

Women stay away from typically male roles

Family responsibility, lack of female interest in areas such as 'bikes and guns' and a need to address bullying and harassment means many women do not choose to enter or stay in specialist roles.

The British Association of Women in Policing (BAWP) found evidence from women around the country about issues affecting their working environment.

The work, part of the Gender Agenda 2 document, due to be launched this month in London, uncovered a number of issues which can put women off entering specialist roles such as firearms.

Liz Owsley, coordinator for the BAWP, said: "Some of the reasons [there are few women in specialist roles] are because some women do not want to ride bikes or fire guns so the pool of female officers to take from is smaller. The 22 percent of women in the police force nationally becomes smaller when you have to pick from those who also have an interest in the subject."

She also added that there is a perception that the specialist departments are quite macho and anecdotal evidence suggests that the right equipment is not always provided for female officers when they do join, such as correctly-fitting uniform.

Julie Nesbit, secretary of the Police Federation's equality sub-committee, said: "Women officers with caring responsibilities will choose to remain in roles where they can be offered flexible working. The service needs to provide a working environment within the specialist roles that is free from harassment and bullying."

The British Association of Women in Policing will launch the findings in Gender Agenda 2 on October 30 in London. For more details see their website at www.bawp.org

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Officers will not face criminal charges over shooting

Two firearms officers will not face criminal charges in relation to the shooting of Simon Murden who drove the wrong way down a road and moved towards the public carrying a sword-like weapon.

The Crown Prosecution Service announced this month that they would not be pressing charges against the two Humberside police officers after the tragic death of the 26 year old.

Jon Savage, chairman of Humberside Police Federation, said in a statement following the news: "The officers [who have not been named] are of course relieved there are to be no charges in this case. They wish to say that their thoughts are with the family and friends of Simon Murden, as they have been since the day he died."

The young man, who worked for his father's fair trade charity, was driving one of the organisation's vans down the A63 in the wrong direction when police were called.

He approached the officers carrying a sword-type weapon and was fatally wounded when police shot after baton rounds and warnings failed to stop him.

Ken Macdonald QC, the director of public prosecutions, said: "At the time that this tragic event occurred, Simon was acting in an unpredictable manner, carrying a form of weaponry that was capable of inflicting fatal injuries, and moving determinedly towards an area where there were members of the public."

Even after initial baton rounds were fired, it was clear he was determined to carry on towards the public.

The officers who shot him have said that they honestly and genuinely believed that in those circumstances force was necessary to protect themselves and others from lethal harm."

A date is yet to be set for the coroner's inquest.

Sgt Phaedra Coulson, firearms officer, has not been put off by stereotypes



Photography: Andrew Carruth

Jon Savage: officers thoughts go out to Murden family



Photography: Humberside Federation