

FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation

April/May 2024



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WELCOME

Welcome to the April/May 2024 edition of **Federation** - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role - though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

- 4 Chair's introduction
- 5 Elizabeth Emblem to honour fallen officers
- 5 National Police Memorial Day: booking open
- 6 Government has to act on police pay and low morale
- 8 Bailey Atkinson murder: the investigation
- 10 Accountability review: Fed welcomes plans for legislative change
- 11 Lengthy conduct investigations must be sped up
- 12 'I know he'd be happy for me that I finally got to do this'
- 14 Prostate cancer screenings for members
- 15 First Special to carry Taser in West Midlands
- 16 One year on: an interview with multi-faith lead Khadija Sulaiman
- 18 Concerns over single custody officer blocks
- 21 Comprehensive cover with our 'unbeatable' Group Insurance Scheme
- 22 Making a road traffic accident claim: The 'how to' guide
- 23 Building community relations through cricket
- 24 New York Half Marathon fast approaching
- 26 Officer goes 'above and beyond' to help elderly man off streets
- 29 Police Unity Tour: registration open
- 31 West Midlands Police Museum scoops award
- 32 Do you need family law advice?
- 33 Wolverhampton history documented in new book

ADVERTISERS

- 2 **McAlister**, family law
- 11 **Irwin Mitchell**, family law
- 20 **George Burrows**, Group Insurance Scheme
- 22 **Slater & Gordon**, police law
- 28 **First Call Financial**, independent mortgage advice
- 28 **NARPO**, member services
- 29 **Warren & Co**, independent mortgage advice
- 30 **Police Mutual**, car and home insurance
- 32 **Gorvins**, police and family law
- 34 **Police Insure**, car, home and motorcycle insurance

Policing cuts have had consequences



By **Rich Cooke**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

Frustrated, fatigued and fed up, police officers across England and Wales are struggling to make ends meet and sick of the way they are treated by the Government and the public.

These are issues we have been raising for some time, but now officers from forces nationwide have spoken out themselves having taken part in the national Federation's annual pay and morale survey.

When the Government announced cuts to police budgets in 2010, the Federation warned the cuts would have consequences.

We were accused of scaremongering.

It gives me no great pleasure, but I am afraid it is tempting, on reading the results of the survey, to say "We told you so."

Policing has been damaged by the austerity years, as has the service we provide

to the public. Our numbers were slashed, with those officers remaining being put under huge pressure trying to do more with less.

We had fewer officers and police stations and police bases, reduced intelligence gathering, weakened links with our communities and hard-pressed and demoralised police officers trying to meet ever-increasing demand.

Police officer numbers are now back to 2010 levels, thanks to the Government's Uplift Programme which brought another 20,000 colleagues nationwide.

But it is going to take time for the police service to recover from the years of underfunding. There is no quick fix.

And, in fact, things could get worse before they get better. We now have a relatively young and inexperienced workforce and there is a risk that some of longer serving officers are going to leave at the earliest opportunity.

According to the survey, 15 per cent of West Midlands respondents intend to resign from the police service either 'within the next two years' or 'as soon as (they) can'.

They blame low morale, how the police are treated by the Government and the impact of the job on mental health and wellbeing (with 82 per cent, 78 per cent and 70 per cent respectively).

This should serve as a wake-up call for the Government and chief officers. They must tackle low officer morale and the factors

contributing to that malaise if we are to rebuild the service and ensure officers feel valued, well-supported and motivated.

As a Federation, we will continue to raise members' concerns with the Force's senior leadership team and we are seeking to engage with the region's MPs to encourage them to speak up for the police officers who serve and protect their constituents.

But, in the meantime, there are some flickers of positivity. Earlier this year, it was announced that an Elizabeth Emblem had been created as a posthumous honour for officers killed in the line of duty. This is something the Federation has been pushing for, and is welcomed by the families of our fallen colleagues who can now apply for the emblem.

We have learned that a new mental health crisis line is being rolled out, initially in the North East but next year this will spread nationwide as part of the Police Covenant provisions.

The Home Secretary has also announced plans for legislative change to improve the timeliness of investigations into police officers' conduct and also raise the threshold at which the police watchdog refers cases to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

James Cleverley's plans have been welcomed, on behalf of the Federation, by our branch secretary Tim Rogers, who said they were long overdue.

The current legal framework has led to

“ AS A FEDERATION, WE WILL CONTINUE TO RAISE MEMBERS' CONCERNS WITH THE FORCE'S SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND WE ARE SEEKING TO ENGAGE WITH THE REGION'S MPS TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO SPEAK UP FOR THE POLICE OFFICERS WHO SERVE AND PROTECT THEIR CONSTITUENTS. ”

firearms officers handing in their ticket because they have no faith in a system whereby they end up on the wrong side of the law simply for doing their job to the best of their ability and training, but without the benefit of hindsight or the ability to go through a video of an incident frame by frame after the event.

Police officers fully understand the need for accountability but when they put themselves in harm's way to serve and protect the public they have to make split-second, life or death decisions. They need confidence that the system for reviewing their actions strikes the right balance between that accountability and the support they need when they are using their powers effectively.

You can find out more about the proposals on Page 10.

“ IT IS GOING TO TAKE TIME FOR THE POLICE SERVICE TO RECOVER FROM THE YEARS OF UNDERFUNDING. THERE IS NO QUICK FIX.

These three developments will help show that police officers' unique role in society is appreciated, but it must not stop there. We need long-term investment in policing and more recognition of the challenges and dangers officers face.

As if a reminder is needed of police officers' commitment to their communities, it is worth noting that plans are now underway for National Police Memorial Day in Scotland this September.

The memorial day serves as a reminder that all too often our officers leave their families to go to work but do not return home after their shift. They pay the ultimate price, something their families live with for the rest of their lives.

If you have never been to a memorial day service, I would urge you to do so at least once during your career. [You can register to attend now.](#)

Finally, can I end this article with a plea for members to consider sponsoring me and a team of 16 other West Midlands officers taking part in the New York Half Marathon on Saturday 20 May?

We are running to raise awareness of neuroblastoma, a rare cancer that affects children, mostly under the age of five. We are also raising money for the charity Joining Against Cancer in Kids, or [J-A-C-K.org](#).

[Find out more.](#)

Elizabeth Emblem to honour fallen officers

'We must never forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service,' says West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich welcomed the announcement of the new Elizabeth Emblem, which will recognise public sector workers who die in service.

Named after the late Queen and conferred by His Majesty The King, the Emblem is a national form of recognition awarded to the next of kin of police officers, firefighters and many other public servants.

Rich said: "We warmly welcome the introduction of the new Elizabeth Emblem.

"Police officers put themselves in harm's way everyday just doing their jobs and we must never forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service.

"The new Elizabeth Emblem will allow the nation to honour their dedication and give their families formal recognition of their sacrifice."

The Elizabeth Emblem is the civilian equivalent of the Elizabeth Cross, which recognises members of the UK armed forces who died in action or as a result of a terrorist attack.

The design of the emblem incorporates a rosemary wreath, a traditional symbol of remembrance, which surrounds the Tudor Crown. It is inscribed with 'For A Life Given



Elizabeth Emblem to be awarded in honour of fallen officers.

