

# FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation

April/May 2023



**SAM HUGHES – 5th DECEMBER 1969 – 15th MARCH 2023**

*Supporting our members in everything we do*

[www.polfed.org/westmids](http://www.polfed.org/westmids)

**FIXED FEES AND DISCOUNTED  
RATES FOR POLICE OFFICERS  
AND PERSONNEL.**

**McALISTER**

FAMILY LAW

# WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

DIVORCE AND CHILDREN LAW SPECIALISTS

McAlister Family Law is the country's leading provider of police divorce and family services. Whether you are facing divorce and are worried about the impact on your pension or are seeking contact with your children or any other family law dispute, we are here to help.

**FIXED FEE DIVORCE**

**£350 + VAT\***

**FREE FIRST APPOINTMENT**

\*Conditions apply. Please see website for details.

- Leaders in police divorce and children cases.
- Over 20 years' experience in representing police officers facing divorce and children disputes.
- Experts in police pensions and divorce.

**0333 202 6433**



CHILD AND FAMILY LAW SPECIALISTS

**McAlister Family Law**

2nd Floor, Commercial Wharf  
6 Commercial Street  
Manchester M15 4PZ

[mcalisterfamilylaw.co.uk](http://mcalisterfamilylaw.co.uk)



*"McAlister Family Law are formidable opponents for any of the leading firms across the country."*

**BE**  
**BEYOND**  
LAW GROUP  
[beyondlawgroup.co.uk](http://beyondlawgroup.co.uk)

# WELCOME

Welcome to the April/May 2023 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.

**Published by:**  
XPR (UK) Ltd

**Editor:**  
Rich Cooke, chair

**Design and production:**  
XPR (UK) Ltd

## Contact us:

Guardians House  
2111 Coventry Road  
Sheldon, Birmingham  
B26 3EA

**Telephone:**  
0121 752 4900

**Email:**  
westmidlandspf@polfed.org

[www.polfed.org/westmids](http://www.polfed.org/westmids)

Federation is produced by XPR (UK) Ltd on behalf of West Midlands Police Federation.

The articles published do not necessarily reflect the views of the Branch Council. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit any material submitted.

Every care is taken to ensure that advertisements are accepted only from bona fide advertisers. The Police Federation cannot accept liability for losses incurred by any person as a result of a default on the part of an advertiser.

All material is copyright and may not be reproduced without the express permission of the editor.



# WHAT'S INSIDE

- 4 Chair's introduction
- 6 'Officer pay must reflect the risks they take'
- 7 Leave embargo lifted
- 7 Inspecting ranks urged to know their rights
- 8 Calls for national ballot for industrial rights
- 9 Knife crime trial 'needs re-thinking'
- 10 Chair calls for new approach to tackling violent crime
- 11 'We are talking about saving young lives'
- 12 'Fundamental' for stab vests to be properly fitted
- 13 Sacked detective returns to work as ruling is overturned
- 14 Officers must have confidence in fair hearings
- 15 'Fed reps are an asset to the departments they work in'
- 15 Pensions update
- 15 Your chance to win £1,000
- 16 Detectives facing the challenge of caseloads and paperwork
- 18 'An amazing, inspirational and genuine lady'
- 21 Tiff shares her story
- 22 New policing model better for the public
- 23 Taking the lead on change programme
- 23 Planning maternity leave? Federation publishes new guide
- 23 Free mortgage advice
- 24 Fed chair praises Specials
- 26 Force 'frontrunners' in policing with drones
- 29 Discounted insurance for all the police family
- 29 More support for injured officers
- 30 Benevolent Fund's weekend breaks in the Ribble Valley
- 31 Help and support on hand with free guides
- 32 PTSD and its effect on law enforcement
- 34 Retired officer speaks about his passion for helping youngsters
- 35 Fed chair calls for Labour to commit to investment in policing

## ADVERTISERS

- 2 **McAlister**, family law
- 24 **Irwin Mitchell**, family law
- 28 **Police Insure**, car, home and motorcycle insurance
- 31 **Warren & Co**, independent mortgage advice and travel insurance
- 32 **Slater & Gordon**, family and police law
- 33 **NARPO**, member services
- 33 **First Call Financial**, independent mortgage advice
- 36 **George Burrows**, Group Insurance Scheme



# Sam leaves a big gap in our team



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

In recent months, we've sadly said goodbye to some exceptional colleagues. So I begin by paying tribute to Sam Hughes and Chris Johnson.

I'm sure I speak on behalf of the membership when I express just how heartbroken we were to hear about Sam, our branch deputy chair. Sam will be hugely missed by everyone here at the Federation and she leaves a big gap in our rep team. She was a truly remarkable woman and an inspiration to me in my role, and our thoughts continue to be with her husband, Shaun, along with her two children and family.

And, as for Chris, our former Assistant Chief Constable - I've never known of somebody in such a role to be liked by every single person he meets. I experienced Chris's greater good first-hand when he mentored me during my early days as a chair - and I'll be

forever grateful for the support he gave through a difficult time for me. We became friends and I will miss his wisdom and advice massively. Our thoughts are with Chris's wife, Sharon, and their two children.

Both incredible people, and both taken far too soon. I know both Sam and Chris were extremely popular among our membership. They were both truly 'one of us' and that never changed. It's during these situations more than ever, where this idea of being a big police family rings true. So I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage you to reach out to the Federation if you are finding work or life a challenge at the moment. Give

us a chance and we may be able to help, as I've seen so often in the work our reps are doing daily.

The past few months have also brought with them some welcomed changes, including the re-opening of two local custody blocks at Bloxwich and Stetchford. We have been pushing for this for many years now, and finally, our voices are being heard. This means officers will be closer to the system, and will really help to enhance the more local policing model, that we're working to adapt.

This brings me to the Change Programme, which seems to be going really well and has been welcomed by the majority of the Force.



Sam with her Mum and daughter.

Of course, like any form of change, we've run into challenges in certain areas of the Force, but both myself and workplace rep Jase Dooley, who is leading on this project for the Federation, are working hard with Commanders to iron out those problems.

I would like our members to know that we recognise these challenges won't just get better overnight. It will take time and it won't be easy for many of us, but can I reassure you that your Federation is here for you and will support you as the programme progresses.

The Taser uplift programme is continuing to develop nicely. I'm pleased to see plans are being put in place to boost Taser training further - even I might be put on a course in the near future, so watch this space.

**BOTH INCREDIBLE PEOPLE,  
AND BOTH TAKEN FAR TOO  
SOON. I KNOW BOTH SAM  
AND CHRIS WERE  
EXTREMELY POPULAR  
AMONG OUR MEMBERSHIP.**

Another issue we have been seriously campaigning about is knife crime. It's no secret that this is something I feel extremely passionate about and it finally looks like the Government might be taking this more seriously. A consultation is now underway on banning some of the vicious weapons we so often see in the hands of our young. It's not going to be a panacea of course, but it is a significant step in the right direction and common sense - but more work needs to be done on this, and fast. Young lives are still being lost, too often, due to this scourge on our towns and cities.

As you read this, I would like to think I'll be out on my bike training for this year's Police Unity Tour. Myself and Andy Beard will be taking part this year, and there's still time for you to sign up - but be quick, we need to plan accommodation as soon as possible, the absolute deadline being the end of the month.

The 200-mile event will start on Friday 28 July and end on Sunday 30 July, with the final chapter being in Staffordshire, as riders end at the National Memorial Arboretum, to mark this year's memorial service.

I would actively encourage anyone to join me for the tour - it's a great experience, genuinely mixed ability and a fantastic opportunity for us all to remember our fallen colleagues. If you are interested in taking part, please email either me or Andy as soon as possible.

Until next time, keep safe.

## 'Funny, kind, fierce and brave'

Tributes have flooded in since the sad and untimely death of Sam Hughes, deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

We have dedicated our centre pages to Sam, in memory of a truly wonderful lady, a much admired and respected officer and friend.

See Pages 18 to 21.

## Tribute to PC Marc Forth

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers has paid tribute to PC Marc Forth who died on 5 April.

Marc (44) joined the Force in 2002 and spent much of his service working in Coventry including some time on the traffic department.

"Our thoughts at this time are with Marc's family and particularly his three children, his friends and, of course, his colleagues," says Tim.

"The death of a serving officer always hits us all and I would just like to remind anyone affected by Marc's death to reach out for help with Federation officials and workplace reps able to sign-post people to suitable support services."

## Remembering Chris Johnson

Former Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson was not just an inspiring police officer and leader but also an inspiring man, according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Chris sadly died on 20 April.

He had retired from the Force in September 2020, almost two years after being diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND). He had given 29 years' service to policing.

"It was so sad to hear of Chris' passing on Friday and that sadness, I know, will have rippled through the Force," says Rich.

"He was an inspirational police officer, and an inspirational leader but he was also an inspirational man. He was dealt a cruel hand when he was diagnosed with MND just six months after becoming our ACC but he continued to inspire people with the strength and determination he showed in the face of that diagnosis.

"Our thoughts are, of course, with his wife, Sharon, his two children and also his wider family and friends. The Force will mourn his loss but no one will feel that loss more keenly than his family."

With an act that typified his attitude towards MND, on the day he left Force Headquarters for the last time, he completed a mission to walk 5,000 steps for the Motor Neurone Disease Association and for the 5,000 people in the UK living with the illness.

He said at the time: "That pain and discomfort is nothing compared to hopefully raising awareness around Motor Neurone Disease. You can't choose much with this disease. There's no known cause and no known cure, and your life-time chance of getting it is one in 300.

"If you dwell on that sort of stuff, I think it would bring you down. So, the only thing you can control is how you choose to face it.

"I'm determined not to be defined by the disease and to keep fighting every day, one for myself but, more importantly, for Sharon and the children."



# 'Officer pay must reflect the risks they take'

## FEDERATION CALLS FOR SUBSTANTIAL UPLIFT AND MAY CAMPAIGN TO PURSUE INDUSTRIAL RIGHTS

**W**est Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has backed calls for officers to be given a 17 per cent pay rise.

Rich said the pay claim followed the publication of a report from the independent Social Market Foundation (SMF) think tank which showed pay had been lagging behind inflation by around 20 per cent since 2000.

He said: "Police officers have routinely been offered the worst pay deals across all the emergency services for many years and even a 17 per cent award this year, significant as it would be, would only go part way to redressing the balance.

"Colleagues in other frontline services have pressed their cases for fair pay through industrial action but our members are forbidden by law to withdraw their labour and that also has to be taken into account. In my view, if things continue as they have we should campaign to pursue industrial rights.

"The Police Federation has long campaigned for better pay for its members



West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

and I think the time has now come for the Government to take our position seriously and bring us back into line with the rest of the public sector.

"The pay issue has been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis which has left some of our members struggling to make ends meet and that is totally unacceptable.

"Our members deserve better. They work incredibly hard in very challenging circumstances and keep our communities safe

and secure.

"They should be treated with dignity and respect and that begins with a fair pay offer that reflects the sacrifices they make and the risks they take."

The SMF research found other protective services workers had received an average real terms rise of one per cent since 2000 while other public sector workers had received increases equalling 14 per cent. MPs' salaries went up by four per cent in real terms during





the same period.

The report said the decline in police pay was likely to be linked to the restrictions on police officers' right to strike, which puts them at a distinct disadvantage to all other workers including other emergency service workers.

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

The report references the P-factor as an element of police pay that reflects the unique obligations and responsibilities police officers experience relative to other comparable roles.

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

The P-factor payment does not feature in the report highlighting that the actual figure of

degradation of police pay is significantly higher.

Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn said the SMF research should act as a "wake-up call for policy-makers in the UK". He said: "Police officers put their lives on the line every day to serve and protect their communities.

"That is why our National Council has taken the decision to call for a minimum of 17 per cent increase in pay for our officers.

"The Government can no longer sit by and ignore our members' basic needs and must recognise the impact of this independent research.

"In the context of ongoing inflation, indications of a police retention crisis, and reports of officers being forced to turn to food banks, the issue of police pay must be addressed now after more than a decade of being ignored."

**“ IN THE CONTEXT OF ONGOING INFLATION, INDICATIONS OF A POLICE RETENTION CRISIS, AND REPORTS OF OFFICERS BEING FORCED TO TURN TO FOOD BANKS, THE ISSUE OF POLICE PAY MUST BE ADDRESSED NOW AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE OF BEING IGNORED.**

## Leave embargo lifted

West Midlands Police has lifted the leave embargo for the coronation of Kings Charles over the May Bank Holiday weekend in response to calls from the Federation branch.

Branch deputy secretary Chris James has been attending regular meetings to discuss planning for Operation Golden Orb - the national policing operation for the coronation - and one of the biggest issues for members was the leave embargo.

Chris said: "I have made several representations and pushed the Force to lift this as soon as possible.

"However, this has been complicated by the current change programme which has caused some delays.

"The Force has now agreed to lift the leave embargo and allow any officers who are not already off to book leave in line with staffing levels.

"We understand that this is later than hoped, but we have been working with the Force to get the embargo lifted."

King Charles will be crowned on Saturday 6 May at Westminster Abbey in London. Tens of thousands of people are expected to descend on the capital for the weekend.

## Inspecting ranks urged to know their rights

Inspectors and chief inspectors are being reminded of their rights under Police Regulations.

Since 1994, the inspecting ranks have worked under different Police Regulations from constables and sergeants due to changes made under the Police Negotiating Board Agreement.

This agreement means that casual over-time is not paid to the inspecting ranks but, critically, the agreement also set out that inspectors and chief inspectors should not be expected to work additional hours.

Nevertheless, many have been working excessive hours, which has affected their work-life balance and general wellbeing.

The Federation is now publishing a series of blogs to look at the changes afforded by the agreement and provide inspectors and chief inspectors with guidance on how they can better manage their working days and weeks.

The first blog explored [Knowing your rights and managing your time](#) and the second looked at [Understanding rest days in lieu](#).



# Questions around benefits of seeking industrial rights

**T**he chair of West Midlands Police Federation says a national ballot for officers is not only 'overdue' but 'must happen immediately' as members are urged to make sure their details are up-to-date ahead of a potential vote.

Rich Cooke's comments come after it was revealed that a national ballot on industrial rights could be incoming.

He says the national ballot would be a 'clear demonstration of the anger and frustration felt by those in the Force'.

"As chair of West Midlands Police Federation, having canvassed our members, I feel there is a huge need for the ballot - and I'm confident that most of the membership agrees with me," said Rich.

"Our members need to know that we are pushing for the ballot to happen now, not in six months' time. We need action - and any unnecessary delays could mean a poor voter turnout, and the whole exercise undermined."

The Fed's campaign for a national ballot comes shortly after the Casey review, which has seen a review of misconduct procedures and vetting processes for Police Officers, with every officer nationally being re-vetted.

While the Federation backs the re-vetting process, they have voiced concern over calls

to abolish independently chaired misconduct hearings, and potentially using the vetting process to effectively have 'two bites of the cherry' regarding historic allegations that have already been concluded.

"It looks like the recent Casey review will have an impact on our regulatory rights. They are looking at avoiding regulations in terms of vetting officers - to remove vetting of officers and remove independent chairs. If this happens, arguably, we're no better off, and some would say worse off than an employee who has employment rights," he continued.

"And, while we're not legally allowed to strike, I think the national ballot would be a clear demonstration of the anger and frustration being felt in the Force.

"Ultimately, it says once and for all that police officers are not happy, and we cannot go on like this anymore."

Rich also referred to the Strikes Bill, which plans to impose minimum service levels on certain industries during strike action, to ensure those in critical service roles can strike safely.

"If you're saying that nurses can go on strike - not all of them, but a safe number - then why can't the same be said for police officers?" he added.

Rich's comments were echoed by branch secretary Tim Rogers who emphasised that campaigning for the ballot is not about having a right to strike.

He said: "There are a range of strategic matters that we would seek to have implemented through this piece of work, we need a fair and enforceable pay mechanism, something that has been sadly lacking.

"Police officers hold a unique position which is why Police Regulations exist. That said this unique position should not allow the Government to simply ignore the evidence on how Police Pay has been allowed to fall behind so far."

Tim is also urging members to ensure their contact details are up-to-date, in case the ballot goes ahead.

"Engagement from our membership is key here," he continued.

"If we're fighting for a ballot, it needs to mean something - this is our opportunity to really demonstrate how we are all feeling.

"Please make sure all of your contact details are up-to-date with the Federation, so we can keep you informed. As cliché as this sounds, your vote will make such a difference if a ballot happens."



# Knife crime trial 'needs re-thinking'

'It is a good idea in principle but I don't think it will have much impact', says 'sceptical' Federation chair Rich Cooke after West Midlands is revealed as one of four forces taking part in a new stop and search trial aimed at tackling knife crime.

Rich's comments follow the announcement that a number of forces will introduce Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SCROs), which will make it easier for officers to search high-risk offenders for weapons.

The trial, which started in mid-April means the court will be able to issue a SVRO, giving officers the power to stop and search a person, providing they are aged 18 or over and have previously been convicted of carrying a knife or bladed article.

If an offender breaches the order, they could receive up to two years in prison, an unlimited fine, or both.

"While this is a good idea in principle, I think it needs re-thinking," says Rich, who has been actively campaigning for a tougher approach to knife crime.

"A lot of the suspects are juvenile, which means they will be exempt from the stop and search orders. I'm a little bit sceptical about it all, will it really make any difference?"

"Is this really tackling the problem, and targeting the right people?"

In 2022, West Midlands Police recorded 1,894 crimes where machetes were used, according to official figures, which is around 160 a month.

West Midlands Police also recorded the highest rate of knife crime per 100,000 people, which saw figures increase by 496 per cent since 2012, to a total of 7,257 incidents between 2021 and 2022.

"In my opinion, it's a bit too soft. Why shouldn't the police be able to stop a repeat offender?" added Rich.

"This still relies on officers applying for an order to be put in place. It shouldn't be a temporary order that is applied for, it should be permanent, it should be mandatory.

"I'm not sure how much impact this will have."

The Government recently announced plans for a crackdown on knife crime, which would see more machetes and zombie knives banned in England and Wales.

This came shortly after supermarket giant Iceland became the latest retailer to sign a voluntary policy agreeing to the responsible sale of knives.

Rich welcomed this news after he actively called for an 'outright ban' on the sale of machetes, following two knife attacks - one fatal - that took place in Walsall across three days in March.

"Of course, I am pleased to see that Iceland, along with multiple other retailers are taking a more responsible stance when it comes to the sale of knives," said Rich, who urgently calling for 'tighter rules' to be implemented on the sale of machetes and other weapons.

"We have got to fight knife crime on all

fronts, and that includes a clampdown on supply.

"I'd now like to see even more retailers taking action and signing the agreement."

The voluntary agreement with major retailers on the responsible sale of knives has been in place since 2016 and was revised in line with the Offensive Weapons Act, which was passed in 2019.

The act meant that retailers should apply their existing policies for age-restricted items when it comes to the sale of knives. It also included details on retailers ensuring knives are displayed and packaged securely to minimise risk. Additionally, retailers should also take practical and proportionate steps to restrict accessibility and avoid immediate use, to reduce the possibility of injury and to prevent theft.

Iceland is the latest retailer to sign the voluntary agreement, joining Aldi, Amazon UK, Argos, Asda, B&Q, Co-Op, Dunelm, Ebay, Homesense, John Lewis, Lidl, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, TK Maxx, Waitrose and Wilko.

While Rich has welcomed news that more retailers are taking a stand against knife crime, he said the only way to really stop offenders is to 'outright ban the sale of machetes'.

"Although it's a step in the right direction, unfortunately, it's not going to be enough to stop these offenders," he said.

**IN 2022, WEST MIDLANDS POLICE RECORDED 1,894 CRIMES WHERE MACHETES WERE USED - AROUND 160 A MONTH.**

# Chair calls for new approach to tackling violent crime

## RICH COOKE IS CAMPAIGNING FOR MORE TO BE DONE TO HALT KNIFE CRIME

**W**est Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has called for a new approach to tackling violent crime and youth offending after figures showed murder rates were on the rise.

Rich was speaking after new [data from the Office for National Statistics](#) showed 51 homicides were committed in the West Midlands Force area between April 2021 and March 2022. This was compared to 40 in the previous 12 months, a rise of 27.5 per cent.

The homicide rate in the West Midlands over the three-year period to the year ending March 2022 was 15.8 per million population. The figure was higher than the average for England and Wales, which was 10.8 per million population.

Rich said: "It seems like every day we're talking about violence and violent deaths and

every day we're making the same calls to prevent needless deaths so surely it is now time for a different approach.

"I have always been a strong advocate of neighbourhood policing and I think we should be looking at ways of bringing that model up to date.

"If police officers are given adequate time and space they can be much more proactive, build relationships and get to know a community and geographic area intimately well.

"This then feeds engagement and intelligence which will help address prevalence of drug abuse linked to acquisitive crime, gangs and knife crime."

As part of their ongoing #lifeorknife campaign, West Midlands Police have been working closely with local schools, doctors and paramedics to actively encourage children to talk about knife crime with parents, teachers and peers.

The campaign, which is now in its fifth year, highlights the common signs that

**“ WE NEED OFFICERS TO BE ABLE TO USE THEIR STOP AND SEARCH POWERS TO PREVENT VIOLENT CRIMES AND TO GET WEAPONS OFF OUR STREETS.**

indicate when adults might feel it is time to discuss knife crime with young people in their lives.

It also provides information on where people can report or talk to someone about knives and where people can anonymously dispose of them.

Nationally, homicide returned to pre-pandemic levels in the year to March 2022, according to the ONS figures.

There were 696 victims in the last year, 130 more – or a 23 per cent increase – than the year ending March 2021 when Government restrictions meant there was less social contact.

“IT’S NOT JUST A POLICING ISSUE. WE ALL HAVE A DUTY BECAUSE ONE LIFE LOST TO VIOLENCE IS ONE TOO MANY.”

The ONS data also showed:

- The homicide rate over the three-year period to the year ending March 2022 was 39.7 per million population for the black ethnic group, approximately four times higher than for the white ethnic group (8.9 per million population)
- 282 homicides, approximately 4 in 10, were committed using a knife or sharp instrument, a 19 per cent increase compared with the previous year, and the highest annual total since the Home Office’s homicide index began in 1946
- There were 69 homicide victims aged 13 to 19 years. Of these, 51 were killed by a knife or sharp instrument
- There were 134 domestic homicides in the year ending March 2022, 18 more than the previous year, and a similar number to the average over the last decade of 129
- Males accounted for 72 per cent of homicide victims in the latest year, but 93 per cent of convicted suspects.

Rich said: “We need officers to be able to use their stop and search powers to prevent violent crimes and to get weapons off our streets.

“We need the courts to hand down sentences that act as a deterrent. And we need other services – such as the health service and education – to work together because intervention and prevention must be at the heart of our response.

