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By the time this edition is published we will be on the cusp of being in or out.
In, or out, of the European Union. In, or out, of Euro 2016. But forget footie and politics, officers will also know whether they will be in or out of getting a measly pay rise of one per cent or less this year. Or in or out of getting the fair 2.8 per cent we have asked for to recognise the sacrifices officers make. We haven’t asked for the 10 per cent that MPs have recently been afforded. We haven’t even asked for half of that.

But in the meantime we wait with bated breath to hear what it will be this year. Is it true that those who shout loud enough? Have you made sure your next year then please do so – take it at minimum levels.

‘Slush funds’ to be stopped

The Home Secretary is to consult with the Police Federation to ensure large amounts of money spent at branch board level are sanctioned at national level amid concerns some local officials use funds as “pocket money”.

Theresa May launched a stinging attack on the way branch boards manage their accounts, warning them not to use members’ subscriptions as “a slush fund” for the Federation or pocket money for officials.

She criticised boards for their spending decisions which she called “both questionable and opaque”, highlighting cases where boards spent “thousands of pounds” on retiring Federation representatives. She said one board had an annual £10,000 clothing allowance and some branches own “what appear to be holiday homes”.

However branches hit back at her claims, stating that holiday homes are a much-valued service for officers, particularly where forces were failing to provide adequate occupational health services. West Yorkshire Police Federation has two holiday homes, offered to families of fallen officers and those who are recovering from injuries and illness, among others.

Senior officer apologises for comments

A Direct Entry superintendent whose comments appeared to compare constables to bin men has apologised.

The Direct Entry scheme began in 2014, and the nine participants were spoken to by the University of Portsmouth and their comments appeared in Police Journal.

Part of the scheme requires participants to undertake rotations as a PC and sergeant, approximately six weeks, and the study asked what they thought of this.

‘With the bin lorry’

Supt Adam Thomson from North Yorkshire Police was quoted, albeit anonymously, as saying: “If I was training to be the leader of the council, I wouldn’t be asked to do a few mornings with the bin lorry first.”

Steve White, chairman of the PF EW, said the comment would go down like “a fart in a spacesuit”, but speaking after the article ran, Supt Thomson said: “I have the utmost respect for police personnel at all levels, and any comments I made about how direct entrants are trained were certainly not intended to denigrate the important work that PCs do.”

The PC rotation was, he said, essential to understanding the work of a constable.

“The point I was trying to make was that in other sectors it is usual to enter the organisation at different levels and – with the right training and support – be successful. If the reporting of what I said caused offence to police constables, I apologise.”

Mike Stubbs, Chair of North Yorkshire Police Federation, said the comments were “unfortunate”. “None of our members have yet complained to us. Perhaps that is because, as police officers, they all know that their words and actions can be subject to intense scrutiny and criticism, even where they have acted with the very best of intentions.”

Follow the Federation @pfew_hq
June for me marks two things. Firstly it means that conference is complete and secondly the beginning of summer.

For the first part I look back on what was a thoroughly engaging, constructive and progressive few days for which I appreciate the positive feedback on so many elements from so many of our members.

On the latter it means longer days, not just on the daylight front but often on duty, with so many summer events including festivals, sporting fixtures, celebrations and more taking place.

Walking the beat at Glastonbury Festival was a regular fixture for me in force. However, this month I was fortunate enough to walk a wholly different beat, the floors of St Paul’s Cathedral, to help Her Majesty celebrate her 90th birthday. A truly remarkable milestone for the lady we take an oath to serve with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality. It was a true privilege to attend not just as Steve White a serving officer, but as the Chair of the Police Federation for England and Wales.

With the ongoing threat of terrorism, especially at a time of big international events like the Euros, the police, you, play an increasingly important role in ensuring our public can enjoy these events safely, and do a great job at achieving this.

Finally, by the next edition we could be on the road to planning our exit from Europe, or not. Either way I know our members will continue to provide the first rate service that is the envy of the world and we will continue to ensure that we help influence and manage any change in a positive way for those we represent.

Follow me on Twitter @PFEW_Chair

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**Reform ‘confused**

The chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales called for effective co-operation with government, in his annual address to conference.

Speaking to Home Secretary Theresa May, Steve White said he was drawing a line under the kind of “gladiatorial contest” that creates “distrust and suspicion”. He then gave Mrs May his assurance that the Federation would work with the Government to deliver improvements in policing for the public.

Calling for reform to make the police service of England and Wales more efficient and more joined up, Mr White claimed that reform is being confused with cost-saving and is being driven by short-term financial concerns that lead not to strategic reform but to under-resourcing, leaving police officers vulnerable and the public unprotected.

He insisted on the need for the Federation to have a seat at the negotiating table on the Police Reform Board (PRB) and criticised the lack of co-operation to date. Here are some of the keys points from Mr White’s speech, which you can read in full online at www.polfed.org

**On accountability and the IPCC:**

He said: “We must be held accountable for our own actions and inactions. Accountable to the law, to parliament and to the public we serve. However, officers need to know they will be treated fairly.”

Discussing new IPCC guidelines on dealing with firearms officers after an incident, he called for police to be treated as witnesses and not suspects when assisting with IPCC enquiries.

He said that officers must have “confidence that, should they be compelled to discharge their firearm in a split-second life or death situation, they will not automatically be arrested on suspicion of murder.”

**On the fight against terror and the need for fully funded resources:**

Highlighting the danger following the terror attacks in Paris and Brussels, Mr White referred to the Home Secretary’s conference comments last year when she called him “the boy who cried wolf” for claiming that cuts have consequences. Mr White said: “If I sound like the boy who cried wolf well, the word on the street is that there have been verified sightings of the wolf.”

He welcomed the decision by Chancellor George Osborne not to introduce further police cuts and his promise to protect the protectors by providing the police with the tools they need to do the job.

Commenting on the fact that the crimes which are rising fastest are those that are under-reported such as online fraud and other cybercrime, he warned that this is precisely the kind of crime that the police are currently least equipped to deal with.

**Remembering those who died on duty:**

Delegates paid tribute to PC Sahib Lalli and PC Dave Phillips who both lost their lives while on duty last year. Mr White appealed to the Home Secretary to commit to increasing the sentences of those guilty of assaulting public servants doing their job. He also spoke about the work the Federation is doing to help the Home Office in improving the data on officers who are assaulted.
with cost-saving’ says chair

when we say there should be a wider roll-out of Taser for those officers who volunteer and receive proper training.” He added: “Nobody likes to see guns on the streets. In an ideal world, nobody would want to see Taser on the streets, but as long as there are violent individuals armed with knives, guns and worse, the public needs to know that those charged with protecting them have the tools to do the job.”

On extra powers for special constables and volunteers:
“Volunteers do a fantastic job in support of the police but they are not police officers and they must not be burdened with responsibilities that go beyond their competence and training.”

Mr White highlighted the concern around increasing powers of police staff and volunteers, stating: “The public expects its police service to be professional, highly trained and independent of political influence and private interests.”

On public trust and the Believe in Blue campaign
Mr White referred to statistics which show a 68 per cent trust level in police (Ipsos MORI poll 2016), compared to just 21 per cent for politicians. The chair introduced the Federation’s new Believe in Blue campaign aimed at turning covert public support into overt public support and remind the country what a brilliant job the British police do every day.

He told delegates: “We are not only single-minded crime fighters, we are also the glue that binds communities together. We don’t just uphold the law, we stand for decency and fairness. We look out for the vulnerable, we stand up for the victims of injustice and we protect those who are under attack.”

On remaining independent:
Mr White reaffirmed the position of the Federation as a non-partisan organisation, willing to work with any government that enjoys a democratic mandate. He pointed out however that police officers take an oath to the Queen and not government. He stated that the police are “public servants, not politicians”, adding: “The public understand that we serve them best by fiercely guarding our independence from the government of the day.”

On merging forces:
Mr White said the idea of merging police and fire service roles was “a non-starter”. “We are best-placed to see what kind of reform will actually make our service more effective, rather than making false economies that harm policing.”

On distribution of funding:
Calling for consistency and transparency, he told delegates: “The way forces are allocated funding is uneven, unsystematic and confusing, so confusing that it even resulted in a ‘statistical error’ by the Home Office last year.”

On funding and pay:
Mr White reminded delegates that police officers have been hit with a real-term pay cut of 15 per cent over the past six years. He referred to the Prime Minister’s comments earlier this year that “there’s no such thing as a safe day if you’re a police officer”, before appealing to the Home Secretary to honour the sentiment and uphold the decision made by the pay review body. He stated: “We’re not asking for spectacular bonuses, just respect and adequate compensation.” The Federation has called for a 2.8 per cent pay rise.

On facility time for fed reps:
Challenging the misconception that most fed reps are in full-time roles the chair invited the Home Secretary to take the opportunity to thank the hundreds of fed reps across England and Wales, who do their Federation duty in their own time, calling them “the unsung heroes of the police service”.

In closing:
Addressing the Home Secretary directly Mr White said: “You are not dealing with belligerent people, police officers are on side. The Police Federation is on side. Our members are selfless men and women who give their communities everything they can.”

