we sometimes get it wrong and it is OK to admit that and make it right.

"Being more open to change is key and messaging around RP would be helpful as officers still feel the use of the misconduct stick is still in play."

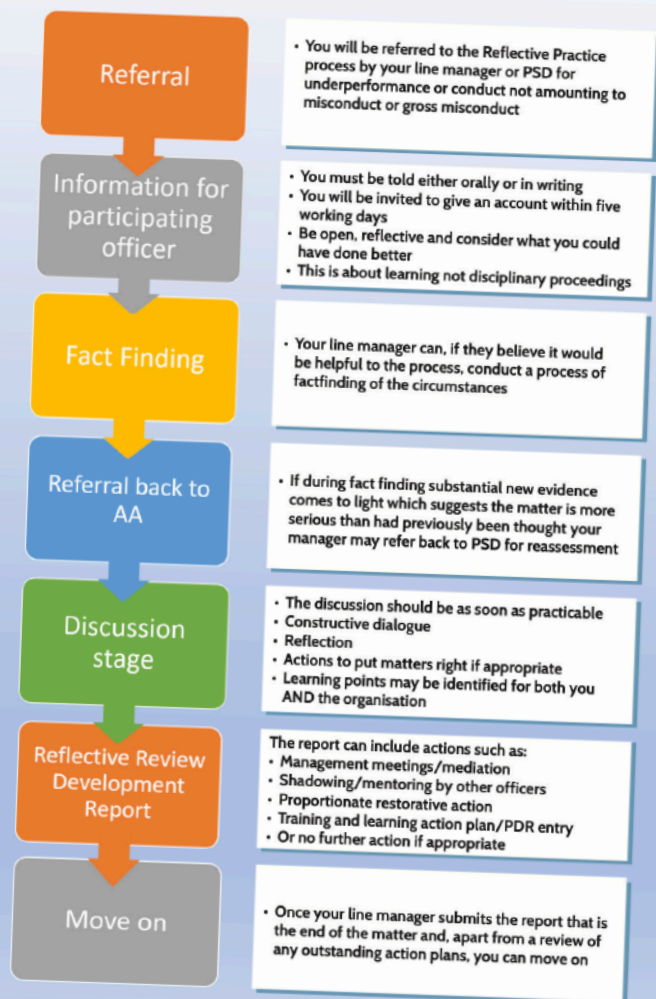
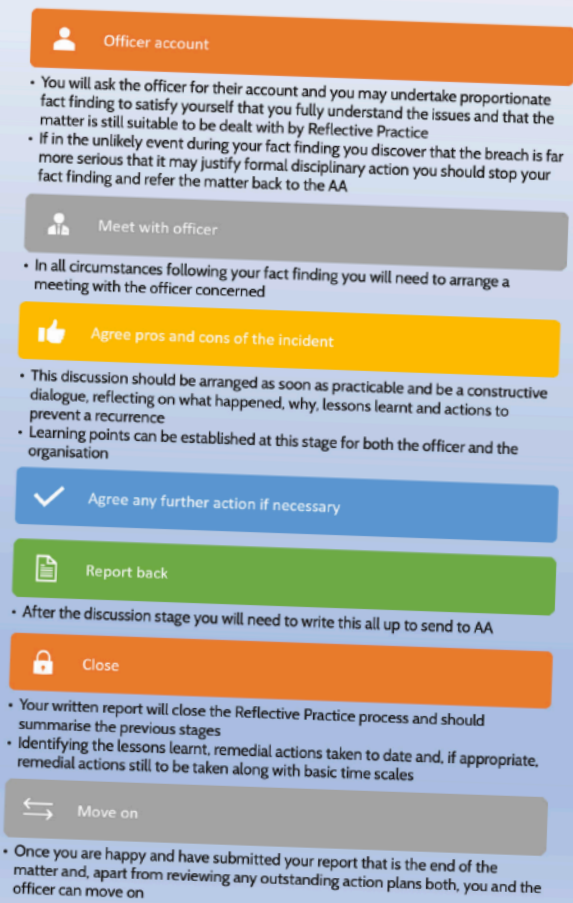
Despite the need for this training and the slow progress to date, George acknowledges that there have been improvements in terms of Force support for officers' wellbeing and also with updates, though again he feels this still needs to go further.

He adds: "There have been improvements with communications coming from both the Professional Standards Department and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). Again, the hope is this will continue and this can only be a positive."

In terms of an overall rating for progress with the new regs, George awards a four or five out of 10 and says both PSD and the IOPC need to embody RP far more often than they are doing right now.

He concluded: "My wishlist would be a more confident approach in dealing with RP with managers taking the time to deal with the situations placed before them by their officers and not looking to deal with so many of these at the higher level."

## Reflective Practice Review Process for reviewing officer and participating officer



# An officer's guide to reflective practice

The Reflective Practice Review Process (RPRP) aims to give officers and line managers a chance to discuss where things have gone wrong and look for ways of addressing them.

The RPRP sits above normal management interventions on minor matters. The behaviour in question will have been referred to the Professional Standards Department (PSD) which, along with the line manager, will have decided not to take formal discipline but to deal with any shortcomings by this process.

Matters may be referred directly from managers as well as by way of public complaint or other means. It is not a misconduct finding and is designed to be a way of dealing with relatively low-level misconduct or performance issues in a proportionate way.

The RPRP cannot be used to block promotions or job moves. It is not a disciplinary process so does not lead to a finding of misconduct.

### CONSISTENCY AND PROPORTIONALITY

To ensure consistency, fairness and proportionality, RPRP will be centrally recorded but managed locally by a line manager. It will also be used to establish patterns and trends – not only in an individual case but also for the Force in general to identify areas causing problems.

### THE PROCESS

- An officer will be informed they are subject to RPRP, possibly in writing
- They will be invited to give an account of their actions and the event, with five working days to respond
- They can seek advice from a Federation representative
- They will then be invited to a Reflective Practice Review discussion with their line manager.

### THE DISCUSSION

- This will be between the officer and their line manager, a Fed rep cannot attend
- There is an expectation of engagement

and failing to engage could result in the matter being referred for formal proceedings or the officer being moved on to the Unsatisfactory Performance Procedure (UPP)

- The discussion will cover the incident that led to RPRP - learning, training needs, welfare, and actions moving forward
- It is an opportunity to reflect on what went wrong, or what could go better next time
- Officers can speak freely because matters discussed cannot be used in any misconduct proceedings in the future.

### THE REPORT

After the discussion, a report will be completed by the line manager which will be retained and reviewed as part of the officer's Performance and Development Review (PDR). It will include what was discussed, as well as any actions agreed, if any, moving forward.





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# 'IOPC shrouded in secrecy'

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is shrouded in secrecy, with its staff lacking the right depth and breadth of knowledge, failing to get the right training and being 'absolutely unaccountable', the Federation's national conduct and performance chair has told MPs.

Phill Matthews made the comments when he addressed a Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into the role and remit of the IOPC at the end of January.

Criticising the long delays in investigations into officers' conduct and outlining the damage that caused to officers, their families, colleagues and the complainants themselves, Phill repeated the Federation's calls for a 12-month cap on police disciplinary inquiries and said there should be sanctions for the IOPC when it failed to meet these deadlines.

"A delay doesn't serve complainants or our members at all," he said.

Phill continued: "There must be some form of teeth because at the moment there is absolutely no incentive for the IOPC, or appropriate authority, to deal with things promptly and properly because they don't need to. If there was an incentive, like there is for police when you must get a case in front of a hearing within a set period, you would invest the time and money to do that."

But he said funding was not the issue since the IOPC has a budget of £72 million and 1,000 staff and that it was how the watchdog was using that funding causing the problems.

The IOPC, he explained, has failed on numerous occasions to explain why a case is over-running, but he highlighted poor disclosure as a contributing factor.

Phill explained that a case ended up dragging on for seven years because the IOPC failed to disclose an expert statement, corroborating the officer's account, at the beginning of the case.

He was critical of some of the staff at the IOPC.