“It’s not just a policing issue. We all have a duty because one life lost to violence is one too many.”

# ‘We are talking about saving young lives’

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers has welcomed Home Secretary Suella Braverman’s commitment to combating soaring knife crime.

Ms Braverman said the Government was looking at legislation targeting the sale of machetes and other types of knives.

Her comments came after the Federation branch chair Rich Cooke called for a ban on the sale of machetes which he said would help cut knife crime across the region.

Tim said: “What we are talking about is saving young lives and that has to be a top priority.

LAST YEAR WEST MIDLANDS POLICE RECORDED 1,894 CRIMES WHERE MACHETES WERE USED - AROUND 160 A MONTH - INCLUDING ROBBERIES, ASSAULTS AND MURDERS.

“We need to tackle knife crime from all angles and banning the sale of these disgusting weapons is an extremely important part of that approach.

“These weapons are specifically designed to kill and maim and are often aimed at a target market of young people. That is totally unacceptable.

“We must do all we can to get them off the streets so I am pleased to hear the Home Secretary and policing minister are seeking solutions that will hopefully work in practice.

“We would fully support any legislative changes to make it harder for these weapons to get in the wrong hands and ultimately reduce knife crime and gang violence across our Force area.”

The West Midlands has the highest rate of knife crime in the country and has seen a



Home Secretary Suella Braverman.

number of fatal stabbings this year.

Last year West Midlands Police recorded 1,894 crimes where machetes were used – around 160 a month – including robberies, assaults and murders.

The sale of so-called zombie knives was banned in 2016 and anyone found in possession faces up to four years in prison if convicted.

But, machetes – including those with serrated edges – can still be sold to anyone aged over 18 and are readily available online and on the high street for as little as £15.

New legislation would make it an offence to sell machetes and or possess such weapons in the home.



# ‘Fundamental’ for stab vests to be properly fitted



## FEDERATION'S HEALTH AND SAFETY LEAD RAISES CONCERNS WITH FORCE

**W**est Midlands Police Federation's health and safety lead is urging members to ensure their stab vests fit properly after he called upon the Force to ensure best practices are followed, as delays to receive the protective equipment continue.

Deano Walker has raised his concerns with the Force, after discovering some departments were lending out stab vests, borrowing from colleagues or wearing ones that have outlived their lawful shelf life.

Worried about the safety of members, Deano says that if officers do find them using pre-worn stab vests, then it is 'fundamental that they are properly fitted'.

"I voiced my concerns with the Force after

hearing that some departments have a pool of stab vests that they lend out each shift - some of which come from retired officers," said Deano.

"While it seems the Force is listening to my calls, the emphasis is now on educating our members on the importance of ensuring their stab vest is properly fitted, if it is a re-used item.

"No one under any circumstance should be wearing a stab vest which isn't properly fitted. Stab vests are measured to fit each individual officer - so if they are not wearing one that fits them correctly, they're not getting the maximum protection they need which could ultimately put them in serious danger."

According to The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations, employers have a duty to ensure that personal protective equipment (PPE) is:

- Properly assessed before use to make sure it is fit for purpose
- Maintained and stored properly
- Provided with instructions on how to use it safely
- Used correctly by workers.

Deano also said that he has also recently witnessed officers wearing stab vests that are more than 10-years-old and in some instances nearer 20.

**“ STAB VESTS SHOULD BE USED FOR 10 YEARS AND NO MORE. AGAIN, TO ENSURE THEY ARE DOING THEIR JOB AND PROTECTING THE OFFICER, THIS RULE NEEDS TO BE FOLLOWED.**

"Stab vests should be used for 10 years, and no more. Again, to ensure they are doing their job and protecting the officer, this rule needs to be followed," added Deano, who explained that some officers are experiencing a wait time of up to six months to get their stab vests due to there being a global shortage of some of the vital materials needed in their design.

"Look, I understand the frustration our officers must be feeling if they're waiting for a stab vest. After all, the majority of our officers want to get out on the streets - that's why they're in the job, right? But just because they're keen to get out, it shouldn't mean they put their lives at risk by wearing ill-fitted protective equipment.

"This issue needs to be taken seriously before one of our officers gets injured or even worse in the line of duty because they're not wearing a stab vest fit for purpose."

Deano's concerns come shortly after Mark



Deano Walker.

Andrews, the health and safety lead at the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), reminded forces of their legal obligations to treat their employees with dignity, consideration and understanding. Mark said: "I continue to be shocked by the information sent to me by Fed reps around the country, detailing the health and safety failings by forces and the risks this presents to our members."

"Since 1998, chief constables have been deemed the employers of police officers. The onus is, therefore, on them to ensure their force complies with HSWA and the Regulations behind it."

"This ranges from not recognising obvious risks leading to a direct threat to life, to the lack of the provision of basic facilities to maintain the dignity of officers seeking toilet breaks or to change sanitary products."

"This is not good enough."

Mark said the Federation is working to remind forces of their legal obligations to treat their employees with dignity, consideration and understanding.

It is calling on forces to ensure:

- **Suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken with reasonably practicable control measures put in place where appropriate**
- **Recognition as to when Generic Risk Assessments need to be updated or changed**
- **Appropriate training**
- **Uniform, equipment and PPE to keep officers secure and comfortable**
- **Working locations where we have facilities to rest, concentrate and take care of our basic human needs**
- **Consideration of our needs when deployed on operational situations.**

Mark said the Police Federation's six-point health and safety wish list was not unreasonable and actually enshrined in law.

He added: "In short, PFEW will hold police forces to account and make sure police employers do better."

# Sacked detective returns to work as ruling is overturned

## FEDERATION WELCOMES SUCCESSFUL APPEAL

West Midlands Police Federation has welcomed the successful appeal of an experienced detective who was dismissed after using his personal mobile phone to help identify a suspect in a murder case.

Detective Constable Paul Knowles, who has been with the Force for 19 years, was sacked for gross misconduct last May after a disciplinary panel ruled he had potentially jeopardised the investigation.

But the decision to dismiss him has been overturned and replaced with a written warning and DC Knowles will now be able to return to work.

Federation branch conduct lead George McDonnell described the appeal panel's ruling as "absolutely the right one".

He said: "This would have been one of the biggest travesties of justice in all the years I've been doing this but thankfully the appeals panel found the original decision to be wrong and overturned it which was absolutely the right thing to do."

"There was never any wrongdoing or misconduct and they have put this officer through immeasurable suffering for three years for no reason."

"And obviously there is also a financial implication for the Force because it will have to reimburse the officer for 10 months from his dismissal to his reinstatement."

George said the original decision to dismiss the DC Knowles centred on his request to a colleague to delete information he had forwarded on his mobile phone which led to allegations of honesty and integrity breaches amounting to gross misconduct.

A second allegation of discreditable conduct was found not proven.

Following his dismissal, DC Knowles took his case to a Police Appeals Tribunal (PAT) with the full backing and financial

support of the Police Federation which funded his legal challenge.

A legally-qualified PAT chair then ruled he had grounds for appeal which led to the second panel ordering the officer's reinstatement and replacing the original sanction with a written warning.

"It appears the original panel concentrated on an allegation of dishonesty that never was. He did what he did for the right reasons," said George.

"The result of this officer using his own initiative was three offenders getting convicted and given lengthy custodial sentences."

"He should have received an acknowledgement around what his decision-making ultimately achieved and that was very much the view on social media and with members of the public at the time."

"Instead, he was dragged through a misconduct process and sacked for gross misconduct."

George said the Force's policy which forbids the use of personal mobile phones except in extreme circumstances must now be reviewed.

"There was never any dishonesty or wrongdoing in this case," he said.

"I think it is accepted that the policy on mobile phones has to be much, much clearer and therefore this should go back to the Force or some organisational learning."

George said the Police Federation stood shoulder-to-shoulder with DC Knowles from the moment the initial allegations against him were made.

He added: "We are here to represent our members. We were happy to fund this appeal and pleased that he has got his job and his livelihood back."

**“ THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE BIGGEST TRAVESTIES OF JUSTICE IN ALL THE YEARS I’VE BEEN DOING THIS BUT THANKFULLY THE APPEALS PANEL FOUND THE ORIGINAL DECISION TO BE WRONG AND OVERTURNED IT WHICH WAS ABSOLUTELY THE RIGHT THING TO DO. THERE WAS NEVER ANY WRONGDOING OR MISCONDUCT AND THEY HAVE PUT THIS OFFICER THROUGH IMMEASURABLE SUFFERING FOR THREE YEARS FOR NO REASON.**

# Officers must have confidence in fair hearings

## BRANCH CONDUCT LEAD RESPONDS TO CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMENTS

**W**est Midlands Police Federation conduct lead Dave Hadley has rejected claims that chief constables should have "the final word" on decisions to sack officers and staff.

Dave warned members could be left exposed to unfair treatment under proposed changes to the disciplinary process and insisted police chiefs already had the necessary powers to remove officers from their forces.

He spoke out after West Midlands Chief Constable Craig Guildford, who is professional standards lead on the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), urged reform.

Mr Guildford said: "We feel that the chief constable as the employer, as the standard-setter, needs to have that final word and that needs to be done expeditiously.

"But this isn't just about making sure that it's easy to dismiss officers at all because each officer and staff member needs a fair hearing and it's important that that is remembered."

Mr Guildford was speaking after Met chief Sir Mark Rowley complained it was "nonsensical" he did not have the power to sack staff and warned his Force has still employed "hundreds of people who shouldn't be here".

But his views drew a strong response from Dave who said members deserved to have confidence in a fair hearing if accused of misconduct.

He said: "I fundamentally disagree with the Chief Constable on this. It should be unpalatable to even consider removing

independence from a process that can lead to dismissal, public disgrace and restricted future employment opportunities simply because that independence has become inconvenient.

"The Home Secretary refers to 'bureaucracy and unnecessary processes' but to those with limited employment rights, they are the essential safeguards of a fair hearing."

Dave insisted regulations enabling chief constables to dismiss officers were already in place and said ensuring Professional Standards Departments (PSD) were fully-functioning and fit-for-purpose should be a top priority.

"I'm getting tired of pointing out that despite what the National Police Chiefs' Council would have everyone believe, chief constables already have a full range of powers under regulations and applicable guidance to 'exit' officers from their forces," he said.

"The answer is to properly staff PSDs and ensure they fairly and expeditiously apply the regulations and hold them to account when they don't.

"Perhaps the chiefs could join the Police Federation in its calls to put time limits on misconduct cases which would then create impetus in PSDs.

"As a profession, we are entitled to expect a fair, transparent, independent process, chaired by National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs (NALQC) members - a process



West Midlands Police Federation conduct lead Dave Hadley.

to which those most affected can have confidence in a fair hearing."

In mid-January, the Home Office announced a review of current disciplinary arrangements for forces, to assess if they were both "effective" and "efficient at removing officers who fall far short of the high standards expected of them".

Under existing procedures, officers and staff accused of the highest-level gross misconduct go before tribunals headed by independent LQCs, which can issue sanctions short of dismissal even if the Force wants the individual sacked.

Chief constables can dismiss officers in limited circumstances, known as the fast-track procedure, such as when officers have already separately been convicted of a serious criminal offence.

Mr Guildford said any final decision on changes to the existing system was ultimately "for the Home Secretary to consider".

Results of the review are expected to be published by the Home Office in the coming weeks.



# ‘Fed reps are an asset to the departments they work in’

## GUIDE HAS BEEN PRODUCED TO HELP MANAGERS

**W**est Midlands Police Federation has produced a guide for line managers whose team includes a workplace representative.