He asked the Home Secretary not to take them for granted because for the men and women in blue, duty is just the beginning.
The Police Federation of England and Wales is making clear progress in reforming the way it conducts its business following the Normington Review, according to the Home Secretary, Theresa May. She commended the changes that are underway, despite setbacks and delays. She said: “You have recognised that the Police Federation will be more representative, more credible and more professional as a result.”

However, she added that of the 36 recommendations made in the Review, 24 had not been delivered, while recommendations such as the Independent Reference Group did not live up to the ‘spirit’ of the review.

In response, the Federation reminded the Home Secretary that 11 of the outstanding recommendations required changes to legislation, which were now sitting with the Home Office to progress, while the remainder were being worked on. But Mrs May warned that the Federation must finish the job of reforming itself, or she would step in. She added: “If you stall, if you falter, or if the Federation turns its back on reform, I will use legislation to do it for you. But for as long as you are making progress, I will listen and I will help you because you are doing the right thing.”

Concern about distress caused by long IPPC investigations into officers

Lengthy IPCC misconduct investigations cause untold distress to officers and their families, the PFEW annual conference was told.

To applause from members, PFEW Conduct Committee secretary Richie Jones said: “We are concerned about the quality and the timeliness of investigations by the IPCC. There is no accountability and it causes considerable impact on officers’ welfare and that of their families. For example, I know of an officer who has been suspended for three years. That can’t be justifiable, surely?”

He asked Home Secretary Theresa May how she saw police officers being able to hold the IPCC and Professional Standards Directorates to account in the light of forthcoming changes.

Mrs May replied: “I understand the trauma a long suspension can cause. I hope the reform of the IPCC will provide a better structure. It is crucial that the public and officers can have confidence in the nature of investigations and the way that complaints are handled.”
Significant progress made in policing domestic abuse

The Home Secretary has praised the police service for making “real improvements” in the way it tackles domestic abuse.

Theresa May said the service had acted following a damning report by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary’s (HMIC) on the police response to domestic abuse in 2014.

But she also highlighted concerns over examples of officers forming “inappropriate relationships” with victims of domestic abuse, and has called for the issue to be investigated during the next PEEL inspections.

Mrs May said the 2014 report by HMIC had uncovered a “shameful attitude” by some officers towards victims of violence and abuse, including one officer who accidentally recorded themselves calling a victim “a bitch”.

Real commitment

The Home Secretary said considerable changes had taken place in the last two years and she commended all those who have shown “a real commitment to protecting vulnerable people from appalling violence and abuse.”

Every police force in England and Wales now has an action plan to tackle domestic violence, and body-worn video has boosted the quality of evidence gathered. In 2014/15, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) recorded the highest ever number of police referrals, prosecutions and convictions for domestic abuse.

Despite the progress, the Home Secretary reiterated the fact no force was outstanding in the way it protects vulnerable victims, and that 31 forces have been judged either inadequate or requiring improvement.

She also highlighted the problem of officers forming relationships with domestic abuse victims, telling delegates: “We know of officers who develop inappropriate relationships with victims of domestic abuse. They have ignored their professional duty and their moral responsibility, and instead abused their position of power to exploit victims.”

Theresa May, Home Secretary

“Everyone in this room will know it goes on far more than we might care to admit.”

The Home Secretary revealed she had written to Sir Thomas Winsor, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC) to ask him to investigate the issue during Legitimacy inspections later this year. Legitimacy inspections form part of HMIC’s annual PEEL inspections.

Mrs May also criticised officers who use restorative justice to resolve domestic incidents. Although she recognised that restorative justice is victim-led and should be considered in all cases, according to guidance, she added: “I simply do not believe it follows either the evidence or common sense to sit vulnerable victims across from perpetrators who for months and years may have destroyed their confidence, manipulated their mind, and beaten their bodies.”
Counting the votes

The electorate has spoken! We now know the identities of our Glorious Leaders for the next four years as the police and crime commissioners look forward to glad-handing the public, keeping their numerous staff busy and posing for photographs. It’s a tough life, but someone has to do it.

In the good old days we had police committees, generally a collection of magistrates, political non-entities and the like, who could sit and pontificate for hours on end while generally allowing us to get on with our job. Any pink-and-fluffy do-gooders were largely counterbalanced by the hang’em and flog’em brigade, so a reasonable consensus was generally possible.

Now, however, we have a single figurehead who has taken it upon themselves to poke their nose into the running of their local force. It is, of course, the brainchild of the current regime. I could have stomached the idea of a single independent figurehead, accountable to the local public on pain of being booted out if they didn’t come up with the goods.

What annoys me no end, though, is that these individuals are allowed to be elected on a party political ticket. So instead of the best candidate being elected on their own merits, they simply appeal to the electorate on the basis of their coloured rosette. This has brought politics into a service which is required to be impartial. How is it fair that I cannot take an active part in politics when the person with overall scrutiny of my colleagues and I is often a time-served hack of one group of political buffoons or the other?

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Politicians, looking after their own kind once again.

Follow me on Twitter @stationsarge

We will hunt roads offenders, officer tells delegates

A Northumbrian roads policing operation has led to unprecedented success in reducing the number of dangerous drivers on the force’s roads.

PC Steve Clare told delegates that since Operation Dragoon began in 2013, 169 people had been arrested and 295 summonses issued. Those convicted are facing a total of 32 years in prison between them and 115 years in disqualifications. To date, 163 vehicles have been seized.

PC Clare’s colleague, PC Derek Longstaff also took to the podium to explain the operation’s success. He said: “We hunt them and I make no apology for using the word ‘hunt’. At the end of the day, they are endangering my family, my friends and yours. If that means sitting in a street for hours, then I will do it.”

Shared characteristics

Operation Dragoon came about following two fatal collisions in 2013. The perpetrators shared certain characteristics including already having had words of advice, warnings and reports of bad driving, although no-one “had joined the dots”; said PC Clare.

Dragoon has three strands: education, engagement and enforcement. But it is the enforcement element that officers said marked the operation out from others, beginning with risk management and assessment which identifies targets and whether they are high, medium or standard risk.

High risk covers a range of factors including likely to cause death. Medium includes criteria such as the person has a history of dangerous driving. Standard risk would mean the target was young, inexperienced or had been given previous warnings. The force is currently monitoring four high-risk targets, 21 medium-risk targets and 149 standard-risk targets.

PC Longstaff said that part of the Dragoon strategy was for officers to attend remand hearings which put the magistrates under pressure to remand offenders. The operation has a 100 per cent success rate for remands.

He said: “We are sat there in court because it is that important and that necessary that this person is remanded in custody.”

The officers told delegates that when Dragoon was launched they anticipated the focus would be on young drivers and modified vehicles, but had found a “massive link” to criminals including drug dealers and sex offenders.

The team, which includes one sergeant and eight officers, now believe Operation Dragoon should be rolled out nationally.

PC Clare added: “It is an effective system that is proven to work.”
Police watchdog chief pledges his support for service

Sir Thomas Winsor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, paid an impassioned tribute to fallen Merseyside officer PC Dave Phillips – and to policing in general – at the annual conference.

"Every day [officers] go out to face dangers that they can never anticipate… an angry man with a knife, acid thrown in their face, or an attack with an axe," said Sir Tom.

"I have enormous respect for rank and file police officers and everything they do every day, their ‘can do’ attitude… when other public services fail, the police will never say no.

Profound experience

“Every officer risks his life, everyone involved in the service needs to keep this in mind. I attended the funeral of PC Dave Phillips – it was perhaps the most profound experience of my life; husband, father, brother and son – only 34 years old – whose life was taken so suddenly, so violently in the line of duty. I reflected on his sacrifice and I reflected on the price some police officers pay.

“Dave Phillips’ daughters will grow up without their father. They will be proud of their father but they will miss him every day – they will live with his memory but not his presence. This is something that everyone needs to keep front and centre of their minds as policing judgements are made."

Sir Tom went on to call for the PFEW to have a seat at the influential Police Reform and Transformation Board: “It was a mistake not to include them,” he said, and pledged support in gathering more accurate data to tackle the problems of assaults on police officers.

PC Lisa Stanhope, Thames Valley’s health and safety lead, also pressed Sir Tom on the need for proper support for police officers suffering from mental health illnesses. Sir Tom said: “There should be no stigma about mental health problems. It is often an invisible illness that only becomes apparent when officers have cracked, because they are standing on a motorway bridge, or holding a knife. There is no shame in being physically ill, and there is no shame in being mentally ill. Yes, we will take it as seriously as it deserves.”

Shadow Home Secretary tells conference ‘I believe in blue’

Shadow Home Secretary Andy Burnham addressed the annual conference in full support for today’s British police service.

Quoting our new campaign to increase support for the police and strapline of the conference, Mr Burnham (pictured) said: “When it comes to the police, I have no hesitation in saying that I do believe in blue. I believe in you and what you do.”

He continued: “We are now in the sixth straight year of cuts to police budgets. These cuts come when the challenges of the job are greater than ever before and when the pressures on you are increasing all the time; at a time when crime is changing, becoming more sophisticated, and starting to rise again; when the terror threat is growing; and when the police are increasingly being left to pick up the pieces from cuts to other public services as the service of last resort.