"We don't think they have the right depth and breadth of knowledge; we don't think they have the right training and they are absolutely unaccountable," he explained, "You cannot get disclosure from the IOPC and I don't think they understand it properly."

Phill said he would have more confidence in retired officers, who work well in forces' professional standards departments, taking on roles in the IOPC.



*Phill Matthews, the Federation's national conduct and performance chair.*

"There are some very good people who work for the IOPC, but there are others where we see a staggering lack of knowledge," he added, "We just want the best possible investigators with the best possible training and knowledge to investigate members because that is best for members and the police service."

George McDonnell, West Midlands Police Federation's conduct and performance lead, has backed Phill's comments.

"I wholeheartedly support our national lead in his efforts to try to redress some of the imbalance that historically has seen what was then the IPCC sit at opposite ends of a table with the Federation as the impact of its lengthy, often poorly thought-out investigations had a devastating impact on our colleagues and their families. Factor in the standard of service given to those members of the public who felt aggrieved at their dealings with the police and it was obvious something had to change," says George.

"On a local level, we believe, as a Federation, we are making positive changes

in our relationship with the IOPC in that it is being more accountable, more open and transparent, more professional and there is noticeably better staff retention. Our hope is this will lead to better investigators with better training that will culminate in better investigation, however, it cannot be understated, this is a work in progress."

Phill's comments were also backed by Victor Marshall OBE, professional standards co-ordinator, who gave evidence on behalf of the Police Superintendents' Association and said: "The 'justice delayed, justice denied' exists across the whole system because we feel for everybody when these things drag on. Obviously, it has an impact on officers, their families, and careers – but absolutely it has an impact on complainants and answers need to be given. The longer these things go on the worse the situation becomes."

Phill acknowledged the IOPC, which replaced the IPCC in 2018, had made improvements and there was a better understanding between the watchdog and the Federation.

"It's a step in the right direction and its director general, Michael Lockwood, has done a great deal to build trust with the Federation and is trying to reform his organisation but it's the speed of change we are not content with," he added.

To safeguard genuinely delayed cases, the Federation is recommending a Legally Qualified Chair should then be appointed and should have the power to terminate or conduct robust case management to bring cases to swift conclusions, safeguarding both the complainant and an officer's position.

It also wants to see greater transparency at the IOPC with Phill suggesting that it should be audited in the same way as forces are.

Phill praised rank and file colleagues for the challenging and risky work they do: "They are dealing with some of the most chaotic and dangerous individuals in society - and they are put in confrontational situations with those individuals. It is inevitable that there will be complaints made against officers, but just because there is complaint doesn't mean an officer has done something wrong."

After the session he said: "We appreciate being given the opportunity to provide evidence to the committee and hope this will in turn make a tangible difference and establish a fairer system for all. The Federation will continue to lobby Parliament on these issues."



# Violence and hate crime on police officers and staff

# 10

## Point Plan

- 1 Violence and hate crime on police officers and police staff should be investigated with the same care, compassion and commitment as we give to members of the public.** This sounds obvious but all too often our response to assaults on officers and staff can be rushed or treated secondary to other offences
- 2 The injured or assaulted colleague cannot lead their own investigation.** However, to ensure there are no delays in investigating the offence, a police officer who has been assaulted can in some circumstances and based on the three tier system, write their own statement
- 3 The Victim Code applies to all victims.** Complying with the Victim Code means keeping the victim updated, discussing outcome options, and taking into account the victim's view before reaching an outcome. This is essential because we don't always get our response right, with police victims reporting dissatisfaction and resentment
- 4 To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented.** You should use a Victim Personal Statement and the chief constable will provide a personal impact statement for each case
- 5 An e-safety report must be completed by the colleague's supervisor and if possible, the injured party, at the earliest opportunity.** This helps ensure the force is continuously learning
- 6 Colleagues recover better and more quickly with the right welfare and supervision.** The victim must be seen by their supervisor as soon as possible and the relevant discussions take place surrounding their well-being. The victim may downplay the impact the assault has had on them and as such the supervisor must recognise the potential effects and offer the appropriate well-being support
- 7 The victim's supervisor must ensure that the local senior leadership team is informed of the assault or hate crime.** If the colleague is hospitalised the on call chief officer must be notified through the FIM so the support can continue as necessary
- 8 The assault or hate crime is to be raised a the next available TRM** and discussed outside of this meeting to maintain confidentiality of the victim
- 9 The supervisor must notify the Police Federation or the appropriate police staff union, Unison or Unite**
- 10 A leaflet explaining what happens next and what support is available should be given to the victim**

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# Force launches new 10-point plan on assaults and hate crime

**T**he Force has published a new 10-point plan on officer and staff assaults.

The new plan also extends to those who have been the victim of hate crimes.

"We welcome the fact that the assaults plan has been reviewed and updated," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, "There is a growing awareness of the provisions of the 10-point plan but we want each and every officer and member of staff to be familiar with it so we can ensure that everyone is fully informed about how the Force should respond if someone is the victim of an assault or a hate crime while serving their communities.

"No one should be assaulted or be subjected to a hate crime because of the job they carry out but it is essential that when these attacks do occur our officers and staff are treated in the same way as we would respond to a member of the public."

The release of the new plan was announced at the latest Force assaults meeting which was led by Temporary ACC Claire Bell who has released a blog to launch the new assaults portal.

She says: "The assault figures are unacceptable and we must work harder as a Force to protect our officers and staff. If you ask anyone why they joined West Midlands Police the majority of us would say to make a difference, to protect people from harm and that at our core we are proud of what we do.

"We need to remember these reasons when we are dealing with colleagues who have become victims of crime. We need to offer the same care and compassion we

would to any victim of crime, we need to stand together and look after each other. We are all in this together."

The Force has also produced an assaults leaflet which will be given to officers and staff who are victims of assaults or hate crimes.

And it is launching an "It's Unacceptable..." campaign which will highlight the fact that these attacks are unacceptable and also explain how it is supporting victims. The Federation has helped the Force produce case studies featuring officers talking about their experiences.

The assaults meeting also included an update on the National Police Chiefs' Council Officer Safety Review which is due to come into effect in the spring.

Jon explained: "This will change the way that officer safety training is delivered. The

Force is in a good place with a large number of the recommendations already in place and the remainder being worked towards.

"There was also a discussion around vehicle extraction, something that, as a Federation, we have repeatedly raised our concerns about. I expressed our dismay at the delays in introducing what we consider suitable training; training that could help prevent our officers being injured.

"T/ACC Bell understood our point of view and agreed we needed to know more. Sadly, there was still no clarity about whether vehicle extraction would be covered in the new syllabus for officer safety training when this is implemented in the spring."

Jon will be liaising with T/ACC and Chief Superintendent Ian Green, who attended a national meeting about the review, and hopes this will lead to a plan for the best way forward for the Force.

“The assault figures are unacceptable and we must work harder as a Force to protect our officers and staff. If you ask anyone why they joined West Midlands Police the majority of us would say to make a difference, to protect people from harm and that at our core we are proud of what we do.”



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Serving police officer Shippam, 2021

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Serving police officer 2021



GeorgeBurrows 



# 'Jail sentences needed for those who weaponise Covid'

Offenders who weaponise Covid-19 should receive jail sentences to reflect the despicable nature of the offence, says the chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Jon Nott said that latest figures released by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) showed the extent of the problem and called for urgent action to protect officers.

A total of 1,688 offences out of 6,500 coronavirus-related crimes recorded by the CPS between 1 April and 30 September last year were classed as assaults on emergency service workers.

In pressing for tougher sentences for those who attack police officers and other emergency services personnel, Jon said: "I still find it difficult to comprehend that so many people have sought to weaponise the virus. The pandemic is tough on everyone but police officers are on the frontline trying to protect their communities and they should not be spat at or coughed over by mindless individuals claiming to have the virus.

"They are facing a risk to their own health and that of their families while going about their duties as it is but this just adds another pressure for them. We need to see the CPS and the courts get tough on these offenders – both to punish them and act as a deterrent to others."

