



We Must Prioritise Mental Health

The number of mental health absences in policing does not reflect the true scale of the problem in the police service, according to Norfolk Police Federation.

Figures show that 13,263 police officers in the UK took time off due to stress, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder in the past year.

In Norfolk, 143 police officers took time off for mental ill health in the past year.

Andy Symonds, Chair of Norfolk Police Feder-

ation, said: "My first reaction is that these figures do not truly reflect the true scale of the issue of mental ill health within the police service. I know many police officers that are suffering but currently feel that they would be letting their team down to report sick. So presenteeism is alive and kicking in the police service.

do their best even when they are ill. We need to continue to invest in officers' wellbeing before they break rather than invest in the services available when they seek help. By then we've lost key time to intervene early to get them well again.

"When I see all new student officers I make sure that I spare some time to signpost them to self help and other mental health services – both the Federation have in the form of our Welfare Support Programme and our reps who

attending fatal road collisions but the slow creep of dealing with all types of stresses, anxieties, pressures and traumatic incidents day after day, week after week, and shift after shift. We need to get better at identifying those colleagues that are struggling to cope.

"Investment in officers being trained in recognising the symptoms or behaviour in their colleagues.

"Therefore investment both in terms of financial but also a force-wide commitment to

"We need to invest in officers' wellbeing before they break"

ation, said: "My first reaction is that these figures do not truly reflect the true scale of the issue of mental ill health within the police service. I know many police officers that are suffering but currently feel that they would be letting their team down to report sick. So presenteeism is alive and kicking in the police service.

"Officers are committed people who want to

are trained in mental health first aid.

"We recruit people into the organisation train them in the law, process, how to arrest and how to defend themselves but we're simply not good enough in training and preparing them for the types of trauma they will see and have to deal with on an almost daily basis.

"So it's not only the obvious trauma like

make the support available consistently to those officers that need it.

"So we need to concentrate our efforts into the preventative measures we can take to stop this issue getting bigger. If we don't, ultimately it will mean we will have more officers off sick suffering with their mental health who are not able to serve their communities."

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Book your slot by phoning the Federation office on 01603 971420
or emailing norfolk@polfed.org

Degree Not Necessary To Police

Being a great cop doesn't necessarily include being able to write a dissertation, the Chair of Norfolk Police Federation has said, as he welcomed the news that there will be a new, non-degree entry route into policing.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman announced the change at the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and National Police Chiefs' Council Partnership Summit.

In her speech she said policing needed to "draw from the widest pool of talent".

Andy Symonds said the Federation had

been campaigning on this issue for some time, arguing that the current Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) was putting off recruits from the military, Special Constables and older career-changers.

He said: "The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has been consistent in warning the police service and Government of the perils of restricting the only entry routes into the service to either current degree holders or to those who have to gain a degree through an apprenticeship.

"We should always remain open to all people, regardless of their academic abilities.

"As long as they can, with training, become an excellent officer who is able to serve their communities with distinction and can investigate and solve crimes, that is all that matters.

"Being a great cop doesn't include being able to write a dissertation.

"It makes no sense to miss out on excellent people from our community who would be great police officers."

He added: "I hope this now means that we will have a mix of entry routes into policing. Some people may not want to do a degree but will nonetheless be top cops."



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Police Conduct System Is Fair

The current police conduct system is fair, open, transparent and robust, Norfolk Police Federation has said.

Chair Andy Symonds was responding to an announcement by the Home Office that it intends to launch a “targeted review of police dismissals to raise standards and confidence in policing across England and Wales”.

But Andy said changes to what he described as a fair system would be a “retrograde step”.

Conduct hearings were changed in 2015/16 under the then-Home Secretary Theresa May, which included holding hearings in public and a Legally Qualified Chair being appointed.

Andy said: “The purpose of the changes was

followed appropriately and that regulations and the law is adhered to and these officers get a fair hearing. This is called due process.

“As a Police Federation we help oust bad and corrupt officers from police service as they tarnish us all with their actions. However, we do represent officers and support them if – based on the evidence – we feel that the officer does not deserve to be dismissed.