The document aims to ensure managers are fully aware of the Police Federation’s purpose, the responsibilities of the branch’s Fed reps and how much time they need to perform their roles.

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, says: “Fed reps are an asset to the departments they work in and should be seen as such by managers. They are an integral part of the management team and one that can greatly help them in doing their roles looking after staff and ensuring the Force is better able to meet the overwhelming demands it faces.

“Some managers have seen the granting of facilities for workplace reps to carry out their roles as something negative, a bother to them and the wider team. But, in fact, the investment that Fed reps receive by way of training and experience make them an absolute asset for any forward-thinking manager.”

The guide highlights areas such as duty time for Federation meetings, training, the national conference, department and health

and safety meetings, on-call Fed reps and confidentiality.

It also sets out the various areas of legislation designed to protect reps from discrimination or detriment connected to them carrying out their Police Federation commitments.

It says: “Depending on the proportion of duty time spent on Federation activities, it may be prudent to consider them akin to a part-time worker in terms of performance managing their day job.

“The opportunity cost here is offset by the value the Federation role provides to the wider department.”

Previously managers have gained so much from their rep that they have allowed them to do most of their Fed role within the team, in support of their department and the members. In others the reps share out the work but still have a day job.

And the guide for line managers adds: “If you were the officer accused of something or needed support, what would your expectations be of your Federation rep? How available should they be? How well trained should they be? How much influence and representation should they have with senior leaders?”

[Read the guide.](#)

“**THEY ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM AND ONE THAT CAN GREATLY HELP THEM IN DOING THEIR ROLES LOOKING AFTER STAFF AND ENSURING THE FORCE IS BETTER ABLE TO MEET THE OVERWHELMING DEMANDS IT FACES.**”

## Pensions update

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) welcomed the Government’s response to the consultation on the Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience (SCAPE) discount rate, which has resulted in an update to the Police Pension Scheme 1987 commutation factors.

This will directly and positively affect the pension benefits of police officers at the time of retirement by increasing the rate at which pension is converted into a commutation lump sum at retirement.

The new factors were effective from 3 April, and PFEW acknowledged that the revised SCAPE discount rate and subsequent updated factors have come into immediate effect, without providing stakeholders with advance notice so they could make members aware.

While the Government has not allowed for the updated factors to be implemented with retrospective effect, members who are planning an imminent retirement (or retired on or after 3 April) are advised to contact their pension administrator for further clarification and assistance.

Find more information about the [SCAPE discount rate methodology consultation](#).  
[Read the Chief Secretary to the Treasury John Glen’s statement.](#)

## Your chance to win £1,000

West Midlands Police Federation members could win £1,000 in Police Mutual’s FREE Spring into Summer prize draw.

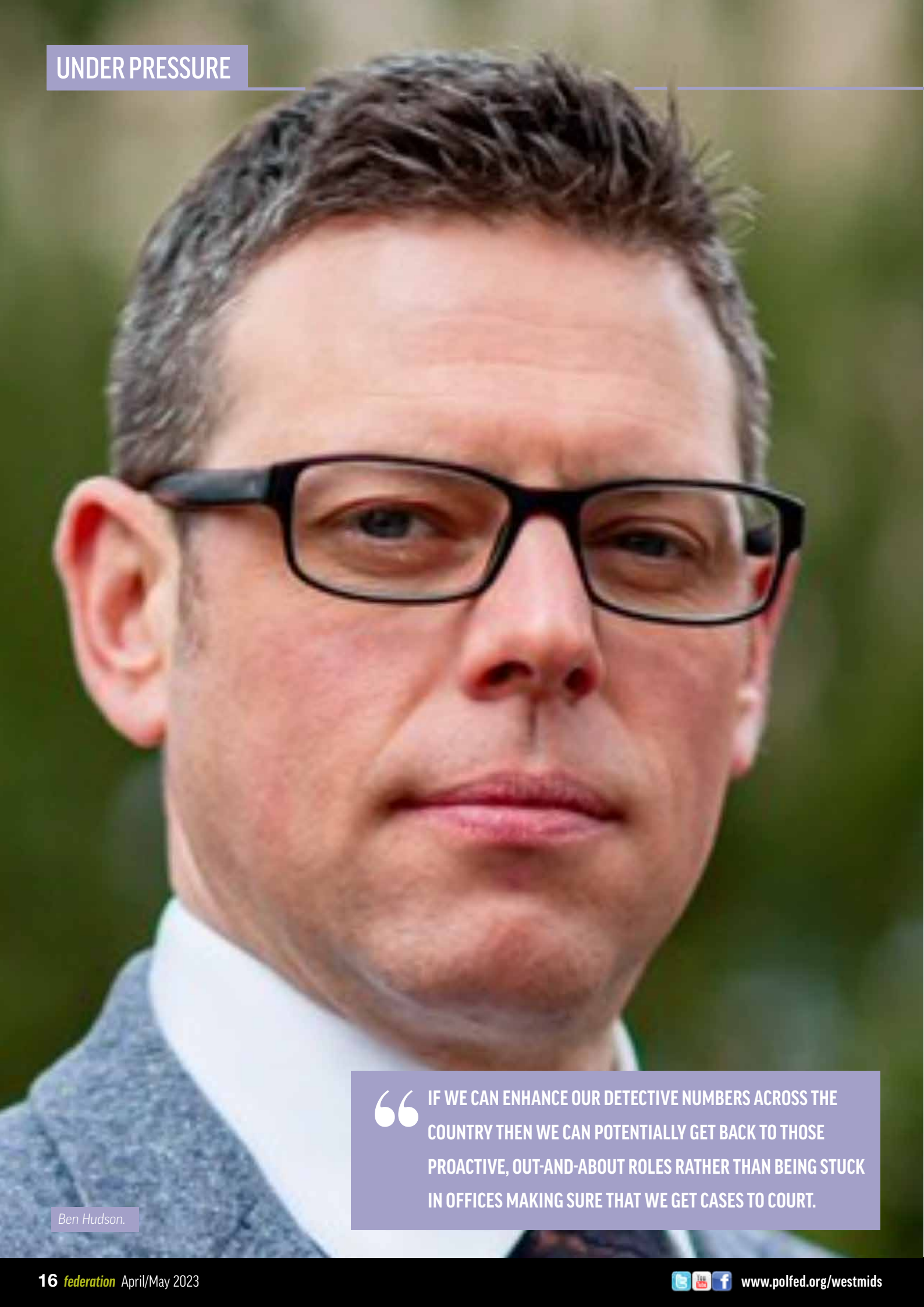
There are also two Samsung Galaxy S23/128GB Phantom Black mobile phones to be won.

The free prize draw is being organised by Police Mutual, which offers financial services for serving or retired police officers, staff and their families.

Entries close on 30 June and the winners will be drawn on 3 July.

[Enter the prize draw now.](#)  
[Terms and conditions and eligibility apply.](#)





“ IF WE CAN ENHANCE OUR DETECTIVE NUMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY THEN WE CAN POTENTIALLY GET BACK TO THOSE PROACTIVE, OUT-AND-ABOUT ROLES RATHER THAN BEING STUCK IN OFFICES MAKING SURE THAT WE GET CASES TO COURT.

Ben Hudson.

# Detectives facing the challenge of caseloads and paperwork

## FEDERATION'S DETECTIVES LEAD EXPLAINS THE PRESSURE OFFICERS ARE UNDER

Caseloads and paperwork remain the biggest challenges for detectives, according to the chair of the Police Federation National Detectives' Forum (PFNDF).

Ben Hudson said disclosure rules and the process of getting files to the Crown Prosecution Service left officers bogged down with administrative tasks.

Speaking on TalkTV as part of the channel's Police Week, he said: "Detective workloads are huge and there are competing demands.

"Detectives are predominantly in the office or out and about making inquiries but are also carrying huge caseloads for cases which could go on for six or eight months or sometimes take more than a year to investigate."

He said disclosure rules and data protection guidelines made their jobs even more difficult.

"The biggest challenges are caseloads and paperwork and the amount of administration needed just to get a simple charge," he said.

"In 2021 new guidance came in from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and that is what we have to abide by in order to put a file in for a charging decision.

"The rules set out by the Attorney General govern what the Director of Public Prosecutions has to issue for the CPS and ultimately it means that, because of the Data Protection Act, we are having to spend far more time sitting at desks across policing in order to redact personal information from the files we hand over.

"So, where we have people on body-worn video that aren't involved in the case, their privacy is at stake so they have to be blocked out.

"If we take someone's phone, which we do in most cases, of all the contacts in that phone and all the people that have contacted them there might only be one person involved in the case and all the others have to be redacted so personal information isn't being shared.

"It's a huge job. Technology can only do so much because we have to look at it and identify it so one of the things I am leading on nationally for the Police Federation is to seek

an amendment to the Data Protection Act to create a 'data bubble' for the police and the CPS."

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, said the issues raised in the interview were all relevant in the Force.

He explained: "From a local perspective, the current restructuring of the Force could bring the potential for officers to be incentivised to take a role in CID.

"We have long struggled to get officers to join FCID with people needing to be uplifted into the void due to a lack of interest in taking on what amounts to extra responsibility but with a pay cut."

Ben, who is the Suffolk Police Federation secretary, said there was a national shortfall in detective numbers and that uniformed colleagues no longer jumped at the chance of a transfer.

He said: "Becoming a detective requires an additional exam and sometimes that from an educational perspective will put people off.

"But also, to be a detective you are roughly taking a £1,200 pay cut because of the difference in not working nights and the shift allowance you get for that as a uniformed cop.

"One of the things we are looking to address nationally is pay parity so we can try to ensure we can keep people interested in becoming a detective.

"There are not enough detectives across the country. We can't attract people to move from their uniformed roles into detective jobs but what we have been able to do really successfully is attract new people into policing and I think we should be really proud of the way we have been able to attract people who didn't necessarily want to wear a uniform into policing so they can serve the community, help victims and do a jobs that they really enjoy as a detective."

Ben said his role as chair of the (PFNDF) was to represent and enhance the role of the detective which he felt had become under-appreciated.

He said: "We are working with the National

Police Chiefs' Council, Deputy Chief Constable Jason Hogg at Thames Valley Police is doing some fantastic work around the investigative resilience plan, really trying to enhance the role of detectives in areas such as pay parity, wellbeing and continual professional development.

"I think over the last 10 years the role of detectives has been somewhat undervalued within policing. The public quite rightly expect boots on the ground and want to see visible policing but being in jeans and a t-shirt or a suit isn't visible policing so it's been undermined in the sense that the work has been devalued.

"Colleagues just don't want to be detectives and my job is to sing the praises of detectives nationally and encourage colleagues to become detectives.

"If we can enhance our detective numbers across the country then we can potentially get back to those proactive, out-and-about roles rather than being stuck in offices making sure that we get cases to court."

National Federation chair Steve Hartshorn said it was important for detectives to be allowed to get on with their jobs.

He said: "If you want experienced investigators to do their job properly they need somewhere to work from, they need the right kit and they need the right training so while it's nice to see boots on the ground in the uniformed sense, it's really important that our experienced detective colleagues have the time and the space to do the job properly.

"When you look at the cuts we have had in officer numbers, it's made it more difficult to do that because they are carrying far higher caseloads than they ever have and some of the recent changes in disclosure rules have impacted on their ability to get those case files prepared properly and quickly enough to get decisions from the Crown Prosecution Service.

