

PFEW Advisory Group – Report to Conference 2018



Introduction

The 2014 Normington Review made a series of recommendations on the culture, structure, behaviours and organisation of the PFEW. The 3 recurring themes are the emphasis on building trust, increasing the Federation's professionalism and putting unity before divisions.

Normington concluded that it would not be enough just to 'wish it to happen' and that there needed to be some form of continuous outside challenge.

Initially an Independent Reference Group was formed, but that was subsequently abolished. A new Advisory Group (AG) has now been established and, in keeping with Normington's recommendation, it comprises "a group of 6 people with a range of expertise ranging from public policy, to law, to policing, to organisational management and with at least 50 percent of the membership from outside the world of policing". Details of the group's membership can be found on pages 6 and 7.

The terms of reference of the AG are to advise upon and assess key areas of work and, in the process, enhance and promote the PFEW's credibility with stakeholders. Although the Group has the opportunity to bring up any matters it wishes with the Federation, it is particularly asked to look at the alignment of PFEW strategy, culture and activities with its core purpose and the degree to which it is serving the public interest. Areas that are suggested in this regard are standards, health and wellbeing, equality and diversity, pay and conditions and matters relating to public confidence.



Advisory Group activity

The AG has got off to a sluggish start and only had its first substantive meeting in November 2017. Since then, it has immersed itself in visiting PFEW Branches, attending its existing committees and meeting Headquarters officers and staff. The AG's initial view has been generally positive and from which we wish to provide 6 reflections to conference:

1. The AG has felt welcomed but found an equal understanding that whilst 'a part of' the Federation' we are also very much 'apart from' the structures and democracy of PFEW. We have found PFEW representatives and staff willing to engage, but we remain concerned that we are not yet recognised as a 'go to' body that can provide counsel and challenging advice. Nor do we yet feel that we receive the organisational support to make this possible. We are quite sure this is not deliberate obstruction, but we are not yet embedded in PFEW consciousness.
2. Our sense is that the Federation leadership has moved to embrace Normington's trinity of 'unity, trust and professionalism' but still has the humility to accept this will not be achieved in a few short steps. For our part, the AG has not yet been able to establish how deep within the PFEW structures and culture the desired objectives of trust, accountability, professionalism and ethics have taken root or how robustly the 'first shoots of change' will last when buffeted by events. That is a concern because some of the issues on which we have expertise and can advise (such as on financial governance) should come more naturally to a modern organisation than they appear to.
3. A key aspect of this relates to the fact that PFEW is a Federation (as the title intends) with Branches proud of their autonomy. But they are not independent; for, if they were, then it would not be a Federation. At the same time as autonomy is defended, there is a desire for the PFEW to lead with a clear national voice as if it were an Association. Whilst the new electoral system may produce a distinct leader with a Federation-wide member mandate this will not of itself stop some of the sniping we have witnessed and which is a source of great weakness. Indeed there are risks were a Chairman with a Federation-wide mandate to see him or herself in a Presidential role. It is a concern to us that this could lead to conflict with other equally-important power structures so balancing these competing pressures is a challenge.
4. We have seen a huge amount of effort being put into building the 'architecture' of the new election process, to the point where other important policy and governance issues have not had the full attention they deserve. There now seems to be a deep wish across PFEW to get the election over with. Whilst the AG shares that desire, we would counsel that a new electoral system will not of itself deliver the cultural shift envisaged by Normington or apparently wished for by the Federation at large. Three areas in particular stand out:
 - a. The AG is concerned about the financial and governance rules around expenses, contracts and how money is held 'in trust' on behalf of members. The AG has also asked to be briefed about the standing of the staff pension scheme, in the light of revelations in other organisations that schemes are underfunded and will not deliver their commitment to retiring staff.
 - b. The electoral changes need to be monitored to make sure they are having the desired effect and, in particular, whether the relationship between the National Board and National Council gives the leadership the incisive governance needed by PFEW.
 - c. The need for greater equality and diversity to be embedded in the structures of PFEW and a better grasp of ways in which the PFEW can become a champion of the broadest equality agenda. This could start with mainstreaming the work and not tagging it onto the end of agendas.
5. From across the country and from top to bottom we have met representatives who care about policing, protecting the public and ensuring fairness for police officers. The following little cameo illustrates the point - when a Branch representative was listing the various PFEW duties they performed, an AG member asked "do you do any police work?" which met with the response "all my work is for the police".
6. However, we have detected a very clear message from those same representatives which reports police officers feeling undervalued and under-resourced. AG wants to better research these views and their practical implications so as to help frame a better understanding of what is 'the public interest' and how a more productive debate can take place with Government and policy makers.

