

# FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation

June/July 2023

**WEST MIDLANDS TEAM  
WINS OVERALL  
NATIONAL POLICE  
BRAVERY AWARD**

Pages 6 to 8



*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 June/July 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
- 5 Police Federation members to be given vote on industrial rights
- 6 West Midlands team named overall winner at Police Bravery Awards for lake rescue bid
- 9 Government announces seven per cent rise for police officers
- 10 'We have a right to a private life too'
- 12 'No wonder we struggle to retain staff' says sergeant who was called to court during annual leave
- 13 Police drivers urged to ensure they are 'in ticket'
- 14 Jason Dooley named new deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation
- 15 Fed member awarded MBE in King's Birthday Honours
- 16 Do you know the signs of fatigue?
- 18 Fed chair pays tribute to former Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson
- 20 Force launches rejoiner scheme to retain skills and experience
- 21 Op Hampshire: 'I'm proud of how far we've come' says deputy chair
- 22 New board member determined to prove 'dyslexia doesn't limit you'
- 23 Men's Health Week: Deputy chair 'Big Jase Dooley' opens up about mental health
- 24 Chair wants action to stop 'young lives being lost' to knife crime
- 25 'We can't hold back'
- 26 Fund-raising team take on Wolf Run for children's hospital
- 27 Jess completes half-marathon in honour of murdered schoolboy
- 28 Tree climbing, crate stacking, zip wiring and S'mores
- 29 Aztec Adventure Water Park
- 30 Officials announce new approach to work on Police Covenant
- 31 Fed welcomes appointment of new chief medical officer for the Police Covenant
- 32 Extra bereavement support
- 33 Former Fed member launches wellbeing retreat for police officers
- 34 Have you been affected by noise-induced hearing loss?

## ADVERTISERS

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

# 'Fed chair determined to shine light on pay'



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

**J**ase Dooley has been elected as our new deputy chair, following the sad loss of Sam Hughes. Jase brings a wealth of experience to the role and is already a well-known and friendly face to so many of our members. He shares so many of the same passions for policing as Sam did, especially around officer welfare.

I have no doubt at all that he will prove to be a great partner to challenge me to be the best I can be in my role, but also vocalise and take practical action to deal with the concerns of colleagues who are experiencing yet another round of structural change, albeit in many respects, change that is more welcome than in the past.

He's already shared his own experiences with mental health as well as discussed the difficult challenges officers are having with court bookings - both huge and extremely important issues that I'm sure so many colleagues can relate to.

We've also recently welcomed Steve Green,

an inspector from Birmingham LPA to the Federation Branch Board. Dawn Murkett has been elected as one of our lead conduct and performance (CAPLO) reps. Both are important strategic roles within the branch and I congratulate both warmly. It says a lot about the success of our branch when we see talented police officers putting themselves forward, wanting to be on our board, and wanting to be the change they want to see.

A big congratulations also to Fed member Sergeant Harvy Rai who has recently been awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) in this year's King's Birthday Honours. Harvy co-founded the West Midlands Police and the National Sikh Police Associations, playing a key role in improving connections between communities and building relationships within the region and across the country. Well done, Harvy, an extremely worthy award - we are all very proud of you.

The Police Pensions Challenge (PPC) Employment Tribunal judgement is a major event with big potential ramifications for the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW). For years I advocated for the PPC and argued passionately at every opportunity for PFEW to embrace it. My interventions and actions are mentioned in the judgement. I was unsuccessful in that endeavour though, and it's a matter of regret for me it ended in this litigation. I know many colleagues feel badly let down by advice given to them at the time, which now, as a matter of record, was wrong. I

am legally and organisationally conflicted with this case, being a claimant myself. I have never made a secret of this. But I reiterate what I've previously said - the development must be considered carefully but quickly by PFEW, and the organisation needs to commit to being accountable and transparent to a level never seen before to win back lost trust. Conversely, I know just how much of a brilliant job our Police Federation branch does for our members, every single day representing their interests and making practical interventions on their behalf in the workplace. My view is the result of the tribunal can, and should be, the biggest catalyst for a new, more responsive PFEW in the future.

In June, our branch and region, including the Staffordshire, West Mercia and Warwickshire branches, also backed by the Metropolitan Branch, submitted a proposal to the PFEW National Council (NC) (which includes branch chairs and secretaries from all 43 forces): 'The PFEW ballot members on whether they wish us to pursue industrial rights as soon as practicable'.

The current pay mechanism is totally unfair and insulting to police officers. In the absence of having any effective Article 11 rights, as most people do to take industrial action, the very least we deserve as 'compensation' is a 'seat at the table' to negotiate our pay, backed by respected arbitration. Many of you might be surprised to learn it was Mrs Thatcher's Conservative

**“ MAKE NO MISTAKE, WE HAVE VERY LITTLE DESIRE TO OBTAIN INDUSTRIAL RIGHTS, BUT WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES DISRESPECTED, OUR RIGHTS ATTACKED AND DENUDED, LOSING EXPERIENCED OFFICERS HAND OVER FIST, OUR PAY AT LEAST 17 PER CENT DOWN IN REAL TERMS ON WHERE IT WAS IN 2000, IT IS TIME TO ACT TO SHINE THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT WE CAN ON THIS ONGOING AFFRONT.**

government who gave us the police negotiating board (PNB) plus police arbitration tribunal (PAT) system which lasted over 30 years and delivered much fairer pay for police officers, genuinely recognising the unique status and restrictions on us – known as the ‘P-Factor’. Sadly, her successors abolished that in 2014 and since then we’ve been subject to a pay review body (PRRB) that in our view, lacks independence and does not have the confidence of policing.

The situation we find ourselves in regarding our remuneration is truly dystopian and cannot continue. We must take radical action to address it urgently and that’s why we’ve started to think the once unthinkable. Make no mistake, we have very little desire to obtain industrial rights, but when we find ourselves disrespected, our rights attacked and denuded, losing experienced officers hand over fist, our pay at least 17 per cent down in real terms on where it was in 2000, it is time to act to shine the brightest light we can on this ongoing affront.

**“ A BIG CONGRATULATIONS ALSO TO FED MEMBER SGT HARVY RAI WHO HAS RECENTLY BEEN AWARDED AN MBE IN THIS YEAR’S KING’S BIRTHDAY HONOURS.**

In June, myself and Fed rep DS Curt Wilkins attended a drop-in event at Westminster, which gave us the opportunity to update two of our local politicians, from opposing sides of politics, on our campaign. I think what the day demonstrated to us, was that interest and sympathy from our MPs is still there, it’s just making them more aware of our issues and placing them higher on their priority list.

Finally, I’d like to thank everyone who has supported the West Midlands team ahead of this year’s Police Unity Tour (PUT). This is my fourth PUT and as this year’s team captain, supported by Chief Supt. Andy Beard, I’m looking forward to July’s challenge more than ever. It’s become an annual event for me, and one that I’m sure I’ll continue to take part in until I’m unable to. For me, what stands out most is those family members who come back year after year, to support forces from across the country, in memory of a loved one - it’s extremely touching. If there’s ever an event that demonstrates just how much of a police family we all are, it’s this one.

I couldn’t end without plugging our fundraising page, could I? If you want to support the West Midlands team at this year’s PUT, then please visit our [JustGiving page](https://www.justgiving.com/polfedorgwestmids).

# Police Federation members to be given vote on industrial rights

**T**he Police Federation is to ask its members if they want the organisation to pursue industrial rights on their behalf.

The historic decision to hold a ballot on the issue was taken by the National Council, the members of which will now begin the process of exploring what industrial rights could mean for members.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke said: “This is a positive decision to address the disgraceful way our members are currently being treated over pay.

“Police officers have no bargaining rights and no industrial rights and pay has been in decline for more than 20 years as a result.

“Our members have seen their pay fall by 20 per cent over the last two decades - even more among junior ranks who have been disproportionately affected - and that is utterly unacceptable, particularly when we are currently denied even the opportunity to negotiate our pay.

“We have called for a 17 per cent settlement this year and we wanted to make sure our members were balloted on seeking industrial rights either before the pay announcement was made this summer or urgently afterwards.

“We need to get on with it and make it count. We’re not there yet.”

The ballot motion was proposed by the West Midlands Region and backed by the Metropolitan Branch.

West Midlands branch secretary Tim Rogers said: “We wanted to make sure our members were given the ability to direct the Police Federation on how it acts for them on the wholly important issue of pay and conditions.

“We are delighted that other branch boards around England and Wales have overwhelmingly supported the proposal.

“We have been forced to think the once unthinkable because of the inappropriate pay award mechanism which has delivered year after year of real pay reductions.

“Police are virtually unique in being legally barred from industrial action at the same time as having no bargaining rights whatsoever.

“There is a simple solution: give police a genuine ‘seat at the table’ and an arbitration system we can trust.”

The police service gave up its recourse to industrial action to settle disputes more than 100 years ago.

The country was thrown into turmoil between 1918 and 1919 when more than 50,000 police officers under the guidance of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers (NUPPO) went on strike after repeated calls for fair pay and work conditions in the wake of the First World War.

Eventually the government of the day backed down and promised fair pay to police officers in return for them giving up the right to strike and brought in the Police Act 1919, which also established by law the Police Federation of England and Wales.

But independent research published by the Social Market Foundation (SMF) think tank earlier this suggested the well-documented decline in police pay over the last two decades is likely to be linked to the restrictions on police officers’ right to strike, which it says has put them at a distinct disadvantage to all other key workers when it comes to pay talks.

**“ POLICE ARE VIRTUALLY UNIQUE IN BEING LEGALLY BARRED FROM INDUSTRIAL ACTION AT THE SAME TIME AS HAVING NO BARGAINING RIGHTS WHATSOEVER.**

**THERE IS A SIMPLE SOLUTION: GIVE POLICE A GENUINE ‘SEAT AT THE TABLE’ AND AN ARBITRATION SYSTEM WE CAN TRUST.**

# West Midlands team named overall winner at Police Bravery Awards for lake rescue bid



A team of West Midlands Police officers who put their own lives on the line as they formed a human chain to try to save four young boys who had fallen into a frozen lake has been named this year's overall national Police Bravery Award winner.