In Service', and will have the name of the person it honours on the reverse. It will include a pin to allow the award to be worn on clothing by the next of kin of the deceased.

Rich said its introduction was due in no small part to the campaigning of Bryn Hughes, whose daughter Greater Manchester Police PC Nicola Hughes and her colleague PC Fiona Bone were murdered in 2012.

Rich said "Bryn has been a driving force behind the Elizabeth Emblem and I congratulate him on the campaign coming to fruition.

"It is tragic for anybody to die in the line of duty. Bryn has worked tirelessly to get recognition not just for Nicola, but for all public service workers who have been killed in service and this is something he can rightly be proud of."

Bryn said: "Nicola and Fiona went to work that day wearing the Crown and they lost their lives while responding to what they thought was a call for help from a member of the public.

"To receive this news that their sacrifice is to be formally recognised by the Crown and State is overwhelming.

"I meet with many other families of fallen officers and I'm sure that many of those too will be thankful for this formal recognition."

The Police Federation of England and Wales will now continue the work of its Medals for Heroes campaign with all 43 represented forces.

National Police Memorial Day: booking open

West Midlands Police officers are being urged to register to attend the National Police Memorial Day service in Glasgow at the end of September.

The memorial day was founded by now retired Kent Inspector Joe Holness after his colleague Jon Odell was brutally killed in Margate in December 2000. The inaugural service was in St Paul's Cathedral in London on Sunday 3 October 2004.

The event rotates around the four nations of the UK each year and this year will be held at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall on Sunday 29 September with Scotland taking over as hosts from Wales as the 2023 service was held in Cardiff.

"National Police Memorial Day recognises and honours our fallen colleagues, those who never returned to their families at the end of their shift, and in turn enables us to show those families that the police service never forget the officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice and the ongoing impact that has had on the families left behind," says West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

"Having attended the service a number of times myself now, I would encourage all officers to try to attend at least one of the memorial day services during their careers. They are very moving and poignant."

[Find out more and book your place.](#)

Government has to act on police pay and low morale

A key priority for the new Government formed after the General Election must be reviewing the current process for determining police pay and committing to long-term and sustained investment in the police service, according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich was speaking after a nationwide survey revealed 88 per cent of members felt morale in the Force was low or very low and 58 per cent felt their personal morale was low or very low.

While 96 per cent of West Midlands respondents said they do not feel respected by the Government, 97 per cent said the way the Government treats policing has impacted on their morale. Other factors affecting morale identified by respondents to the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) Pay and Morale Survey included how the police are

treated by the public (88 per cent), pay and benefits (85 per cent), workload and responsibilities (65 per cent) and pensions (65 per cent).

In addition, 85 per cent of members responding said they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their overall remuneration including basic pay and allowances.

"I am not at all surprised that members are dissatisfied with their pay and feel that Force morale is so low but, as the breakdown of these figures reveals, the reasons for this are rooted in long-term under-investment, and consistent denigration of traditional policing," says Rich.

"The austerity years when police budgets were slashed reduced police officer numbers by around 2,000 in the West Midlands, many historic stations closed and continue to close

to this day and once thriving hubs of productive activity became like ghost ships overnight. Recruitment and training all but ceased. Officers were deskilled from a position of flexible omnicompetence in the ability to competently respond as well as investigate. Neighbourhood policing shrank and intelligence dried up.

"The pressure on those left behind increased exponentially along with the demand from the public as partner agencies were also affected by severe cuts. This created a deep wound that could take decades to fix.

"We have now seen an investment in boosting our numbers through the Government's Uplift Programme but officers are still lagging behind in terms of their pay and do not feel valued by Government. The legacy of pension changes means experienced, skilled officers are, perversely, incentivised to leave the profession earlier.

"Years of below inflation pay rises and pension changes meant that in effect we had a massive real-terms pay cut (circa 20 per cent) facilitated by a mechanism for determining police pay in which police have no seat at the table. The review body is appointed and has its remit set by the government. Even then, the Police Remuneration Review Body's (PRRB) recommendation can be ignored by the Home Secretary.

" I AM NOT AT ALL SURPRISED THAT MEMBERS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR PAY AND FEEL THAT FORCE MORALE IS SO LOW BUT, AS THE BREAKDOWN OF THESE FIGURES REVEALS, THE REASONS FOR THIS ARE ROOTED IN LONG-TERM UNDER-INVESTMENT, AND CONSISTENT DENIGRATION OF TRADITIONAL POLICING.

“There is no question of arbitration, although this had worked when it was in place between 1980 and 2013, and colleagues in Northern Ireland and Scotland still retain this option.

“The Police Federation has rightly withdrawn from the current pay review body process in protest at the fact that it is not a fair system but I think which ever party is elected in the General Election later this year must take on board the findings of the pay and morale survey and review the PRRB.

“Police officers want to see a return to a mechanism for determining police pay in which they, through the Federation, actually have a meaningful voice. As it stands, I am seeing no indication that either of the main parties has

any intention to consider the way in which the review body works but improving police pay, and developing a more respectful approach to police officers, will go a long way to restoring officer morale.

“Police officers put their lives on the line each and every day to serve and protect their communities. This should be properly recognised by the Government so that the police service can offer the very best service to the people in our cities, towns and villages. Politicians need to make policing a key priority as their first duty is the safety and security of the public. We need a long-term strategy for sustained investment in policing.”

The PFEW Pay and Morale Survey obtains members' views on their pay and conditions, as

**96 PER CENT
OF WEST MIDLANDS
RESPONDENTS SAID
THEY DO NOT FEEL
RESPECTED BY THE
GOVERNMENT**

FACTORS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING MORALE

	West Midlands Police %	England and Wales %
Pay and benefits	85	81
Workload and responsibilities	65	66
How the police are treated by the Government	97	95
How the police are treated by the public	88	86
Your pension	65	64
Opportunities for development and promotion	40	41
Work-life balance	59	61

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORKING IN THE POLICE

	2023 %	2022 %
I would not recommend joining the police to others	70	69
I do not feel valued in the police	76	71

OFFICERS' TREATMENT IN THE POLICE

	2023		2022	
	'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' %	'Disagree or 'Strongly disagree' %	'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' %	'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' %
I am respected by the Government	1	96	1	96
I am respected by the public	5	86	4	83
I am treated fairly	23	49	28	45

INTENTION TO LEAVE

	2023 %	2022 %
I intend to resign from the police service within the next two years or am seeking alternative employment at the moment and will resign as soon as I can	15	14

well as their attitudes to their work and the police service in general. It is one of the largest annual surveys of police officers conducted within England and Wales and has been conducted annually since 2014.

The 2023 survey was launched on 6 November 2023 and closed on 11 December 2023. During this time, 789 responses were received from West Midlands Police, representing a response rate of around 10 per cent (based on March 2023 Home Office figures of officer headcount).

The West Midlands results also revealed:

- **83 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police indicated that they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months**
- **76 per cent of respondents said that they did not feel valued within the police**
- **70 per cent would not recommend joining the police to others**
- **63 per cent of respondents said that over the last 12 months, their workload has been 'too high' or 'much too high'**
- **38 per cent have experienced verbal insults (swearing, shouting, abuse) at least once per week in the past 12 months**
- **20 per cent of respondents reported 'never' or 'almost never' having enough money to cover all their essentials**
- **15 per cent intend to resign from the police service either 'within the next two years' or as soon as possible**
- **13 per cent have experienced unarmed physical attacks (struggling to get free, wrestling, hitting, kicking) at least once per week in the past 12 months.**

Rich concluded: “There are some shocking figures in this report and we will be working with the Force to address the issues raised but we are also urging all our local MPs to digest the findings and to do their bit to address our concerns.