“So your job is getting harder and, if this wasn’t bad enough, there has been a steady stream of revelations about policing practice in the past. But I have not come here today to point the finger. Things go wrong in all institutions and in all professions – as we MPs should have the humility to be the first to admit.”

He spoke about the three elements of Labour’s policing policy review – funding and powers, structure and organisation, and culture and leadership. And when questioned, Mr Burnham gave support to the Federation’s call for the rollout of Taser saying he would “have that conversation” if he was Home Secretary.
Mental health must become integral to policing

A leading expert has warned that managing mental illness must be “woven into the fabric” of the police service.

Stephen Bevan, head of HR Research and Development at the Institute of Employment Studies, said that if the service treated the symptoms of mental illness without addressing the underlying causes, the situation would worsen.

Mr Bevan was presenting the findings of a study which interviewed officers about their experience of mental illness in two forces in England and Wales. The study focused on what level of support the person had received as well as how health provision and training could be improved.

He said the results revealed positive and uplifting stories but other examples revealed a system that “isn’t working”.

Officers were fearful of disclosing their condition to both their line managers and their colleagues. They were also worried about the level of support they would receive and about returning to work after being off sick for mental health reasons.

Limited access to training

The study also revealed that, among line managers, there was limited access to training due to time and cost. Support often didn’t ‘kick in’ until the situation had become serious.

Mr Bevan added that local police federation representatives were often the only ‘catalyst’ for a “proactive joining up of consistent support for a person suffering mental illness”. However, he warned that the Federation should not become an occupational health department by default.

Mr Bevan also warned that some forces’ occupational health departments had suffered cutbacks, including the Employee Assistant Programmes (EAP).

He added: “Occupational health is either a cost or an investment. It seems to me that it has to be an investment.”

More officers ‘broken’

A change in the way the police service tackles mental illness has been called for after a Federation survey revealed the sheer scale of the problem.

The survey of around 17,000 officers found that 65 per cent still went to work at least once when they felt they shouldn’t have because of the state of their mental well-being. In addition, 39 per cent had sought help for their mental health problems.

Ché Donald, the Federation’s lead on officer welfare and mental health, told delegates about officers who had been “broken” because of the way their mental illness had been dealt with by their force. He said the only way for the Police Federation to make the best case for change was to carry out the survey to build a true picture of the situation.

“Without this, nothing will change and officers and their families will continue to suffer,” he said.

‘They don’t care at all’

During Mr Donald’s presentation, a series of powerful and shocking films were shown in which officers revealed their treatment at the hands of their force when they suffered a mental illness.

One officer said: “It’s not that the police don’t care enough. They don’t care at all.” The officer, a former soldier suffering combat stress, was told by health practitioners that the way he had been treated by the force made his condition far worse.

Another officer said that “the understanding didn’t seem to be there”, and when she attempted suicide after being turned down for ill-health retirement, she was described almost as if she was acting like “a petulant child”.

Mr Donald told delegates that the current situation could no longer be tolerated.

The research also suggested that the mental health and stress levels of officers might be negatively impacted by the falling number of officers on the ground. That, coupled with the changing demands of policing, increasing complex cases, historical investigations which cannot be predicted and the lack of planning of resources to match those changing demands, were all impacting on how officers felt about their jobs.

Interviewed officers were fearful of disclosing they were worried about their mental health due to the stigma involved, a lack of workplace support, and concerns about work exposing them to further traumatic situations which would trigger future episodes of stress. Other results included:

- 62 per cent said they never or rarely felt optimistic, and 60 per cent never or rarely felt relaxed
- of those who had been off work sick in the previous 12 months, more than a quarter (29 per cent) said one or more days of that had been due to stress, depression or anxiety

Federation signs up to the Mind pledge to

The Police Federation has pledged its help to tackle mental illness in the service.

Steve White, Federation chair, signed mental health charity Mind’s Blue Light Time to Change Pledge on stage at this year’s Police Federation conference.

The pledge is part of the Mind’s wider Blue Light programme launched in March 2015 to support the emergency services including the police.

The highest levels of all blue light services

Research by Mind has revealed emergency workers are more likely to experience a mental health issue, but less likely to seek help. Figures show 90 per cent of police personnel have experienced stress or poor mental health while working within the service, and 61 per cent have had personal experience of mental health problems – the highest of all blue light services.
as forces fail on mental health

of those who disclosed seeking help to their line managers, 36 per cent felt they had not got the right support; 73 per cent of managers said they had not been trained on how to support a colleague who was having difficulties with mental health and well-being.

In April we revealed how the high-stress nature of the job has driven several police officers to consider suicide.

But Faye McGuiness, Mind’s manager for the Blue Light programme said the initiative was already having a positive impact. There are now 312 Blue Light champions across the service and 82 of them are trained to give peer support. More than 2,500 police line managers have received training and 320,000 booklets on different mental health conditions have been sent out to all forces in England and Wales.

She added: “We are working closely with forces and we have achieved a great deal in terms of reducing the stigma around mental health and raising awareness.”

The PFEW also supports the Welfare Support Programme in conjunction with the Police Firearms Officers Association. Find out more at www.polfed.org
**CONFERENCE NEWS**

**Officer well-being and proactive policing suffers as not enough cops to do the job**

New research which examines the well-being of officers and explores the demands of the job was revealed at conference. Nearly 17,000 officers took part in the research, carried out by the Police Federation in conjunction with the University of Nottingham earlier this year. Here we look at some of the main issues.

Officers say they aren’t able to do their jobs properly, nor to the standards they wish, and communities don’t get proactive patrols.

Of those surveyed:
- 84 per cent said there were not enough officers to manage the demands placed upon them
- 80 per cent of officers agree that sometimes they are not able to perform tasks because they have too much work to do
- 78 per cent said there were not enough officers in their team/unit for them to do their jobs properly, and 58 per cent said they did not have enough time to do their job to a standard they could be proud of
- just 13 per cent said they had the time to engage in proactive policing, with the majority just reacting to jobs coming in.

Just over a fifth of officers whose teams had minimum staffing levels said these were rarely or never met in the last year.

And if one team is short, there is nowhere else to go for help, with nearly 64 per cent saying they could not get help from elsewhere if they were struggling on shift.

The research also found:
- only four per cent of respondents said they always get their rest breaks during work, while more than half (53 per cent) said they “never” or “rarely” did
- 27 per cent of those who responded said they “often” or “always” had their annual leave requests refused and 13 per cent said their allocated days off were “often” or “always” cancelled.

The results are also due to be examined to see the impact that demand is having on officers’ welfare.

**Advice on divorce – Do’s and Don’t’s**

Going through a divorce is an extremely stressful process. In my work as a family lawyer, I have several important tips to follow during the process.

**Do:**
- Take advice from a specialist family law solicitor as soon as possible.
- Keep communication amicable, if possible – don’t be tempted to take documentation belonging to your spouse, open confidential mail or look through emails or social media accounts.
- Be honest with your solicitor if you have instructed one.
- Explore government websites so you are aware of what benefits you are entitled to. As a married couple there are benefits which often are not available, but if a couple has separated there may be benefits they are now entitled to.

**Don’t:**
- Vacate the property before taking proper advice from a specialist family law solicitor.
- Take advice in the first instance from friends or family members – speak to an expert.
- Put sensitive information on social networking sites.
- Delay dealing with your divorce and finances if you decide your marriage has broken down. If your divorce and finances are not sorted your spouse can still claim on your pension.

**Pensions**

When spouses separate, an officer will need to obtain their cash equivalent transfer value for their pension. This is a cash value. It often takes pension administrators up to three months to calculate this so it is wise for an officer to do this as soon as possible to avoid delay later down the line.

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Slater and Gordon  
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Officer well-being and policing under threat

Officers fear violence but do not want to carry guns

Despite the threat of violence, the majority of officers in England and Wales do not want to carry firearms. And while officers go about their work, nearly 60 per cent say they are subjected to insults from the public – swearing, shouting and abuse – at least once a month; 17 per cent say this happens on a daily basis.

The survey found that almost four in 10 officers fear they will be subject to violence at work, which could explain why 63 per cent said they either have or want to be double crewed.

In looking at what protection measures officers had or would like access to, of those officers who responded:
- just 18 per cent said they have regular access to body-worn cameras, but a third more would like to (33 per cent)
- while just 14 per cent confirmed that they have access to Taser, 43 per cent more want it
- about a quarter confirmed that they already have double-crewing, but just under 40 per cent more want it (63 per cent overall)
- only a third of surveyed officers have or want access to rapid response firearms teams; only a fifth have or want personal firearms.

Where officers did not already have access to certain types of personal protective equipment (PPE), they were most likely to say that they want access to Taser (43 per cent of the whole sample), followed by double-crewing (39 per cent) and body-worn video (33 per cent).

Officers were also asked to what extent they were concerned by fear of future violence from members of the public. Only nine per cent of those who responded said “not at all”, while 38 per cent said either “a lot” or “very much.”