PS Paula McDowell, PS Fergal Sharkey, PC Harriet Batchelor, PC Alana Grigg, PC Stewart Powers, PC Joshua Adams, PC Anthony Maginnis, PC William Finnegan, PC Fidha Akhtar, PC Olivia Studholme, PC Charanjit Chana, PC Jordon Finn, PCSO Chloe Westlake and PC Jason Gilbert were honoured for the tremendous courage they showed throughout the tragic incident at Babbs Mill near Solihull on 11 December last year.

The policing minister Chris Philp presented the team with the overall award, shortly after the shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper announced them as Region 3 winners at a ceremony in London on Thursday 13 July.

Speaking about the award Paula said: "These officers are the epitome of British policing and I am immensely proud of every single one of them. In my eyes, they are all heroes."

As part of the annual bravery awards event the West Midlands officers also joined fellow nominees from forces across England and Wales at a Downing Street reception hosted by Home Secretary Suella Braverman ahead of the awards ceremony.

The officers were nominated for the incredible bravery they showed when they attended an incident involving four children, who had been playing on a frozen lake and had fallen through the ice into the freezing waters.

"It was me and two PCSOs who were first on the scene. Without hesitation, they headed into the water and put their lives at risk. Rank didn't matter and everyone was there on the same mission - and that was to save those children. The entire team showed bravery, courage and determination," continued Paula.

Using their initiative, the officers fearlessly created a human chain so they could reach further into the lake, wading through freezing

*Continued overleaf*



The West Midlands team.

“ I AM BEYOND PROUD OF OUR TEAM. HEARING ONCE AGAIN ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND WHAT THEY WENT THROUGH THAT DAY MADE ME QUITE EMOTIONAL.

# NATIONAL POLICE BRAVERY AWARDS

waters and smashing through thick ice with their hands and batons.

The lake was so cold, the team were forced to make the difficult decision to leave the water. Shortly after, the Fire and Rescue Service arrived, entering the lake and bringing the first child to the shore, with a further three boys located within minutes.

The team of West Midlands officers, along with emergency service colleagues from the Air Ambulance and Fire and Rescue Service, began first aid and CPR on the four children, who were all in cardiac arrest when rescued.

Despite the children being blue-lighted to hospital where CPR continued, all four children tragically died as a result of the incident.

Paula added: "We couldn't have done anymore that day. The team did all they could, and I hope, in some way, this award acknowledges that."

Chair of West Midlands Police Federation Rich Cooke said: "The Police Bravery Awards are the highlight of the policing year and I never fail to be amazed by the incredible acts of bravery that we gather to honour.

"I am beyond proud of our team. Hearing once again about the incident and what they went through that day made me quite emotional.

"I know they didn't get the outcome they wanted that day but they all did their very best. The bravery awards showcases all that is good about policing, giving us an opportunity to appreciate the work of our officers who put their lives on the line as they serve the public."



The Police Bravery Award winners attended a reception at 10 Downing Street ahead of the presentation ceremony.



The West Midlands Police team with Fed chair Rich Cooke, shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper, Chief Constable Craig Guildford and Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn.



# Government announces seven per cent pay rise for police officers

**P**olice officers are to receive pay rises of seven per cent across all ranks after the Government accepted the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB).

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke said the increase was a “good award” against a backdrop of a weak economy and persistent high inflation but vowed to continue to fight for reform in the way police pay is decided.

He said: “Seven per cent is a good award in the current climate, albeit still below the cost of living.

“Our focus will remain on getting a fair system of pay negotiation and arbitration for the future.

“That is the key to getting better pay in the long term for police officers.”

The pay offer is well short of the 17 per cent claim issued by the Police Federation and the Government’s decision to rule out extra borrowing to fund the pay increases amid fears of stoking inflation could mean more cuts to existing services.

The current level of CPI inflation is running at 8.7 per cent and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak - who has promised to cut it to around 5.3 per cent by the end of the year - wants to avoid increases which could fuel a wage-price spiral.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt told MPs it was “important to deliver on the Prime Minister’s



Chancellor Jeremy Hunt ruled out borrowing to fund police pay.

priority to get debt falling and to control borrowing to avoid adding inflationary pressures and risk prolonging higher inflation”.

He said: “That means taking difficult but responsible decisions on the public finances, including public sector pay, because more borrowing is itself inflationary.”

Chief Secretary to the Treasury John Glen said the police pay rise would be partly covered by increasing the cost of certain visas by up to 20 per cent to create more funding

for border forces, allowing the Home Office to divert some money towards police officer pay.

Responding to the announcement, Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn said: “I have no doubt that police officers will have mixed feelings – on the one hand, they will be pleased that the pay award was not as bad as some media outlets had speculated, but also disappointed that it doesn’t fully take account of inflation, as they and their families struggle with increased utility, mortgage and food costs.

“We will continue to push for fair pay awards that take full account of inflation and recognise and reward the unique status of police officers; including the introduction of a fair, independent mechanism and negotiation process, so that we can properly sit down with government and employers to negotiate pay settlements that fully consider the risks and restrictions placed on police officers’ private and professional lives. The focus going forward needs to be on pay restoration.”

**“ I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT POLICE OFFICERS WILL HAVE MIXED FEELINGS – ON THE ONE HAND, THEY WILL BE PLEASED THAT THE PAY AWARD WAS NOT AS BAD AS SOME MEDIA OUTLETS HAD SPECULATED, BUT ALSO DISAPPOINTED THAT IT DOESN’T FULLY TAKE ACCOUNT OF INFLATION, AS THEY AND THEIR FAMILIES STRUGGLE WITH INCREASED UTILITY, MORTGAGE AND FOOD COSTS.**

“ I WAS ACTUALLY WORRIED THAT I WAS GOING TO STEP OFF THAT PLANE HAVING RETURNED FROM HOLIDAY AND BE ARRESTED, IN FRONT OF MY DAUGHTER.

# 'We have a right to a private life too'

## FEDERATION CALLS FOR ACTION AS COURT HEARINGS CONTINUE TO INTERRUPT OFFICERS' ANNUAL LEAVE

"Threats were being made and I feared I could've been arrested in front of my daughter if I didn't come back from my holiday to give evidence in court. This is happening far too often, and it's shocking. We have the right to a private life too," says West Midlands Police Federation deputy chair Jason (Jase) Dooley.

Jase is calling for urgent change, after seeing more and more officers being unexpectedly ordered to cut their annual leave or holidays short because they are needed as a witness in court.

Drawing on his own personal experience, Jase says police officers are not being considered by the Crown Prosecution Service, as he warns 'the Force will lose great cops if things don't change soon'.

"Because of an ongoing problem that's being caused by the CJS (Criminal Justice System), the welfare of our officers is being seriously impacted. It's crazy," said Jason, who was ordered to attend a court case that having been brought forward coincided with his pre-booked annual leave.

"I put an objection in and that objection was refused," explained Jase.

"Look, I wasn't prepared to come back from my holiday, with my daughter, for a court case. This led to me being threatened with a witness summons, which left me fearing that I could've been arrested.

"I was actually worried that I was going to step off that plane having returned from holiday and be arrested, in front of my daughter. How embarrassing and mortifying would that have been?"

Jase recalled that at this point, he cited the [Human Rights Act](#), which resulted in his words, 'everyone going silent'.

He added: "The case had been adjourned, so it turned out I wasn't needed that day. However, the stress and anxiety it caused me was unbelievable. I'd taken a week off prior to my actual holiday and I spent that entire week

on the phone, trying to sort the situation.

"How is this happening? Just because we're police officers and we're serving members of the public, we have the right to a private life as well.

"We cannot switch off anymore, we are expected to be a police officer 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Are we ever allowed to relax?"

"The current system is shocking. Officers, real people, are breaking because of this."

As it stands, if police officers are given notice of a court case, they are asked to block book three weeks of their calendar per trial, in case they are called to give evidence.

**“ AS POLICE OFFICERS, WE RECOGNISE THAT WE MIGHT BE CALLED BACK FROM OUR REST DAYS FOR COURT BUT WE SHOULDN'T BE CALLED AWAY FROM OUR ANNUAL LEAVE.**

"Obviously as part of the job, most officers make more than just the one arrest - which means they will be blocking out multiple blocks of time, in case they are needed in court," Jase explained.

"I know of one colleague who had eight ongoing court cases - which meant she was not allowed to book annual leave for 24 weeks of the year. Yet she will not know until the night before if she is required or not.

"And the worst bit - I know that at least most of those trials were cancelled or adjourned."

The importance of Jase's ongoing campaign was further highlighted following a tweet from

Fed member Sergeant Mitch Derby, who was called back from his family holiday earlier this year, as he was needed as a witness in court.

However, having left his family on holiday and while he was on the train home, Mitch received a call letting him know that the case had been adjourned.

"If things don't change, this is going to start having a real impact on our officers," said Jase, who revealed he has missed several personal events including weddings and even his child's fifth birthday due to being called into court.

"When in any other business would this happen? If Mitch was in any other job, he would not have been called back from his holiday.

"As police officers, we recognise that we might be called back from our rest days for court but we shouldn't be called away from our annual leave.

"I have been in the police for 28 years now and I've never seen so many people suffer from stress and anxiety - and this issue is not helping, it's having a massive knock-on effect.

"What needs to change? It's a really simple fix, the courts need to check our availability. They have access to this, it's not difficult. And don't ask us to block three weeks out - surely one week is enough? The courts are just being unrealistic in their approach."

Jase is now encouraging members who find themselves being called back from their annual leave by the courts, or being placed on a court warning when they have annual leave already booked, to get in touch with the Federation.

"I know our members are worried that they could be breaking conduct regulations if they don't leave their family holiday to give evidence in court. But we will challenge this strongly," confirmed Jase.

"Speak to your Federation, this is exactly why we are here. Reach out to us, and we will help you."

See more about Mitch's story on Page XX.



# 'No wonder we struggle to retain staff' says sergeant who was called to court during annual leave

A sergeant who was forced to abandon his family holiday to be a witness in court only to find out it had been cancelled while he was en route to the trial is desperately urging for the 'relentless' problem to be fixed.

Mitch Darby had pre-booked annual leave to enjoy a rare trip away with his wife and children earlier this year only to find out he needed to block out time to appear in court, 'smack back in the middle' of his time off.