“Police officers have a unique role in our society and they deserve to be respected by the Government and fairly paid for the critical role they play in fighting crime, keeping people safe and protecting the vulnerable.”

[Read the full report.](#)

Bailey Atkinson murder: the investigation

One of the West Midlands Police detectives who led the investigation into the brutal murder of Bailey Atkinson described it as one of the most complex cases he's worked on.

Detective Sergeant Andy Jelfs paid tribute to the investigating team after seven teenagers were convicted of stabbing to death Bailey in Walsall town centre.

It is thought the murder was in retaliation for an attack on one of the defendants' brothers two months earlier.

Andy, a West Midlands Police Federation member, said: "I've been in West Midlands Police for 29 years and it's probably the most complex investigation I've been involved in.

"I've been on homicide since April 2020 and we have had several complex cases, but this was the most horrific and the most harrowing to happen on our streets."

Bailey, 21, died from multiple stab wounds to his back, arms, and legs.

His final words to a West Midlands Police officer were: "I'm going to die. Tell my mum I love her."

Bailey was attacked at around 1.20am on 28 January 2023. He was walking past the market stalls in Walsall town centre with a female friend when a car swerved towards them to run them over. Bailey told his friend to run, and he ran along High Street.

The drivers of the two vehicles, a black Seat Leon and a silver Toyota Verso, both of which were stolen and on false registration plates, tried to run him over. Bailey used metal bins, bollards and lampposts to shield himself from the cars.

They eventually caught up with Bailey, at which point six of the occupants got out of

the vehicles and attacked Bailey with machetes and 'Rambo First Blood' knives – which are widely available on the internet.

At the end of the attack, one of the offenders appeared to try to take a photo of Bailey dying on the floor but was disturbed by members of the public, forcing them to flee the scene.

Despite receiving CPR and open-heart surgery at the scene, Bailey was pronounced dead at hospital a short time later.

It sparked a massive manhunt.

Andy said: "Our priority was to identify the two groups in the vehicles. We believed there were nine of them.

"Five actively took part in the stabbing, one encouraged them to do it and another was driving the Toyota Verso and tried to run him over. Two others remained in the Seat while the attack took place.

"A lot of the attack was caught on CCTV and was being watched live by the CCTV operator, who was able to capture the attack on Bailey, the registration numbers of the vehicles, and their direction of travel."

DS Andy McDonald was appointed CCTV co-ordinator and pulled together more than 1,000 pieces of CCTV evidence.

It was established the group had met in the car park of a nearby supermarket 20 minutes before the attack.

Andy said: "Due to excellent work around the CCTV, intelligence from the public via Crimestoppers and social media, and using phone work, we started identifying the suspects.

"We quickly got an idea of who they were, how they operate, how they associate and where they hang around and live."

Within 72 hours the first three arrests were made, at a hotel in Rhyl in North Wales. Further arrests followed in Worcester, Bloxwich and Walsall. One suspect handed themselves in, with all nine suspects in custody by 16 February.

Andy said: "We were working 18-hour days for the first three weeks with a homicide team of 16 detectives, the assistance of the CCTV team, which was a further six to eight officers. We appointed a family liaison officer to support his mother and family.

"There was a huge amount of phone work and CCTV work. We needed to know about each suspect that's going to help us build a picture of why this happened."

The trial at Nottingham Crown Court lasted 10 weeks.

"These weeks were intense at Nottingham Crown Court," Andy explained. "We were working long hours.

"For this case where there were nine defendants, so there were 18 defence barristers plus two barristers for the prosecution, so it was a difficult process."

At the end of the trial, seven teenagers were convicted of Bailey's murder.

They are:

- Benjamin Wilkes, 18 of Guild Avenue, Bloxwich
- Patrick Brookes, 18 of Hunter Crescent, Walsall
- Sonny Loveridge, 19 of Irvine Road, Bloxwich
- Ronan McCulloch, 18 of Livingstone Road, Bloxwich.

Three 17-year-olds who cannot be named for legal reasons were also convicted. Two other defendants were found not guilty.

Andy said: "The guilty verdicts were massive testament to the dedication of the homicide team, the CCTV team and partner agencies such as the CPS and forensic services. We used prison intelligence, and that assisted our case greatly.

"It really was and really had to be a team effort.

"When the guilty verdicts were returned it's a massive relief and a sense of

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Knives used in the attack.

“ WE LIVE AND BREATHE THE INVESTIGATION. OUR FAMILIES HAVE TO BE UNDERSTANDING BECAUSE, UNFORTUNATELY, THE JOB ULTIMATELY COME FIRST. WE DO IT FOR PROFESSIONAL PRIDE, JOB SATISFACTION AND GETTING THE RIGHT OUTCOMES FOR THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS.

achievement when you've put so much into it. "The amount of work that detectives, on homicide particularly, put into investigations is huge.

"We live and breathe the investigation. Our families have to be understanding because, unfortunately, the job ultimately come first.



"We do it for professional pride, job satisfaction and getting the right outcomes for the families of the victims."

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has been campaigning for a ban on the types of weapons used in the attack, as well as online sales and marketing he believes are aimed at young people and children often involved in violence

Rich has also been calling for a clear deterrent to prevent the carrying of knives in the first place.

"We need prevention, enforcement and sentencing," he said. "Serious prevention, tough sentences and tough enforcement."



Accountability review: Fed welcomes plans for legislative change

The Home Secretary has announced plans for legislative change to improve the timeliness of investigations into police officers' conduct and also raise the threshold at which the police watchdog refers cases to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

James Cleverley's plans have been welcomed by Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, who says they are long overdue.

"We are pleased to see that the Home Secretary has listened to what the Federation has been saying for some time now," says Tim, "The current legal framework has led to a situation where we have firearms officers handing in their ticket because they have no faith in a system whereby they end up on the wrong side of the law simply for doing their job to the best of their ability and training, but without the benefit of hindsight or the ability to go through a video of an incident frame by frame after the event.

"Police officers fully understand the need for accountability but when they are putting themselves in harm's way to serve and protect the public they have to make split-second, life or death decisions. They need to have confidence that the system in place for reviewing their actions strikes the right balance between that accountability and the support they need when they are using their powers effectively.

"Under these proposals the threshold for referral of officers' cases to the CPS will be brought in line with the threshold used for the public – so that only those with a reasonable prospect of conviction will be referred which is a far fairer and proportionate response."

In September last year, the then Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, announced a review of the way in which police use of force and police driving related incidents are investigated.

Announcing the outcome of the review, Mr Cleverly, who is now seeking three changes to the Criminal Justice Bill currently working its



Home Secretary James Cleverly.

way through Parliament, said: "Our police officers act bravely in the line of duty, and they should not fear that their actions, when lawful and taken in line with their training and guidance, could damage their careers, wellbeing and family life.

"It is vital for the public and our policing that officers are held to the highest of standards and a balance must be struck between making sure officers can do their jobs safely and confidently and holding them to account.