In response to the levels of threats officers had experienced in the last 12 months:
- 44 per cent experienced verbal threats (eg threat of hitting) at least once a month; seven per cent said this was daily
- 35 per cent experienced unarmed physical attacks (eg struggling to get free, hitting) at least once a month
- six per cent experienced use of a deadly weapon (ranging from bottles and sticks to firearms) at least once a month.

Culture change needed to reduce assaults on officers

Assaults on officers cannot be tackled effectively unless there is a change in culture.

John Apter, chair of Hampshire Police Federation said that it was wrong to accept police assaults as being part of the job. “Policing is dangerous and unpredictable, but if you say being assaulted is part of the job then that makes it right and it is not right.”

He said it was down to chief officers to drive the change needed and that relationships with other agencies such as the CPS, College of Policing and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary were vital to reducing the overall number of assaults on officers. However, he also criticised chief officers for refusing to allow a national roll out of Taser.

He said: “It’s a disgrace to say Taser shouldn’t be rolled out further. It is an essential piece of kit. I accept it’s expensive, but what’s the cost of the safety of your officers?”

Mr Apter also called for officer safety training to be standardised across all 43 forces in England and Wales. “It isn’t right that there isn’t a standard. It isn’t good enough. If we get it right, we can look after our people.”

The Home Secretary firmly placed the ball in chief constables’ courts when asked about greater Taser rollout and more funding to provide the weapons.

During a Q&A session a Cornwall PC warned Mrs May that colleagues felt isolated and vulnerable in rural areas. Devon and Cornwall were currently carrying out a public consultation to consider whether there should be a greater number of Taser-trained officers, he said. But Mrs May countered: “It is for chief constables to decide what is appropriate for their force. Tasers are an operational issue.”

Federation Chair Steve White said Devon and Cornwall would need to find an additional £1.4m of funding if the consultation took them along that route. “But they also need equipment that is not obsolete.”
South Yorkshire officer Zuleika wins national award

A Rotherham police officer, who works as a specialist community engagement officer in hard-to-reach communities, won the national Women in Policing Award at this year’s Police Federation Conference.

Zuleika Payne, a police officer for 24 years, was rewarded for her innovative work in community cohesion which has led to, among others things, changes in the law.

**Immensely proud**

Speaking about her win she said: “I am absolutely delighted. I am immensely proud that South Yorkshire Police have been recognised for the service we provide to the community day in, day out. This is becoming increasingly difficult as we are losing vast swathes of officers.”

South Yorkshire officer Zuleika wins national award

Police officers driving with blues and twos are better protected in law to be treated as a suspect in the event of an incident, as opposed to being treated as a witness.

Police response drives are effectively illegal as there is currently no legislative support for officers if something goes wrong. This was the focus of the witness or suspect session, led by Tim Rogers, the Federation’s lead on pursuits.

He said: “If an officer is trained to drive to a certain professional standard and licensed by the College of Policing, we should provide the right protection. But the way the law currently stands, they put themselves at risk of prosecution when they’re trying to keep communities safe.”

When asked directly whether it was better to be a suspect or witness, barrister and panel member Mark Aldred said “suspect”. The Federation is leading the way to change the law through the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), represented by Anthony Bangham on the panel, which believes protection is only needed for advanced pursuit drivers, but not response drivers.

Mr Rogers added: “We do not support this approach – we want all drivers to be afforded legal protection. Frankly it’s criminal these safeguards are not in place already.”

**Better to be a suspect in the eyes of the law**

Older women officers often feel discriminated against, isolated and vulnerable at work, delegates heard at a session called ‘The Older Workforce’.

Dee Collins, West Yorkshire Temporary Chief Constable, said the problem was particularly prevalent among those going through the menopause, stating: “It is one of the last unmanaged health taboos. It can affect women of all ages. It needs to be taken seriously now.”

Ms Collins said that 13 million women in the UK are currently going through the menopause. Sufferers face increased risks of disciplinary and absence procedures, and are often distressed because their coping mechanisms can be affected so can be susceptible to issues like depression. In return, forces and managers aren’t really coping either and are poor at dealing with the issue Ms Collins said.

**Health taboo needs tackling now**

Other finalists included PC Victoria Harriott, from the Metropolitan Police Service, who was nominated for her role as an instructor in a specialist training environment; Inspector Jacqui Jenkins, from Sussex Police, who was nominated for her role in Evolve, the Sussex Police Women’s Network Support Group, a professional support network for officers and staff who work or volunteer with Sussex Police; and PC Claire Large, from Humberside Police, who was the first operational female officer in the force to become an advanced motorcyclist, dealing with two very difficult Family Liaison Officer roles involving the deaths of colleagues.

Jayne Willetts, the Federation’s equality lead, highlighted the 106 employment tribunal claims for disability discrimination the Federation has received over the last year, as well as “hundreds and hundreds more contacts and requests for advice” which are resolved before reaching a claims stage. “The last thing we want to do is put an officer through a tribunal, but sometimes there’s no alternative.

“With the age of officers now increasing and the earliest retirement for most in the future to be 55 years old, it is vital that these areas are tackled. How can we be getting this so wrong?”

**Getting it so wrong**

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Glass ceilings ‘don’t exist’

Women are not progressing in the police service because they are being held back by their own unconscious bias.

PC Sally Mulvaney from North Wales Police said that while she has faced unconscious bias from her colleagues, it was her own unconscious bias that had hindered her progress at times.

“Unconscious bias affects how we see ourselves; that can be far more limiting and damaging. Glass ceilings do not exist,” she told delegates. “Unconscious bias is holding women back.”

PC Mulvaney recalled doubting as a young officer whether she could be an effective member of her force’s Public Support Unit (PSU). Although some officers objected to working alongside her in the PSU, PC Mulvaney said their unconscious bias was much easier to confront than her own.

Positive role models

But she added that women needed positive role models to “remind them they can do it and they should give it a go.” She said: “If you see someone with skills that would make them a good leader, support them and encourage them. We need positive role models to remind us that we can do it and we should give it a go.”

PC Mulvaney, speaking at a session on the future of women in policing, was joined by DS Nita Jhanji-Garrod, the first female Asian officer in Greater Manchester Police. The detective shared her experience of unconscious bias during her 29 years of service.

She said people’s attitudes to her were heavily influenced by a lifetime of their own experiences. However, DS Jhanji-Garrod said the service had changed considerably since she had joined and there were now far more women in specialist roles as well as senior ranks. She added: “Women will achieve and we will be allowed to reach our full potential.”

Unconscious bias is when a person makes judgements and assessments of people and situations. Biases are influenced by a person’s background, cultural environment and experiences.

Partnership working must be improved

More needs to be done to ensure better partnership working between agencies dealing with child protection cases, according Superintendents’ Association President, Chf Supt Gavin Thomas.

He told delegates that there needed to be a more joined up approach to how vulnerable children and people are dealt with, involving organisations including the police, social services and local councils. Mr Thomas said that the work of public protection units had significantly improved since the Bichard Inquiry, but there was still work to be done.

Mr Thomas said: “It is only once a serious case review has been undertaken that we as public agencies collectively understand who knew what, when and where. If this information had been shared at the right time, in the right place between the right professionals, then maybe – just maybe – that child or victim of domestic violence may have survived.”

Keeping you informed

If you’re a serving officer you will now receive updates on the work of the national Federation direct to your email inboxes.

This follows the launch of the national members’ database and is the first time the Federation can communicate directly with its members.

All forces have signed up to provide the data and updates will start in the next few weeks, giving information on important issues such as changes in legislation, pay and conditions and specialist areas.

College of Policing admits it needs better links to the front line

The College of Policing has admitted it needs better links to frontline police officers.

Chief Executive Alex Marshall was challenged by a conference delegate who told him: “The College is a long way away from our frontline officers – unless you have got a rose or a crown on your shoulders. The College doesn’t have anything to do with frontline officers.” Mr Marshall said he was “less pleased with the connection with the frontline bit of policing”, adding: “It’s not a good connection.” Rachel Tuffin, the College’s director of knowledge, research and education, agreed, saying: “It’s a fair challenge and we are trying to sort it out.”

The conference heard that officers found it hard enough to get routine appraisals due to lack of time, let alone undergo regular training as advocated by the College. Mr Marshall agreed and said policing compared poorly with other professions in that respect. He said much more needed to be done, particularly in the areas of training officers involved in public protection including child, sexual and domestic abuse.
Hillsborough: the other victims

Hillsborough – the UK’s worst sporting disaster – made headlines all over again in April, as the longest inquests in legal history finally came to a conclusion. It remains a painful topic for the hundreds of friends and families of the victims who fought tirelessly for the truth over the years.

The tragedy happened on April 15, 1989 at the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Hillsborough, the home ground of Sheffield Wednesday. A severe crush developed in the Leppings Lane terrace allocated to Liverpool fans.

Six minutes after kick-off the referee stopped the game when it became clear that people were injured and dying; 96 people died, and many more were injured. It would take another 27 years before a second jury returned verdicts of unlawful killing for those who died. For the police officers on duty that day, and to some extent the Police Federation reps who have supported them throughout, the impact of the disaster has been ever-present in their lives. Here we look at some of their stories.