As well as prosecuting offences under Covid-19 legislation, the CPS has introduced a 'coronavirus flag' on its case management system to highlight criminality related to the pandemic as an aggravating feature at sentencing.

This can include coughing and spitting while threatening to 'infect' another person with the virus, thefts of essential items or fraudsters taking advantage of the crisis.

In the first six months of the pandemic, the number of cases given the coronavirus flag included: coronavirus offences, 1,137; public order offences, 480; criminal damage, 466; common assaults, 464 and other offences, 2,234.

Max Hill, Director of Public Prosecutions,

said of the figures: "Particularly appalling is the high number of assaults on emergency workers still taking place and I will continue to do everything in my power to protect those who so selflessly keep us safe during this crisis."

National Federation chair John Apter has also spoken out on the latest figures and called for jail sentences for offenders so that emergency workers did not feel let down by the justice system.

He said: "Being spat and coughed at, in the middle of a pandemic which has taken so many lives, is disgusting, dangerous and inhumane. In some cases, individuals who commit these offences are even saying they have the virus and hope the officer catches it then dies.

"This stark increase in coronavirus-related crime may shock decent members of society but will not come as any real surprise to colleagues. Police officers on the frontline are increasingly facing abuse from a small minority who think

nothing of deliberately weaponising the virus, and these people are the lowest of the low.

"The frustration we have in dealing with these individuals involves sentencing, as it's inconsistent and often leaves victims feeling completely let down by the criminal justice system."

He added: "We have recently seen examples of Covid being transmitted to colleagues through these attacks. When someone knowingly has the virus or believes they have it and then wilfully coughs or spits at a police officer, we need the CPS to consider a much more serious charge than the 'Assaults on emergency workers' category. Without this, these types of attacks will continue to rise."



# QPM for West Midlands officer who led pandemic response

**A** West Midlands Police officer who played a critical role in preparing the region to cope with the pandemic has been rewarded with the Queen's Police Medal (QPM).

Detective Chief Inspector Jennifer Pearson spearheaded the transformation of an aircraft hangar at Birmingham Airport into a temporary mortuary, bringing in key people and contractors and ensuring the work was completed in good time and £5 million under budget.

She is also the president of the Lichfield and District branch of Soroptimist International, an organisation focused on improving the lives of women and girls, during its centenary year.

DCI Pearson said finding out that she will be among the small group of exceptional officers collecting a QPM at the Palace next summer, was "an amazing feeling," adding: "It's a real honour – when your Chief rings and says 'I know your secret', it's like 'wow, gosh it really is true and I'm not dreaming this'."

She had to keep the news under wraps ahead of the publication of the honours list on 30 December and was particularly looking forward to telling her parents and her eight-year-old daughter.

Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, has expressed his delight for Jennifer.

"On behalf of everyone within the Federation, I would like to congratulate Jennifer on this much deserved accolade. Her efforts during the pandemic have been outstanding and I am delighted that she has been recognised in this way."

DCI Pearson was a junior member of a British team sent to Thailand to respond to the Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004 which killed approximately 228,000 people across 14 countries. She was there for 14 months and gained the vital experience that allowed her to take on a lead role in the pandemic response as the bronze lead for mortality.

She assembled a multi-agency team



*On duty in Thailand.*

involving local authorities, the Army, Air Force and the NHS to build the regional mortuary at Birmingham Airport. DCI Pearson was given a budget of £10 million – she only spent half – and appointed a contractor within 12 hours, ensuring they were not snapped up by other authorities. It

was the one she'd worked with in Thailand and her old commander from years ago also came to work for her.

"If I hadn't had that experience in Thailand there's no way that I'd have been able to get my head around what was needed," DCI Pearson said.

"One of the biggest achievements for me was being able to get the faith leaders on the same page. I invited them in to see how well it was built and how respectful it was for families. To have leads from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Catholic faiths, and non-religious groups all speaking to each other and agreeing was powerful and a positive for the future."

DCI Pearson also enlisted the support of local Soroptimists to make washbags, knitted hearts for the bereaved and gifts for the NHS. In addition, she trained up 90 Soroptimists to assist in domestic violence courts.

An officer of 25 years, she has previously worked in domestic and child abuse areas and was focused on managing missing people before stepping into the bronze commander role. In January she took on the role of Temporary Superintendent to manage the West Midlands Covid resilience team.

## Knighthood for Chief Constable

West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson was knighted in the Queen's New Year Honours.

The knighthood recognises the Chief's 30-year policing career.

Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "Congratulations to the Chief, this is an amazing honour for a man who has dedicated himself to serving the public."

Mr Thompson (51), who previously served with Greater Manchester Police, was the Force's Deputy Chief Constable for six years before becoming Chief Constable in 2016.

He said he was 'genuinely humbled' to have been honoured.





“It’s a real honour – when your Chief rings and says ‘I know your secret’, it’s like ‘wow, gosh it really is true and I’m not dreaming this.’”

*Detective Chief Inspector Jennifer Pearson.*

# Staff levels biggest concern for Fed members according to survey

**A** staggering 83 per cent of West Midlands staff feel there are not enough officers in their team to do the job properly, according to a recent Federation survey.

The annual national Police Federation of England and Wales demand, capacity and welfare survey was carried out last year with the results being published on a force by force level on 1 February.

Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "I'm concerned to hear that members feel they can't fulfil their roles properly due to the lack of staff but the results aren't totally unexpected.

"We've faced a national pandemic over the past 12 months, which means the Force has been stretched. We are living and working through uncertain and abnormal times but hopefully, as we continue with the current recruitment drive, we will have extra officers to share the load going forward."

The survey also revealed 77 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other health and wellbeing difficulties over the past 12 months.

"Obviously it's never pleasant to hear that so many of my colleagues and fellow members have faced mental health or wellbeing issues," added Jon.

"I'm hoping that as awareness of mental health is increasing throughout the Force, officers will feel more comfortable in opening up and accessing the support they need."

On average, officers gave their job satisfaction a rating of five out of 10, with 63 per cent reporting that their workload is too high.

Results also indicated that the pandemic is having an ongoing effect on officers and the job, with 43 per cent reporting to being single-crewed often, or always, and 12 per

The survey revealed 77 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other health and wellbeing difficulties over the past 12 months

cent saying this had occurred more frequently during the Covid-19 crisis.

Just over a third (35 per cent) suggested they are either very, or extremely worried about the impact the Covid-19 crisis will have on them personally.

But around two thirds felt they were

given the necessary equipment needed to protect them from Covid-19 while at work.

"Coronavirus is affecting us all, in different ways, both on a personal level and at work," says Jon, "But in addition to our normal worries and concerns, members also have to deal with working on the frontline and putting their health at risk every day.

"While these results must be taken seriously, we need to also remember that these are unusual times, which could be having a direct effect on the concerns of our members."

A total of 33 per cent called their job "very or extremely stressful" with 68 per cent of respondents saying they were in good health overall and 37 per cent reporting never or rarely being able to take the full rest break entitlement.

When questioned about work-related violence, 20 per cent of West Midlands respondents said they had suffered one or more injuries but only 12 per cent reported work-related accidents.

Nationwide, around a quarter of officers

“ We've faced a national pandemic over the past 12 months, which means the Force has been stretched. We are living and working through uncertain and abnormal times but hopefully, as we continue with the current recruitment drive, we will have extra officers to share the load going forward. ”



(26 per cent) said they believed they had contracted coronavirus with 45 per cent saying they believed they contracted it through work-related activities. But in the West Midlands, only three per cent of respondents said they have had a positive antigen or antibody test – while 26 per cent believed they had contracted the virus either based on strong personal suspicion or medical advice.

The weaponising of the Covid-19 virus against police officers was revealed to be an emerging threat to health and welfare nationally. Almost one in three (32 per cent) of all respondents reported a member of the public who was believed to carry the virus had purposely threatened to breathe or cough on them, while nearly a quarter (24 per cent) said someone had actually done so.