"There is not just a single fix that will make it easier, there's a whole culmination of events that have led to it becoming a very pressured job."



# ‘An amazing, inspirational and genuine lady’

**W**est Midlands Police Federation deputy chair Sam Hughes died on 15 March. She was 53.

Sam, who joined the Force in 2003, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017 and on returning to work the following year worked in PPU at West Bromwich within the review and allocation team.

But, with typical selflessness, she was keen to help others and in 2020 she became a Federation workplace representative with a determination to use her own experiences of working in domestic abuse, response, neighbourhood roles and public order situations, to support colleagues with the issues and demands they were facing.

Sam also wanted to share the highs and

lows of returning to work after her treatment to help others in similar situations, putting together a booklet of tips and advice for anyone diagnosed with a serious illness which was circulated around the Force and promoted nationwide.

She became deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation in December 2021 and was intent on developing the branch’s wellbeing support, particularly in relation to mental health which she could see was becoming a major issue.

Sadly, she was only a short time into her new role, when she was given a further cancer diagnosis.

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation led tributes to Sam saying:



*Sam during her treatment.*

“Sam was an amazing, inspirational and genuine lady. She came into the Federation role with a firm desire to use her own experiences to help others. Sam always thought of everyone else.

“It is heartbreaking that her life has been cut short. She will be sorely missed and our thoughts are with her husband, Shaun, her two children, wider family, friends and colleagues.”

“**SAM WAS AN AMAZING, INSPIRATIONAL AND GENUINE LADY. SHE CAME INTO THE FEDERATION ROLE WITH A FIRM DESIRE TO USE HER OWN EXPERIENCES TO HELP OTHERS.**”

# ‘Sam always thought of everyone else’

**Sam Hughes joined the Force in 2003 and was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017.**

On returning to work the following year worked in PPU at West Bromwich within the review and allocation team.

She was always keen to help others and in 2020 became a Federation workplace representative keen to draw on her own experiences of working in domestic abuse, response, neighbourhood roles and public order situations, to support colleagues with the issues and demands they were facing.

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, commented: “Sam was an amazing, inspirational and genuine lady. She came into the Federation role with a firm desire to use her own experiences to help others. Sam always thought of everyone else.

“It is heartbreaking that her life has been cut short. She will be sorely missed and our thoughts are with her husband, Shaun, her two children, wider family, friends and colleagues.



*Sam (second from left) enjoying her policing duties.*

“Having spent time with her family, seeing the turn-out for her funeral service and reading the messages posted in the book of

condolence, all the thoughts and feelings expressed for her were so true, and then some.”

# Sam's story

**"So much of what the Force put in place for me has been very, very good," Sam explained when talking about why she wanted to produce a booklet to help others cope with a critical illness diagnosis.**

"But there were still some areas where things could have been done better. When I came back I reached out to Pauline McGuire, the HR manager, to see if I could help shape Force policies.

"My phased return, for example, was really well managed and I got excellent support through Red Arc, the counselling service available to all members of the Federation's Group Insurance Scheme. The nurse I spoke to at Red Arc was absolutely superb, she was calming, understood what I was going through and was available at any time of the day to listen, understand and offer support.

"But, on the other side of the coin, I found myself scrambling around trying to get information in terms of the various organisations that could offer help and support. It would have been better if there was some kind of 'tick list', summing up everything for me. It's hard to go through various websites and paperwork when you are unwell and focussing on your treatment and getting better.

"I am sure many other officers are the same but you have deductions taken from your pay each month for things you have signed up for but when it came to it I was not really sure what I had access to and what I didn't.

"I would also like to see a mentor programme put in place so that people can speak to someone who may not have medical training but can be a source of support and encouragement."

Sam also wanted to encourage colleagues not to shy away from speaking to someone who has a cancer diagnosis.

"I found it really upsetting that so many people just couldn't bring themselves to talk to me when they heard I had cancer," she says, "Some would say they couldn't handle it but I had no choice. Some people won't even say the word cancer, as if they are going to contract it just from saying it."

Despite the odd disappointment at people's

lack of understanding, Sam said, on the whole, she had great support. Tom Payne, her sergeant at the time of her initial treatment, was very supportive, arranging for someone different to attend each of Sam's chemotherapy sessions with her.

"It was amazing, as bizarre as it sounds, we would turn it into a bit of an 'outing', sometimes having cakes or other treats. It also served to give colleagues a sense of what I was going through and show them that you can come out of the other end," Sam explained.

On returning to work, she also had support from Inspector Nikki Everson.

Sam was a relatively late joiner to the police service. Having tried her hand as a swimming teacher, a retail floor manager, a mortgage adviser and a mortgage underwriter, she knew she wanted to do something



*A pair of Jimmy Choo's Sam was treated to after her diagnosis.*

different and, in her early 30s, with her children aged around 10 and five, decided it was now or never.

Despite having no family ties to the police service, she decided to apply to join the Force and after about two years made her way in.

Due to having lymphedema as a result of having her lymph nodes removed as part of her treatment, Sam could no longer carry out full policing duties which she found frustrating as she felt it was another thing the cancer had taken away from her.

Her family history – her Nan and an aunt both had cancer – had made her more aware of the need to keep on top of everything in terms of health checks and self-awareness but in May 2017, just four months after having a mammogram, Sam had found a lump in her right breast.

Within two weeks, after a biopsy, breast cancer had been diagnosed and she had a mastectomy. She went back into surgery when her lymph nodes needed to be removed and had a series of further operations.

Throughout she was supported by her two children, who she said were massively affected by her illness, and she also found a surprising source of strength in her ex-husband, Shaun. The couple had been divorced for around four and a half years at the time of her diagnosis, but her ex stepped up to the plate and they got back together.

"He has been my rock. It has been a blessing; something like this makes you realise what's important and who's there for you. There are people who avoid you like the plague and then there are those who surprise you with their kindness," she explained.

"I had my long hair cut shorter during my treatment but then it started to really fall out so I shaved it off and my best friend, PC Jam Ismail, came with me to wig shops and we treated it like a dressing up session. It was hard losing my eyebrows and eyelashes and I just didn't feel very much like a woman and then, of course, you are living this life of CT scans, bone scans, operations, the chemo, then 15 rounds of radiotherapy and you are drained but also wondering if you are going to survive."

She was also touched by the efforts of her colleagues DC Katie Hughes and DC Marie Carmichael who set up a Just Giving page for Sam after she joked when diagnosed that she didn't want flowers but a pair of Jimmy Choo shoes. They got her the shoes!

Read Sam's booklet, [The Dreaded C-Word](#).

## Church packed for funeral

Mourners filled St Chad's Church in Coseley for Sam Hughes' funeral service.

Sam's coffin was carried into the church by West Midlands Police officers Patrick McBrearty (a Federation workplace representative), former West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott, Andrew Hollies, Paul Turner, John Tranter and

Federation deputy secretary Chris James.

Both Sam's daughter, Stephannie, and former Federation equality lead Cliff Tomkinson, read moving eulogies, reflecting on her life.

The service ended with a recording of Sam's younger granddaughter, Emmie, singing 'Wonderful World'.

## Force tributes

The Force set up an online book of condolence when Sam died.

These are just a selection of the many tributes posted.

*To put it simply, Sam was a truly lovely woman. Always smiling and sweet. Nothing but supportive, and so easy to talk to. She will be missed by all those who knew her. My thoughts and sincere condolences to her close friends and family at this time. Rest easy, Sam x*  
**Chris Bolton**

*I have known Sam for pretty much all my 20 years' service. I was diagnosed with cancer in 2016 so I supported Sam through hers and she supported me. Making me laugh going for coffee rocking her bald head whilst I hid under wigs. She was always kind visiting me recently and never moaning. I spoke to her last Friday and we arranged to meet Tuesday, she was so upbeat it's come as a complete shock. I will say her name every day and laugh at all the times we spent together. She was a super hero helping others through cancer and becoming a Fed rep. RIP Sam, I will miss you every day.*  
**Sara Burgess**

*In the short time I knew her, I found her to be a very caring and empathetic lady who wanted more than anything to put other people first. She was positive and determined to give her all. I know she will be hugely missed.*  
**Peggy Lamont**

*Sam Hughes... what a woman! One of the strongest, most amazing women I ever had the pleasure of knowing.*  
*The strength of this woman, not only during her illness, but before too. She was a little pocket rocket and more fool you if you dared to go up against her!*  
*An absolute powerhouse of a woman who will be missed beyond words by everyone.*  
*Rest in peace beautiful. xXx*  
**Sophie Giles**

*With a heavy heart I am writing this... Sam, My love... There is so much to say and not enough space here... My very first posting was on C Unit, Wednesbury many years ago, this is when our beautiful friendship began. We worked hard and played hard and really loved policing. We have maintained that strong bond throughout our careers in policing and, as all officers know, it is difficult, juggling shifts and family and life... we did it. We always knew that we had an extra special relationship and so did everyone else. Where Sam was Jam was always close by and vice versa. Life has been so hard for you, girl and you had that burning desire to live and I know you were holding on and fighting for your family and mine. The love that we have shared cannot be replaced or replicated. We have cried and laughed together and hugged lots. Only I could get away with telling you off as, like you said, I was always right. Very hot-headed and*

*Nothing but praise expressed for Sam and her work. A huge loss to colleagues in the Fed and beyond. On behalf of the AMP, thoughts and prayers with you all and her loved ones in these testing times.*  
**Emad Choudhury, chair - WM Association of Muslim Police**

*Absolutely heartbroken to hear this sad news. I had the pleasure of supervising Sam on her return to work. I was constantly astounded at Sam's drive and energy despite the debilitating side effects of the treatment she was continuing to undergo. Sam's candid approach to what she had been through and desire to help others was and still is inspiring. Sam you will be sorely missed.*  
**Niki Everson**

*I had the absolute privilege of working with Sam for the last couple of years, prior to her moving to her new role. She made me laugh so much and was a constant inspiration to make the most of every single day you are blessed with. She was one in a million. My thoughts are with her family and grandkids, who I know she adored x*  
**Nicole Leigh**

*stubborn and loyal and just so very kind. There was nothing complicated about our friendship, we just loved each other... simple and very easy.*

*As soon as your beautiful light went out I knew my life would never be the same without you, Sam.*

*My heart is broken into many pieces. I cannot express how much I will so miss you being in my life, the chats, dancing in a nightclub, face-timing, the cuddles you gave the hooligans, the laughs... just you Sam, just us.*

*You remain in my heart forever. You are going to get the best send off ever... trust me girl... you would be so thrilled with all the fuss, it's all about you.*

*Stand down PC 9187 Sam Hughes...Your TOD is completed.*

*Friends until the end... as I had always promised you. Rest your weary eyes my best girl... love you always... xxx*  
**Jam PC 1399 Ismail**

*I had the pleasure of working with Sam many years ago, she would make me absolutely howl, always cheer me up and always make me smile. Never a dull moment and would stand up for what she believed in! Beautiful, kind and caring woman. You will be missed so much by so many. Xxx*  
**Emma Parker**

*Sam was an awesome person and I will miss her immensely. I have known her, her whole career and been fortunate to work with her on K1 and on Brum City Centre. She always put other people first and I think her role within the Fed showed this - always wanting to help other cops despite her own health problems. She will be very sorely missed.*  
**Andy Hollies**



Sam,  
Two running themes within the messages here are what a nice you person you were whilst possessing great strength, I could not agree with this more.

An example of this, which immediately sprung to mind was when you first started to lose your hair and we were arranging to meet, your only concern was that it would be upsetting for me!