“Hillsborough has always been bubbling away in the background for virtually the entire length of my career,” explains Neil Bowles. “I was a young PC with just over two years’ service in Sheffield when the tragedy happened. I was on duty that day in the city centre and was not working at the ground but the news soon began to filter through that something dreadful had happened.

“Due to the large number of post-mortems that were required, staff at the mortuary were over-run. I was sent to assist and spent a day as a mortuary assistant. I saw sights that day that I will never forget and never wish to see again.

“Afterwards, I saw first-hand the distress of some colleagues – officers crying, and other forms of breakdown when the trauma became too much to deal with. The undercurrents of April 15, 1989 have, quite simply, never gone away.”

Neil became a rep in 2006 and was to become even more closely acquainted with the individual stories of Federation members as the investigations and inquests took their course. After the jury returned their verdicts earlier this year, he was asked how he felt.

“First reaction? Emotion,” he said. “Twenty-seven years of debate, arguments and investigations. My thoughts go out to the families and friends of the victims. But we have got to remember the constables, sergeants and inspectors who turned up to police that match, and ended up trying to save people’s lives.

“These officers have suffered; Sheffield has suffered. During one IPCC interview an officer said it was the first time he had been able to speak about what he did on that day. Two officers – still serving – had to go home sick when the verdicts were returned because the media coverage brought it all flooding back.”
The key legal milestones

January 1990 – the Taylor Report, the official enquiry into Hillsborough, concludes that the reason for the disaster was the failure of police control but also denounces the antiquated stadia of the day.

November 1990 – inquests begin in Sheffield.


February 1998 – publication of Lord Justice Stuart-Smith Report on scrutiny of evidence relating to the Hillsborough disaster.

July 2000 – a private prosecution brought by the victims’ families against the match commanders clears Supt Bernard Murray; the jury is unable to reach a verdict on Chf Supt David Duckenfield, who walks free after judges award him a ‘stay’ of prosecution.

January 2010 – Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP) formed.

September 2012 – publication of HIP report which highlights serious issues around the policing of Hillsborough. It also presented documentary evidence that suggested attempts may have been made to shift blame to Liverpool fans and found that 41 of the 96 who died had the “potential to survive.”

October 2012 – IPCC announces it will be conducting an independent criminal investigation into the police actions in the aftermath of the tragedy. It has carried out hundreds of interviews, which are ongoing today, and could lead to criminal charges or misconduct hearings.

December 2012 – accidental death verdicts quashed at the High Court, paving the way for fresh inquests.

December 2012 – Operation Resolve is ordered by the Home Secretary, led by former Durham Chief Constable Jon Stoddart. It is looking into the events that led up to the disaster, examining the range of organisations and bodies involved in the preparation and planning of the match.

March 2014 – new inquests start at Warrington after the original verdicts are quashed following the HIP report.

April 2016 – jury returns new verdicts of unlawful killing on all 96 victims and concludes that fans did not contribute to the disaster.

“Many have been publicly vilified and endured years of whispering criticism in their communities. It’s hard not to be affected when you witness other people’s suffering – no matter which side they belong to.

“Policing is a family and together with my Federation colleagues we have sought to try to help our members through this harrowing journey.”

What of the future? “These days there is a different culture in policing and officers can now challenge the decisions of senior colleagues in a way which wasn’t possible in 1989. That’s not to say that things are all rosy in the garden now. The force is facing something of a crisis; the Chief Constable has just been suspended and we need strong leadership more than ever. We have still got to go out and police the public, and morale among ordinary rank and file officers is not great at the moment, but thankfully the community in South Yorkshire is still supportive of the service. A few weeks ago we were inundated with messages of support from across the country after a woman officer was severely injured in a machete attack.”

But Neil is troubled by fears that the Hillsborough nightmare isn’t over yet for some. “No, it hasn’t really finished. The investigations aren’t over and we shall still be needed to help our members through it.”
As a 19-year-old, Army Lance Corporal Paul Aspinall was training to go to the Falklands when the Hillsborough disaster happened. On manoeuvres, and then stationed at the remote South Atlantic outpost with little TV or radio, the tragedy didn’t register to the extent it does today.

Although he joined South Yorkshire Police in 1994 – the year he left the Army – it was more than 20 years later before he was confronted with the full human misery and emotional toll, as a full-time rep supporting hundreds of affected Federation members.

When Paul first joined the force, Hillsborough remained a total mystery. “I didn’t understand it because I hadn’t been there at the time. But when I tried to question colleagues, I met a wall of silence. Years later I realised that colleagues who had been involved in life-saving efforts on the pitch and in the pens were simply unable to talk about it.”

Paul, a detective sergeant and a Discipline Liaison Officer at South Yorkshire Federation, was thrown into the deep end one Friday afternoon a year after the publication of the Hillsborough Independent Panel report. “Letters had just landed on people’s doormats – there was no prior warning about the timing. People were beside themselves with worry when they learned they were to be interviewed as witnesses as part of the investigation.”

In the first few months he dealt with over 300 phone calls from anxious members, long into the night, at weekends and while on holiday. He credits his wife and son with being “very understanding and supportive”. “It’s been very difficult at times,” he said. But this is nothing compared with the loss of the families or the anxiety and stress levels of members under investigation.

“Offices, ambulance crews and fans try to reach those trapped in the Leppings Lane end.

“These are officers who did their best on the day, but while some have acknowledged the efforts of on and off-duty police, medical professionals and the public, it’s never really the story that is picked up. Officers remain suspects, and some have been damaged by their traumatic experiences and the subsequent criticism and the shame of the force. Some are suffering from PTSD, some have had nervous breakdowns and others are suicide risks.

“Some have never told their families or their children about it. Others have just wanted to get as far away from South Yorkshire as possible.”

Paul and the rest of the South Yorkshire Federation team have been a lifeline for the hundreds of officers who have given evidence at two inquests and found themselves on the receiving end of an investigation, but he is underwhelmed by the welfare and occupational health help from the force. “It has been patchy – maybe that has been down to limited resources, but extra budget was allocated to them for Hillsborough. While there has been some counselling, to the best of my knowledge nobody has been referred by the force to a psychiatrist for mental health diagnosis – possibly because they would potentially attract an Injury on Duty award.”

Does he see it getting any better for affected members now the inquests have concluded? “For some it will never end,” he says quietly. “Either their health is shattered, their careers are over or the prospect of yet further proceedings looms. It’s clear that some are still being treated as suspects and may face more interviews.

“The longer I worked on the inquests, the more apparent it became that the full facts of what happened on the day had not emerged earlier. Our team was committed, not only to ensuring that our members were supported, but also to ensuring that the truth emerged. No matter how hard it was for officers, most were mortified they had not been able to save, or where they had, saved more lives. Those that did save lives have never been recognised, but the fact is they don’t want to be.

“The dignity of the bereaved families during the inquests and in the aftermath of the jury’s decision, and the decency with which they treated us, was striking. I only wish this full and thorough hearing had happened a long time ago, and that the investigators will press on to finalise things now.”
A powerful silence for Hillsborough

A powerful minute’s silence honouring the victims of the Hillsborough disaster was held at the Police Federation Annual Conference. Steve White, in his opening address, paid respect to the families of the victims of the Hillsborough tragedy stating: “Our thoughts and deepest sympathies remain with the families and friends of the 96 people who lost their lives. Sadly, like every organisation, errors are made – nowhere more so than at Hillsborough 27 years ago.”

He acknowledged that it was “a tragedy that should never – and will never – be forgotten”, adding that the mistakes of the past not be blamed on the new generation of police officers: “We must draw a distinction between the actions of a minority of senior officers decades ago and the behaviours of the majority of our members today.”

Shadow Home Secretary Andy Burnham told delegates that the police service could not move forward in an open and transparent way without facing up to its actions in the past, and that Hillsborough had “shaken the faith” in policing.

“If we want a police service for this century, then we first need truth about how we were governed and policed in the last,” said Mr Burnham, adding that Hillsborough now had to become a watershed moment when “we come together to create a more open and accountable police service, that does not tolerate a closed-shop culture”.

“If we can achieve that, it will in the end will be better for public and police officers alike.”

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Hillsborough at a glance:

96 fans died, 766 injured
324 members, former and current officers, supported by the Federation
293 days’ worth of evidence at second inquests – the longest in legal history
£5m+ legal costs to support Federation members and provide legal representation
£2m costs clawed back by the PFEW from South Yorkshire PCC
27 years for justice
Duty is just the beginning.

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You do it because it’s who you are.
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Deep scars, but little force support

There's no denying the awful toll that Hillsborough has taken on mother-of-two Fiona Nicol. Then a PC, she volunteered to police the game on her day off, a decision which cost her her marriage, career and nearly her sanity.

Like dozens of officers that day she tried desperately to save lives, and her sympathies remain entirely with the families. "The force made a hell of a lot of mistakes; it should have admitted them sooner, not 27 years later."