Over half (55 per cent) had been the victim of an unarmed physical attack over the previous 12 months, and this figure increased to 83 per cent when only examining responses from officers working in response, neighbourhood policing, custody and roads.

Officers felt undervalued for the dangerous work they do, and high levels of fatigue and occupational stress were found in the survey to be commonplace.

John Apter, national chair of the Federation, said: "This survey clearly shows the huge pressure officers are under policing the pandemic and the negative impact on their welfare, with half of the respondents saying they have been physically attacked and one in three having been threatened by someone claiming to have Covid.

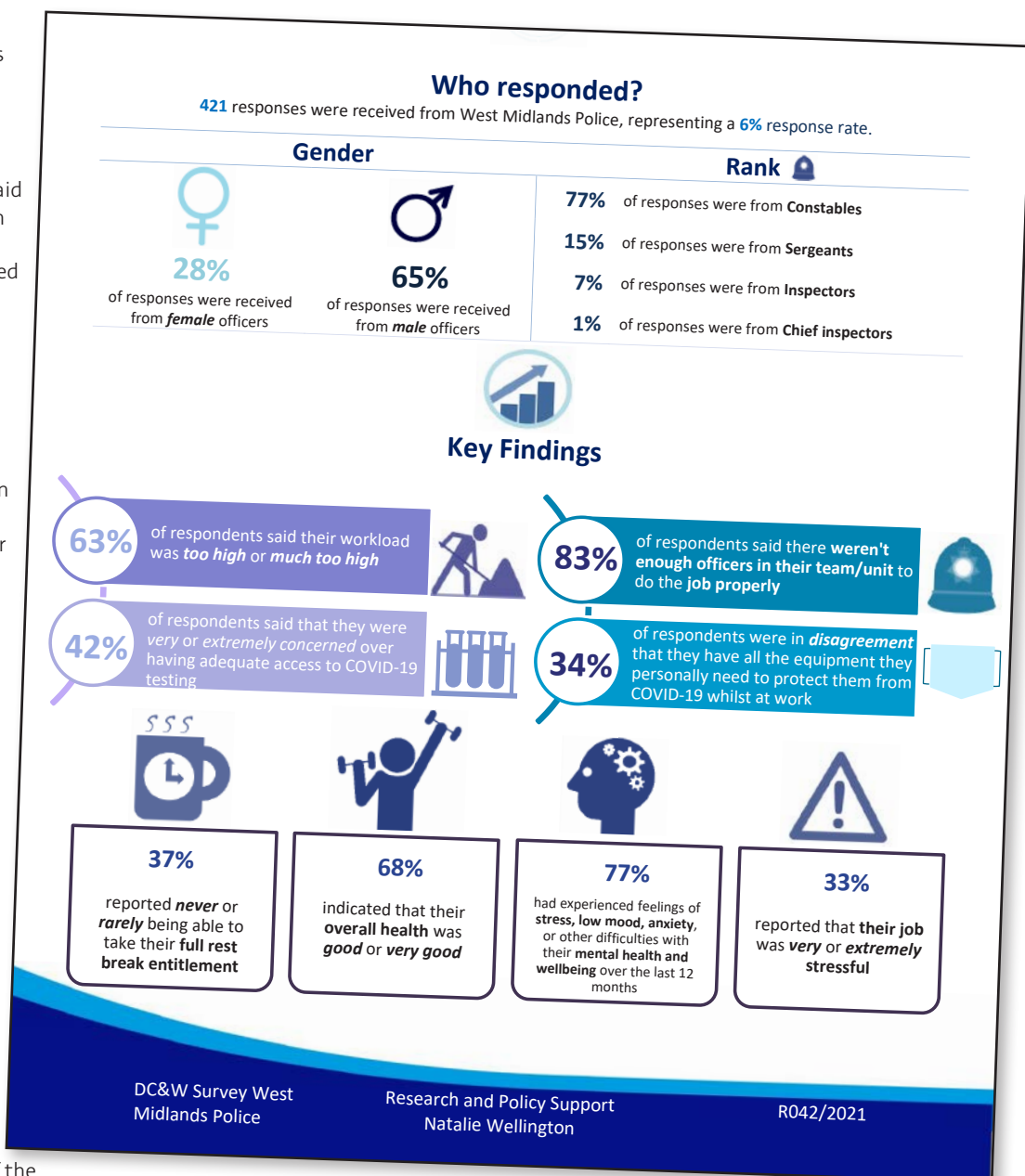
"As well as having an incredibly challenging and demanding job and all the

pressures that go with it, police officers are also human beings who are looking after kids, poorly relatives, and have the same stresses as everyone else. This survey shows the harsh reality of policing during a period when police officers have simply done the best they could to help and protect the public.

"The results of this survey have come directly from our members - those police officers who are on the frontline dealing with whatever society throws at them. The increasing level of violence they face, especially involving the 'weaponising' of the virus, is a sad indictment of the society we live in.

"Government must hear them; they must be given all the protection they need to protect themselves and this includes being prioritised for the Covid vaccine. We have had enough of the warm words - we now need action."

The biennial survey forms part of PFEW's submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body, the non-departmental public body which provides advice to the Government on pay and conditions for police officers at or below the rank of chief superintendent.



Force level figures for breaks, rest days and annual leave	2016	2018	2020
Reported being <b>never</b> or <b>rarely</b> able to take full rest break entitlement	49%	48%	37%
Reported having <b>two</b> or <b>more</b> rest days cancelled in the previous 12 months	75%	77%	47%
Reported having a request for annual leave refused <b>once</b> or <b>more</b> in the previous 12 months	89%	78%	70%

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# Julie is determined to support equal rights for officers in new role

**J**ulie Fleming says she is determined to support members within their job and help get officers back to work after being appointed deputy equality liaison officer (ELO) for West Midlands Police Federation.

It's a new year and a new challenge for Julie, who fast developed a desire for resolving equality issues for members having first become a workplace Federation representative in 2017.

Nearly four years on and Julie is now taking her passion for helping colleagues even further, as she takes on the temporary position of deputy ELO. In her new role, she will work to ensure the Federation's equality policies complement those set out by the Force's HR team.

"I feel I have a lot to offer in this area," says Julie, who joined the police almost 20 years ago.

Up until now, she has been a neighbourhood officer at Stoke and Wyken in Coventry but, having struggled to juggle a full-time job with her Federation responsibilities, she has chosen to focus on supporting members.

"I really feel the Federation can work better with management across the Force to improve awareness of equality issues," she explains, "If those higher up have a better understanding of equal rights then this, in theory, should lead to a happier workforce all-round. Ideally, this would then lead to less grievances, misunderstandings and the general unhappiness, all of which I currently witness far too often."

She suggests putting together a training package for supervisors or sending out email bulletins.

"My priorities will be to support members within their job and get people back to work while also making sure they are happy in a stable and fulfilling role which is better for them, for the Force as a whole and also for the public we serve," she says.

Since becoming a rep, Julie has completed numerous training courses, which will assist her in the role, including the equality practitioners' course and a mental health first aid course.



*Julie Fleming.*

Over the last four years, she has assisted members with a range of equality issues, including ill-health retirement applications and flexible working arrangements.

"I've also helped officers with disabilities and reasonable adjustments, as well as having been involved with lower-level grievances," Julie explains.

She says that she has conducted a lot of work supporting officers at attendance meetings, where they look at returning to work after a period of sickness.

"I find that sickness can sometimes stem from clashes at work with a colleague or supervisor and, while these incidents are minor, they can often grow," Julie explains.

"Something that can initially start off small can ultimately cause real stress for all parties. Sometimes, it's just a case of trying

to mediate and allow for each party to understand one another, while finding some common ground and a way to move forward."

In a bid to not let the pandemic overshadow her priorities with her new role, Julie promises to keep in regular contact with those who need her support.

"I know that, due to the restrictions, contact has been limited to phone, email and Skype, which can feel isolating," she says, "Doing the mental health first aid course gave me a better insight into the various conditions we can all suffer. I feel this should help me support officers who find themselves struggling."

