

Stressed detectives turn to Fed reps as forces cut support

Detectives are increasingly turning to federation representatives for counselling as occupational health units in forces are 'diminishing rapidly'.

The Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum (PFNDF) Seminar debated the increase in cases of stress among detectives who are suffering cuts to their numbers and increased workloads.

Ian Spain, a member of the PFNDF, said that detectives do not deal with good news – that it tends to be everybody's horror stories and grief and questioned whether this coupled with a long-hours culture is taking its toll.

Liz Dux, a solicitor with Russell Jones and Walker, deals with victims of psychological injuries including police officers involved in the response to the terrorist attacks in London in 7/7. She told detectives from all over the UK at the PFNDF Seminar that as facilities for 'in-house' counselling are closing and the nurturing role of forces is diminishing federation representatives have to fill the gap.

"You as fed reps are taking on a semi-counselling role. It's very important to members and by the time they get to you they are sometimes very very ill," she said.

The advice she gave to federation representatives was to try to spot any officers who may be suffering from the effects of a psychological illness and report it early on. Officers who are treated early by such means as cognitive behavioural therapy react much better than those who suffer in silence.

The delegates were told that it is very difficult to prove a psychological injury claim in a court as there are fears of the 'great black cloud' of injury claims that would be made. Ms Dux also said such cases are very hard to prove as the criteria is hard to fulfil, and you had to show any injury was 'foreseeable'.

She added: "Police officers are not very good at saying 'hello, sorry, I'm having a breakdown.'"

More detectives are suffering stress, but forces are cutting counselling



Detective Awards recognise tireless work by officers

The first Police Federation National Detective Forum Awards have been held to highlight the crucial role of the detective which is under pressure from spending cuts.

The awards, held at Chelsea Football Club, paid tribute to some of the tireless work by detectives across the UK. Det Insp Steve Williams, chair of the PFNDF, told the audience that cuts to policing meant detectives were 'increasingly over-worked and overwhelmed' with investigations as the number of officers and roles fell.

He added: "At a time when morale is at its lowest, it is great that we can showcase some of the hard work done by detectives around the country to bring dangerous criminals to justice. The awards ceremony was a chance to celebrate the dedication and professionalism of our colleagues and highlighted the essential role they play within the police service and in protecting the public."

Met Det Ch Insp Caroline Goode and the Operation Baidland Investigation Team took home the Detective Investigation Award for their tireless work to catch those involved in the honour killing of Banaz Mahmod.

The work of the officers resulted in five convictions after the victim's body was discovered in a suitcase buried in a garden in 2006 when she had left her abusive husband for another man. The officers had to work incredibly hard to combat a wall of silence within the Kurdish community to track down those responsible.

Det Con Mandy Richardson, also from the Met, was given recognition for the high standard of her work in various roles including the South-East Regional Crime Squad, the National Crime Squad, Murder Teams. She has delivered an average of 12 detective courses every year since becoming involved in training and took away the Services to Detectives Award.

More on the nominees for the awards in next month's edition of the magazine.

DCI Goode and her team alongside guests and host Steve Williams, chair of the PFNDF