But she has not been treated well by South Yorkshire Police, where she served for more than two decades, and was forced into early retirement last year when repeated requests for a psychiatric referral fell on deaf ears. "It just got to me one day. My hair was falling out in clumps. It wasn't fair on my family, so I just filled in the resignation form and walked out. Colleagues were lovely, but the organisation itself did not help me at all."

Fiona was forced to transfer to Barnsley shortly after the disaster because her daily journey to work took her past the Hillsborough stadium. Interviews with the IPCC and Operation Resolve were a constant reminder. "They agreed I should never have to police a football match again, but they kept forgetting, and I got shouted at for refusing. Then I couldn't get time off for the interviews; we were short-staffed so I had to go on my days off. I went off sick for a while, then they put me down to half pay, then no pay. That's when I had to leave."

Her marriage had already become a casualty, and the legacy of 1989 stayed with her. "I have never dared to visit Liverpool because I felt ashamed of being a South Yorkshire Police officer," she added – despite the fact that she was captured on CCTV performing CPR on 14 year-old Adam Spearritt after lifting him down to half pay, then no pay. That's when I had to leave."

Fiona Nicol pictured in 1989 (top) and today (above)

Her marriage had already become a casualty, and the legacy of 1989 stayed with her. "I have never dared to visit Liverpool because I felt ashamed of being a South Yorkshire Police officer," she added – despite the fact that she was captured on CCTV performing CPR on 14 year-old Adam Spearritt after lifting him from the terraces, in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to save his life.

She is clear where much of the blame lies. "There was a complete lack of communication and of senior leadership – most officers did their best on the day but senior officers, they did nothing. It was the perfect storm."

It helps now that she is no longer a police officer. "My life has moved on," she says, thankful that her two daughters, and first grandchild, bring joy to her life and a new focus. Yet she knows how lucky she is. "Some have not had that chance. I don't know how you ever get over losing a child."

90 minutes to unravel 27 years

"I hope I will be no more than 90 minutes," said Paul Greaney QC at the start of his questioning of David Duckenfield. His comment has been wrongly attributed as an attempt to draw parallels with the length of a football match. "Not so", says Mr Greaney. But the Federation barrister's questioning of the former South Yorkshire chief superintendent caused a frisson of high drama, as the relatives of the victims heard the words they'd been anticipating for more than 25 years – his failure directly caused the deaths of 96 people.

Over the 90 minutes, Mr Greaney pushed Duckenfield to accept five points crucial to the inquests' outcome:

- that people died in a crush in the central pens
- that if they had not been permitted to flow down the tunnel into those central pens, they would not have died
- that closing the central tunnel would have prevented their deaths and would have prevented the tragedy
- that Duckenfield failed to take that step, and critically,
- his failure was the direct cause of the 96 deaths.

"He answered very starkly 'yes' to a series of five questions that led to the conclusion that his failure was the direct cause of the deaths in the Hillsborough disaster," said Mr Greaney. "There was no attempt to hedge, no caveats."

Duckenfield was asked five times by Mr Greaney whether he had frozen in the crucial minutes before deciding to open the Leppings Lane gate, eventually replying: “Yes, sir.” It was the end game of a legal strategy devised by Mr Greaney alongside lawyers from the Federation’s retained firm Slater and Gordon and two other barristers, Sam Green QC and Chloe Fairley.

"We came at it from the point of view that the rank and file, the junior officers, had done their best but had been let down by senior officers. The fresh inquest was not the place for the police to be lumped together as one. The junior officers had a quite different interest from the force and the senior officers. That needed to emerge and be emphasised," said Mr Greaney.

And after the jury finally returned unlawful killing verdicts on all 96, it was the culmination of the longest inquest in legal history. "The officers of federated rank had very real empathy with the bereaved families. They wanted to participate fully and indeed bravely on the day – officers who tried to save lives in the face of a lack of leadership by senior officers – yet this is still hanging over their heads. We have been through a bit of a journey with the junior officers, but there is still a way to go."

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What about him personally? "I was personally very pleased for the families – I feel that after 27 years they have got what they wanted and deserved: justice, the answers they had waited so long for."

"Many of the officers of federated rank behaved decently and indeed bravely on the day – officers who tried to save lives in the face of a lack of leadership by senior officers – yet this is still hanging over their heads. We have been through a bit of a journey with the junior officers, but there is still a way to go."
This year the Police Federation of England and Wales is celebrating 21 years of Police Bravery at its annual bravery awards. The event, sponsored by Police Mutual, honours police officers for their actions to tackle criminals and keep the public safe. The nominees have all been identified for amazing acts of bravery and all win the award, with overall regional winners being announced at a special ceremony at the Dorchester in July. Here we showcase just some of the humbling stories. The remaining stories from across the country will follow in the next edition and they will all feature as part of our Believe In Blue campaign.

Avon & Somerset: Officers stop a man setting himself alight

Student officer Constable Rebecca Quirk and her tutor, Constable Matthew Wilson, were called to a local filling station where a drunk man was threatening to blow up the petrol station, causing staff and customers to fear for their own safety. The man had doused himself in petrol and on arrival, the officers found most of the petrol pumps had been removed from their cradles and were lying on the floor surrounded by spilt fuel. The man was on the forecourt holding a lighter and expressing a wish to die. Several members of the public and staff had locked themselves inside the store in fear.
Without any thought for her own safety, PC Quirk – who was just 10 weeks into her job – took the brave decision to tackle the man who was refusing to co-operate. Both officers then struggled with the man, trying to complete the handcuffing process during which time he tried several times to ignite the lighter. They managed to keep hold of the petrol-soaked man until assistance arrived. He was eventually handcuffed and removed, saving not only his life, but potentially that of the staff and public in the station.

Bedfordshire: Officers tackle woman threatening to blow up house

The actions of Sergeant Paul Chadwick and Constable Owen Webb helped to save the life of a woman and potentially many more. While on duty in May 2015 the officers were called to reports of a woman who was barricading herself in her flat and threatening to blow it up with gas. She had also stated she had ‘booby-trapped’ her house with electrical cable, by attaching this directly to the fuse board, pouring accelerant everywhere and attacking her gas main.
On arrival officers could smell white spirit or petrol through the letterbox of the front door, and therefore started a full evacuation of the adjoining flats. After initially engaging with the woman through the locked door but getting no response, officers suspected her to be self-harming or trying to kill herself by hanging.
Other officers attended in an attempt to force entry via the rear door which was now on fire, but it had been barricaded. At the same time officers saw smoke coming from the letterbox; flames were then seen at the front door too.
Officers broke in, and PC Webb and Sgt Chadwick rescued the woman.
Durham: Off-duty cop attacked as he foils armed robbery

Constable Paul Canvin’s efforts off-duty foiled an armed robbery. PC Canvin was helping his partner to make up papers for the newspaper rounds at a local newsagents when two masked men entered the shop. One was armed with a three-foot metal bar, and threatened store staff, making repeated demands for cigarettes and money.

Despite obvious danger to him, and without any protective gear, PC Canvin acted without hesitation to intervene and stop the offender and protect those around him. PC Canvin was able to detain the man with the metal bar and spent the next 10 minutes struggling as the man tried to fight him off. At one point, a third offender entered the shop, and the detained man was heard to shout at the other assailants that they should stab the officer with a kitchen knife.

The offender was held until uniformed officers arrived, and the other suspects were quickly identified and arrested. Four men were subsequently charged with attempted robbery in relation to this offence, and the two who played a key role were each sent to prison for three years.

North Wales: Officers risk their lives in pub fire

Two officers risked their lives when they entered a burning pub to try to find trapped people inside. Sergeant Iwan Owen (now retired) and Constable Elwyn Williams were told that people were trapped inside the Three Crowns Pub in Bangor, and entered the building despite heavy black smoke and large flames on the first floor. In a matter of seconds the situation inside quickly deteriorated; the heat was intense and visibility was extremely limited.

Both officers quickly realised that the situation was perilous and extremely dangerous – they were having difficulty breathing and were concerned that the ceiling may collapse, blocking the exit, and made the decision to leave the premises. The building subsequently suffered significant fire and smoke damage to all three floors including the roof, which ultimately collapsed. Luckily it was found that no one was inside.

Derbyshire: Knife-wielding man stopped in tracks

Sergeant Trevor Steed had just finished a Saturday shift in September 2015 when he was approached by a member of the public outside Buxton police station. He was told of a man in the town centre who was causing problems and, despite having been working all day, volunteered to go and check it out. Upon arriving in town, he found a man who appeared to be inhaling a substance from a canister.

As the officer approached, the man pulled out a large knife and began attacking him. During the attack, which lasted several minutes, Sgt Steed was able to fend off almost all advances, but did sustain a cut to his arm. He was able to strike the man with his police radio, and the man walked off towards a busy public area. Despite the obvious personal risk, Sgt Steed followed the man down the street, shouting at members of the public, warning them of the danger. The officer managed to corner the offender, and convince him to drop the knife, preventing harm to anyone else.
Gloucestershire: Race against time on live train track

Sergeant Geoff Blindell and Constable Neil MacDonald stopped a man from taking his own life on a live train track near Swindon. The first at the scene was PC Macdonald who saw the man 100 metres from the safety of the crossing, sitting just a couple of metres from the track. He radioed in to check the trains were stopped and, fearing for the man’s life, he approached him. However, the man then got up and began running along the track further away from safety. The officer eventually caught up with him, to detain him under the mental health act. Still struggling with the man he was then advised that a train was due imminently. Dog handler Sgt Blindell arrived on the scene and went onto the track to help and they dragged the man to safety. Seconds later, the road barriers came down and a freight train passed.