Excited to explore what the position has to offer, Julie ends: "I'm really looking forward to getting started."



# 'They are under huge pressure'

A shortage of detectives means that many are working excessive hours, giving up rest days, missing time with their families and still having to deal with some of the most traumatic investigations, says West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott.

Jon, who is also deputy secretary of the Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum (PFNDF), spent much of his career as a detective before becoming a full-time Federation official in November 2019.

He explained: "Detectives are under huge pressure and the decade of cuts to police budgets hit them hard given that despite the fall in officer numbers there was no corresponding drop in crime. The Government mantra at the time seemed to be that you could do more with less but that simply was not true.

"Officers across the board struggled to meet increased demand with reduced resources and they were run ragged. Despite the current recruitment campaign, it is going to take a while for us to get back to where we were pre-cuts. Detectives investigate the most horrendous crimes, supporting the families of victims of crimes and juggling heavy caseloads. Working excessive hours, missing rest days and just not having time to relax, all take their toll and, of course, with the pandemic many will have not had the opportunity to go away on a holiday to try to relax and recharge."

Jon's comments came as the national Federation launched a month-long focus on the role of detectives.

As part of this, Glyn Pattinson, PFNDF chair, says more need to be done to recognise the demands and personal impact of dealing with serious and disturbing crime.

In a blog published on the national Police Federation's website, Glyn says:

"Unsurprisingly, policing can be very grim at times. No officer I know signed up thinking it will be easy but, while we embrace what we face with pride and the overwhelming will to protect the public we serve, it shouldn't come with the expectation that we can all cope with anything and everything. We can't.

No one can.

"Recognition must be given to officers and staff throughout policing for the constant commendable work they do and their unwavering nerve – particularly throughout the pandemic. My PFNDF colleagues and I want to bring to light the challenges detectives face; the unrelenting volume of serious and complex criminal investigations, with little or no respite.

"Every detective I know wants to do the best job possible but there simply are not enough of us. Demand is outstripping resources and colleagues are working excessive hours, forgoing rest days, sacrificing time with their families and simply not getting enough rest.

"The sad thing is that this is a normal working week for most, severely impacting on physical and mental wellbeing. It's hard enough trying to process and cope with traumatic criminal investigations, but this is in addition to supporting scared and distressed victims, working with partner agencies, the Crown Prosecution Service, and seeing a number of legal processes through to completion to bring some form of closure for those affected."

Glyn says officers tend to put their own welfare last with many people under the misconception that they can forget what they have seen once a case has finished and swiftly move onto the next or juggle several cases at once. But this only adds to the strain, with a cumulative impact that lasts a lifetime.

He called on officers to help each other but also wants to see a cultural shift.

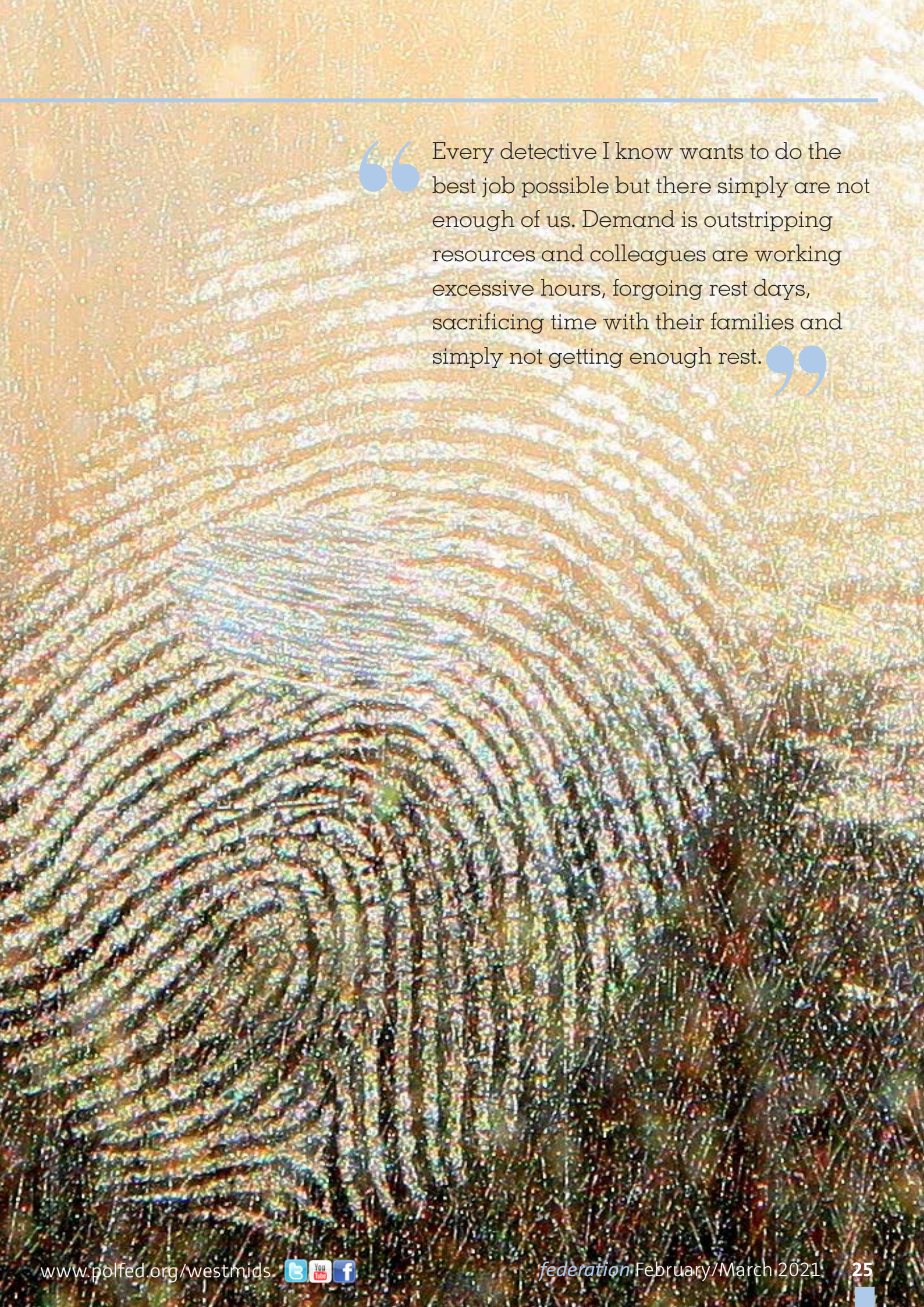
"We need to get better at supporting each other – recognise when we are struggling, talk more openly about wellbeing and listen. There are sources of support out there but we need to see cultural change and we all have a role to play in that," he explained.

"Throughout this month, we will be sharing personal stories from officers who have sought support, officers who have helped colleagues, and we will shine a light on the fantastic detective work that goes on day in and day out.

"We are all finding it tough right now, in every force, in every discipline and if now isn't the time to recognise the signs and show simple acts of kindness, I don't know when is."

“Detectives investigate the most horrendous crimes, supporting the families of victims of crimes and juggling heavy caseloads. Working excessive hours, missing rest days and just not having time to relax, all take their toll and, of course, with the pandemic many will have not had the opportunity to go away on a holiday to try to relax and recharge.”





“ Every detective I know wants to do the best job possible but there simply are not enough of us. Demand is outstripping resources and colleagues are working excessive hours, forgoing rest days, sacrificing time with their families and simply not getting enough rest. ”





# Travel insurance update

Members of the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme are being advised to read the latest travel insurance update from the scheme providers.

The update gives guidance on the ongoing impact of the pandemic on holidays and travel.

[Find out more.](#)



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I am able to have peace of mind for the future



# Stuart becomes UK's first football hate crime officer

A response PC who was racially abused as a child has become the first ever football hate crime officer not just in the Force but also in the UK.