Despite raising his concerns and even asking if he could appear remotely - which was

refused - Mitch's holiday was interrupted when he received a phone call ordering him to travel to court.

"My wife is an inspector in the Force, so - as you can imagine - trying to get time off together as a family is hard. We actually have our plans written down on a spreadsheet, 90 days in advance, it's that hard to make plans with each other. We'd only gone to Anglesey but, still, it was time away together with my two kids," said 38-year-old father-of-two Mitch.

"I was three hours into the five-hour train ride to court when I received a phone call telling me the case had been adjourned. My kids had been let down and I'd missed valuable time off with them.

"It 100 per cent ruined my holiday. I was almost certain that case wouldn't go ahead but I couldn't risk getting a disciplinary. I felt like I couldn't say no."

Frustrated by the sequence of events, Mitch tweeted: "Kids let down again, this time on holiday because of 'the job'. I can see why we struggle to retain staff."

Speaking about his experience, Mitch added: "It's not just the time-wasting and hassle but it's the fact you can't switch off, knowing you've got to go to court, mid-annual leave.

"You've got to pack a shirt and tie, your work laptop, it's so hard to ever switch off. You try so hard to get some time off work and then when you finally do, are you really off?"

Mitch continued to stress that if the problem is not addressed, forces will lose officers.

He said: "This problem is everywhere, it's not just in West Midlands. It's easy to see why we're losing so many bobbies and it will definitely push officers out of the job, it's another erosion of our basic human rights.

"I'm lucky that my wife understands, because she's in the Force herself, but now all partners and loved ones get it. Even though she gets it, and she is understanding, it doesn't mean that it's acceptable.

"I know courts are under pressure too, but I can't help but feel like police officers are constantly put to the bottom of the pile.

"And I am sure that if you go into any police station, and ask any active frontline officer, they will all be able to give you two or three examples of being in a similar situation. It's absolutely not fair and it's undoubtedly taking its toll on the wellbeing of officers."



“ I WAS THREE HOURS INTO THE FIVE-HOUR TRAIN RIDE TO COURT WHEN I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL TELLING ME THE CASE HAD BEEN ADJOURNED. MY KIDS HAD BEEN LET DOWN AND I'D MISSED VALUABLE TIME OFF WITH THEM.

# Police drivers urged to ensure they are 'in ticket'

The legal guidance underpinning the legislative change that affords police drivers better protection in law has now been updated.

After a successful campaign by the Police Federation, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 delivered the framework to ensure that police officers' skills and training could be taken into account rather than their driving being judged by the standards of the careful and competent driver.

But the Director of Public Prosecutions' (DPP) guidance had to be updated to reflect the changes that came into effect on 30 November 2022 with the new legal test for police drivers.

The legislative change followed an eight-year campaign led by Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation lead for police pursuits and driver training.

He explained: "This has been a hard-fought campaign to get this legislation in place. Time and time again, it felt like we were making progress but then we would be hit by another hurdle to get over.

"Having finally succeeded with what we set out to do, we are seeing evidence that the legislation is delivering the changes we wanted. But we now need to ensure that officers of all ranks are aware of their obligations under the new law and that includes chief constables who must make sure their forces are compliant."

Tim said that while the legislation came into effect last year, there has been a lot of work behind the scenes to make sure that it is truly fit for purpose hence the new DPP guidance.

"The act does give better protection to police drivers and should give them the confidence that their training is recognised in

law whereas prior to this new legislation pretty much everything officers did when driving a police vehicle and carrying out the job they were trained to do would be viewed as illegal in a court of law," he explained.

"But there is a caveat, and one that each and every police officer who drives a police vehicle has to be aware of and take responsibility for.

"All officers' training must comply with the regulations and the law, through Statutory Instrument 1112. There can be no ifs, no buts, no exclusions, no selection and no senior management deviation. Not even chief constables can extend officers' validation to perform a tactic, for example.

"Incidentally, chief officers are responsible for the adherence but it is the driving officer who would ultimately be charged for non-compliance."

Under the guidance, officers' driver training has to be delivered by a driver trainer who has been licensed by the College of Policing. Once again, there is no leeway. Training delivered by a non-licensed person is invalid and will leave officers in a vulnerable position. There is a sensible protective governance process which cannot in any way be deviated from. The college is conducting licencing compliance checks. It will not license a force which does not comply with the provisions of the law.

Since the new law came into effect, a Subject Matter Experts (SME) group has been established to give assess police drivers where needed against the new test. This is achieving

good levels of consistency with easy accessibility for all interested parties.

Tim explained: "I have seen fair results here with the need for additional reviews becoming less common. The new law does appear to be achieving the intentions I set it out to achieve. There have been cases where officers would definitely have been charged, yet under the new law were not.

"This is a generational change for policing and one that should not be spurned by decisions to deviate from the statutory instrument."

Tim, who is part of the SME group, adds: "Locally, however, we are in need of improvement. Forces with driving standards mechanisms are expanding their advisory role into fields that sit outside their scope of expertise. We are supported here by the National Police Chiefs' Council who will be mandating a model for all forces to follow and this needs to be implemented soon.

"The process requires knowledgeable advice for decision-makers at a local level. It does not require improvised collision investigation as we have seen in some circumstances.

"In the meantime, I would urge all officers to make sure they are fully aware of the new legislation and the regulations that underpin that law. But, above all, I cannot stress enough how crucial it is that they don't drive if they are not licenced; if your training is not up to date, do not drive a police vehicle."

Tim is writing to all chief constables to remind them of their obligations under the law.

**“ I CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH HOW CRUCIAL IT IS THAT THEY DON'T DRIVE IF THEY ARE NOT LICENCED; IF YOUR TRAINING IS NOT UP TO DATE, DO NOT DRIVE A POLICE VEHICLE.**





## Jason Dooley named new deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation

Jason (Jase) Dooley has pledged to continue developing the fantastic work Sam Hughes started after being named the new deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation. Jase says his recent appointment has been accepted with a heavy heart, as he vows to keep Sam's memory alive after the former deputy chair sadly died after battling breast cancer since 2017.

Jase, who joined West Midlands Police in 2017, says his passion is 'helping members', having 'got the bug to do more for his colleagues' after becoming a Federation workplace representative two years ago.

"What I really enjoy is helping people,"

says 52-year-old Jase.

"This is certainly not the circumstances in which I wanted to take on this job. I'd worked closely with Sam since the day she started the job. Sam and I had a shared passion for prioritising the welfare of our members.

"I want to continue developing the fantastic work she started, especially around the welfare of our members.

"There are members who really need support, and I want to give them a voice, while also providing them with a shoulder to cry on, or a listening ear when they need it most. I want members to know we're not there to judge them, we're there to advise, listen and

support them.

"I like to think I'm an approachable person, and hopefully I can work on bridging the gap between our members and the Fed's board. It's all about building that trust, not just within the Federation, but between us and the Force too."

Jase, who will be stepping up from his current role as full-time lead on the Force's ongoing Change Programme, added: "For me, this is an opportunity to carry on the work I'm doing with the change programme while developing my role as deputy."

Jase says one of his main priorities as deputy is supporting student officers, who are just in the infancy of their policing careers.

**“ THERE ARE MEMBERS WHO REALLY NEED SUPPORT, AND I WANT TO GIVE THEM A VOICE, WHILE ALSO PROVIDING THEM WITH A SHOULDER TO CRY ON, OR A LISTENING EAR WHEN THEY NEED IT MOST. I WANT MEMBERS TO KNOW WE'RE NOT THERE TO JUDGE THEM, WE'RE THERE TO ADVISE, LISTEN AND SUPPORT THEM.**

"I have a very keen interest in supporting student officers. I think it's really important that they're aware of how policing can and will change their lives, or know what they're entitled to," he added.

"I want to be a mentor to student officers, advising and supporting them, from day one of their training and especially during those first few years."

Jase explained that he feels members need to be more aware of the ongoing support the Federation provides, not just when there are circumstances involving disciplinary action.

"I think we need to do more to showcase what we do," he continued.

"After all, sometimes, we can change things in just 15 minutes - by contacting the right people, providing efficient advice to our members, or by simply pointing them in the right direction.

"And it's not just student officers, I want to support everyone - take newly promoted sergeants for example. Creating their portfolio can take over their lives - I've been there. We need to prioritise the wellbeing and mental health of all our officers, whatever stage of their career they're at."



# Fed member awarded MBE in King's Birthday Honours

**A** Fed member who co-founded the West Midlands Police and National Sikh Police Associations has been awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in the King's Birthday Honours List.

Sergeant Harvy Rai has told how he feels 'very humbled' to have received the award, which is given in recognition of an outstanding achievement or service to the community.

Harvy, who joined West Midlands Constabulary 29 years ago, played an integral role in the formation of the Force's Sikh Police Association in 2013, before co-founding the National Sikh Police Association in 2019.

"I've always been a firm believer that representation and advocacy is important. I was finding that a number of my colleagues were coming to me, raising their concerns around discrimination. I was able to highlight and successfully escalate these, and, before I knew it, I had many other people voicing similar issues," said the father-of-two.

"When my colleagues come to me with concerns, I feel compelled to raise them. I knew I needed to do something about it, and

that something was forming the West Midlands Sikh Police Association."

As Harvy supported other forces to create their own Sikh Police Associations, he said he recognised the need to form a national branch and so, in 2019, he helped launch the National Sikh Police Association at an event in Tally Ho, in Birmingham.

He continued: "I was chair of the West Midlands Sikh Police Association, and was elected president for the national branch while working as a neighbourhood sergeant - which together took its toll. And so, after many discussions, it was decided that being president would become my full-time role.

Harvy explained that having a Sikh Police Association is fundamental to getting a better understanding of local communities, helping to build bridges between the police and members of the public.

He identified the difficulties members of the Sikh community had in highlighting hate crime via third-party reporting and so, in collaboration with other police bodies, has helped to develop 'Sikh Guard' - a specific

reporting portal which was launched last year.

"Members of the public come forward and talk to us - these can be frank and often challenging conversations, the main thing is they're communicating with us and voicing their concerns," he added.