“It’s not the case that all officers that are charged with misconduct breaches deserve to be dismissed. This is why hearings have other options such as no case to answer, practice requiring improvement, reduction in rank, written warning and final written warning.”

be processed to conclusion. The police service and other stakeholders, such as the Independent Office for Police Conduct and Crown Prosecution Service, need to get their act together so that these processes are sped up drastically.

“It is simply unacceptable to have either complainants, victims or the officer subject of the investigation and misconduct process not to have it completed in a timely manner resulting in the right and appropriate outcome.”

Andy described the proposed changes to the system as having political motivations.

He concluded: “Any changes to allow Chief Constables to Chair these hearings would be a retrograde step and would simply be a political

“The current system is fair, open, transparent and robust. And importantly it has a member of the public sitting in judgement”

to bring greater transparency and independence to police misconduct hearings.

“Currently the hearings have a panel of three people who assess the evidence put before them and make a decision based on what they’ve heard and seen during the hearing.

“This is a perfectly robust process and has independence from the police, which was the entire reason for these changes.

“As a Police Federation, we do not protect bad officers. We make sure the process is

Andy said it would be more useful to focus on the length of time investigations take.

He explained: “What we should be concentrating on is the timeliness of these investigations. I have cases which have taken over a year to conclude. These delays are not a result of an officer delaying or refusing to co-operate.

“Officers tend to submit to interview very quickly and often are interviewed very soon after an allegation is received.

“However, investigations take far too long to

move and a knee-jerk reaction.

“The current system is fair, open, transparent and robust. And importantly it has a member of the public sitting in judgement.

“The system involves legally qualified chairs who have experience and expertise in Police Regulations and who receive regular training. This enables consistency in outcomes according to the standards of professional behaviour, the police code of ethics and the guidance on outcomes for police misconduct processes.”

POLICE

Movember Challenge Raises Cash For Men’s Health

A group of Norfolk Police officers have raised a fantastic £1,140 by cultivating new moustaches in November.

Harry Martin and nine colleagues from Galston and Yarmouth grew moustaches for Movember, collecting money from friends, family and workmates as they did so. The cash goes to support a number of men’s mental health and suicide prevention causes.

Harry said: “Half of the people that are doing have beards already, so going to a ‘tache and going clean shaven at the start of the month felt like a real difference.

“Friends, families, partners were all a bit shocked for the first few days. But obviously they were all on board and supportive. And then the



other half always have a clean shaven face so to have a ‘tache made quite a difference.”

Norfolk Police Federation donated each member of the team a shaving kit, to help

them restore their faces to their former glory in December.

Harry, who has organised the grow in a previous role but never in the police, added: ‘We’re grateful to have the Federation’s support.

‘I’d like to thank all the guys for getting involved and supporting. Every little helps, even if it’s a couple of quid donation from their friend. Also big thanks to the family and friends that have all supported us through it, and kind of put up with looking at the ‘taches for the month.’

‘The Movember charity is the global leaders for men’s mental and physical health, and they’re the only mainstream charity that tackles it globally. So it’s quite an important thing to get behind.’

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Honouring Fallen Colleagues

The police service should never forget the sacrifices that officers make, Norfolk Police Federation has said.

Chair Andy Symonds was speaking before this year's National Police Memorial Day service in Belfast, where members of the police family gathered to honour their fallen colleagues.

Andy was joined by Secretary Sam Hawkins, and families, friends and former colleagues of the fallen.

Andy said: "This annual event is really important and we never, ever forget the sacrifices that our colleagues and friends pay in the line of duty."



"It's important that, however long ago that death or being killed on duty is, that we continue to remember them forever"

"We've had 10 officers in Norfolk that have sadly died or been killed on duty, starting in 1907 with the last one in 2003.

"So it's really important that we never, ever forget, and we pay respects to them and their family and loved ones.

"This is a difficult day every year and these events bring back those memories. But it's important that, however long ago that death or being killed on duty is, that we continue to remember them forever."

Andy said the event was especially important for families, to ensure they maintain that connection with the police.

Sam added: "There is real gravitas and the poignancy at this event. Andy and I visited the RUC memorial gardens, and over 300 officers were killed in The Troubles and on duty and it just really brings it home.