Gwent: Officer arrests knife-wielding murderer on isolated farm

Constable Philip Williams will be recognised for his brave act when he detained and arrested a man who had stabbed his stepmother to death. In November 2014 Gwent Police received a call from a man informing them he had stabbed his stepmother five times with a knife. PC Williams went straight to the address in an isolated area of Monmouthshire in an attempt to save life and prevent further violence. When he arrived – at an extremely isolated farm, on the edge of a forest – and without any thought for his own safety, PC Williams managed to successfully restrain and detain the man. He then entered the house to check on the condition of the victim but unfortunately she had died as a result of her terrible injuries, so PC Williams arrested the man for murder.

Humberside: Officers wrestle armed man threatening to behead girlfriend

Hull was the scene of a dramatic incident when an armed man was threatening to behead his girlfriend. Constables Mark Hawley and Carol Ashford were called to the man, who was armed with a rifle, on a busy street. Being a Saturday afternoon, there were members of the public around, and an Easter egg hunt was also happening in a nearby park, so the safety of the public was the main concern of officers. When talking to the man to get him to put down his weapon failed, PCs Hawley and Ashford attempted to wrestle the weapon from him. PC Hawley suffered a fractured jaw as a result of being attacked by the man, who was eventually arrested.

Greater Manchester Police: Officer stops man jumping from building

A drunken man was stopped from jumping to his death thanks to quick-thinking Constable Edmund Barker. On a cold night in January 2015, PC Barker responded to a call to Rochdale Town Hall to find a drunk, emotional 21-year-old man 40ft up the fire escape, sitting on a ledge in the snow. He had broken free of his worried friends who were trying to reason with him from nearby. Without a thought for his safety, the officer quickly climbed up to the roof and tried to speak to the man, who was moving closer to the edge in slippery, wet conditions. Suddenly the man turned and moved to jump, but PC Barker was quick enough to grab him by his neck and shoulders. The young man struggled to break free, but PC Barker was able to hit his emergency button on his radio to call for back-up while holding on tight to the man. The officer clung on to the man as he thrashed around on the edge of the roof until his colleagues arrived and were able to pull them clear of danger. The distraught man tried again to throw himself from the roof, but the officers were able to handcuff him and restrain his legs to stop him being a further risk to himself. The young man was carried from the roof and taken to hospital to receive care and support.
Lincolnshire: Officer prevents serious crash and saves life
An officer who stopped a car whose driver was having a seizure helped to prevent a potentially fatal crash. Constable Danielle Crompton was driving a colleague and a passenger to hospital in Lincoln on a main A-road when an Audi overtook them. She saw that the driver was leaned back in his seat, head tilted back, and appeared to be suffering some sort of medical problem.
The Audi hit the central reservation and continued to travel at high speed, and the officer believed that the driver’s foot was on the accelerator while he was unconscious. Fearing for the safety of other motorists on this busy road, and with the vehicle racing towards a roundabout, PC Compton drove her police car level with the Audi and it against the central reservation, drawing both vehicles to a controlled halt. The cars sustained damaged, but no injuries occurred.
The driver of the car regained consciousness after being pulled from the car by officers. A major incident had been averted through the actions of PC Compton, who had been an officer less than a year at the time.

Merseyside: Man saved from turbulent river
A man trying to take his own life in the River Mersey was rescued by Constables Ian Bradford and Ian Logan-Sherratt.
In October 2014, during the early hours of a cold, wet and windy morning, PCs Bradford and Logan-Sherratt arrived at the River Mersey, which was very turbulent. The officers struggled to spot the man in the darkness until they glimpsed the light of his mobile phone 100m out from the shore.
The officers called out, but the man would not respond and the Coastguard was not due for another 15 minutes. The man was in deep water and in danger of being swept away. The officers braved the icy waters and set out towards him, but when they reached the man, they found he was stuck fast in the mud. Fighting with the tide, the man, the mud, and torrential wind and rain, they were eventually able to free him and drag him back to shore, saving his life.

Cheshire: Officer snatches a woman from the path of an HGV
A police officer saved a vulnerable woman from taking her life by stepping into traffic on the M62. Constable Ian Blanchard was on patrol on the motorway when he spotted a woman standing near the central reservation close to the fast lane. The officer activated his emergency lights and stopped his vehicle close to where the woman was. On seeing the police car, the woman clambered over the barrier and walked across the three lanes of traffic on the opposite side of the motorway. PC Blanchard leapt from his car, climbed over the central reservation and, spotting a gap in the oncoming traffic, ran across the road after her. The officer managed to reach the woman and pull her from the path of an HGV and onto the hard shoulder just seconds before impact. The woman was later taken to hospital for care and support.

South Yorkshire: Officers arrest murder suspect in burning building
A raging fire did not prevent two officers from fighting off and arresting a murder suspect in South Yorkshire.
Constables Chelsea Rudge and Christopher Beevers attended an incident in Sheffield and were confronted with a well-established flat fire, where a man was lying unconscious, severely injured, in the doorway. After dragging him away from the fire, the officers began CPR and tried to treat the man’s substantial injuries, which were clearly life threatening, until help arrived.
It was clear at this stage that a murder may have been committed, and on seeing two men run into the burning building, PCs Beevers and Rudge followed. One of the men became violent towards the officers as they tried to restrain them and they were arrested on suspicion of murder.
West Mercia: Pensioner pulled from house fire

Constable Robert Harris rescued an elderly woman from a blazing house after neighbours were beaten back by smoke.
In the early hours of one morning in November 2014 PC Harris was sent to a house fire in Telford, Shropshire, after being alerted that an elderly lady had fallen and was lying immobile inside. Neighbours had smashed the living room window but had been unable to free her – and now the flames were taking hold, fuelled by air from the broken window. PC Harris tried to grab the lady and get her through the broken window but when that failed he smashed his way through the patio door and ran in to find her. He managed to put out the flames with a fire extinguisher. The fire service then arrived and used cutting gear to open the front door and the woman was able to be evacuated and taken to hospital. The woman’s daughter later paid tribute to the actions of PC Harris, saying: “You may see it simply as ‘part of the job.’ We however do not. You all put your lives on the line for us, the general public... thanks to your actions our family is still complete.”

Northumbria: Officer prevents mid-air flight disaster

Constable Adam Tate helped prevent a mid-air flight disaster while off-duty. PC Tate was returning home from a holiday in Madeira with his wife when he heard a passenger announce he was going to open one of the doors on the aircraft. The passenger went to the rear door of the plane and attempted to open it mid-flight. PC Tate reacted immediately, jumping out of his seat and wrestling the man to the floor. With the help of another passenger, PC Tate was able to keep the man restrained for the remainder of the flight (approximately 40 minutes), during which time the man tried to bite and spit at the officer and other passengers.
The offender was a former flight attendant, and the flight staff were extremely concerned his aviation knowledge would mean he could succeed in opening the door of the cabin. He had earlier attempted to enter the plane’s cockpit, and had approached cabin crew to show them a letter from his dead boyfriend, expressing a wish to “join him.”

Suffolk: Christmas day fire rescue saves woman

Two officers rescued an unconscious woman from her burning home on Christmas Day. Constable Alastair Maidment and Sergeant Ali Livingstone were first on the scene at the fire in Ipswich and, knowing someone’s life was at risk, broke down the front door to get inside. While Sgt Livingstone checked downstairs, PC Maidment climbed to the first floor, but was unable to find anyone before being overcome by the heat and smoke. Sgt Livingstone then climbed the stairs and, forced to his hands and knees, felt a lifeless body just inside a doorway. Retreating briefly downstairs to take some deep breaths, he returned and managed to drag the body to the top of the stairs, where PC Maidment was waiting. Together they were able to get the unconscious woman outside.
Within seconds, the windows on the top floor exploded, showering them with glass shards. The woman survived without any serious injury; both the officers were treated for smoke inhalation at the scene.

Staffordshire: Officers save woman from burning flat

Four Staffordshire officers rescued a trapped woman from a flat fire. Sergeant Charles Haycock and PCs Andrew Lloyd, Lee Parden and Andrea Radford were called to Burton, Staffs, after receiving reports that someone was trapped in a burning flat. Arriving before the fire service, they tried and failed to get a response from the female resident inside.
Fearing for her life, and with no thought for their own safety, the officers immediately forced their way in. Finding the woman in the smoke-filled hallway, they managed to get her out and move her quickly to safety. They were also able to evacuate the other residents in the block before the fire service arrived.
Northamptonshire: Samurai sword attacker injures officer

A typical Sunday evening in November 2014, took a dangerous turn after a call came in about a man causing damage to cars with a baseball bat in Northampton. Arriving at the scene, Constables Rob Monk and Gary Liddle found the damaged cars and could see there was damage at a nearby house. There were concerns that the man had mental health problems and may attempt to take his own life.