Stuart Ward, who is 34, has been given the pioneering role which will put him at the forefront of the Force football unit's work to eradicate rising abuse against players and fans; an offence which has seen an online increase. It will also improve the Force's ability to investigate offences.

As the victim of racial abuse himself, Stuart feels he understands the emotional impact it can have and believes he can provide appropriate support to victims.

"I'm mixed race and growing up I was racially abused," he explained, "I remember being 11-years-old and playing football for a junior side. It came from another player and the thing that stuck with me was how no-one did anything about it, other than my mum who stopped the game and took me off the pitch.

"There were parents, match officials, other players - who were old enough to know right from wrong - who didn't challenge the comments or support me. So, having sadly been subjected to discrimination, I know the feelings and the impact it can have on you."

Stuart's role will include investigating complaints of hate crime linked to football, monitoring online interactions and working with the region's clubs at both professional and amateur level to highlight what is an offence and the importance of reporting it.

He will also be going into schools to educate children around discrimination, linking with other bodies such as Kick It Out, and he will work with the football unit to



PC Stuart Ward.

monitor any offences when stadiums re-open following the pandemic.

Hate crime can cover a range of offences including abuse connected to race, sexual orientation, disability, religion or gender. Last season there were 287 reported hate crime incidents connected to matches in England and Wales. Kick It Out also revealed there was a 42 per cent rise in reports of discrimination last season.

Stuart said: "We need to change this culture. We're a multicultural society and it's important we educate people around hate crime to stop it happening. Clearly, we'll look to take enforcement action too and won't hesitate to take people to court where appropriate.

"I've spent 12 years as a response officer - along with some time as a football spotter - and I'm proud to have been given the role of dedicated football hate crime officer. I enjoy the game and want everyone else, whatever their background, to feel comfortable in doing so too.

"I feel I'm in a position where I can offer help and support, while looking to take action against those involved."

Sergeant Lizzie Lewandowski of the football unit, added: "It's incredibly sad to see football, a game for everyone, being used by some to fuel hate crime.

"Abusing a footballer or another fan for the colour of their skin, sexual orientation, for having a disability or their religion can never be confused for 'banter'.

"We hope the appointment of Stuart as a dedicated hate crime officer will help put us at the forefront of changing, challenging and stopping such appalling behaviour."

Follow [@FootballUnitWMP](#) for updates from Stuart and the rest of the football unit.

“ We need to change this culture. We're a multicultural society and it's important we educate people around hate crime to stop it happening. ”

# Officers' concerns over pay and morale

A new survey which found more than half of West Midlands Police Federation members have low morale has been described as "hugely concerning" by Federation branch chair Jon Nott.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) annual pay and morale survey found that 52 per cent of West Midlands respondents feel their morale was low or very low.

This is the seventh highest level in the country and is set against a national average of 48 per cent. But this is still an improvement on last year's survey in which 59 per cent of members reported low morale.

The survey also found that 86 per cent of respondents felt morale in the Force was low or very low, compared to 95 per cent last year. Nationally, the figure was 75 per cent.

Jon said: "It's been an incredibly tough year and the pandemic has clearly had an effect on everyone's lives. Police officers have been on the frontline throughout, they've protected and served the public, and they've continued to perform their every day roles as well.

"In responding to this survey, they've raised real fears and worries about their morale and their pay, and some of the results are hugely concerning.

"While we are pleased to see that there has been an improvement in morale since last year's survey it is still unacceptable that more than half of our members are suffering with low morale which will have a serious impact on their wellbeing.

"As a Federation, we will be discussing this survey with chief officers and we will work with the Force to address the issues it highlights though we acknowledge that police officer pay and pensions are both matters which have to be tackled on a national basis."

The survey was carried out across all 43 forces in England and Wales giving more than 130,000 Federation members their first opportunity to provide detailed feedback on how policing the pandemic had affected their finances and wellbeing. It revealed:

- 42 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police felt the Force has managed officers well during the pandemic, against a national average of 49 per cent
- 72 per cent said West Midlands Police had kept them up to date with Covid-19-related guidance, the figure nationally was 78 per cent
- Just under a third (32 per cent) said they had received adequate training on the crisis versus 41 per cent across the country.

Other key findings from West Midlands Police Federation members were:

**Pay and remuneration**

- 83 per cent of respondents said they don't feel they're paid fairly for the stresses and strains of the job, and 76 per cent said that they're not fairly paid for the hazards they faced. Nationally, the figures were 86 per cent and 77 per cent respectively
- 72 per cent said they were dissatisfied with their overall remuneration, including pay and allowances
- 35 per cent worried about the state of their finances daily or almost daily, lower than the national figure of 37 per cent
- 58 per cent felt they were worse off financially than they were five years ago
- Seven per cent reported never or almost never having enough money to cover their essentials.

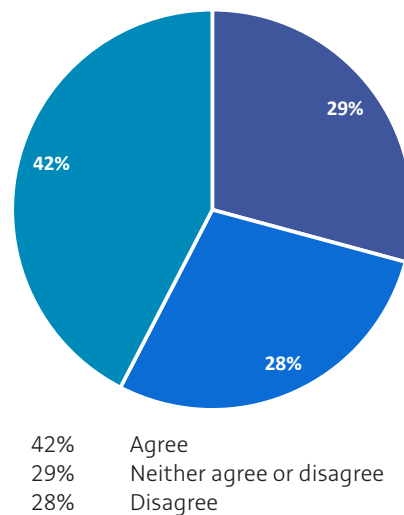
**Morale**

- The top reasons given for low morale were how the police are treated as a whole (93 per cent), pay and benefits (74 per cent), pension (73 per cent) and the Covid-19 crisis (69 per cent).

**The Covid-19 crisis**

Overall, 42 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police said that their force has managed officers well during the Covid-19 crisis. This is lower than the proportion of respondents in the country as a whole where 49 per cent said that their force has managed officers well during the Covid-19 crisis.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that your force has managed officers well during the Covid-19 crisis?**



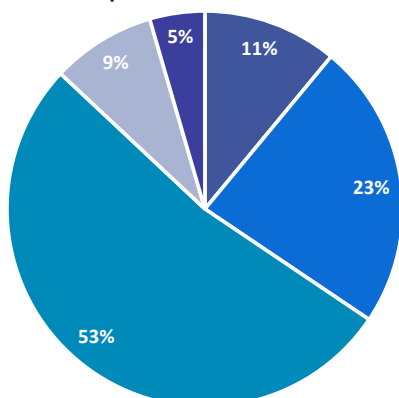
**Attitudes towards the police**

- Two thirds of respondents (67 per cent) said they did not feel valued in the police compared to 57 per cent nationally
- 44 per cent felt they weren't treated fairly, the second highest figure in the country
- 65 per cent said they wouldn't recommend joining the police to others, the third highest figure in the country.

### Cost of living

35 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police reported worrying about the state of their personal finances every day or almost every day. This is lower than the national figure for England and Wales as a whole, where 37 per cent of respondents reported that they worried about their personal finances every day or almost every day.

**How often do you find yourself worrying about the state of your personal finances?**



11% Every day  
23% Almost every day  
53% Occasionally  
9% Almost never  
5% Never

### Recruitment drive

- 29 per cent felt the Force would be able to recruit the number of officers allocated to the West Midlands as part of the Government's plans to boost officer numbers by 20,000 over a three-year programme.

The survey was compiled by the national Federation's research and policy department, which plays a vital part in providing strategically important evidence to achieve better pay and conditions for members.

It generated more than 25,000 responses which is around 20 per cent of all Federated rank officers across England and Wales.

National Federation chair John Apter said: "These results should give serious concern to chief constables and to government.

"The low morale reported by officers comes as no surprise, but the police service needs to take its head out of the sand and acknowledge we have a serious issue.

"My colleagues take the time to fill in these surveys and give their honest views, so it would be a failing by police leaders to ignore what is being said.

"This year, more than ever, officers have been put under significant pressure, dealing with the day job as well as policing the

### Reasons for low morale

The survey asked respondents about the factors that had a positive or negative impact on their morale, the table below shows the proportion of respondents in West Midlands Police who said a particular factor has had a negative impact upon their morale compared to the national figures.