Advisory Group priorities

The Advisory Group will continue to immerse itself in the world of PFEW and engage with representatives at all levels and with policy makers. Immersion will undoubtedly see our views evolve, but it seems to us that there are 4 areas where our efforts need to be directed:

A. Purpose and Strategy. The focus on elections has prevented quality time being spent on examining PFEW's core purpose and building a strategy to deliver that. We have met many people with different views on what 'the Fed' is for, so agreeing common purpose is not some esoteric debate but has to come from deep within the Federation. We hope we can help PFEW find and articulate that common purpose.

B. Public interest. We have not found a clear and shared understanding of what this is to mean. Who, for instance, decides what is in the public interest? If it is to be Government, with its election mandate, then the PFEW could be too easily portrayed as not acting in the public interest if its views differ from Government. And when the police are faced with competing demands, such as child abuse or domestic violence or terrorism or slavery or putting 'bobbies on the beat', who decides which area is most in the 'public interest'? We want to help PFEW raise these issues in a way that brings a better shared understanding.

C. Leadership. The new election process will establish PFEW leaders with a new democratic mandate; but leadership is more than that and PFEW will need leaders who can:

- i. rise above the inevitable day-to-day problems that seem too often to engulf the time and attention of leading PFEW representatives. The leaders need to keep the Federation moving forward and building its professionalism and unity rather than constant fire-fighting;
- ii. find an authentic voice that reflects what the rank and file police officer is thinking and feeling but is able to deliver those messages appropriately and speak truth to power in a way that brings about change rather than populist point scoring;

iii. harness the combined wisdom and front line experience of police officers and their PFEW Branches so as to be clear with the public over the choices they face and do so from a place of deep trust;

iv. have courage, be beyond reproach and put the Federation first; and

v. we want to help shape a programme of leadership development for those who succeed in the elections so that the wider new leadership team are encouraged to develop shared values and orthodoxies.

D. Governance. Good governance enables unity of purpose, trust and professionalism. The PFEW is developing its governance structures, and that is to be welcomed, but they seem piecemeal, too slow in coming together and do not seem to be warmly embraced across the Federation. As well as this seemingly cultural resistance, there are two issues we will explore. Firstly, whether it is right that the Federation and its officers should rely on Police Forces' rules as the underpinning regulations for PFEW standards rather than the PFEW having its own explicit rules and set of standards. Secondly, whether a better integrated set of governance processes and structures should be developed, in keeping with the best outside practices. We want to help build good governance.

Appreciation

We would like to register our thanks to all those who have given freely of their time. Although the Advisory Group is taking longer to establish than the Normington report would have wished, and is not yet established as a critical friend across The Fed, we feel we have a sense of direction, a growing momentum and a respect for the work that Fed members do day in day out, as both police officers and representatives.

From the PFEW Advisory Group. May 2018

Membership of Advisory Group

Rita Dexter



Until 2015, Rita Dexter was the Deputy Commissioner of London Fire Brigade, a role she held for six years, having previously been the Brigade's Director of Corporate Services.

During her time at London Fire Brigade, Rita was their Equality Champion and

helped to deliver an increase in BME and female employees to ensure they were more representative of the city's diverse population.

Rita has also worked as Deputy Chief Executive at Barnet Council and in a policy role at the Department of the Environment.

Rita has been a non-executive Director of companies operated by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and was instrumental in Government work to establish Holocaust Memorial Day and in the first national and local ceremonies.

In 2013, Rita was awarded an OBE and in 2017 was appointed as a member of the House of Commons Committee on Standards.