"And what's more, the association helps officers too. Having associations like this is fundamental when it comes to retaining members of staff. Say if somebody is having a down day, then they can speak to a like-minded person in the association. Whether that's over a coffee or just having a chat, it can re-centre and stop them from thinking they're on their own."

Since joining the Force in 1993, Harvy has been vital in establishing and improving connections within communities and building relationships with prominent leaders.

Speaking about receiving an MBE, he said: "It really is a huge honour, a big deal and a great privilege for anyone who receives a royal honour. I feel very humbled.

"I also want to congratulate my police colleagues who received recognition for their contribution and service, I'm sure their families like mine are very proud too."

With his 30 years in service soon approaching, is Harvy preparing for a life outside of the police?

"It has been suggested that I continue," he revealed.

"It's all very up in the air at the moment but to be honest, for now, I can't see myself totally giving up policing. There is a lot of work that still needs to be done."



Do you know  
the signs of  
fatigue?



# OFFICERS URGED TO SPEAK UP IF THEY ARE STRUGGLING

The new chair of West Midlands Police Federation's Health and Safety Committee is calling for members to recognise the signs of fatigue as he emphasises the importance of speaking out if officers feel they are struggling.

Patrick McBrearty raised awareness of fatigue in line with Mental Health Awareness Week in May.

He says that officers need to be aware of the difference between feeling fatigued and stressed while reminding members that they have a responsibility to speak to their line manager if they feel they are burnt out.

"While the long-term impacts of fatigue can be similar to stress, it's important that our officers understand as much as possible the difference between the two, mainly so you can take the most appropriate action," said Patrick.

**“THE THING IS, OFFICERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK OUT, FOR THEIR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITY, FATIGUE CAN LEAD TO POTENTIAL MISTAKES BEING MADE - AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM.**

"If someone is stressed, they might be feeling angry, overwhelmed, anxious, depressed and worried. These feelings might then result in physical symptoms, like panic attacks, difficulty breathing and muscle aches, for example.

"On the other hand - and while the two share similar signs and symptoms - a person who is fatigued tends to be totally and completely burnt out. For example, if an officer has had six days off and they are still tired, and their body cannot cope, this tells me it is fatigue.



Patrick McBrearty.

"Simply put, fatigue is an overwhelming sense of tiredness that doesn't get better, even when rested."

Patrick is urging officers to make themselves aware of these symptoms and, if any sound familiar, to contact their line manager immediately.

"The thing is, officers have a responsibility to speak out, for their safety and the safety of the community," he explained, "Fatigue can lead to potential mistakes being made - and that's the problem."

Patrick's comments follow the launch of Target Fatigue, a new initiative by the national Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), which aims to improve awareness of fatigue across forces while reducing the associated risks that fatigue poses.

Target Fatigue has been designed to be an accessible resource for all officers, that will grow and develop over time.

"I need our members to know that they are protected by law if they are feeling fatigued. In

fact, employers have a legal obligation to manage risks from fatigue, irrespective of any person's willingness to work," Patrick continued.

"So, if you are feeling fatigued, speak out and always remember to file your near-miss reports, that's key too. Your line manager cannot legally ask you to carry on working - and if they do, you need to log it, because, in the event of anything happening, they will be liable, not you.

"You know you've done your due diligence if you've spoken up."

Patrick is urging members to not only speak out but reach out.

**“YOU KNOW YOU'VE DONE YOUR DUE DILIGENCE IF YOU'VE SPOKEN UP.**

He ended: "Officers are continuing to feel huge pressure and demand, it's no wonder fatigue and poor wellbeing is so prevalent.

"If you feel you are struggling, please speak out - talk to somebody. And, if you notice a colleague that is showing any sign that they are finding things difficult at the moment, reach out to them.

"This is a reminder that simply asking somebody if they are OK can make the biggest difference."

Some of the main symptoms of fatigue include:

- **Insomnia**
- **The inability to concentrate:**
  - Unable to focus
  - Difficulty remembering names, numbers or certain words
  - Unable to recall particular events
  - Experiencing slow reactions

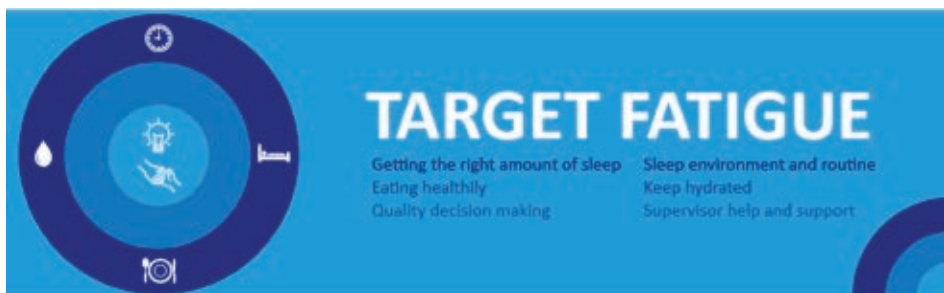
- **Depression and anxiety**
- **Overly emotional**
- **Brain fog or confusion**
- **Dizziness**
- **Blurred vision**

- **Unexplained weight loss or gain**
- **Digestive problems**

Some of the signs of fatigue might include:

- **Finding that you are more frequently losing attention or memory**
- **Reacting slowly**
- **Making errors**
- **Being overly irritable**
- **Occasionally falling asleep at work**
- **Lacking motivation or interest in their work.**

Find out more about [Target Fatigue](#).



# Fed chair pays tribute to former Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson

**“I miss Chris’ advice and guidance greatly. He never once sought to control me or influence my decisions. He supported me and reminded me what was most important in life – family, and to maintain perspective in everything.**

**“He was an inspirational police officer and an inspirational leader but he was also an inspirational man.”**

In a special tribute piece, West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke talks of the legacy former Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson leaves behind.

Chris (55) died in April, after being diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in 2018. He worked up until 2020, following 29 years in service, which is when his condition worsened and he was forced to retire.

Since his diagnosis, Chris, along with Federation members, colleagues and his loved ones have helped to raise more than £100,000 in honour of the father-of-two, money which has been split between the MNDA ([Motor Neurone Disease Association](#)) and [Primrose Hospice](#), in Bromsgrove, which has supported the family.

“I was so sad to hear of Chris’ passing and that sadness, I know rippled through the Force,” said Rich.

It was when Rich first became a Federation representative in 2012 that Chris first introduced himself, the branch chair recalls.



*Chris Johnson: an inspirational leader, an inspirational man.*

He continued: “Chris was a superintendent and was keen to introduce himself to me and congratulate me on my role. I remember that conversation precisely because of how much I felt valued and encouraged, without qualification. That might seem a relatively simple example of manners and good practice, but my experience of that is rare as a Fed rep.

“This inclusive leadership style was my first experience with Chris and I was enthused to meet him and do the best I could as a result. “Moving on through the months and years we went through some difficult times for colleagues as austerity-hit hard and we had to rationalise and reduce our service in some very painful ways. Throughout this, I raised many concerns and challenges, I never felt dismissed by Chris, even where there was disagreement, he always looked for common ground and bought people from different sides together. I always felt even disagreements were valued.”

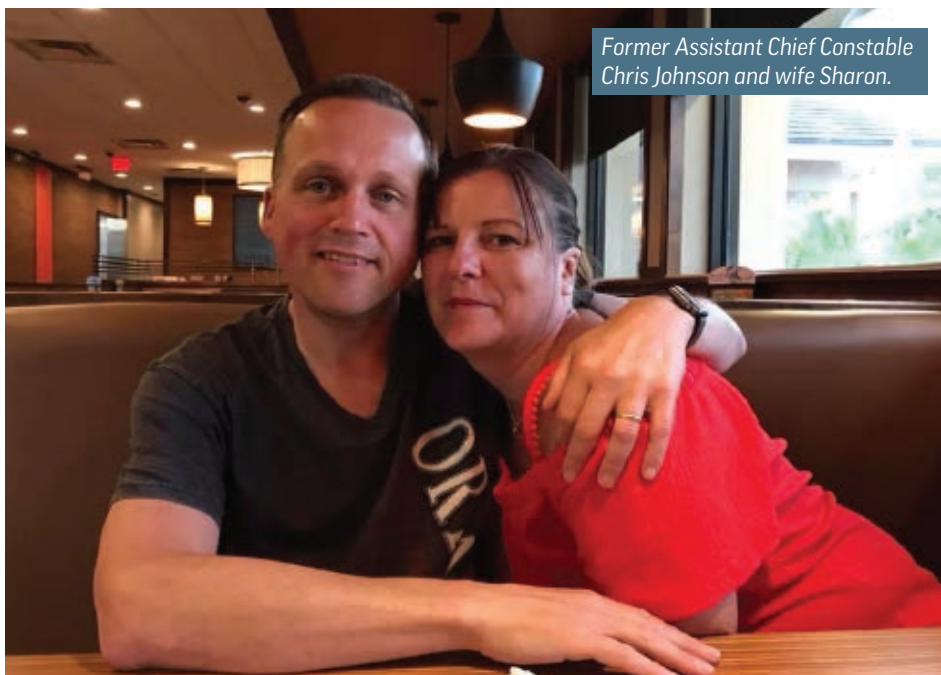
Having eventually gone their separate ways, Rich explained how their paths next met when he was elected as chair of the Federation in 2018.

“By this time Chris was an assistant chief constable,” says Rich, adding: “Again he took the time to warmly congratulate me with words I won’t forget but will remain personal.

“As chair, I wanted to revolutionise the Force’s approach to officer assaults and I found Chris a powerful ally. We set up the Assaults Gold Group to oversee, scrutinise and ultimately improve the experience and outcomes for our own officers who were assaulted.

“One of the more controversial issues I campaigned on was access for more officers to Taser. Sometimes it was difficult to see real progress and the part you played in it. Chris’ knack was in helping people like me to see the bigger picture and how our efforts had a real impact.”

Former Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson and wife Sharon.



"At my request, Chris had become my mentor and those meetings were completely 'man to man' - no agenda or rank."

Chris continued to mentor Rich despite his diagnosis, with the pair even meeting in hospital, during one of his treatments, for lunch.