"That is why the changes we are setting out today, and further measures in the coming months, will ensure both our officers and the public have faith in the accountability system."

While the amendments to the bill will set out to improve the timeliness and fairness of investigations, they will also enhance the rights of victims to challenge decisions made by the Independent Office for Police Conduct while chief constables have been urged to

ensure that forces provide post-incident support to officers.

The Home Secretary is also putting forward a range of non-legislative measures to address the complexity and length of the accountability process, to improve post-incident communications to both officers and the public, and to ensure better support is provided to both bereaved families and officers.

After the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May, there will be a public consultation period on the proposed changes.

Tim concluded: "These proposals could make a huge difference in terms of reassuring police officers involved not just in firearms or driving incidents but also in all incidents of police use of force.

"My only concern now is that the Government, with the General Election looming, has sufficient time to get them over the line."

Lengthy conduct investigations must be sped up

West Midlands Police Federation's discipline lead has highlighted the impact of lengthy conduct investigations on individual officers, their colleagues and the public.

Dave Hadley said that the time it takes for allegations to be heard needed to be speeded up for the sake of everyone involved.

He cited an investigation into five people which concluded after 11 months with no case to answer. He said it was by no means one of the worst examples, but the fact investigations around this length of time are becoming normalised was 'deeply troubling'.

Dave said: "The incident was largely captured by very clear CCTV and audio. It was manifestly obvious that the complaint was false and malicious, but here we are almost a year later, during which time those officers

were restricted from operational duty, placed in back-office roles."

Dave said the investigation has had a financial impact on those involved, with one officer in particular seeing a drop in his salary after being returned to PC rank, losing shift allowance and being unable to work over-time.

"With that investigation, the poor chap had to get a second mortgage," Dave said. "His wife had to take on extra hours. It had massive impact on them and their family.

"When people are suspended from duty, the public are paying someone to do nothing. When officers are restricted from duty, they're not doing the full role of a police officer. In both cases the officers suffer and so do the public.

"In this case there were five people for the best part of the year doing back-office jobs.

That is an enormous financial cost to the public."

He also repeated his long standing concerns around the 'toxic ripple effect' of such investigations.

"If you're a PC and you've seen one of your colleagues being treated like that for doing no more, in your view, than what they're trained to do as a police officer, how likely is it that when you are faced with attending incidents that you will rush to deal with it?

"If left unchecked, you end up with a passive style of policing, where officers don't have the confidence to exercise their powers, because they fear the financial and psychological consequences of the process that's designed to hold officers to account."

Dave's comments come after the Home Office announce that investigations into police officers suspected of committing offences in the line of duty will be sped up to provide swifter clarity to both officers and victims.

“ THOSE WHO ARE CHARGED WITH INVESTIGATING OFFICERS WITHIN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENTS AND AT THE IOPC NEED TO BE AFFORDED SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO FULFIL THEIR ROLE.

The Home Office also announced a rise in the threshold for referring police officers for criminal prosecution, saying that 'only cases that have a reasonable prospect of conviction should be referred'. This mirrors the test for members of the public suspected of committing a crime.

The Police Federation of England and Wales has been campaigning for a disciplinary proceedings to be speeded up through its [Time Limits campaign](#).

Dave said: "I don't criticise individual investigators. They've undoubtedly got a desk full of other jobs which they have to prioritise. The fact is that one person can only do the work of one person, and yet I'm aware of the workload of some investigators where two people would struggle to complete it.

"Those who are charged with investigating officers within professional standards departments and at the IOPC need to be afforded sufficient resources to fulfil their role.

"What is needed is an influx of staff and resources, and we also need them to use those resources efficiently, making braver decisions around what could be dealt with through learning outcomes for example."



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“XXXXXXXXX”

Dean Marriott in training.

'I know he'd be happy for me that I finally got to do this'

Year after year, West Midlands Police Federation member Dean Marriott would apply for a highly-demanded London Marathon ballot place in the most popular marathon in the UK.

The 51-year-old sergeant has competed in half-marathons and long-distance charity bike rides, and even when not training for an event, is no stranger to a 5am run as part of a normal routine.

Yet, despite being a confident athlete with a clear appetite for the challenge, he would open each year's ballot application unsuccessful email with a slight sense of relief.

"Of course, I wanted to do it - I've always wanted to do it, to be honest. So, although I would be disappointed, there would still be a small part of me thinking, 'Phew, that was close,'" said Dean.

"Marathons are just a whole other level, no matter how well you prepare."

His most recent application was different, however. There would be no room for consolation this time around. Inspired by the sudden passing of his close friend Paul 'Sheps' Shepherd, who suffered a cardiac arrest last June, Dean instead applied for one of only four hundred charity entrances through the British Heart Foundation.

This one was successful. Dean was to race in the 2024 London Marathon.

He said: "There was a lot more riding on it this year - it wasn't just about me anymore. I knew I had to do it for Paul. I was told there were thousands of charity applications, and I got a place, so it feels meant to be."

Dean and Paul's friendship began when they met at a baby group back in 2010, having children of a similar age. Both keen runners, the two were part of a wider group of friends who will be present to support Dean on race day.

"I think Paul would be really proud. He liked running too, so he knew my passion for it better than most," he adds.

"He probably thought I was too passionate sometimes. When we'd be on holiday with our friends, he would tell people he was 'hiding from Deano' when I would try to get him up for a few early-morning kilometres.

"Sheps was such a good mate and I know he would be happy for me that I finally get to do this."

As a member of the Federation for nearly 27 years, Dean has also seen friends from within the Force suffer from heart-related issues, something he says will be on his mind as he represents the British Heart Foundation - in addition to his central tribute to Paul.

He said: "I'm sure everyone has witnessed someone they know struggle with heart problems. That's why the Heart Foundation

continues to be so important. Its work will help parts of the next generation of officers, so you could even say I'm running for them too."

“ I THINK PAUL WOULD BE REALLY PROUD. HE LIKED RUNNING TOO, SO HE KNEW MY PASSION FOR IT BETTER THAN MOST.

Dean initially kept the confirmation of his place low-key around work.

"I didn't want to go too early with it," Dean added. "We're police officers. Most of the time, we just crack on."

Since making more colleagues aware, however, he describes the support he has received as 'absolutely fantastic' and the sergeant is evidently very grateful for both the emotional and financial backing of his fellow Federation members, including the organisation of a quiz night fundraiser - which took place on Saturday 16 March.