	Negative impact on morale (West Midlands Police)	Negative impact on morale (England and Wales)
Pay and benefits (including pension)	74%	73%
Workload and responsibilities	65%	66%
Work-life balance	61%	59%
Health and wellbeing	60%	58%
How the police as a whole are treated	93%	90%
The Covid-19 crisis	69%	65%
Your pension	73%	69%
The 20,000 officer uplift	12%	12%

### Satisfaction with pay

83 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police told us they do not feel they are paid fairly for the stresses and strains they have within their job, and 76 per cent said they are not fairly paid for the hazards they faced within their role. Nationally, 86 per cent of respondents said they were not fairly paid for the stresses and strains of their job and 77 per cent said they were not fairly paid for the hazards they faced.

Comparison of 2020 and 2019 figures for perceptions of fair pay in West Midlands Police is provided in the table below.

	2020	2019
Do not feel fairly paid for the stresses and strains of their job	83%	91%
Do not feel fairly paid for the hazard faced within their job	76%	83%

72 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police said they are dissatisfied with their overall remuneration (including basic pay and allowances) and 61 per cent said they are dissatisfied with their pensions. Comparison of 2020 and 2019 figures for pay and remuneration in West Midlands Police is provided in the table below.

	2020	2019
Satisfied with total remuneration	72%	79%
Dissatisfied with pension	68%	59%

constantly changing Covid rules.

"Despite doing their very best, they have been turned into the villains of this pandemic by some, damned whatever they do; and this constant criticism takes its toll.

"While it might come as a surprise to some, police officers are human beings; they have their own worries about the virus and the fear that they take it home to their families.

"I accept that the wellbeing of police

officers is considered more now than it has ever been in the past, there is some good work going on in some forces, but the benefits of this good work are still not being felt by all of our members and that is a serious issue.

"This must be seen for what it is, a cry for help from police officers who need to ensure their voice is heard. If these results are ignored by police leaders, then this will be a failing that will be unforgivable."



# 50-mile challenge runs up funds for charities

Forgetting Dry January or taking up a new diet, 130 supporters of WMPMND put January to good use by each running 50 miles to raise funds for the campaign's two chosen charities – the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) and Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove.

The fund-raising mission was launched by West Midlands PC Sharon Johnson who, celebrating her 50th birthday in January, decided to set the campaign's supporters a challenge.

And, with the enthusiasm that has already seen them smash their original fund-raising targets several times over, they have raised more than £900, once the cost of medals for those covering the distance had been taken into account.

"I just thought it would be a great way to mark my big birthday and also motivate people during January," says Sharon, "Of course, when I set the challenge I didn't know we would be in a nationwide lockdown but at least a daily run has been something people have been able to do.

"I am overwhelmed by everyone's efforts and also want to thank them for everything they have done to make my birthday as special as possible given the pandemic."

Sharon's husband, Chris, who retired from the Force last year, was diagnosed with motor neurone disease – which affects the brain, spinal cord and nerves that stop muscles functioning – in autumn 2018, six months after being promoted to Assistant Chief Constable.

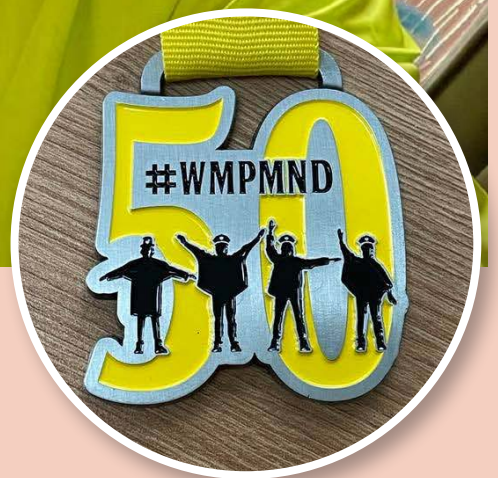
A fund-raising appeal set up in the ACC's name has already raised more than £28,017 which will be split between MNDA and Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove which are supporting Chris and his family. The group's current target is to raise £32,280 – Chris' collar number was 1614 so this target will give each charity £16,140.

Inspired by Chris' approach to being diagnosed with MND, West Midlands Police Federation representative Trudy Gittins rallied a team of officers and supporters from forces across England and Wales to run Liverpool's Rock and Roll Marathon last May.

Trudy, a DS in the organisational learning and development department, wanted the runners to support the two



Sharon Johnson after completing the final leg of her 50-mile challenge and (inset) the specially commissioned medal for those who took part.



charities supporting the Johnson family.

The marathon was initially moved from May to autumn last year, and this May's event has also just been put back again.

But despite the setbacks, the fund-raisers have been doing their bit to boost the charities' coffers.

MND attacks the nerves in the brain and spinal cord and could happen to anyone at

any time; a person's risk of developing the disease is around 1 in 300.

- Sharon has been named as an Ambassador for Primrose Hospice, recognising her efforts to support their work.

# PTC offering virtual wellbeing and physiotherapy support



The Police Treatment Centres

**W**est Midlands Police Federation members will still be able to access mental health and physiotherapy support despite the new lockdown restrictions.

This comes after the Police Treatment Centres (PTC) announced the temporary closure of both of its rehabilitation centres following the Government's decision to put the country in a national lockdown.

Explaining the closure, Patrick Cairns, the chief executive officer at the PTC, said: "At the core of this decision is the need to keep our employees and patients safe. We need to respect the intent behind the legislation which is to reduce the transference of the virus from person to person."

However, members of the PTC team have been working hard to ensure people will be given wellbeing and physiotherapy support, either virtually or remotely.

Patrick reassured all current members accessing the centres' wellbeing programme that they will be hearing from the nursing team with information on what support they will be given.

"They will also be offered access to the Thrive App, which is the only NHS approved mental health app available in the UK and can be used to manage stress and improve wellbeing," he added.

"Likewise, all those booked onto the residential physiotherapy programme will be contacted by the team and if appropriate will be offered remote treatment."

The remote physiotherapy service will continue, offering both current and new patients online treatment from clinicians while work on the new clinical services wing has been able to continue and is on track for completion in the spring.

Patrick added: "We would like to thank everyone for their understanding. We are very much aware that our police officers have worked tirelessly throughout the whole of the pandemic, often at great risk to their own physical and mental health.



"We would like to reassure everyone that we will re-open our doors at the very earliest moment and look forward to getting back to delivering our class-leading treatment plans to the best police service in the world."

The PTC is a charity which provides treatment and support for injured and ill police officers and retired officers, including a psychological wellbeing programme as well as police-specific physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

It has two treatment centres at St Andrews, in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, and Castlebrae in Auchterarder, Perthshire.

The Force has switched to the PTC as its rehabilitation services provider. As part of the new Force arrangements, all student officers will receive their first 12 months' subscription to the PTC free of charge.

And, any officers signing up to the PTC before 30 April 2021 will not have to be a member for a minimum of 12 months before they can access treatment as is usually the case.

The treatment centres are available to all serving West Midlands Police officers, PCSOs, Special Constables and detention and custody officers. Retired officers can also sign up at a lower rate.

Any serving officer who had previously been donating to Flint House was automatically transferred to the PTC from 1 January 2021.

If you would like to find out more about subscribing to the PTC please visit [thepolicetreatmentcentres.org](http://thepolicetreatmentcentres.org) where you can also find the sign-up forms.

The PTC is a registered charity supported by voluntary donations from the police family. Officers currently make a donation from their pay of £1.80 per week.

Almost 4,000 serving and retired officers usually attend the two centres each year with most receiving intensive physiotherapy. Others seek support with stress-related conditions or anxiety and depression as part of a psychological wellbeing programme.



# New year, great new member benefit from the Benevolent Fund

NEW OFFERS ADDED EVERY WEEK!



**W**est Midlands Police Benevolent Fund has started off the year by launching an exclusive new benefit for its members.

In recognition of the challenges faced by many last year, the police charity wanted to give a little back as a big thank you to members for keeping up with monthly subscriptions and continuing to support the fund's vital work.