You were without doubt one of those rare people who had the emotional intelligence and capacity to be both extremely kind and formidable when required.

All those who have known you are richer for having had you in their lives, I feel very sad whilst also privileged to have been able to call you a friend and a colleague.

Pat xx

Sam brought light into everyone's lives who met and worked with her. Words cannot express my sadness at her passing. She always lent a shoulder to cry on and despite her own health issues always had time for others throughout her struggle. I will miss you Sam but it's time to stand down, your shift has ended and we've got this from here. Rest in eternal peace. My prayers go out to all family and friends.

Stewart Bladen

Sam, you really were something quite unique within my experience of both policing and humanity. Giving me hope and inspiration, with your fresh selfless approach, the way you treated people and work, something that restored faith in both.

Even in your darkest times you always found the strength to dismiss your own issues, giving what you had left to make others' troubles more tolerable. You're missed at work for sure and I miss your genuine and useful counsel. What a remarkable lady you were.

Tim Rogers



# New policing model better for the public

## CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT AFTER MAJOR OVERHAUL OF NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING MODEL

**W**est Midlands Police Federation said it was fully behind the new policing model introduced across the Force during April.

The changes include a major overhaul of neighbourhood policing with local commanders being given better resources to make officers more visible in their communities.

Jason Dooley, the branch's full-time lead on the Force's ongoing change programme, said members welcomed the return to a well-established and successful system of policing.

"Back in 2012 there were massive changes because of cuts to the policing budget which essentially meant introducing a model that was cheaper to run," he said.

"This created separate centralised hubs for investigation, neighbourhood policing and response – but over the years it has led to officers becoming deskilled and neighbourhood teams getting smaller and smaller.

**“ WE ARE GOING TO BE MORE VISIBLE, WE ARE GOING TO BE ENGAGING MORE WITH THE PUBLIC AND WE ARE GOING TO START TALKING WITH OUR PARTNERS AGAIN. IT WILL BE MUCH BETTER FOR THE PUBLIC. ”**



Jason Dooley.

"Public trust and confidence in the service has been damaged as a result and we need to try to win that back."

Jason said the improved relations between the police and the communities they serve helped reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

He said: "The new Chief Constable Craig Guildford is now implementing a policing model which is not so much re-inventing the wheel but returning to a long-established, tried and tested method of policing which, frankly, we should never have moved away from in the first place.

"We are going to be more visible, we are going to be engaging more with the public and we are going to start talking with our partners again. It will be much better for the public.

"We are all behind this. I'm sure there are going to be a few bumps along the way but things had to change. We have to change to get better."



Under the new policing model, each of the Force's seven areas will be led by its own chief superintendent commander, with response and investigation teams based at the same local hubs as neighbourhood officers.

The Force said the new policing model was designed to increase neighbourhood presence to really understand local issues and work with communities to tackle them.

Response officers will be more community based while local investigation teams have been told to focus on areas such as burglary, robbery, vehicle crime and

domestic abuse to deliver better outcomes.

Mr Guildford said: "When I joined West Midlands Police in December last year I said I wanted us to be recognised as a police service that is big enough to cope with everything that is asked of us, while showing we are small enough to care about the things that really matter to our communities.

"The new local policing model will help us to get better at solving local issues and preventing and solving crime by working in partnership with communities to deliver justice and keep people safe across the West Midlands."

# Taking the lead on change programme

Jason Dooley has spoken about his appointment as West Midlands Police Federation's full-time lead on the Force's change programme.

Jason, a detective sergeant who has been a workplace rep for a year, will draw on his 27 years' experience in the police as he liaises between the Federation and the Force as it seeks to improve the service it delivers.

He said: "The new Chief Constable has realised that the way we policed in 2010 and 2012 has changed completely and that lots of issues need addressing. He accepts that change has got to happen.

"The costs of implementing these changes is an issue because the money the police service gets from the Government is less and less each year so he is trying to make it more streamlined but better for the public, victims and offenders."

Jason joined the police in July 1995 and has held a wide range of roles on response, operational support unit and drugs and traffic. Until recently he was a detective sergeant at VVA, West Bromwich.

The experience and knowledge he has picked up over almost three decades with the Force will be invaluable as the change programme is implemented.

"In this new role I can go to the meetings and give an insight into what things can be done and what things can't be done," he said.

"There were big changes in 2010 and then again in 2012 when cuts were made. The Police Federation at the time said 'cuts have consequences' but we were ignored and we have reached the situation we are now in.

"Craig Guildford has come in as Chief Constable with new ideas and the Force is quite receptive to change because it knows we

are not delivering a good service at the minute.

"I totally agreed with Mr Guildford when he said we were very good at big things like the Commonwealth Games and major incidents but not so good at the little things where a resident might complain about anti-social behaviour in their street.

**“ THE NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE HAS REALISED THAT THE WAY WE POLICED IN 2010 AND 2012 HAS CHANGED COMPLETELY AND THAT LOTS OF ISSUES NEED ADDRESSING.**

"I think neighbourhood policing is coming back to the forefront because it's what is needed and what has been needed for years and that is the sort of change we are driving."

Branch chair Rich Cooke said: "The change programme is the biggest project in years and input and support from the Police Federation is crucial.

"It is essential that we have someone working full-time on the change programme to help ensure it is delivered in the way the new Chief Constable would want.

"And make no mistake, there are some big challenges ahead.

"The pace of change is a worry and there are serious infrastructure issues - the Police Uplift Programme has addressed the officer side of the 25 per cent cuts to policing but there has been no investment in buildings, support structure or back office operations."

## Planning maternity leave? Federation publishes new guide



Members who are planning to take maternity leave can find out their entitlements via a new calculator developed by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

The ready reckoner and a new advice booklet can provide information on what to expect during your pregnancy, while on maternity leave and when you return to work. There are also a range of entitlements available to partners that are worth reading up on.

Jon Nott, personnel lead for West Midlands Police Federation, explained: "There are differences around maternity rules for police officers compared to other public services. Officers are eligible for both Police Maternity Pay and Statutory Maternity Pay but not statutory maternity leave, only police maternity leave.

"There have been numerous examples of forces getting it wrong and members not receiving their full entitlement of pay and time off, so I would really encourage anyone who is expecting a baby, or the partner of a pregnant officer, to make use of the calculator.

"You can also play around with different dates to see what would happen if you need to take early leave or an extended leave. And of course, your Federation rep or the branch officials are here if you need any further help or advice."

[Read the guide and use the maternity calculator.](#)

## Free mortgage advice

West Midlands Police Federation members thinking of getting on the property ladder or re-mortgaging their homes can get free advice at one of a series of mortgage surgeries.

Warren & Co Mortgages, which has more than 20 years of mortgage experience, is holding advice drop-ins throughout the year.

[The full list of surgery dates.](#)



# Fed chair praises Specials

## THE FEDERATION RECOGNISES THE CONTRIBUTION MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY MAKE TO POLICING

It takes a special person to become a Special Constable, says West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke as he praised their contribution to policing.

Rich said Specials played a vital role in policing and brought a wealth of skills and experience to the Force.

He said: "Our Specials are an important part of the Force and provide an invaluable service to the people of the West Midlands.

"They come from all backgrounds and provide a vital link between communities and the police.

"They serve alongside regular officers, have the same powers as officers, and face the same threats as officers – all as a volunteer on their own time.

"It takes a special person to become a Special.

"And it's great that we're now able to

welcome them into the Federation, and offer the same level of support that regular officers are able to enjoy. It's like we can give them something back," he added.

Rich's comments echo those of Federation Welsh affairs and Specials lead Nicky Ryan, who described them as an "amazing asset" to policing and said the key roles they play should be properly acknowledged.

Speaking on TalkTV as part of the channel's Police Week, Nicky said she did not feel the value of Specials was always fully appreciated.



Expert Hand. Human Touch.



Protect what matters most

### The Birmingham family law team are leading experts in police divorce, finances and children matters.

As experts in this area, we understand the specific pressures and concerns that you may be facing. We have a wealth of knowledge dealing with a variety of police matters to include pensions as part of financial proceedings, and the impact of shift patterns on child arrangement disputes.

As a member of the West Midlands Police Federation our leading experts in police divorce, finances and children matters can offer:

- A free initial consultation
- Fixed fee divorce service
- 10% discount on all fees
- Price certainty options.

#### Our experts

To speak to a specialist member of our team, please call Lucy, Mark or Clare for an initial chat:

Lucy Todd

+44 (0)7592 121 001

Clare Wiseman

+44 (0)7525 911 737

Mark Hands

+44 (0)7712 428 748

[irwinmitchell.com](http://irwinmitchell.com)



Federation Welsh affairs and Specials lead Nicky Ryan.

Nicky said: "We need to acknowledge that day in, day out there are Special Constables up and down the country that are carrying out frontline duties, detective roles, fighting cybercrime, roads policing - they cover the whole range of duties.

"The skills that policing gets from them can't be quantified. They are an amazing asset. We have career Specials with 25 or 30 years' service and they have so much knowledge and experience."

Nicky said some people joined the Special



“ SPECIAL CONSTABLES CAN, AND DO, PERFORM MOST OF THE SAME DUTIES AS THEIR PAID COLLEAGUES.

THEY WEAR THE SAME UNIFORM, THEY HAVE THE SAME POLICING POWERS AND THEY ARE EXPECTED TO PERFORM TO THE SAME HIGH STANDARDS - PERFORMANCE WISE AND ETHICS WISE - AS PAID OFFICERS. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THEY ARE VOLUNTEERS.

Constabulary as a route into a career in policing while others chose to sign up because they wanted to serve their community.

She said several current chief constables and senior officers had begun their policing careers as Specials.

“We have 7,401 Special Constables in England and Wales and last year they volunteered more than 2.5 million hours to policing which equates to just over £61.5 million,” Nicky explained.

“Special Constables can, and do, perform most of the same duties as their paid colleagues.

“They wear the same uniform, they have the same policing powers and they are expected to perform to the same high standards - performance wise and ethics wise - as paid officers. The only difference is they are volunteers.”

Nicky said Specials were not paid but were reimbursed for any expenses and often volunteered through a strong sense of community and commitment.

“We have all sorts of people, airline pilots, young mums, students - we have a whole range of people from different backgrounds,” she said.

“People do it for a variety of different reasons and we get to utilise their skills and they learn new skills from policing.

“There are all sorts of areas of policing that are opening up to Specials because we now acknowledge the skills and depth of experience that they have.

“We have people from the banking sector, people from the cyber world with a range of skills that far surpasses what we have in policing.”

The Special Constabulary dates as far back as 1831 but Specials were only allowed to join the Police Federation in July.





# Force 'frontrunners' in policing with drones



**A** chief drone pilot with the Force says he is 'proud to have been part of such a big legacy' as he reflects on a career that has helped to shape the future of policing.

In 2019, 23 years into service, PS Keith Bennett was asked if he wanted to be part of a pioneering drone project at West Midlands Police, as part of a wider initiative which involved forces looking into alternatives to helicopters.

Four years on and recent statistics show that last year, the West Midlands Drone Department completed more than 5,000 flights, clocking up a total of 1177 hours in 12 months.

"The West Midlands Force has undoubtedly been frontrunners in the work the police do with drones," explained Keith, who now manages 44 pilots and aircraft.

"In 2019, West Midlands made a brave move when it decided to offer 24/7 drone support - in fact, we might still be the only Force that does this.

"When it comes to drones supporting the police, West Midlands are driving the bus and I'm so proud to have been part of this legacy. It's amazing to think that I was there at the beginning when our work with drones started."