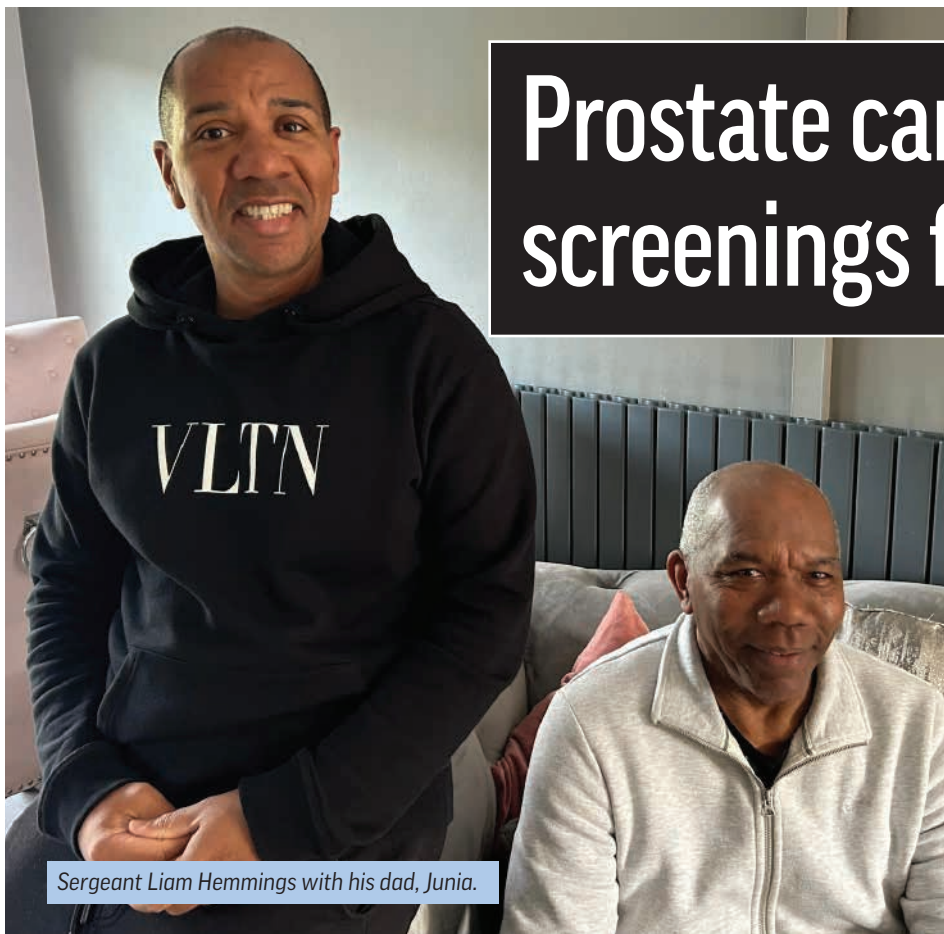
As well as their shared friends, also at the marathon will be Paul's younger brother, Dom, who will take part in the race itself alongside Dean.

Other supporters in attendance were Paul's wife, Becky, and their two sons, Jake and Archie. For Dean, one of the most emotional conversations of his life came when he asked for Becky's permission to race in her husband's name.

He said: "When the distance really started to kick in and things started to hurt, I held onto that conversation. The memory of Paul helped me push through."

You can still donate to Dean by visiting his [JustGiving page](#).

“ I'M SURE EVERYONE HAS WITNESSED SOMEONE THEY KNOW STRUGGLE WITH HEART PROBLEMS. THAT'S WHY THE HEART FOUNDATION CONTINUES TO BE SO IMPORTANT. THEIR WORK WILL HELP PARTS OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF OFFICERS, SO YOU COULD EVEN SAY I'M RUNNING FOR THEM TOO.



Sergeant Liam Hemmings with his dad, Junia.

Prostate cancer screenings for members

A West Midlands Police Federation member who pushed for officers to have access to a test for prostate cancer says he's delighted the screening is to be introduced.

Sergeant Liam Hemmings requested the test be made available after his dad, Junia, and the husband of one of his team members were diagnosed with the disease within a short period of time.

He was inspired by a similar testing programme that was recently introduced by the Metropolitan Police.

Now West Midlands Police has agreed for a number of tests to be made available and will be working with the Graham Fulford Charitable Trust.

Liam said it could potentially save lives.

"It's great that the Force has said it was going to do it," he said. "It's a real positive step forward from the Force."

"If we get one person who takes up the test and gets treatment early that saves their life, that's got to be a good thing."

Liam began researching prostate cancer in order to support a team member after her husband had been diagnosed with the disease.

"When I started looking at it so I could help and support her, at the same time, my dad then told me and my brothers that he had just been diagnosed with it," Liam said.

"My dad had the operation and that was all successful. The member of my team, her husband had the operation and that was also successful."

Liam spoke to his GP about getting himself tested but was told that at 40 he was too young.

"I was a bit taken aback I couldn't get a test," he said.

"When I looked into how prevalent prostate cancer was, I realised firstly the NHS

has no national testing programme and it's the most common cancer in men with 1 in 8 men being diagnosed, and on average 144 men a day are diagnosed with prostate cancer.

"I thought it was a cancer only old men get but it's not. You can get it at any age, it's just more common in men over 50, and if you are from a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) background you are at even greater risk for some reason – even the doctors don't know why.

"It was only the fact I kept pushing and said my dad had just gone through it that they tested me."

Liam said he would urge all men aged over 50 to get tested, and for people to encourage the men in their lives – such as their partner, dad or brother – to get tested.

He said: "I knew how difficult it was for me to get a test, even though I come from a BME background with a dad who has had it, and realised how difficult it must be for other people to get tested but haven't had someone in their family have the cancer.

"They're going to keep getting turned away. I thought there must be officers out there who fall into these different categories.

"And with men, unless you're pushed or backed into the corner, you're not going to go to the doctors to get tested."

Liam turned to West Midlands Police Federation for support in getting members access to tests.

Jase Dooley, branch deputy chair said: "It's an issue quite close to my heart because my father had prostate cancer.

"It's not something I'd thought about until he had it, so for Liam to be raising awareness of it is great.

"He asked the Federation for support and we were happy to help."

The Federation then approached the Force for support, with Deputy Chief Constable Scott Green and Pete Gillett, Director of Commercial Services immediately backing the initiative.

"We had a really good meeting with Mr Gillett, and found that his father had it as well," said Jase, adding: "It's all quite personal. We don't really know just how many people had had prostate cancer – it's quite a lot, so if we can help just one person, then that will be fantastic."

“ WHEN I LOOKED INTO HOW PREVALENT PROSTATE CANCER WAS, I REALISED FIRSTLY THE NHS HAS NO NATIONAL TESTING PROGRAMME AND IT'S THE MOST COMMON CANCER IN MEN WITH ONE IN EIGHT MEN BEING DIAGNOSED, AND ON AVERAGE 144 MEN A DAY ARE DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER.

First Special to carry Taser in West Midlands

A man who made history by becoming the first Special to carry a Taser in the West Midlands says 'having that added layer of protection' gives both him and his family 'peace of mind' when he is volunteering.

Acting Special Sergeant Ryan Courtney completed the training this year, having joined as a volunteer with the police in 2020.

The father-of-one, who dedicates around 50 hours a month to the role - alongside his day job at Jaguar Landrover - says he now 'thinks like a Taser officer' rather than a Special.

"I had to go through some seriously intense training but I wouldn't be without a Taser when volunteering now," said 32-year-old Ryan.

"I've not had to use it yet but it just gives that added level of protection and acts as a visible deterrent when I'm out. It undoubtedly gives both me and my family that added peace of mind."

The opportunity for Ryan came after the rules changed back in 2022, allowing Specials to both join the Federation and train to carry a Taser.

"When the rules changed I immediately put my name forward. I volunteer in an area which has high crime numbers (Stechford Response)," recalled Ryan, "Then last year, I was approved for the training."

"One of the great things was that some of the regulars I work with were on the training course too."