"He really went out of his way to help me, even while coming to terms with the worst news that his life would be cut abruptly short. And when I subsequently went through personal and professional difficulties within the Federation, and when my own son was born early with a heart condition, Chris kept in touch and was always there to help in any way he could.

## CHRIS WANTED HIS FUNERAL TO BE A CELEBRATION OF HIS LIFE AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS.

"I miss Chris' advice and guidance greatly. He never once sought to control or influence my decisions. He simply supported me and reminded me what was most important in life - family, and to maintain perspective in everything - 'make sure you respond, don't react' he once told me.

"I feel very honoured to have met Chris and I know I'll never forget him. He left this world way too soon for those he leaves behind, especially Sharon and his lovely family of course, but he certainly left a legacy of overwhelming love amongst his family, many friends and colleagues in West Midlands Police - and far beyond."

More than 500 people attended Chris' funeral, whether they were in-person or

watching online, a service that his wife, Sharon called 'a celebration of his life'.

"Chris wanted his funeral to be a celebration of his life and that's exactly what it was," said Sharon, a former West Midlands police officer, who made the decision to retire in 2022, so she could help care for her husband.

Sharon recalls how she met Chris when she was relatively new in service - the pair got on immediately, she explains.

"We'd had a few drinks on a night out and got together. We moved in together three to four weeks later and the rest, as they say, is history," she added.

"The job was his everything - behind me and the kids, of course. He was always so loving and caring. He was a very hands-on dad - I remember, he'd spend hours crafting with

them, making sure they had the biggest and best costumes on World Book Day.

"We had so many happy memories together, as a family."

Sharon said that since Chris died, she has learnt a lot about who he was as a police officer.



Chris faced his illness with courage.

"He was the type of man - there was just something about him - that people liked. Even as he rose through the ranks, it never changed him as a person," she explained.

"I've been told how every Monday morning - until the day he left the Force - he would walk through the corridor, hands in pockets, singing, 'oh what a beautiful morning'.

"His favourite quote was 'people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel' and that was Chris in a nutshell.

Chris' last words to Sharon were 'I love you', before he died peacefully, having developed pneumonia one week before.

"His body might've failed him but his mind never did. He was always the man I love, he was still my Chris, right up until the moment he left us."



Chris and his family enjoying Disney.

# Force launches rejoiner scheme to retain skills and experience

## FEDERATION GIVES CAUTIOUS WELCOME TO FORCE INITIATIVE

**W**est Midlands Police Federation has cautiously welcomed the Force's decision to launch a new 30++ police officer rejoiner scheme in a bid to retain specialist skills and experience.

But, for the initiative to achieve its objectives, the Force will need to improve its infrastructure and offer a more competitive package, according to Federation secretary Tim Rogers.

The Force has launched the scheme to encourage retiring or recently retired officers to consider going back to work. Eligible officers will retire and, following a break in service of at least one month, return to policing as a warranted officer.

They will be able to rejoin at the rank they retired at, up to inspector level, and will be posted to where their skills and experience can best be used.

Tim said trying to retain staff with key skills made perfect sense and welcomed the fact the Federation was consulted about the scheme.

He said: "Many officers considering their retirement options will have plenty of external job opportunities because of the excellent transferable skills they have.

"A top rate sergeant would be retained on an annual salary of £48,000 but their abated pension of around £27,000 would need to be deducted from the retained salary so in effect this officer would be getting £21,000 a year for doing the same job! That's not the incentive most would require to remain.

"It is essential that officers considering this option seek appropriate advice both pensions and taxation wise.

"And for the Force to truly compete, it needs to allow officers to work on the same basis they would in the private sector, drawing their pension and salary."

Tim said the Force would also have to



West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers.

address infrastructure and back office issues. He said 28 per cent of West Midlands Police officers were student officers which had created great demand for the infrastructure which had been lost since funding cuts began in 2010.

He said: "The cuts removed the infrastructure including appropriate levels of tutors for the students. We have seen ratios of one tutor to six students which is clearly unsustainable.

"In fairness, the Force recognises this and has gone some way to remedy it with a

commitment to have a maximum of one-to-two in the future."

Tim warned difficulties in recruiting officers in key roles had also reached crisis point with CID becoming a particularly undesirable department because of caseload and working conditions.

He said: "This has resulted in the Force mandating moves into these roles which is a positive step and will hopefully stop some of the experience drain we are currently suffering.

"Aside from normal retirements, we are also having to deal with officers simply resigning too - April saw 30 officers resign."

Tim said there was lots for members to think about around the implications to their pensions while considering rejoining.

Retiring before age 55 and taking a lump sum from the 1987 Police Pension Scheme will give a member a better commutation factor. Age 49: 27.3; age 50:26.9; age 51: 26.4; age 52: 25.9; age 53: 25.4; age 54: 24.9; age 55: 24.3.

Using a lump sum to pay off mortgage, loans or for investment may be beneficial but, as always, members are urged to seek advice from a financial advisor before making any decision.

A pension may be abated but it will still benefit in the background from declared pension increases.

If a member contributes to the 2015 pension scheme on rejoining, their previous 2015 pension entitlement earned from April 2022 will be joined up with their new period and if they then decide to retire at 55 direct from active service the actuarial reduction applied will be based on the normal pension age of the scheme which is age 60.

If a member retired with 1987 scheme benefits before 55 and did not rejoin Pensionable Service and then requested their 2015 benefits at 55 their actuarial reduction would be based on state pension age which may be age 67 or even 68.

Members can contact their Fed rep if they need further advice and guidance on the 30++ rejoiner scheme.

**“ ASIDE FROM NORMAL RETIREMENTS, WE ARE ALSO HAVING TO DEAL WITH OFFICERS SIMPLY RESIGNING TOO - APRIL SAW 30 OFFICERS RESIGN.**

# Operation Hampshire: 'I'm proud of how far we've come' says deputy chair

**T**he deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation says he is proud to see how far Operation Hampshire has come, as he praises the progress of the nationwide strategy.

Jason (Jase) Dooley has highlighted the positive impact he feels Op Hampshire has had on internal processes across the West Midlands, after the wellbeing initiative led by Oscar Kilo was launched to provide a consistent strategy, process and guidance for forces to follow in response to assaults on police officers.

Op Hampshire has become a priority workstream for the National Police Wellbeing Service and Police Covenant, was recently adopted by UNISON and has the backing of policing minister Chris Philp.

Speaking about the success of Op Hampshire within the West Midlands, Jase said: "I've been in the Force for almost 30 years and, believe me, the way we respond when an officer has been assaulted is very different, compared to when I first joined. And Op Hampshire has been pivotal in making these changes happen.

"When I started out if we were assaulted - which happened to pretty much all of us - we would go down the pub and brush it off, it would be swept under the carpet. And that was the norm.

"Nowadays, it's taken much more seriously - as it should be. It doesn't matter who you are, how old you are, what rank you are, being assaulted is not acceptable. And whether officers like to admit it or not, it definitely has an impact on our mental health - and, in some cases, our physical health."

Despite praising Op Hampshire internally, Jase voiced his concerns about what is done externally, calling for the courts to send a stronger message to offenders by taking assaults on officers more seriously.

"Members of the public cannot continue to think it's OK to assault officers," he added.

"We can do all we want internally but



*National Op Hampshire coordinator  
Dave Brewster.*

offenders aren't facing any consequences if they hit, punch, spit or bite officers, then what message is that sending?"

Jase's comments come after Steve Hartshorn, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, called Operation Hampshire a 'legacy project in policing'.

"If anyone ever asks: 'what does the Federation ever do for its members?', then this is an absolute example of what we do. I am immensely proud of how far Op Hampshire has come, its success speaks for itself," said Steve.

"While Op Hampshire is primarily still focussing on officer assaults, it's actually giving our members so much more than that - you have to look at the bigger picture.

"The data we collect will educate us, which in turn will help us provide better training and communications. The project also gives our members the confidence they need to feel valued and see that their Federation is looking after them.

"We're also working with other agencies too, like our emergency service colleagues in

the ambulance service, to share the strategy. Not only will Op Hampshire support officers today but, as it grows and develops, it's only going to get bigger.

"I genuinely believe we can get the public's confidence in the police back and it will be through projects like Op Hampshire."

Steve added that the success of Op Hampshire has been driven largely by the national Op Hampshire coordinator, Dave Brewster. Dave retired from the Met Police last year but has retained his role to keep up the momentum of the initiative with the National Police Wellbeing Service.

Dave has created a national network of Op Hampshire leads across the UK to develop a pool of knowledge so that every force is represented and can share their experiences to help tackle the issue of assaults together.

"My goal is that every assault on a police officer or member of staff is recorded, investigated and then those involved are given the correct support they need. Even if they don't think that they need support, I believe everyone should at least be offered it" added Dave, who said that in today's society, many offenders believe they can freely attack police officers with impunity.

Echoing Jase's comments, Dave added: "I want offenders to be held to account for what they do. After all, the police are here to protect the public and we have to ensure that the thin blue line is supported. If officers aren't being protected and supported, then everything starts to go wrong.

"A huge element of Op Hampshire is changing the culture in policing. Being assaulted is not part of our job. But changing that culture starts with us. We all have a part to play and each individual working in policing is key to the success of such change. It doesn't happen overnight. It takes leadership, direction, action and participation."

**“MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CANNOT CONTINUE TO THINK IT'S OK TO ASSAULT OFFICERS.**

# New board member determined to prove 'dyslexia doesn't limit you'

New West Midlands Police Federation Board member Steve Green, who has dyslexia, has told how being diagnosed with the condition was a 'revolution' as he hopes his new role will allow him to 'stand up for those who feel they do not have a voice'.

The 52-year-old inspector, who became a West Midlands Federation workplace representative for the third time in autumn last year, says he wants to provide a 'support mechanism' and 'a friendly face' for members.

Steve, who joined the Force in 1996, having volunteered as a Special for four years prior, is now using his experience and knowledge of policing, as well as his dyslexia diagnosis to help others.

"Being diagnosed with dyslexia was a revolution, it changed my world," said the father-of-one, who was diagnosed only four years ago, at the age of 49.

"I'd written a document without using Microsoft Word, and all of the letters were jumbled up. That prompted me to get tested - and once diagnosed, so many other things made a lot of sense too. Like, I'd always be overly early to events - people might not know it, but that's a common trait of dyslexia. Or how I found telling the time a real challenge."