Keith, who had no experience with drones before he joined the team in 2019, had spent the majority of his former career in the police working in the dog unit.

"My passion was always working with police dogs," Keith continued, "But when I saw what drones can offer and the potential they have, my passion switched.

"I absolutely love working with drones but if you'd told me 29 years ago that I'd be flying these small planes, catching offenders and saving people using them, I wouldn't have believed you. Back then, the idea of drones seemed like science fiction - even 10 years ago, drones weren't really anything.

"We've come on an amazing journey and it isn't over yet, drones have so much more to offer. West Midlands Police made a brave decision back then, and it's certainly paying off now."

While Keith explained how drones are definitely helping to shape the future of policing, he was quick to point out that they are by no means replacing helicopters.

"The work we do with drones supports that of the helicopters," he said, "I like to think drones and helicopters working in harmony with one another.

"There are some things that helicopters cannot do, that drones can - and vice versa. For example, drones are a very cost-effective solution and can search a square mile in the air, in just 12 minutes, night or day. However, they can't currently operate beyond the line of sight of the pilot, so at the moment, we can't work on the likes of vehicle pursuits, for



example.

"There are definitely still things that helicopters are the ideal tool for in policing."

From locating drug factories using thermal technology to catching offenders who try to escape the hands of officers, drones are constantly supporting the Force with a range of incidents on a daily basis.

**“ WE’VE COME ON AN AMAZING JOURNEY AND IT ISN’T OVER YET, DRONES HAVE SO MUCH MORE TO OFFER. WEST MIDLANDS POLICE MADE A BRAVE DECISION BACK THEN, AND IT’S CERTAINLY PAYING OFF NOW. ”**

"We can even live-stream footage from big events, like football matches or protests, using video recording technology, which helps staff in the control room make more effective, informed decisions, as and when they need to," added Keith, whose work also involves educating amateur drone pilots around flying regulations.

"Drones are also helping to bridge the gap between the police and community. Our team has more than 18,000 followers on Twitter, which is a demonstration of how the public has accepted the work we do.

"We also work with schools and at local community events, to showcase our drones. OK, they might not be as friendly as when we take puppies - our future police dogs - in, but

they certainly generate interest and engagement from younger generations - something we know can be really difficult."

Most recently, the West Midlands Drone Department was recognised by the International Emergency Drone Organisation (IEDO), winning Best Drone Response to a Search and Rescue Operation.

The award comes after the team helped to rescue two lost females who had no signal on their phones and were stranded in ankle-deep mud in Sutton Park, a 2,400-acre nature reserve.

"As the night was getting darker, the two women had been identified as vulnerable," explained Keith, who is heading into his 30th year in service.

"Using the drone, we were able to find them. It seems like such a small thing, but essentially, that could've been a really life-threatening situation.

"It's events like that which are really rewarding. There are so many examples of when my team have helped find vulnerable people or catch offenders, and that makes me immensely proud.

"On a daily basis, we continue to help those who need us. We help to save lives and sometimes, you wonder how different the outcome would've been without drones being involved."

The team are also set to feature in an up-and-coming six-episode series, which will give viewers a fly-on-the-wall insight into West Midlands Drone Department.

The series, which followed the team for nine weeks, will be broadcast on Channel 4 later this year.



**POLICE INSURE**

part of the **A-plan** Group

# SPECIALLY DISCOUNTED CAR, HOME & MOTORCYCLE INSURANCE

For all serving and retired Police Officers,  
Police staff and families



**Contact us today for  
a free, no obligation quote.**

**0162 762 4416**  
[www.policeinsure.co.uk](http://www.policeinsure.co.uk)

# Discounted insurance for all the police family

Police Insure provides specially discounted insurance for all serving and retired police officers, police staff, members of the Special Constabulary and police support volunteers as well as their partners and families.

Originally based in Bury with the famous Robert Peel statue situated just across the square, Police Insure has been a growing presence in the insurance business for more than 15 years specialising in offering highly competitive rates for all the main insurance products – car, motorcycle, home and landlord – regularly providing policy holders with substantial savings as well as excellent service.

Now, having become part of the A-plan Group in December 2022, Police Insure has access to an expanding team of staff dedicated to continuing to provide the best personal service and savings to both new and existing clients.

As well as its online presence, Police Insure engages directly with members of the police family “on the ground” in partnership with the local Police Federation teams or through its dedicated phone lines (**0161 762 4416**) into six “hub” A-plan offices across the country so you can immediately speak to a member of the company’s experienced, helpful and knowledgeable team.

Police Insure currently engages with more than 40 Police Federations and related associations including here in the West Midlands and, to develop and sustain those relationships, has a network of regional business development managers (BDMs - it just wouldn’t be the same without a TLA) who are all retired police officers themselves.

Currently, there are an increasing number of the West Midlands Police family who are enjoying the personal service, confidence and particularly savings that Police Insure has to offer, which is especially important in the current challenging financial climate, and it is looking to ensure that as many colleagues and families have the same opportunity to enjoy those benefits in the future.

More information on Police Insure products and services can be obtained by calling **0161 762 4416**, by visiting [www.policeinsure.co.uk](http://www.policeinsure.co.uk) or by emailing your BDM, Martin Barber, at [martin.barber@aplan.co.uk](mailto:martin.barber@aplan.co.uk)

# More support for injured officers

**P**lans to create a new service offering support, help and advice to injured police officers have taken another step forward after a successful second virtual focus group meeting.

Wounded Blue Line will be a one-stop shop which provides injured frontline workers with vital information and guidance on issues such as benefit entitlement, what they can claim while off work, what help is available to them and how it can be accessed.



The project is being spearheaded by Police Federation national wellbeing lead Belinda Goodwin and her Staffordshire branch colleague Claire Bond who hosted the latest online event.

They want the network to become a safe environment for injured officers and their families to talk openly about their own experiences, setbacks and goals so invited guest speakers to share their stories.

Former Staffordshire Police officer Mark Calladine described the impact two road traffic accidents in 2017 had on him and his family. He has since retired on health grounds.

He said he was offered support by his Force after the accidents but felt much more could be done to help family members who



National wellbeing lead Belinda Goodwin.

are often badly affected when an officer is involved in a life-changing trauma.

Belinda said: “We want Wounded Blue Line to fill that gap with local champions taking up a sort of family liaison officer role to offer help and support the loved ones of members involved in accidents.”

Another speaker, Metropolitan Police officer and mental health first aid trainer Steve McQueenie, talked about his experiences as a survivor of the 2004 tsunami in Thailand and how he came to terms with the traumatic aftermath.

Belinda and Claire said feedback from those who attended was positive but acknowledged it was still early days. They plan to hold further meetings with colleagues who want to get involved with Wounded Blue Line to discuss in greater detail the best ways of moving the project forward.





## BENEVOLENT FUND



# Benevolent Fund's weekend breaks in the Ribble Valley

**A**t the centre of the UK lies the hidden gem that is the Ribble Valley.

With picturesque villages, soul-soothing countryside and warm-hearted inhabitants, it really is a wonderful place to explore.

As a member of West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund, you can enjoy a fantastic weekend away staying as a bed and breakfast guest at St Michael's Lodge.

Why not take advantage of the hospitality of the north and enjoy all their superb facilities including swimming pool, sauna, hot tub, games room and gym at a discounted rate?

**Please note this is separate to the convalescence and rehabilitation benefit we offer our members.**

You can enjoy a two-night break, Friday and Saturday night, staying in the beautiful refurbished rooms. The en suite rooms include a TV and mini fridge.

**OFFER PRICE:**

Superior room £160

Small superior room £140

Standard room £120

Prices are based on two adults sharing, sorry no dogs and include bed, breakfast and full use of St Michael's impressive swimming pool, sauna, gym, outside hot tub and games room as a bed and breakfast guest.

**Members wishing to take children are asked to request a family room at the time of booking. A member of the lodge staff will confirm if family rooms are available for your chosen dates.**

You can book your weekend break online via [our website](http://www.wmpben.co.uk).

### SUMMER EVENTS FOR 2023 IN THE RIBBLE VALLEY, LANCASHIRE

- Friday 28/Saturday 29 April [Ribble Valley Jazz & Blues Festival](#)
- Friday 12/Saturday 13 May [Clitheroe Beer Festival](#)
- Friday 21/Saturday 22 July [Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show](#)
- Friday 11/ Saturday 12 August [Clitheroe Food Festival](#)
- Friday 22/ Saturday 23 September [Ribble Valley Scooter Rally](#)

For more details about your many membership benefits with West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund visit [www.wmpben.co.uk](http://www.wmpben.co.uk)



**West Midlands Police**  
Benevolent Fund  
Charity

# Help and support on hand with free guides

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke is encouraging members to seek help and support if they are suffering with stress.

April is National Stress Awareness Month and aims to raise awareness of stress, open up conversations about its impact, and how people can take steps to reduce stress and protect their mental health.

Rich said: "We've all felt under strain as police officers, and we've seen how the pandemic and now the cost of living crisis have heaped further pressure on people.

"Talking to colleagues and to friends can provide you with support through a stressful period at work or in your private life.

"And often we know our colleagues as well as anyone



and we can see changes in their moods and emotions, or we can tell if they're not coping.

"This National Stress Awareness Month we would encourage officers to look out for each other – and ultimately help colleagues find the right support if they need it."

Police Mutual, which provides financial services and welfare support to the police service, has produced a factsheet for National Stress Awareness Month.

It includes a series of tips to help members manage their stress and worries including breathing exercises, keeping active and writing down your concerns. Other tips include trying mindfulness, talking to others and identifying your triggers.

There are also links to support services and information.

Rich said: "And don't forget that the Federation is always here for those members who need our help or support."

[Download the factsheet.](#)

Police Mutual also produced an information guide for World Health Day, which took place on 7 April.

Organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO), this year's theme was Health For All.

The factsheet includes information on physical health, mental health and financial health, as well as sleep, stress awareness and nutrition.

[Read the free guide.](#)

Meanwhile, a free online guide is now available for West Midlands Police Federation members who want to give up smoking.

It was produced by Police Mutual for March's No Smoking Day – but is available for members all year round.

The guide highlights the short-term and long-term health benefits of quitting, and the financial benefits with an average smoker estimated to save around £2,000 a year by giving up.

It includes practical tips on packing up smoking and signposts to further help and advice.

[Download the no smoking wellbeing guide now.](#)



Working with the Police for over 20 years



- Fee-Free Mortgages & Remortgages
- Independent To Find You The Best Deals
- Over 20 Years Experience
- Friendly, Efficient & Experienced Team

☎ 01452 547783

✉ [contact@warrenifa.co.uk](mailto:contact@warrenifa.co.uk)

[www.warrenifa.co.uk](http://www.warrenifa.co.uk)



**WARREN & CO**  
TRUSTED MORTGAGE ADVISERS



# PTSD AND ITS EFFECT ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

PTSD can widely affect those who work in law enforcement and our expert personal injury lawyers can help those in need

**P**ost-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a delayed and often devastating response to trauma that can provoke behavioural change, suicidal tendencies and recurring distressing memories, nightmares and flashbacks.

Common sounds such as children shouting in the street and sirens blaring can cause terrifying repercussions to those suffering with the disorder.

Once commonly used to describe a condition soldiers developed after being at war, the disorder can now affect anybody who has been exposed to trauma, and that includes those who work in law enforcement. Though dealing with traumatic scenes is somewhat part of the job role, daily views of traumatic scenes with little time to process them can have a lasting impact on the officers.