Ryan said that had he been carrying a Taser in the past, he would have felt more protected - especially when put in vulnerable situations.

He remembered: "I was called to one job that involved a stabbing. When we arrived at the address, the named suspect was present. He was irate and I managed to tackle him to the floor - at which point he pulled out a zombie knife."

"If I had been carrying a Taser - I'm not saying I would have used it - but it might have acted as an additional barrier between me and him."

"In that instance, I got lucky but, in any other circumstance, he could have used that knife on me."

Ryan said he would not have it any other way now.

"I feel weird if I don't have my Taser on me when volunteering," continued Ryan, who said



Acting Special Sergeant Ryan Courtney (left) and Special Sergeant Craig Hume.

it is 'an honour' to have made history as the first Special in the West Midlands to carry the device.

Since he completed training, more Specials have been trained to carry a Taser, with Ryan saying that the move also frees up time for regular officers.

"For the first time ever, Taser-trained Specials were able to work at the football last weekend (12 April). This freed up time for cops, meaning more police on the streets."

Ryan, who is also hoping to complete both public order and blue light training, says being a Special allows him to 'get the best of both worlds'.

"I remember there being a car crash outside my home - it was around 2018 or 2019. I supported the officers then and I said to one of them 'I'm thinking about becoming a Special', and she said 'Why wouldn't you?'," said Ryan.

"I don't know why, but being a Special satisfies something within. It's fulfilling a passion, and I get to build my career at the same time."

Branch chair Rich Cooke has actively campaigned for all frontline Federation

members to carry a Taser, if they want it, and says that Specials should be no exception.

"Fundamentally, not one of our members - whether they are regulars or volunteers - should be sent out on the streets, without the option of carrying a Taser as a minimum protective measure," he said.

"Carrying a Taser offers officers and Specials another tool to protect themselves. In the absence of routinely armed officers, it is the bare basics. As we saw in Australia recently, policing can be so unpredictable, incidents happen dynamically and it is virtually always unarmed officers who are first on the scene and expected to tackle the danger. The fact not all, or even a majority, are offered Taser in the UK is a continuing disgrace in my view."

"We see cops and Specials being put in vulnerable situations on a regular basis, they take the same risks in order to protect the public - the minimum they should have is a Taser at hand, too, if they want it."

"I very much welcome the change of rules which now allow Specials to carry Tasers. I hope that we will see many more follow in Ryan's footsteps."

One year on: an interview with multi-faith lead Khadija Sulaiman

It's been a year since Khadija Sulaiman took on the role of multi-faith lead for West Midlands Police – the first Muslim female to have ever been appointed to the role – and it continues to be everything she expected and more.

To celebrate her first year in post, West Midlands Police Federation sat down with her to hear about her experience a year on.

Since filling the position, Khadija's work has focused on executing her multi-faith chaplaincy strategy, which includes ensuring prayer rooms are established throughout each site, celebrating key holy festivals across multiple faiths, maintaining ties between the communities and police on the ground, and ensuring access to chaplaincy services for people of faith and no faith.

Khadija's work from this year has not only shifted the change in perception of chaplaincy in Force, but also has provided consulting and learning to organisations nationally, while also supporting other emergency services as they establish their own well-equipped chaplaincy teams.

However, this progress hasn't come without its challenges.

"As a young female, I have to work extra hard", Khadija added – and work harder she did.

Over the year, Khadija has found that her biggest challenge has been the misconception of the work she and her team do. But as the largest force chaplaincy team in the country, Khadija is determined to ensure they are providing the best service to the officers and

staff of West Midlands Police.

Her strategic vision extends beyond internal operations to community engagement, emphasising close collaboration with diverse communities. By nurturing these ties, she aims to promote unity and understanding and, as a result, enhance the relationship between the police and the communities they serve.

One stand-out highlight from her year was the Force carol service that Khadija hosted in December. With the church filled with people of vast diversity and readings by officers and staff of different faiths, it was a demonstration of the significance of inclusivity within West Midlands Police.

Khadija recalls the joy of being able to make the whole room laugh with a Winnie the Pooh quote. She says it was at this moment that she realised 'how many similarities there are across religions'.

She added: "It's important to embrace these similarities and acknowledge the differences as this is what promotes unity, peace, and respect."

Over the year, Khadija's multi-faith strategy, inter-faith events and work with recognised influential leaders have paid off. She reveals she has since seen community tensions ease and the support for chaplaincy grow.

Khadija has been recently been nominated for an award for the Top 50 Influential Muslims in Europe. She has also been elected to sit on the board of trustees for Police Chaplaincy UK - she will be the first Muslim lead chaplain to ever sit on the board since it was formed in 2000.



Khadija Sulaiman.

"I don't like the terminology 'building bridges', but maintaining ties is crucial," she says of her goals for the future.

And with the support of her team, which she attributes to much of her success, she says she hopes to be in a much better position in terms of promoting and professionalising chaplaincy which will only happen if 'we understand the strength in diversity and celebrate similarities'.

Although the future is untold, with Khadija's own daughter now determined to one day join the police force, perhaps there is one thing she can guarantee - she is an inspiration to the next generation of change.



“ I DON'T LIKE THE TERMINOLOGY 'BUILDING BRIDGES', BUT MAINTAINING TIES IS CRUCIAL.



Concerns over single custody officer blocks

'As the Federation's health and safety lead, I am not comfortable at all with custody blocks being managed by one sergeant. It's putting our members at unnecessary risk and is having an impact on their wellbeing,' says Patrick McBrearty.

Patrick is calling for all Force custody blocks to have two sergeants working a shift together, rather than one - which is becoming a common occurrence - or alternatively, to build a more resilient model whereby the Force has more locally trained sergeants available to assist, when necessary, as was the case pre-austerity.

He says that he has known single sergeants to be in charge of up to 18 prisoners at one time, which in his opinion 'is totally unacceptable'.

"There is a huge amount of pressure being put on our custody sergeants and they are being put at risk," said Patrick.

"Our custody sergeants are crying out for support."

Patrick explained that two detention escort officers usually work alongside a custody sergeant. However, it is only the trained custody sergeant who is in a position to authorise the detention of a prisoner.

"Training takes three weeks and then the custody sergeant is required to shadow a colleague for two weeks," added Patrick.

"But I don't think five weeks of training and shadowing is enough time to prepare a person to face potentially risky situations as the lone decision maker."

His concerns come after reports highlighted that the number of assaults on custody sergeants and other staff that have taken place in custody blocks has almost reached 100 in six months.

In addition, 190 reported incidents took place during that same time, including

accidents and near-miss reports.

"The sad reality is that many of the prisoners being held in the custody blocks are either a risk to themselves or a risk to others. Some might be intoxicated, dependent on drugs or have mental health issues," Patrick continued.

"It's unrealistic to expect just one custody sergeant to be able to handle so many prisoners on their own. It 100 per cent should not be happening."

As it stands there are two main custody superblocs, one at Oldbury and the other in Perry Barr, North Birmingham. In addition, there are four 'satellite' custody suites located around the region.

"We've been made aware that the satellite custody suites have too regularly been staffed with just one custody sergeant working in each of them," said Patrick.