Following his diagnosis, Steve became part of the Force's Neurodiversity Group and various support mechanisms were put in place,



New board member Steve Green.

including software for his computer that allowed him to listen to reports, rather than read them.

"It was almost a relief when I was diagnosed because the support you get is life-changing," continued Steve, who also lives with dyscalculia, a condition that makes performing arithmetic calculations difficult.

"I tell everyone I'm dyslexic - I'm a real advocate of being open and transparent. I think if you're honest it helps people make sense of certain ways you're behaving."

In 2018, before his diagnosis, Steve completed a Master's Degree in management and leadership, receiving a distinction.

He said: "I want to prove to others that dyslexia doesn't limit you. You just think differently to others, and you can use that as a strength. In fact, people with dyslexia are more often than not, great leaders."

Steve first became a workplace rep in 2012, in line with the police marching through London as part of a protest over cuts. Then again, a few years later as a sergeant, wanting to raise awareness of the issues around detectives. And most recently now, following the introduction of the Force's Change Programme.

"My drive, as a board member, is ensuring equality for officers and prioritising their welfare," added Steve.

"The changes that are being seen in the West Midlands are going to have a real impact on officers. Don't get me wrong, I think localised policing models are the way forward, I just think our members will need a lot of support as they get used to this 'new norm'.

"I want to stand up for those who don't have a voice, especially younger officers who are very influential. I think senior officers can easily take advantage of their enthusiasm, and that's not fair.

"What comes with experience is confidence and an understanding of regulations. I like to think that being voted onto the Branch Board shows that my peers recognise what I can bring to the table and what I can offer.

"I've got just under three years left before I retire. I want to leave a legacy, and pass on what I've learnt to others."

**“ I TELL EVERYONE I'M DYSLEXIC - I'M A REAL ADVOCATE OF BEING OPEN AND TRANSPARENT. I THINK IF YOU'RE HONEST, IT HELPS PEOPLE MAKE SENSE OF CERTAIN WAYS YOU'RE BEHAVING.**

# Men's Health Week: Deputy chair 'Big Jase Dooley' opens up about mental health

The deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation has told how seeking support for his mental health saved him from becoming 'severely depressed' as he hopes to help others.

In a candid interview about his wellbeing, Jase Dooley has compared mental health to a glass, 'that continues to fill up, and fill up, until it overflows'.

Speaking from his own recent experience, Jase revealed how over the past two years he felt his wellbeing 'reach rock bottom', which led to him working an excessive amount of over-time, as a coping mechanism.

"Everyone has a breaking point, even police officers - even me, 'big, old Jase'," said the 52-year-old father-of-two who, after a marriage breakdown saw his mental health spiral.

"Our mental health is like a glass. It fills up and fills up, until it overflows. My glass was overflowing. It's probably been filling up for the past 28 years since I joined the Force - but back then, no one talked about anxiety or stress, we just got on with it and went down to the pub after a shift to debrief. Things have

changed, you don't often speak to your mates like that anymore."

Jase opened up as part of Men's Health Week, an annual campaign which took place this year from 12 to 18 June.

He explained how he was in denial about his mental health, and found that taking on extra hours at work, helped to keep his mind off how he was feeling.

He added: "I'd become tired, lethargic and I had no energy. I didn't have the enthusiasm to go out anymore, I couldn't be bothered - and that had started to impact my daughter too. I should have been out at the park with her, out watching her ride her bike or kicking a football about.

"I knew something wasn't right and I tried to hide it by working more. It was my best mate who noticed the changes and started to ask me if everything was OK. He would come round and see that I wasn't myself, I was upset - he said I needed to talk to someone.

"There's a history of cancer in my family, so I was worried it could be related to that - so I went to the doctors."

After negative blood tests confirmed he did not have cancer, the doctor started to ask Jase about depression.

"I remember thinking, me - depressed? No, not me. And then all of a sudden, I just couldn't stop crying," admitted Jason, who has since been supported by his doctor.

"If I hadn't gone to the doctor, I would have been severely depressed now."

Since seeking support from the doctor a few months back, Jason has already noticed a huge difference in his mental health.

**“EVERYONE HAS A BREAKING POINT, EVEN POLICE OFFICERS - EVEN ME, 'BIG, OLD JASE'.**

"The last Bank Holiday, I would've been searching for over-time but instead, I spent quality time with my daughter - we went to the park three times and went out on her scooter, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

"I feel so much better now and hope that by sharing my story, it will encourage others to start asking themselves, 'am I OK?'"

"And, if you're not feeling 100 per cent, then speak to someone. And if you have any concerns about your mental health, go and see your doctor - and remember, you can use the Group Insurance Scheme through the Federation if you need financial help.

"The first step really is talking about it. I'm 'Big Jase Dooley' and I suffer too - it's nothing to be ashamed of."

If you feel you are struggling with your mental health, then speak to your line manager or get in touch with the Police Federation.



# Chair wants action to stop 'young lives being lost' to knife crime

## RICH COOKE HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING FOR A BAN ON DANGEROUS WEAPONS

**T**he chair of West Midlands Police Federation is highlighting his campaign for a ban on dangerous weapons such as machetes and 'zombie' style blades as Operation Sceptre continues in Force.

Rich Cooke's comments come after a dedicated weapons arch was deployed in Birmingham city centre as part of Operation Sceptre, a national bi-annual campaign that took place in May, designed to tackle knife crime, through arrests, education and awareness raising.

The arch, which helped identify and deter people who carry blades, was used in busy spots across the city, with police officers asking members of the public to walk through the gateway.

Although walking through the arch was not compulsory, officers used existing powers to stop and search people for weapons if they had reasonable grounds to do so.

"This operation is a great way of alerting the public to the dangers of knife crime and deterring criminal possession of deadly weapons, but what police really need is to be backed up by stringent laws and severe sentencing for perpetrators," says Rich.

"Removing blades is important and the seizures must go on, but it's a revolving door, it being so easy, even for children, to get hold of dangerous weapons, including machetes and zombie blades, cheaply online. The likes of a weapons arch or knife amnesty only really have a temporary impact.

"Knife crime is a national scourge, and young, innocent lives are being lost, especially here in the West Midlands."

Rich said the Government should be 'acting quickly' by banning the marketing and supply of the dangerous weapons online and in street retailers.

"Clamping down on sale and supply is only one piece of a complex jigsaw. It won't of itself solve the problem, but it will have a positive impact and over time we would see fewer of these weapons. If it saves one life, it's worth it," he continued.

"Also, the Government needs to continue to back forces and push chief constables to ensure police officers are unambiguously supported to use their stop and search powers lawfully and without hesitation.

"For those who are found in possession of such weapons, there needs to be much more severe prison sentences. An average 7.7-month sentence for repeat offenders, only around a third of which actually go to prison, according to the latest figures is an absolute joke and fails to address either the seriousness of the crime or protect the public by keeping them off the streets."

**“CLAMPING DOWN ON SALE AND SUPPLY IS ONLY ONE PIECE OF A COMPLEX JIGSAW. IT WON'T OF ITSELF SOLVE THE PROBLEM, BUT IT WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT AND OVER TIME WE WOULD SEE FEWER OF THESE WEAPONS. IF IT SAVES ONE LIFE, IT'S WORTH IT.”**



# 'We can't hold back'

West Midlands Police Federation has welcomed the Home Secretary's pledge to back the use of stop and search powers "to prevent violence and save more lives".

Suella Braverman said she would give her "full support" to officers who use the powers and was writing to police chiefs across England and Wales to give her full backing to the tactic.

Ms Braverman said: "Carrying weapons is a scourge on our society, and anyone doing so is risking their own lives as well as the lives of those around them.

"This dangerous culture must be brought to a stop. My first priority is to keep the public safe, and people who insist on carrying a weapon must know that there will be consequences.

"The police have my full support to ramp up the use of stop and search, wherever necessary, to prevent violence and save more lives."

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke welcomed Ms Braverman's comments and warned that statistics used by critics of stop and search could be misleading.

He said: "We can't hold back in the fight against knife crime and stop and search - talking in the widest possible sense - is an

uncontroversial tactic which has widespread public support.

"It certainly has widespread support among police officers because we know it works."

Critics of stop and search say it disproportionately targets black and ethnic minority communities. Government statistics suggest black people are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched compared with white people.

And campaign groups have previously warned that relaxing restrictions on police use of the power could compound discrimination.

But Ms Braverman made it clear she supported the police in tackling knife crime.

"Every death from knife crime is a tragedy," she said. "That's why I also back the police in tackling this blight in communities which are disproportionately affected, such as among young black males.

"We need to do everything in our power to crack down on this violence."

Rich acknowledged it was a complex issue but warned failure to face up to the realities of street crime would lead to the loss of more young lives.

"We get potshots taken at us over issues such as disproportionality which comes from an average figure taken across the entire

population of England and Wales," he said.

"But the figures - and they've been quoted again in the media today - are not accurate.

"Statistical averages are very general tools to measure something which is not a simple or straightforward issue."

Rich said it was complicated by levels of poverty, social injustices and a variety of issues which he suggested had a much bigger impact on communities than policing tactics.

He said: "I think sometimes we are too worried about political considerations. Suella Braverman has given us enough political top cover and we should embrace that and use these powers because there are too many kids getting murdered.

"It is a complicated issue and I do think some of the debate has been warped by the media.

"Some community leaders have got concerns and I think in those cases we have to explain the use of the tactic better because the media narrative has warped the debate and I don't think they are getting the truth."



Home Secretary Suella Braverman.

For when you need back up...

Police Dogs Jack & Kato

**g** GORVINS SOLICITORS  
**police divorce**  
the specialists in police family law

Contact your dedicated force representatives today on  
**0161 930 5151**  
e-mail [police-divorce@gorvins.com](mailto:police-divorce@gorvins.com)  
or visit us at [www.gorvins.com/wmp](http://www.gorvins.com/wmp)

## Legal Services for West Midlands Police

With over 20 years' experience of working with police, Gorvins have been a leading provider of legal services in all matters arising from relationship breakdowns and disputes concerning children. We understand the importance of family and the impact that a family breakdown can have upon all of those closely concerned and that is why our service (with discounted fees) is offered not just to serving and retired police officers and police staff, but also to their partners and immediate family members.