"It is really quite special to be here in Belfast, to see everybody from across the UK recognising the sacrifice officers have made."

The names of officers who lost their lives over the past year were read out at the event.

They were: PC Daniel Golding, of the Metropolitan Police; PC Craig Higgins, of Greater Manchester Police; PC Alex Prentice, of Northamptonshire Police; and PC Darryl Street, of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

Candles were lit by relatives in remembrance of officers throughout the country who have lost their lives – one from each of the four nations of the UK.

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Food Boxes For Those Who Need Our Help

It truly is very sad times when it became apparent earlier this year that we needed to set up a process to help those officers and their families who are struggling with the cost of living to the extent that they are finding it difficult to

feed themselves. We have already supported a number of colleagues with food boxes which contain some essentials to get them through a tough period.

Therefore if you feel you also need this

support, please contact norfolk@polfed.org or ask a Fed Rep and we will be able to support you with a food box.

It will of course remain confidential and you can collect or we can deliver the food box to you.

Helping Our Officers Stay Fit

Rehabilitation clinic Get Fit, Stay Fit helps Norfolk Police officers get back to fitness after injury. And owner Steve Kirby says he's proud of the work he does to help get bobbies back on the beat.

Steve originally worked as Metropolitan Police staff, before being diagnosed with thyroid cancer 35 years ago.

He said: "That changed the way I looked at life. When I was having radiotherapy, the radiologist turned around and said: 'If we get you out of here, what would you like to do with the rest of your life?'"

Steve realised that he was interested in anatomy and physiology. He began training as a neuromuscular therapist and sports therapist, and his first patients were injured Met Police colleagues.

Now Steve is based in Blofield, and his business partner Tom treats patients in Norwich.

Steve said that police officers shouldn't keep pushing on through pain and that they needed



"My aim is to get officers to the point where they're not just coping with an injury, they're able to have pain-free movement"

to know when to seek help.

He said: "If an officer is going to work and they're in pain, their ability to do their job and give their best service to the public is constrained. Quite often they're not sleeping properly at night so they're tired too.

"From my time as police staff, I have seen the hard situations that officers deal with. And they need to be at their best to be able to deal with them. Officers often pride themselves on their tolerance to cope with things, but sometimes they keep on going until they break. And when they come to me, they can be cynical that anyone can help them."

Steve listens carefully to each patient, talks through their issues and works out the best treatment for them.

Alongside sports massage and a range of neuromusculoskeletal therapies, Get Fit, Stay Fit

also uses cutting-edge treatments, including Sigma Q's bioneuro therapy, which increases deep nerve function and blood flow to muscles.

Steve said: "My ethos is, it's not about where you've been, it's about where you're going and how you're going to get there. You've got to have the right people around you and think positively. Two ways you can look at a mountain are: 'Oh, my goodness it's really big'. Or: 'It's really big. How are we going to climb it?'"

"My aim is to get officers to the point where they're not just coping with an injury, they're able to have pain-free movement.

"Tom and I are here for our patients, we can give them our time and we really listen to their concerns. We help the individual, because everyone's different."

One officer who was struggling with a foot injury is now back to fitness after going to Get

Fit, Stay Fit and taking advantage of the discount for Federation members.

The officer had sessions with Steve every two weeks, receiving Sigma Q bioneuro therapy, ultrasound and massage.

She said: "I'd had a foot injury for five or six months, but nothing seemed to be fixing it. I'd also been quite poorly with COVID."

"As I had tightness in my breathing, Steve helped open my lungs up, and he also fixed the issues with my foot – it's all good now.

"He's freed up lots of other issues that I kind of knew were there from previous injuries.

"He goes into your injury history and considers the knock-on effects from those injuries.

"I've already referred two other colleagues to Steve. I told them that it might take several appointments, but it's definitely worth going to see him if you've got an injury to see if he can help."

www.getfitstayfitnorfolk.co.uk

To book with Steve at the clinic in Blofield, call 01603 211570 or email info@getfitstayfitnorfolk.co.uk

To book with Tom at the clinic in Norwich, call 07410192283 or e-mail tomsteadman@GFSFNorwich.onmicrosoft.com

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