"We are now working with the Force to find solutions that avoid having to close one of the suites, with the commensurate impact on policing in that area, and finding urgent short-term measures to support sergeants who may be on their own. In the long-term, we would like to see custody be absorbed into the Local Police Area (LPA) so that staff are supported more by a wider locally based team and can operate more efficiently according to the number of prisoners at any one time.

"While I appreciate this won't eliminate the risks, it will reduce it and reduce the pressure, while increasing the support."

Patrick also said that a risk assessment that took place in March 2023 highlighted a number of key areas of concern, including planning, low levels of resources and the inability to take timely breaks.

"Although some positive changes have been made, I believe those risks essentially remain the same," explained Patrick.

"The break issue is another concern of mine. According to PACE ([the Police and Criminal Evidence Act](#)), there must be a custody sergeant on duty at all times - this means, that if there is just one trained custody sergeant on shift, they cannot take a break. However, according to the Working Time Regulations, officers have the right to take an uninterrupted - uninterrupted being key here - break of 20 minutes.

"The two don't work together - PACE and the Working Time Regulations contradict one another if there is just one custody sergeant on shift.

“ IT'S UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT JUST ONE CUSTODY SERGEANT TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE SO MANY PRISONERS ON THEIR OWN. IT 100 PER CENT SHOULD NOT BE HAPPENING.

"And the result of this is, that custody sergeants are unable to take adequate breaks - which is detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing, especially if they are doing multiple eight to ten-hour shifts back-to-back."

Patrick reiterated that the Federation branch is working closely with the Force to highlight and rectify these issues, and 'that is positive, but that additional training of sufficient numbers of sergeants is vital'.

"In short, the issue is the number of custody sergeants available but, to be honest, the entire custody system needs to be looked at," he added, "We need to train more custody sergeants and manage the suites more efficiently, which we believe is best done locally in the long-term."

If you are a custody sergeant who can relate to the above article and would like to share your experience, please [email Patrick](#).

“ THE SAD REALITY IS THAT MANY OF THE PRISONERS BEING HELD IN THE CUSTODY BLOCKS ARE EITHER A RISK TO THEMSELVES OR A RISK TO OTHERS. SOME MIGHT BE INTOXICATED, DEPENDENT ON DRUGS OR HAVE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.



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Comprehensive cover with our 'unbeatable' Group Insurance Scheme

Subscribers to the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme can now take advantage of a number extra benefits – including increased life assurance cover.

The Federation put the scheme out to tender at the end of last year and, after a series of meetings with specialist insurance companies, has now negotiated a deal with the previous provider – George Burrows.

“We were negotiating in very difficult circumstances, with some of the providers of legal cover withdrawing from offering policies for new business,” says Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation who worked closely with Federation office manager Janet Lea during the renewal process.

“Of course, the cost of living crisis is having an impact on all our bills – and that includes insurance products – but, in addition, the constant barrage of negative media headlines in relation to policing don't paint police officers in the best of light so insurance providers see us as a higher risk.

“It is against this backdrop that we went into the negotiations, but I am happy to say that we were actually able to increase benefits in a number of areas and bring both the Care on Demand scheme and off-duty legal cover into the Group Insurance Scheme cover.

“These are significant benefits for what was already a market-leading scheme. Our branch was the only one in the country that had been paying for the off-duty legal cover – which also covers non-duty related incidents – for all our members out of our own reserves

but that was becoming unsustainable, particularly given the potential financial crisis facing the national Federation due to the pensions discrimination ruling.

“But I must warn Federation members who are not subscribers to the GIS that from 1 April 2024, they will not have off-duty legal cover. The off-duty legal cover will only be available to those who subscribe to the insurance scheme.

“The Federation had also been funding Care on Demand, which gives officers easy access to a GP, something that has become incredibly useful given the difficulties many people are having getting an appointment at their own doctors' surgery, so we are pleased that this will now be incorporated into the scheme and will also be available to retired officers.”

The Federation was keen to ensure any increase to subscription costs were kept to a minimum and, even with the additional benefits, serving officers will pay just £3.38 a month more for their subscription, increasing it from £25.94 to £29.32. Other subscribers will also see small increases to their subscription rates.

“Despite these increases,” Tim explained, “I firmly believe the Group Insurance Scheme still represents exceptionally good value for money and is unbeatable in terms of the cover it provides, particularly given that it is tailored to the needs of police officers. You could not go out and get a better level of cover under such a comprehensive scheme by shopping around yourself.”

Changes to the benefits on offer include:

- **Life assurance cover up from £130,000 to £150,000**
- **Options to take out additional life cover. This was previously available in tiers up to £100,000 and now it is up to £150,000.**
- **Critical illness cover £15,000. For an additional cost, extra critical illness cover is available up to an additional £17,500.**
- **Total disablement cover increases from £130,000 to £150,000**
- **Enhanced benefits on the personal accident, mobile phone and gadget cover**
- **Increased vehicle excess under the travel insurance.**

There is also a new scheme for serving officers whose partners are serving officers with the partners having the same full cover as the serving member which was not the case under the previous policy. This new scheme means two serving officers will pay less for the same cover than they would if they paid separately.

The main cover under the GIS is:

- **Life assurance including terminal illness benefit and child death grant**
- **Additional life insurance option**
- **Critical illness cover – with the option to take out additional cover**
- **Care on Demand**
- **RED ARC - supporting serving officers and their families cope with the practical and emotional effects resulting from the diagnosis of a serious illness**
- **RAC motor breakdown cover**
- **Personal accident cover**
- **'Best Doctors' cover**
- **Regulation 28 - sickness insurance**
- **Worldwide family travel insurance**
- **Mobile phone/gadget insurance.**

The scheme is open to serving officers and Specials and they can also add a partner or spouse to their policy. Officers retiring from the Force can also continue to subscribe and there is a separate scheme available to police staff.

Full details of the new policies will be published on the West Midlands Police Federation website – polfed.org/westmids – from 1 April 2024 and George Burrows will be building an online platform, set to be launched in May, which will give access to all scheme documents.

Any Federation member who is not a member of the GIS but wants to find out more or join, can contact the Federation office or sign up using the application forms on the [documents page](#) of our website.

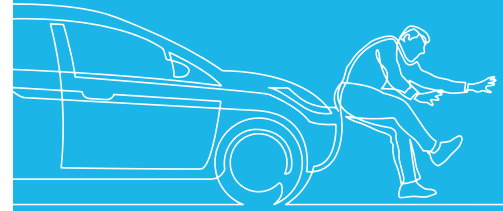


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- 4** To support your personal injury claim, we'll need to **obtain medical evidence**. To do this we will need to, with your permission, access your medical records.
- 5** We will arrange for you to be **examined by an independent medical expert** who specialises in providing medical evidence in these cases.
- 6** Our expert solicitors will **keep you informed and supported throughout the whole process**. We'll ensure you have access to the best quality treatment and rehabilitation to maximise the chances of a full recovery.



