

‘I could have been a ballet dancer, but I’m glad to be a Federation rep’

Case study: Zuleika Payne

There is no such thing as a typical Fed rep. All bring their own unique style and experience to the role. All share a common desire to improve the working conditions and prospects of their fellow police officers.

Zuleika Payne, who chairs the South Yorkshire Police Federation, was very nearly not a police officer at all. Her ambition was to become a ballet dancer. She says: “I moved to London in 1988 to follow my dreams and left behind my life in rural Derbyshire for this large, impersonal city. It was daunting, but the sight of a police officer on the beat always gave me comfort and reassurance.



“Then it dawned on me that maybe I could be that officer who protects the public. I changed my mind about ballet and decided to join the police service.” Zuleika was a PC in Rotherham for a number of years and, in 2005,

she was encouraged to become a Fed rep. She was initially one of only two women on the Branch Board and, although the gender balance is improving, she is keen to encourage more women to stand.

“Never underestimate yourself,” is her advice to would-be reps. She feels officers get a raw deal, but the Federation is their vital support and there to give advice and representation. She adds: “If you’re a good listener and able to speak to colleagues in a non-judgemental way, become a rep. You get training, and the satisfaction of supporting others far outweighs any money.” (Zuleika won the Women in Policing Award in 2016.)

Could you be a Fed rep? Find out how you can get involved at www.polfed.org/repsatwork