Charlotte Harris



Charlotte Harris is Executive Director of the British Society of Criminology, a learned society and membership body for academics and practitioners, whose charitable aim is to increase education about crime, criminals and criminal justice systems in the United Kingdom.

Charlotte gained a PhD from the London School of Economics (LSE) researching murder investigation in France and England and also has an MPhil in Criminology from Cambridge University. In the early 2000s, Charlotte worked alongside two police forces evaluating Home Office-funded Targeted Policing Initiatives aimed at reducing markets for stolen goods.

Charlotte has worked in communications in the Department of Trade and Industry and the Cabinet Office, and in community and media relations for Sussex Police, having started her working life as a journalist in Chester and the northern offices of the national papers, while also volunteering as a Special Constable for Cheshire Constabulary.

Jim McAuslan



Jim McAuslan was the elected General Secretary for the British Airline Pilots' Association (BALPA) from 2002 until his retirement in 2016, where he led a major rethink of BALPA's governance structures, established respectful relationships with airline CEOs, civil servants and

Ministers, fronted BALPA's presence in the media as a mature contributor, and led pay negotiations in 25 separate airlines.

Jim began his career in the Inland Revenue, with postings in Doncaster, Leeds and Luton before a promotion to Head Office. In 1984, Jim opted to become a union employee responsible for training local representatives in the UK's 600 tax offices and he was subsequently promoted Deputy General Secretary responsible for negotiating pay with the Treasury.

Following union mergers, Jim led a team of negotiators covering a range of government departments and campaigning on civil service-wide issues.

Jim remains non-executive Chairman of BALPA Financial Solutions and is a trustee of Nautilus – the union for merchant navy officers.

Peter Skyte



Until January 2011, Peter Skyte was a National Officer of Unite, with responsibility for the IT and Communications Sector.

Peter was also European President of the IT Sector of the international labour organisation Union Network International, representing

professional, commercial and clerical workers worldwide.

Peter served on a number of UK Home Office committees advising government departments on work permits policy, and on the UK Electronics Leadership Council. He was also involved with the European Commission as a member of the EU Consultative Committee on Industrial Change.

Non-executive/public appointment roles have included, holding the Network Rail Board to account serving as a public member and member coordinator, a member of the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office review panel dealing with complaints against the judiciary, and on the UK Digital Skills Task Force. Peter has also served as a volunteer adviser at Citizens' Advice.

Paul Symes



Paul Symes retired from his role as Assistant Chief Constable at Gwent Police in 2014. He was a National Executive Member of the Police Superintendent's Association of England and Wales between 2006 and 2013.

During his 31-year career he enjoyed a range of operational and strategic roles bringing to the AG policing experience and insight in the fields of neighbourhood policing, major incident command, organisational development, leadership and team development, partnership working and transformational change. He also has experience of developing strategies that positively impact on public confidence and between 2013-2014 developed, led and implemented Gwent Police's "Employer of Choice and Employee Engagement" Strategy.

In 2015 he became a Chartered Manager and Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI)

Since leaving the service Paul has sought out roles where he can continue to add value to public services. These have included Voluntary Chair of "Safer Gwent" between 2015-2016 and a Non-Executive Director Role for a County Voluntary Council in Wales since 2015 advising on organisational development. Since 2016 he has undertaken work with a local authority in Wales helping the Public Services Board develop sustainable change plans in response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Deborah Williams



Deborah Williams has 36 years' professional finance and management experience in the public and private sectors in the UK and internationally.

Following an early career as an auditor and consultant with the National Audit Office, Audit Commission and Price Waterhouse, she was appointed Financial Adviser to the House of Lords.

She has since worked as an adviser and non-executive director for more than 20 years. With expertise in strategic change, partnership development, stakeholder engagement, major programmes and corporate governance, Deborah has worked with a wide range of public service organisations, including many facing service delivery and financial challenge.

Deborah previously chaired the Development Committee of the International Federation of Accountants and chaired the Group Audit Committee at the Department for Transport, where she was a non-executive director.

Deborah has also served as a Council Member at Cranfield University, in non-executive roles at two NHS Trusts, in a charity providing advocacy services for adults with learning difficulties, and with the Child Maintenance Redesign Programme Board, a major Government change programme.