Part of **our commitment** to supporting those whose vital work supports us all includes a prompt **initial consultation - free of charge**.

We also supply our legal advice to you at a discounted rate and are able to offer a **fixed-fee divorce process**.

Our family and divorce law specialists understand the aspects that particularly impact upon the police with reference to pensions in divorce cases and shift patterns in relation to arrangement for children.

### Other Legal Services

- Wills, Trusts and Probate
- Corporate/Commercial
- Personal Injury
- Employment Law
- Insolvency
- Dispute Resolution and Civil Litigation
- Commercial Property



The fund-raising runners.

# Fund-raising team take on Wolf Run for children's hospital

**A** team of Force child protection officers successfully completed a gruelling Wolf Run, raising more than £1,000 for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

As part of the event, which took place in Leamington, the 10-strong team - who called themselves 'The Dirty Piggies' - battled an off-road 10km route of boggy ground, muddy lakes, messy trails, hills and fallen trees.

Detective Neil Jones-Keyte, who was part of the fund-raising group, said that 'although the event was a lot more challenging than expected', there was 'no giving up'.

"We're all part of a big team, a police family - and this was our chance to escape from the office and raise money for a cause that means so much to all of us," said 43-year-old Neil, who has been working in child protection for

around seven years.

"When Meg [Davis] suggested we take on the Wolf Run I don't think we realised just how difficult it would be, but there was no giving up - we know just how much of a difference the money we've raised will make.

"As a team, we've seen some seriously complex and severe cases and a lot of the time these young victims need to go to Birmingham Children's Hospital. We've seen first-hand the fantastic care they can give, the work they do is priceless."

The team, which is made up of all abilities, has already reached more than £1,000 of its £1,500 target.

"Our team was made up of all ages and abilities, ranging from the early 20s to over 50," added Neil.



Doing more for sick kids Birmingham Children's Hospital

"Some of the team are really fit, and others aren't - but we all did it together. We all crossed that finish line as one big team.

"This was our opportunity for us all to go out, do some exercise and raise money - it also gave us something else to focus on and work towards. And it's a great alternative to your usual team away day.

"People travel to Birmingham Children's Hospital from across the country because of the amazing work they do. From nurses to specialist doctors, and even their locum staff members, they go above and beyond for their patients - and not because they have to, but because they want to.

"As far as team-building tasks go, I don't think this will be the last time we take on a challenge like this. I'm working on a skydive next, so watch this space."

Donate to the team by visiting their [JustGiving page](https://www.justgiving.com/Birmingham-Childrens-Hospital).

**“ WE’RE ALL PART OF A BIG TEAM, A POLICE FAMILY - AND THIS WAS OUR CHANCE TO ESCAPE FROM THE OFFICE AND RAISE MONEY FOR A CAUSE THAT MEANS SO MUCH TO ALL OF US. ”**



Jess Davies taking part in the fund-raising run.

## Jess completes half marathon in honour of murdered schoolboy

A West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative has raised more than £1,000 in memory of local six-year-old Arthur Labinjo Hughes who was brutally killed in 2020.

Jess Davies completed the AJ Bell Great Birmingham Run in May in honour of Solihull schoolboy Arthur, whose death shocked the nation after he was killed by his step-mother Emma Tustin and father Thomas Hughes.

Mother-of-one Jess, whose own son is just five months older than Arthur, raised a total of £1,100 in memory of Arthur, all of which has been donated to Birmingham Children's Hospital, the hospital that cared for the youngster.

"I think being a mum myself, and such tragedy happening right on my doorstep, makes me want to raise as much money in Arthur's honour - not only to help other children but to help keep his memory alive," said 42-year-old Jess.

"This story really hit me. It rocked the nation, it was horrendous. I think what was so

unusual was that the public was able to see footage of the abuse - we could all see what horror that little lad was put through.

"The day of the event ended up being surprisingly and unexpectedly hot but it was a great day. I managed to raise lots of money for a well-deserved cause."

Response officer Jess, who has been in the Force for 18 years, completed the 13.1-mile route wearing the football top of Arthur's favourite team, Birmingham City which the number 'six' on the back, in honour of his age.

She also wanted to raise awareness of a campaign launched by members of Arthur's family for all social workers to wear bodycams during home visits.

"The work some of the family has done since Arthur's tragic death is great, especially

around raising awareness and campaigning," added Jess, who has previously completed both the London Marathon and the Birmingham Half twice in the past.

"I 100 per cent support their bodycams campaign. In my opinion, bodycams are some of the best pieces of kit we have in the police - after all, videos can be used as evidence as need be and hopefully help to prevent cases, like Arthur's, from happening.

"It's wearing bodycams during the unannounced visits that will make the difference. After all, anyone can make their lives look normal if they have time to prepare for the visit.

"Bodycams have become instrumental in policing, and I think they would have the same impact for social services too."

Jess's fund-raising efforts come after the family of Arthur chose to use a poem written by the Fed rep, to feature on his memorial plaque.

**“ THE DAY OF THE EVENT ENDED UP BEING SURPRISINGLY AND UNEXPECTEDLY HOT BUT IT WAS A GREAT DAY. I MANAGED TO RAISE LOTS OF MONEY FOR A WELL-DESERVED CAUSE.**

# Tree climbing, crate stacking, zip wiring and S'mores



**M**embers and their families gathered at Blackwell Court Adventure for our annual 'A Day To Remember' event.

Set in 50 acres of beautiful parkland, Blackwell Court has been the home of our family adventure day for the past four years.

Blackwell Court Adventure is a non-profit organisation offering more than 20 indoor and outdoor activities. Serving and retired officers, police staff and their families enjoyed a thrilling day of tree climbing, crate stacking, zip wiring, navigating the high-all-aboard and archery, followed by a campfire of toasted marshmallows, s'mores, and ice creams before

the journey home.

The event, which was held at the end of May, is the brainchild of Benevolent Fund chair John Williams who wanted to bring members together and give a little something back to those who subscribe monthly to our police charity.

Back in March, members were invited to express their interest by entering a ballot. More than 200 families got in touch to say they would like to attend. A total of 62 places were subsequently offered to members and the cost of the adventure day was paid for by the fund.

"This year's event was yet another resounding success," commented John. "It is proving extremely popular with families and it was great to see them having so much fun together. It is also nice to be able to chat to members and explain our charity work as well as reminding them of their many membership benefits."

It was an early start on the day, which included a 'meet and greet' from the Ben Fund's general manager, Steve Newbury, followed by a short safety briefing by the Blackwell staff.

Then it was straight into the day's activities which included; crate stacking, archery, two zip wire challenges, tree climbing and the High All Aboard.

PD 5306 Hawkins joined the Ben Fund team to meet families at the event and it was fair to say she received a lot of fuss and attention. Someone who also received lots of attention was Steve's granddaughter, 12-week-old Florence, our youngest ever attendee.

We received lots of lovely feedback from the families who attended.

*"I think it was one of the best experiences of my life!!! My favourite thing was the crate stacking but I enjoyed the zip wire too. Thanks."*

*"What a fantastic day, thank you. Wonderful experience, great fun, quality family time! Huge thanks to all for arranging."*

*"Wonderful day with wonderful people. We are so very lucky to be part of it. Thank you."*

*"An amazing day out with the family. Great memories to cherish and good friends made along the way. Thank you."*

*"We had a really lovely day. Very well*



organised. Such a lovely way of getting to know other colleagues and understand what the Benevolent Fund offers. Many thanks”

“The event would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts of so many people,” added John Williams.

“Thanks to the staff at Blackwell Adventure for providing a great programme of activities. A massive thank you to the Ben Fund team, Nicki and Steve and to our Operations Committee members, Kay Bargewell and Sue Cleeton, for their amazing efforts on the day along with serving officer Charlie.

“Finally, thank you to all the families for joining in, being great sports and for making the day a wonderful success.”

We are pleased to announce that we will be doing it all over again next year. Further details about the event will be available on our website in the new year and emailed to members.

**Don't forget we will be hosting our second 'A Day To Remember' event on 30 August at Aztec Adventure Water Park.**



## NEW MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT THROUGH THE BENEVOLENT FUND

Through our unique partnership with the holistic treatment centre St Michael's Lodge, our members can now receive mental health support as part of their membership benefits with West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund.

We are offering a wide variety of counselling, covering all aspects of professional and personal life to support you and your mental health.

Members can receive up to eight online counselling sessions from a professional team of psychotherapists who are trained in many areas of counselling.

[Find out more.](#)

# Aztec Adventure Water Park

**Wednesday 30 August 2023 -  
OPENING SOON FOR ENTRIES**



Following the ever-popular family event at Blackwell, we will be hosting our second family day for 2023. This time members and their families can enjoy a summer's evening at Aztec Adventure Aqua Park on Wednesday 30 August 2023.

Families will be able to test their agility as they take on the challenges of the giant floating assault course, followed by an hour on the lake kayaking and paddle boarding.

We received some lovely feedback about the evening event last year and hope families will have a great time again this year.

Please note: Activities are suitable for children aged six and over. Participants must be over 122cm tall for safety

reasons.

To register your interest for the **FREE family water park event** please visit <https://wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/family-events/>

If the response from members is high, we will run a ballot to select which lucky families will be taking part. Notification will be sent out to those successful along with information explaining further details about the day.

If you would like to know more about West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund including how to join, visit [www.wmpben.co.uk](http://www.wmpben.co.uk) or contact West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund either by email [info@wmpben.co.uk](mailto:info@wmpben.co.uk) or call the office on **0121 752 4919**.

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





# Officials announce new approach to work on Police Covenant

## PLANS TO PUT FOCUS ON OFFICER WELLBEING

**T**hree new priorities have been identified by Home Office officials working on the new Police Covenant.

The Police Covenant Oversight Board (PCOB) said the additional priorities were a reflection of the rapidly changing nature of police work.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke welcomed plans to update the covenant.

He said: "The Police Covenant is an important reminder that the sacrifices made by our members and their families do not go unrecognised.

"Society asks a lot of the people whose job it is to protect our way of life and this is a formal way of making sure that is not a one-way street.