It is offering all its members exclusive access to a new Rewards Scheme providing a variety of discounts including money off a weekly grocery shop, family days out, health and beauty and travel, plus offers on a huge selection of retail and much more.

John Williams, chair of the Benevolent Fund, commented: "We're delighted to offer this exclusive Rewards Scheme for our members. We hope people will find it a useful addition to the current membership benefits we offer. There's a large selection of discounts to choose from, saving money on everything from your weekly grocery shop to a family holiday. We're very excited about it. Hopefully it will offer members lots of savings and provide even better value for the small monthly subscription to the Ben Fund."

The Reward Scheme can be accessed via a new 'Members only' portal on the

Benevolent Fund website [www.wmpben.co.uk](http://www.wmpben.co.uk) using the membership username and password recently emailed out.

If you have not received your member's log in details, please email West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund at [info@wmpben.co.uk](mailto:info@wmpben.co.uk) or call the office on **0121 752 4919**.

Here's a snapshot of some of the

discounts you can enjoy through the scheme;

- **Discounts on groceries with Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Morrisons**
- **Retail offers for Superdry, New Look, The White Company, Primark, ASOS, Fat Face, Footlocker, Clarks and more**
- **Offers on food and drink, including discounts for Uber Eats, Just Eat, Costa and Pizza Express**
- **A large selection of days out, including**

“There's a large selection of discounts to choose from, saving money on everything from your weekly grocery shop to a family holiday. We're very excited about it. Hopefully it will offer members lots of savings and provide even better value for the small monthly subscription to the Ben Fund.”





The fund gives members access to discounted breaks at two seaside properties.

- discounted entry to all the Merlin Group attractions, Legoland, Sea Life Centres and more
- Offers on sport and leisure, including discounts at Halfords, Sport Direct, Nike, American Golf and more
- Discounts on health spas, general and medical health care and additional wellbeing offers.

If you were to use the scheme solely for your weekly food shop, you could potentially save more than £200 a year on your groceries alone, not to mention savings on days out, dining, leisure and clothes.

Members can also sign up for the Ben Fund's new Rewards e-newsletter and receive the latest news on offers and discounts as well as entry to regular prize draws.

New offers are being introduced every week, so it's a good idea to keep up-to-date on how you can save even more money by using the Reward Scheme.

Any serving officer or member of police staff can join West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund. A monthly subscription of just £2.00 is deducted from your salary and provides a lifetime of support and membership benefits including;

- Life cover
- Grant and loans
- Sickness vouchers

- Convalescence and rehabilitation breaks
- Discounted holidays at the fund's two seaside properties
- Access to the exclusive Rewards Scheme.

To join, simply complete the online application form and receive immediate access to the Reward Scheme and holiday homes. New members can access the full range of benefits after a minimum of six months' membership.

Join via: <https://wmpben.co.uk/how-to-join/application-form/>



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# West Midlands Police Federation Workplace reps - February 2021

LOCATION	REP(s)		POSTING	MOBILE NUMBER
<b>Guardians House</b>	3895	Steve GRANGE	Secretary	07968 215897
	6979	Jon NOTT	Chair	07772 528674
	8474	Tim ROGERS	Dep secretary	07792 774328
	6906	John WILLIAMS	Dep chair	07890 683314
	4132	George MCDONNELL	CaPLO	07807 079409
	9878	Dave HADLEY	CaPLO	07972 917043
	5583	Cliff TOMKINSON	P & E	07376 252835
	4368	Julie FLEMING	NPU	07972 917967
	5139	Peggy LAMONT	Regional	07971 549321
		Hayley ALEY	Regional	
<b>Aston</b>	5992	Barrie PUNSHON	Firearms	Check Blue Pages
	9694	Roy TEAGUE	Firearms	Check Blue Pages
<b>Birmingham APU</b>	4413	Aaron BELL	Operations	07496 685277
<b>Bournville Lane</b>	5456	Winston CHRISTIE	Force Response	07535 176594
	20186	Paul WELCH	Response	07792 767084
<b>Bloxwich</b>	1284	David KEASEY	Response	
	4127	Aaron RICHARDSON	Force Response	
	9270	Richard COOKE	NPU	07974 220292
	4993	Rod ROSE	Neighbourhood	Check Blue Pages
<b>Brierley Hill</b>	6889	Chris SMITH	FCID	07399 005748
<b>Coventry</b>	1329	Jason SAYERS	L & D	07772 529130
<b>Willenhall</b>	3426	Alan O'SHEA	NTF	07792 776626
<b>Willenhall</b>	2162	Dawn MURKETT	NPU	07792 773787
<b>Foleshill</b>	21420	Suky BAGRI	Force Support	07972 916476
	1188	Steve TEMPERTON	PPU	07972 904227
<b>Digbeth</b>	6329	Simon WHEELER	NPU	07534 279654
<b>Dudley</b>	1978	Deano WALKER	H & S secretary	07812 422578
<b>Handsworth</b>	633	Sean GILSENAN	NPU	07974 399360
<b>Ladywood</b>	20287	Marcia FRANCIS	PPU	07930 407683
<b>Lloyd House</b>	133	Eakbinder KAUR	FCID	
	1566	Kin DEVI	PSD, Operations	07972 918454
<b>Nechells</b>	1687	Pete SNAPE	NHT	07976 068542
<b>Newtown</b>	7658	Matt MINTON	Firearms	Check Blue Pages
	6219	Lorayne BROWN	Force Support	07534 279659
<b>Oldbury</b>	8774	Christian HARRISON	CJS	
<b>Perry Bar</b>	21179	Peri DHESI	FCID, Prepare/Prevent Hub	07951 237503
<b>Shard End</b>	667	Dan WOOD	NPU	07972 916463
<b>Stechford</b>	6557	Stuart WHITEHEAD	Response	07852 512726
<b>Solihull &amp; Coventry</b>	698	Richard ANSERMOZ	NTF	07812 223302
<b>Steelhouse Lane</b>	29965	Dan CHAPPELOW	FCID - Reg Organised Crime	07772 527743
<b>Tally Ho</b>	5454	Trudy GITTINS	L & D	07972 918258
<b>Tipton</b>	20428	Christopher JAMES	Force Support	07972 918259
<b>Walsall</b>	8178	Wayne BENNETT	L & D	07951 751150
<b>Wednesfield</b>	8129	Warren HINES	FCID (& local help)	07702 934705
<b>West Bromwich</b>	9187	Sam HUGHES	PPU	07535 177764
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	9233	Darren NEVILLE	Organised Crime WV	07972 916537
	21287	Lee HAYWARD	Force Response	07951 236994
	5287	Sarah THOMAS-WEST	WV - NHT	07972 916428
	9152	Michael WOODS	CJS	07951 751151



# Did you know...



## the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance scheme\* includes GP Care on Demand?

Providing subscribing scheme members and their resident families with **unlimited access via telephone or app** to a GMC licensed practicing GP, **from the comfort of their home.**

At £24.60\*\* per month the scheme also includes:

- £130K Life assurance
- £15K Critical Illness
- Best Doctors®
- Personal accident cover
- Sickness benefit
- Worldwide Family Travel insurance
- Mobile Phone / Gadget cover
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**Available 24/7, 365 days a year, worldwide - you can even use it when you're on holiday!**

Visit the Federation website for further details:  
**[www.polfed.org/westmids](http://www.polfed.org/westmids)**

Or call us on: **0121 752 4900**



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\* Full details are available from the Federation or George Burrows. Terms and conditions apply.

\*\* Correct at 1 January 2021 the premium includes the Federation administration fee and Insurance Premium Tax (IPT)

GP Care on Demand is provided by Teladoc Health, Inc. Teladoc, Inc. is a telemedicine company that uses telephone and video conferencing technology to provide on-demand remote medical care via mobile devices, the internet, video and phone. [www.teladoc.com](http://www.teladoc.com)

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