The officers, one armed with Taser and both with protective shields, approached the front door of the property where the man was yelling aggressively from inside and continually tried to keep the officers outside. PC Monk managed to jam his foot in the doorway, keeping the door ajar. Suddenly, the offender lunged at the officers and stabbed PC Monk in the leg with a samurai-style sword.

PC Liddle acted quickly and pulled PC Monk, who was bleeding heavily, from the doorway. The sword had penetrated PC Monk's thigh straight through, and was close to a main artery. While PC Liddle improvised a tourniquet, PC Monk used his Taser to give some protection to his partner while further help arrived to arrest the man. PC Liddle then rushed his colleague to hospital for immediate treatment, all the while genuinely fearing for PC Monk's life.

Thames Valley: Man threatens to set himself on fire

PC Garry Dixon was called to reports of a disturbed man who was trying to get his dad’s air rifle. The man’s father had died three days earlier and he was full of extreme grief and anger. On arriving at the house in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, PC Dixon found the man in his father’s shed being very aggressive and destroying the shed.

The officer took charge of the situation in a calm and controlled manner, negotiating with the man who was now sat in the destroyed shed with numerous weapons around him. PC Dixon was unable to Taser the man due to sharp items on the floor so maintained a good dialogue with him throughout, but the man was very unpredictable and demonstrated some really challenging behaviour ranging from smiling menacingly, to threats and throwing hammers at officers. The man then smashed a hammer over his own head causing nasty injuries, grabbed a container of petrol – spraying it around the shed and at PC Dixon – produced a lighter and struck it. Fortunately it only sparked. At this point PC Dixon, in fear for his own life and that of his colleagues, tackled the man to the floor before he had chance to set them all alight.

Surrey: Officers escape serious injury after police car is rammed

Constables Ian Madelin and Philip Baines were called by security at Mercedes-Benz World in Weybridge, reporting that a 4x4 type vehicle had rammed through their showroom and stolen a cash machine containing over £51,000. The officers placed themselves along a likely escape route and spotted the suspect vehicle. They began to follow the car, at some points reaching speeds exceeding 100mph.

During the pursuit an Audi drew alongside the officers; a passenger leaned out and smashed the windscreen of the police car. The Audi then pulled in front of the police car, forcing it to stop. The masked rear passenger jumped out, reached inside the boot, and lifted what appeared to be a long-barrelled weapon. Fearing it was a firearm PC Baines drove straight towards the man, who got back into the Audi. The chase resumed, and after a short time the Audi and the 4x4 came to a halt. One of the passengers shone a bright light towards the officers, whilst the 4x4 reversed at great speed, violently ramming the police car.

Both cars then made off again, and while the shaken the officers tried to continue the pursuit, their vehicle was too badly damaged. Another Surrey unit later found the abandoned 4x4, and the National Police Air Support Helicopter Service arrived at the scene to help in finding the suspects; subsequently five arrests were made.
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Control room operators also held to account over pursuits

I read the two articles in the April edition of Police, relating to police pursuits. I am a retired PC, and have been a Communications Officer with the Met for the past 16 years.

Can I say that it is not just the police driver who is vulnerable when dealing with pursuits; the control room operators and supervisors, police or civilian, are equally being held to account when a pursuit ends badly. There have been many changes to the pursuit policy, both internally and nationally, over the past year. What was policy last month is not necessarily policy this month. We need a comprehensive national policy, with clear concise definitions, one that takes into account both urban and rural scenarios and one that covers all aspects of the pursuit, and which does not need ‘tweaking’ every couple of weeks.

The operators/supervisors dealing with the pursuit need the same level of protection that is being sought for the police driver. While the police driver is accountable for his actions alone, we are held responsible for theirs, and our own actions. The fact that so many pursuits are being terminated by operators/supervisors because they do not comply with current policy is a source of friction between officers on the street, and those working in control rooms.

Policy now appears to be all about the rights of the person being pursued. It should be about the rights of the public, who are put at risk when a pursuit is terminated, and if the driver/rider continues driving dangerously.

I would suggest that in order for the police to deal effectively with vehicle pursuits, one of the first requirements is for the Commissioner and chief constables to publicly state via the media if drivers/riders of vehicles fail to stop for police, they will be forced to stop at the first opportunity, and may later be held responsible for any consequences which occur as a result.

Malcolm Peak,
Metropolitan Police Communications Officer
In the last couple of years, magistrates’ courts in Wiltshire have had the ability to receive evidence via video link. This is normally for remand cases, but it is being trialled for officers to give evidence. Recently, an officer from Amesbury received a witness warning for a case to be heard at Salisbury – some nine miles from Amesbury.

However, rather than attend the court in person, the officer was instructed to attend Chippenham Magistrates’ Court – a distance of 30 miles from Amesbury – to give the evidence on camera via the live video link. When he queried this, he was informed: “Regarding which court to attend, they are trying to enable officers to get back on duty quicker when called to court, so are supplying video links from the nearest location to their station so there is less travel time involved. This can only happen if it has been agreed by the CPS and this time it was their suggestion. At this time we are aiming for you to give evidence via video link from Chippenham to enable you to go back on duty once finished, but this may need to move to Swindon (a distance of 32 miles) depending on availability of the room to access the video link facilities.”

Errrr?

Sometimes it pays to be a clock watcher...

I recently came back after Easter annual leave and could not understand when I booked off on my mobile device that the time was wrong. I got home and the family had already had their tea and I was annoyed, as you know these are rare occasions.

“Why are you late home, why didn’t text me?” I was asked. I was a bit confused, “I’m not late.” I then realised the clock in the office I had been working in all day had not been put forward over Easter. I got some ribbing for it the next day. Needless to say the clock now has the correct time!

If you’ve got a story highlighting the lighter side of police life, we’d love to hear it. Please send your Dogberry entries to: Dogberry@polfed.org

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Initiatives and big ideas to keep the supers busy

Starting in about 2013, three years after they were ordered to do so by Theresa May, forces up and down the country decided to drop comparative quantitative analysis as a method of measuring how good they were at policing. Senior officers never called it by that name of course; it was called ‘performance management’ or simply ‘targets’. Many anonymous police bloggers like me, PC David Copperfield, PC South West and PC Ellie Bloggs wrote in considerable detail about ‘detection culture’ and how stupid and brutal the outcomes of such systems became. School kids being arrested for throwing crisps, drunk and disorderly (one detection but no recordable crime) instead of Section 5 POA, and so on.

I admit I never lost any sleep over whether we detected more car theft than police in Warrington or Leeds, and I was roundly criticised for it at the time. I just worried about whether we detected car theft at all. Many of my colleagues lost loads of sleep over it. Bless them! No one even knows or cares now. It is heresy to even think about it.

Although sold to us now as ‘the right thing to do’ I suspect the real reason detection targets were formally abandoned was we were never going to achieve them with the diminished resources on offer. The advent of elected police and crime commissioners, many of whom based their manifestos on solving more crimes, also placed the writing firmly on the wall for targets. How can anyone fail if no one is counting? Genius.

But what on earth was an entire generation of superintendents – selected, trained and promoted almost entirely on the basis of how effectively they could ‘manage’ these ‘targets’ – now going to do all day? Creating totally ludicrous initiatives, worrying endlessly about ‘reputational issues’ and nitpicking operational decisions made by junior officers are all starters for ten. I always chuckle at the latest big strategic ideas. With absolutely no chance of ever delivering any of these due to the chronic lack of frontline numbers, they are discarded a month later without blushing.

New initiatives and big ideas have two positive outcomes for the police. Firstly, it takes months to design and implement these projects, which keeps people at the centre busy. Secondly, it provides endless amusement to those of us on the frontline, as we marvel at the phenomenal disconnect between us and those who meet, refreshed, with knives out, on a Monday morning.

Oh, and it keeps the walls in the Nick freshly decorated with colourful posters too!

We need to get the basics right before we concern ourselves with the latest promotion portfolio fodder.

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Nick O’TIme

Colin Whittock
Advancing the impact of policing

The Liverpool Centre for Advanced Policing Studies is a cutting-edge interdisciplinary research centre which supports the sector to meet the challenges of 21st century policing. We work closely with police forces, the College of Policing and allied security professions to develop evidence-based working practices and build skills in emerging areas of law enforcement.

We provide a range of:
- Continuous Professional Development
- Undergraduate courses
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- Bespoke training
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Our specialist academics and practitioner fellows bring a range of practice and policy-related experience and are developing a wide variety of research programmes, including the Police Knowledge Fund. The 20-month programme focuses on developing capacity in Merseyside Police to develop evidence-based knowledge in challenging areas such as hate crime, child exploitation, cyber-crime, gang culture and female genital mutilation.

If you or your organisation are interested in working with the Centre to build specialist competencies, develop management training schemes or conduct a Knowledge Transfer Partnership, contact our Centre Manager Stephen Moss on 0151 231 5079, email s.j.moss@ljmu.ac.uk or visit ljmu.ac.uk

If Dixon wanted to leave Dock Green, he would look here first!

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