"We worked hard on the Police Covenant so we are pleased to see it being treated seriously and with respect."

The primary focus of the covenant has always been ensuring the health and wellbeing

of serving and former police officers, their physical protection and the support required by their families.

And it was initially working on 11 key priorities agreed within the parameters set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

But three extra priorities have now been added to the list.

They are:

- **To identify and implement a package of measures for individuals who have left the police workforce**
- **To scope the current support in place in relation to healthcare pathways for the police workforce through further NHS engagement**
- **To consider wider issues around police officer and staff safety at the roadside and propose non legislative options to improve safety.**

A spokesman said: "The Oversight Board

will continue to review all priorities throughout the year to consider any further points to add, or the potential combining of priorities."

Of the original eleven priorities, three have now been completed and signed off by the PCOB.

The work under the Covenant to consider the issues raised in the Officer and Staff Safety Review have been met through the changes to legislation around assaults on emergency workers brought in by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The workstream to support forces to put in place Operation Hampshire relating to assaults against officers and staff has also been implemented, with data collection on these assaults now a key part of recording practices.

And the third and final completed area of work is the inclusion of mental health training for new officers in initial training, as part of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) developed by the College of Policing.

# Fed welcomes appointment of new chief medical officer for the Police Covenant

The deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation has welcomed news that a chief medical officer has been appointed for the Police Covenant, saying he hopes this will combat the 'postcode lottery' feeling felt by so many officers.

Jason Dooley says having a chief medical officer in place to support the strategic direction of the Police Covenant is essential if progress is to be made around the physical and mental health of cops.

Jase's comments come after it was recently announced that John Harrison was appointed the role, bringing with him years of experience,

nine of which have been working with Devon and Cornwall Police as their chief medical officer.

"Having a medical professional who also has essential experience in the policing, to represent our members and give our officers a voice at that level, I hope will prove invaluable," says Jase.

"It's no secret that the level of support officers receive for their physical and mental health, varies hugely depending on location - and we definitely feel it here in the West Midlands.

"I look forward to seeing the impact John

makes and I really hope he helps drive the changes we need nationally, in order to improve the health and welfare of our members at a local level."

"It's a marathon, not a sprint" says the new chief medical officer for the Police Covenant, as he admits his main challenge will be ensuring consistent policies across 43 Forces when each has its own priority.

"When it comes to national consistency, that's the problem," said John.

"One of the key challenges I see is that all 43 different police forces come with their own set of priorities. One of my goals is to focus on pulling together a network of people to support and operationalise a national agenda, so all forces can roll out the same policies and ways of working."

John's appointment comes shortly after the Police Covenant revealed their latest priorities includes, to scope the current support in place in relation to healthcare pathways for the police workforce through further NHS Engagement.

The majority of his career has been spent working with the NHS, specifically as an occupational physician, using his core medical training to better understand ongoing issues in employment.

"A priority will be to look at a standardised national approach to occupational health across all forces," he continued.

"It is a postcode lottery. The variation between what different forces offer is massive and there's a huge amount of work that needs to be done in this area.

"I want to change the narrative around occupational policing, not only for our officers but so that we can recruit better too. I think the police is a very exciting place to work and I want to help other healthcare professionals see that."

John explained that his priorities also include clinical governance, to make sure everything that is being done within the police surrounding the health of officers, is done safely.

"It's so important that police forces are looking after their people properly. I'm here to not only help the organisation but to help officers too," John added.

"I recognise it's going to be a marathon, not a sprint but I'm confident we will get there."



John Harrison.



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



**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)



# Former Fed member launches wellbeing retreat for police officers

A former West Midlands Police Federation member who left the Force due to undiagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and burnout now runs her own business, offering officers and their families the chance to enjoy a wellbeing retreat.

Having served in the police for 15 years, Hannah Bailey left the Force in 2013 and decided to re-train as a psychotherapist, leading to the launch of Blue Light Wellbeing, offering workshops, coaching and therapy sessions to current and former officers.

She has since collaborated with fellow police alumni Andy Labrum, a former

Northamptonshire police officer, and founder of Blue Light Leavers, giving members of the police family the opportunity to disconnect from the job while engaging with others who have shared similar experiences.

"We want to give officers and staff, as well as their immediate family members, a place to disconnect from the police while being surrounded by like-minded people who completely understand one another," said 46-year-old mother-of-two Hannah.

As well as experiencing undiagnosed PTSD and burnout during the latter part of her time in the Force, Hannah was diagnosed with



Hannah Bailey.

breast cancer.

After taking nine months off work due to her illness, Hannah returned to work, only for the cancer to come back.

"I'm pleased to say I'm fine now, both mentally and physically. However, at the time, I remember feeling, if I don't leave this job now, it will kill me. This isn't a blame game or an opportunity to criticise the police, but it is about me wanting to use my experiences to hopefully help others.

"I had to learn how to look after myself again. I'd been in the Force since I was 21 and I felt useless when I left. I had no idea who I was or what I was going to do. My physical and mental health was very poor.

"One of the questions I kept on asking myself was 'how do I fit into this world without policing?'"

Hannah explained how the retreats give serving and former officers and staff, the time and space they need to reconnect with themselves, while learning to understand and manage personal change, and their own mental health.

"It's important to acknowledge that the retreats aren't about treating those with [PTSD](#), it gives participants new and different ways to learn about their wellbeing," she continued.

Depending on the location, the two-night retreats include a variety of activities, including the likes of open water swimming, forest bathing, yoga classes, animal feeding, personal time and space to rest and reflect.

"It's not therapy, it's not group therapy. These retreats are for those wanting to learn more about their mental health and wellbeing, while forging new connections with others and hopefully, relaxing and enjoying themselves away from the job," Hannah added.

Following the retreat, participants will be given three months of support including both individual and group support sessions, if required.

The next retreat is taking place at [Wootton Park Wellness](#), in Warwickshire from Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28 September. Tickets for the event start from £545, depending on the type of accommodation.

To find out more or book your spot on the retreat email:

[Hannah@bluelightwellbeing.uk](mailto:Hannah@bluelightwellbeing.uk)

**Fee-Free  
Mortgage Advice  
From Warren & Co.**

**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)



# HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS?

## Noise-induced hearing loss can drastically affect those who work in law enforcement

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is a term used to describe hearing loss, deafness or tinnitus caused by exposure to excessive noise at work where insufficient or no training or ear protection has been provided. NIHL can have a significant impact on those who work in law enforcement, particularly those who use firearms, due to frequent exposure to extremely high levels of noise in their line of work.

Though hearing loss is a common symptom of age, it's important to note the distinct signs that indicate noise-induced hearing loss. Some signs to look out for include:

- **Difficulty hearing or understanding speech, particularly in environments with background noise.**
- **Tinnitus, which is a ringing, buzzing, hissing, or other sounds in one ear or both ears.**
- **Some people become more sensitive to loud noises. Everyday sounds that were previously tolerable may become uncomfortable or even painful.**
- **Difficulty accurately determining the direction a sound is coming from.**
- **Constantly increasing the volume of the television or radio.**
- **Asking others to speak louder or repeat themselves frequently.**
- **Fatigue or strain from listening for extended periods of time.**

All these signs and symptoms can vary in severity and differ from person to person.

As police officers often deal with exposure to loud sounds such as gunshots, sirens, explosions, and high-decibel events, this can and often does lead to damage being sustained to the sensitive structures of the inner ear, which can turn into noise-induced hearing loss. Though symptoms differ, this could cause a permanent decrease in hearing sensitivity, making it more difficult for police officers to hear important sounds, such as verbal commands from colleagues or approaching emergency vehicles.

Hearing loss may also compromise an officer's situational awareness, making them less able to identify any potential threats or hazards. This can impact the ability to respond quickly and appropriately to dangerous situations, potentially jeopardising their safety and the safety of others. Hearing loss could even affect an officer's job performance, especially in tasks that require good hearing abilities, such as gathering witness statements, conducting interviews, or participating in surveillance operations.

To minimise the risk of police officers developing noise-induced hearing loss, it's important for police forces to implement hearing conservation programmes. These could include training in and the provision of hearing protection devices, regular hearing screenings, education on the risks of noise exposure, and strategies to minimise exposure to loud sounds whenever possible. The law says that every employer has a duty of care to protect employees from suffering harm in the workplace, including noise induced injuries.

Madelene Holdsworth, Managing Director of Specialist Legal Services and expert in noise induced hearing loss cases on behalf of police officers, says: 'It's imperative that police departments have stringent safety strategies in place to reduce noise induced hearing loss and tinnitus amongst their staff. Having worked with police federations for over 60 years, we've seen the detrimental impact that hearing loss and tinnitus can have on officers. Employers' duty of care is crucial in safeguarding the health and safety of police officers and safety measures used must be fully effective at all times particularly around the use of radio earpieces.'

Police officers, like other employees, are protected by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. These regulations set out the standards and requirements for employers to manage and control noise in the workplace to prevent occupational hearing loss.

If a police officer believes that their hearing loss was caused or significantly worsened by their work environment, they may be eligible to make a claim for compensation.

Expert noise-induced hearing loss claims lawyers at Slater and Gordon will arrange for you to be examined by a medical professional to determine what proportion of your hearing loss is due to workplace exposures to noise, and on the basis of that independent medical opinion, you will be advised on whether you have a claim that can be pursued.



## "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](http://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** ColMap 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)



# Did you know...

**Our worldwide family travel policy\* covers cruise trips, including repatriation?**

More than just travel insurance—the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance scheme also includes:

- £130K Life Assurance
- Best Doctors®
- £15K Critical Illness
- Personal Accident
- Sickness Benefits
- Mobile Phone/Gadget Cover
- RAC Motor Breakdown: Roadside, Recovery, At Home, Onward Travel and European Motoring Assistance

**Plus GP Care on demand**, an additional benefit which is funded by the Federation, giving unlimited access via telephone or app to a GMC licensed practicing GP - even when you're on holiday!

All for **£25.94\*\*** per month, by payroll deduction.

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 of the cover including exclusions and limitations can be found in the policy wording, which is available from the Federation.

\*\*The premium includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) and is correct at 1 May 2023.

West Midlands Police Federation is an Appointed Representative of Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited. 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) AR34-2023