Close to one in five police officers and staff in the UK have symptoms consistent with PTSD, and with so many officers reporting feelings of stress, fatigue and anxiety, it's up to the police force to ensure that there are support, risk assessments, psychological training and other resources in place to ensure the mental and emotional wellbeing of those in law enforcement are looked after.

However, that isn't always the case, and many officers can be left dealing with PTSD, which can lead to a harrowing effect on their day to day lives.

Did you know that Slater and Gordon handle PTSD cases? Under our personal injury services for Police Federation members, our experts are here to help you take the next steps when it comes to making a personal injury claim, for both physical and mental issues, which includes PTSD claims.

Recently, our head of serious injury, Matthew Tomlinson, handled a landmark case for retired detective, John Cahill, who suffers from PTSD, a result from prolonged exposure to child abuse images.

With no psychological training and risk assessments in place, John has experienced years of unprocessed and untreated trauma, affecting his personality, wellbeing and family life.

After working closely with medical professionals to produce a comprehensive psychiatric report, and a subsequent five-day trial, it was concluded that John should have been screened throughout his time working on the child abuse cases, which would have identified measures to mitigate stress, trauma and harm

caused to John's mental wellbeing.

## How can Slater and Gordon help?

Your personal injury claim will be covered by the Police Federation, and you won't be required to have legal expense insurance. Your claim will not cost you or the Police Federation anything, even if the claim isn't successful; we take all the risk. If your claim is successful, you will retain 100 per cent of the damage we recover on your behalf.

Most lawyers will charge up to 25 per cent of a client's damages if they bring a claim for injuries caused by other people's negligence.

We're specialists in personal injury and ensuring the right amount of compensation for police officers injured on and off duty is awarded.

**To speak to one of our experts in personal injury lawyers, please call 0330 107 6484.**

**Slater  
Gordon**  
Lawyers



**"Now the pressure's gone, I can get back to my police work."**

You never know when you're going to need legal advice. Slater and Gordon have been advising and supporting Police Federation members for more than 60 years, taking the legal stress away and leaving you to focus on keeping people safe.

For all life's legal needs and with offices throughout the UK.

**0808 175 7805**

[slatergordon.co.uk/police-law](https://slatergordon.co.uk/police-law)

**Slater  
Gordon**  
Lawyers

Personal injury - on or off duty | Family law | Employment law  
Police pensions | Trusts, tax and probate | Medical negligence



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS



NARPO is a rank-free association of retired police officers, dedicated to improving benefits for its members.

## NARPO has Branches across West Midlands:- Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.

- **FREE ADVICE** – Pensions, Benefits, Computing, Taxation;
- **MEMBER SERVICES** – Welfare Support, Car, Health and Travel Insurance, Car Purchase, Domestic Appliances, Trusted Legal Advisors, Mobile Phones, Travel Discounts, Job Opportunities + National/Local Websites, National Magazine, Branch Newsletters;
- **SOCIAL EVENTS** – Keep in touch with old friends and colleagues.

Annual membership fee deducted from pension:- £20.64 in 2018.

### ARE YOU RETIRING SOON?

Join on-line [www.NARPO.org](http://www.NARPO.org), or for more information, contact the secretary of your preferred Branch:-

**Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall:-  
Wolverhampton:-**

[www.NARPOWestMidlands.org](http://www.NARPOWestMidlands.org)  
[www.NARPO-Wolverhampton.co.uk](http://www.NARPO-Wolverhampton.co.uk)

First Call  
financial

## Need a Mortgage?

Make us your first call...

- Residential Mortgages
- Protection
- General Insurance
- Buy to let
- Advice on Key worker and New Buy schemes

AVAILABLE  
EVERY DAY  
AT POLICE  
STATIONS ACROSS  
THE FORCE

### Take advantage of our **FREE** No Obligation Mortgage Review

Simply call me to arrange a home, or station, visit. Alternatively pop in to see me, I am available between 10am and 4pm **EVERY DAY** at police stations across the force.

**Our service is open to all Police Officers and Civilian Staff.**

We normally charge a fee for mortgage advice with a typical fee being £200. However for anyone responding to this promotion (website and poster) we will not charge a fee. The Financial Conduct Authority does not regulate most Buy to Let mortgages.

Contact **Louise Norton** CeMap **M: 07968 317 671**  
Independent Mortgage Adviser **E: [louisenorton@hotmail.com](mailto:louisenorton@hotmail.com)**

LIKE US   
on Facebook First  
Call Financial (Leics)



**YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE.**

First Call Financial (Leics) Ltd is an Appointed Representative of PRIMIS Mortgage Network which is a trading name of Personal Touch Financial Services Limited. Personal Touch Financial Services Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

[www.firstcallmortgages.net](http://www.firstcallmortgages.net)

A retired Federation member who spent the last stint of his career supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the region has revealed how the programme he helped lead inspired one youngster to join the police cadets.

Jon Hewett, a former education partnerships officer with the Force, has reflected on the past three decades and in particular the final few years of his policing career, in which time he helped run a programme called Teamworx.

The multi-agency programme, which was led by the police, the Fire service and Sandwell Young People's Service, was designed to engage with local primary school children, helping to build their self-esteem and confidence by taking part in a number of sport and outward-bound activities.



## Retired officer speaks out about his passion for helping youngsters

"We started to find that speaking to students at secondary school just wasn't early enough - it was too late, and in fact, the best chance we had at intervention was if we worked with primary schools," said 51-year-old Jon.

Rewind back to 2011, when West Bromwich and Wolverhampton became the centre of trouble, as 300 youths ran riot, looting businesses, smashing windows and setting both cars and bins alight.

"I was part of the Smethwick neighbourhood team at the time," recalled father-of-four Jon, "And we started to look at the young people who were involved in the riots, which led to us working with schools in the area.

"I was really fortunate that my parents supported me throughout my childhood but you quickly realise that not everyone has the same opportunities as you did.

"Young people were being led down the wrong path and, in Smethwick particularly, there were very few positive activities for them to do. And so, it felt like the most obvious thing for us to do was to provide them with an alternative - something they could do instead of getting in trouble.

"The more I saw, and the more research I did, confirmed that we had to do something. Helping those young people was my drive."

Jon linked up with six local schools working

with their headteachers to identify youngsters who were at risk of living a troubled life.

"There were 30 children in total and there were no provisions out there for them," continued Jon.

"Especially for boys. There are some really strong characters out there, who are very capable, they just needed some sort of direction.

"We eventually persuaded The Albion Foundation - the charity partner of West Bromwich Albion - to put on activities for under 11s, and within weeks the sessions were full."

As a result, the Teamworx programme was born, by way of trying to get something set up that would support those young children in need.

"Working with the fire service and the Young People's Service, Teamworx involved taking the children out for a total of eight days, across six weeks," explained Jon, who said the programme took everyone out of their comfort zone.

"The first programme we did was specifically for children who were at risk of exclusion but we soon realised it would be good for vulnerable children too, including those who might be being bullied, lacked confidence or having trouble at home.

"It wasn't just the children who were taken out of their comfort zone, we would be too - we all got to know each other in a different setting,

and have open, honest conversations with one another than we wouldn't usually have. The programme really helped to break down those barriers.

"At the end of the programme, we created a presentation video and showed it to the group to celebrate the journey they have been on."

Teamworx was eventually evaluated by Public Health Sandwell, which gave the programme a level of credibility.

One of the children who took part was Chloe Ashman, a Year 6 student at the time, who has since joined Sandwell Police Cadets and is now at Halesowen College studying public services.

The 17-year-old now plans a career as a police officer when she has finished her studies.

Jon said: "Chloe got so much out of the programme, she fully embraced it. As a Teamworx participant, the children would each receive a journal, a DVD of the video created and a laminated pass. And Chloe has kept them all, to this day.

"While we can't trace everyone we have supported, we know we have helped at least one person and that's worth it."

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Teamworx was put on hold.

"This programme has such an impact on these children, I really hope it picks up again," said Jon, "Even just a few weeks before I retired, I was visiting one of the local schools and I saw a lad there, who by this time, was Year 11.

"I haven't seen him since he was in Year 6, yet he shook my hand and gave me a hug, and said, let's talk about Teamworx. How humbling is that?"

Although he is retired, Jon's passion for helping young children continues, and he now hopes to use his knowledge and experience to work with local schools in the area.

# Fed chair calls for Labour to commit to investment in policing



## RICH COOKE RESPONDS TO SPEECH BY SIR KEIR STARMER

Opposition leader Sir Keir Starmer has pledged to halve violence against women and girls if Labour forms the next government.

But West Midlands Police Federation branch chair Rich Cooke is warning that targets are no substitute for motivated, properly trained, resourced and locally based bobbies, which will require significant investment, and is not simply a question of officer numbers.

Reacting to a speech by Sir Keir, Rich explained: "There is no place in society for violent crime directed at anyone, let alone against women and girls on the streets or in the family home.

"At the same time convictions for rape remain woefully low, mainly due to the progressive defunding of the service over many years and crazy disclosure requirements. Do policing on the cheap and there are consequences.

"I was pleased to hear Labour is committed to at least halving knife crime – this is a major issue in the West Midlands and is taking the lives of too many of our young

people and therefore a massive concern to frontline colleagues and detectives.

"I welcome the promise to improve charge rates for serious crimes and reduce court backlogs, although it remains to be seen how this would be done.

"They also need to unambiguously support tactics such as stop and search, done properly, driven by intelligence and engagement.

"I want a commitment from Sir Keir that a Labour government would properly pay and resource the police so that we can deliver on these promises.

"Labour should commit to collective bargaining for policing now if it really wants to give us that confidence.

"I would have liked to have heard more about that and recognition that police workloads are already way too high."

Labour's Shadow Home Secretary Yvette

Cooper has promised an additional 13,000 officers would be recruited by Labour, in addition to the 20,000 new police being hired by the Conservative government.

However, these new PCs and PCSOs would be deployed to neighbourhood policing, Ms Cooper said.

In his speech Sir Keir, a former Director of Public Prosecutions, said: "As somebody who has worked in criminal justice for most of my life, I also know that far too often, the inequalities that still scar our society - class, race, gender - do find an expression in the very system that is supposed to protect us all, without discrimination.

"This is personal – it's Labour's plan to tackle the crimewave gnawing away at our collective sense of security. But it's also unfinished business in my life's work to deliver justice for working people."

**“ I WANT A COMMITMENT FROM SIR KEIR THAT A LABOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD PROPERLY PAY AND RESOURCE THE POLICE SO THAT WE CAN DELIVER ON THESE PROMISES.**





GeorgeBurrows

# Did you know...

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

Funded by the Federation, this benefit provides 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.

Available 24/7, 365 days a year, worldwide — you can even use it when you're on holiday!

At **£25.94\*\* per month** the scheme also includes:

- £130,000 Life Assurance
- £15,000 Critical Illness
- Personal Accident Cover
- Sickness Benefits
- Best Doctors®
- Worldwide Family Travel Insurance
- Mobile Phone/Gadget Cover
- RAC Motor Breakdown Assistance

Visit the Federation website for further details:

**[www.polfed.org/westmids](http://www.polfed.org/westmids)**

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



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

\*\*Correct at 1 May 2023 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)

Arranged by George Burrows. West Midlands Police Federation is an appointed representative of Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited, and George Burrows is a trading name of Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered Office: Spectrum Building, 7th Floor, 55 Blythswood Street, Glasgow G2 7AT. Registered in Scotland. Company Number: SC108909 [www.ajg.com/uk](http://www.ajg.com/uk) AR01-2022