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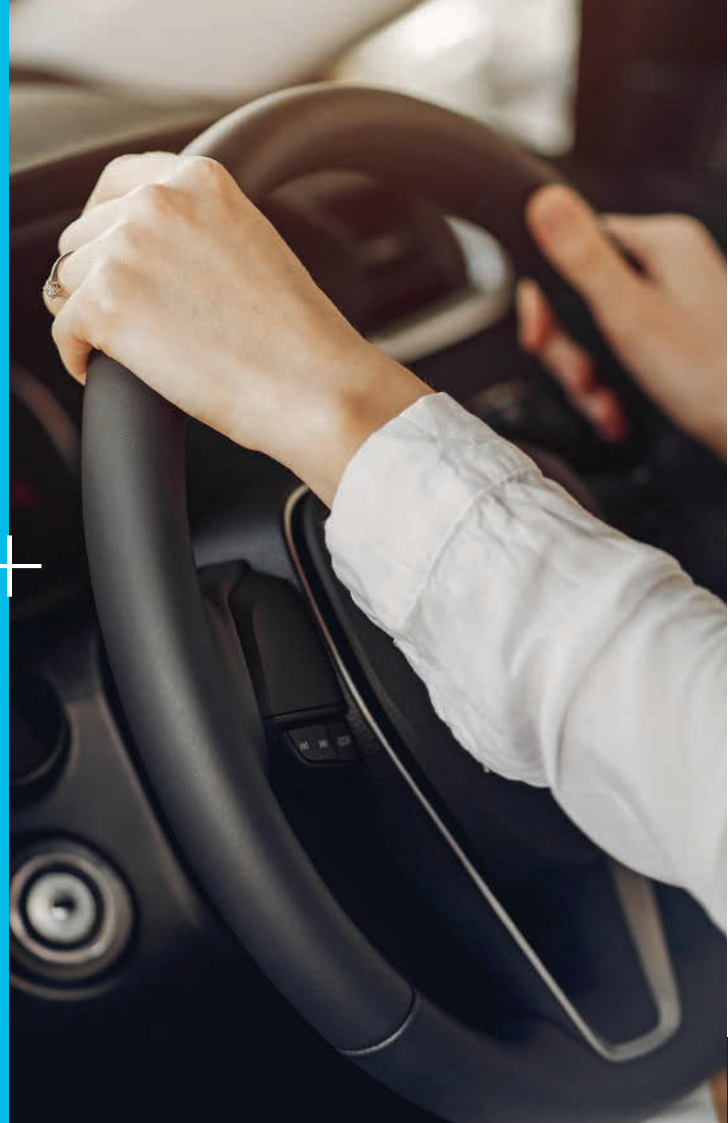
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Pictured are (left to right) PC Aqib Shah, a participant, the Warwickshire coach, Sergeant Stacie Wolkowicz, Sergeant Chris Gallon and a participant.

Building community relations through cricket

A West Midlands Police Federation member has spoken about how the Force is using cricket to inspire young people and build community relations.

West Midlands Police has been working with Warwickshire Cricket Foundation and its Chance to Shine cricket sessions held at Edgbaston's Indoor Cricket Centre.

Sergeant Chris Gallon said the sport was helping to break down barriers and build trust. And he said a huge amount of credit for the scheme should go to Warwickshire Cricket Foundation community officer Mohammed Arif, who runs the Chance 2 Shine scheme.

He said: "We looked at how we can work together to try do something for young people during Ramadan.

"This is giving them an environment in which they've got something to do.

"They have somewhere their parents are happy that they are safe. It's secure. They're playing cricket and getting coaching.

“ THEY HAVE SOMEWHERE THEIR PARENTS ARE HAPPY THAT THEY ARE SAFE. IT'S SECURE. THEY'RE PLAYING CRICKET AND GETTING COACHING.

"During Ramadan, we're having Iftar – breaking fast together – and then we're doing a couple of hours of night cricket.

"And we have some really positive chats around the actual cricket about being good people.

"It's quite a powerful tool, because when you're on the same team playing together you've got a bond that you could spend weeks or months trying to build."

The sessions follow a fun tapeball cricket competition earlier this year, which involved officers, paramedics, an Imam from a local mosque and several young people aged under-25 from across Birmingham.

Chris said: "We were there one night last week and they had around 20 Afghan refugees. PC Aqib Shah is a big cricket fan and he takes the lead.

"We did some coaching with them and we got to engage with a part of the community that have never met the police before. It was a

case of breaking down barriers.

"The language was not always there but the one thing we had was the cricket, the sportsmanship and the camaraderie.

"We'd be giving high fives when they took a wicket or hit a good shot and it really built a strong relationship with young people who were there, to the point where we are continuing to evolve that to look at a summer league.

"It's been fantastic."

Mohammed said: "Cricket can be an important influencer and enabler in societal change.

"It can play a unifying role across communities and bridge divides, that's exactly what our relationship with West Midlands Police is all about."

Now Chris and some of his team are looking at taking cricket coaching badges.

He said: "Myself and three officers are going to be working with Warwickshire to get our foundation in coaching, so that when they host the events we can go as coaches as well.

"Hopefully, it's another way of breaking down barriers."



Rich Cooke in training.

New York Half Marathon fast approaching

The countdown is on to the New York Half Marathon when a team of officers from West Midlands Police will join colleagues from across the country in raising money for a children's cancer charity.

West Midlands Police Federation branch chair Rich Cooke is one of the 17-strong team from the Force who will be tackling the 13-mile course in the Big Apple. They will each be wearing police uniform from the waist up - including a wicking top, epaulettes and a hat - teamed with running gear.

They will join colleagues from around the UK including the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police and Police Scotland, with a total of 85 officers taking part in the race on Saturday 20 May.

The runners are aiming to raise awareness of neuroblastoma, a rare cancer that affects children, mostly under the age of five.

They are also raising money for Joining Against Cancer in Kids, or J-A-C-K.org, a charity founded in 2008 by Metropolitan Police officers, which provides research into neuroblastoma and offers advice and support to families with children with a diagnosis.

And the day after the half marathon, the officers will run a further 5k in memory of fallen New York Police Department (NYPD) officers.

Rich said: "Since the end of December 2022 I've started running and I've really got into it.

"I love running, I love taking part in the races and I like having targets.

"The added bonus with this is that it includes travelling, meeting other police officers from around the country, and we're doing it for a really great cause.

"It's the marrying up of a personal interest and something I enjoy doing with doing something good for other people."

J-A-C-K.org was founded in 2008 by officers in the Metropolitan Police. The charity



National Board Federation member and Region 3 representative Phil Jones.

was inspired by Jack Brown, who was seven when he died from neuroblastoma after a three-year illness. His mum Yvonne and dad Richard were detectives in the Met.

For the past 18 years, police officers from the UK have been running the New York Half Marathon in Central Park to help raise money for the charity.

The runners are known as 'Jack's Pack', and hope to raise more than £30,000 for the charity.

Rich said: "It's a really great cause that helps support children and their families. We are funding all the travel ourselves so nothing is coming away from the charity.

"And it's something that helps to build trans-Atlantic police links with the NYPD. We're all really looking forward to it."

Alongside Rich, Police Federation National Board member Phil Jones will also be taking on the challenge, as part of a year of positive change for him.

Phil, who represents the West Midlands, West Mercia, Warwickshire and Staffordshire

forces in his national Federation role, said he has a number of motivations for taking on the challenge.

"I'm not a natural runner or an athlete," he said. "If you've seen the film Run, Fatboy, Run, that's probably me.

"To complete the half marathon will be a personal achievement and all in aid of a fantastic cause.

"My training is getting there and hopefully, come May, I'll be able to give the best that I can.

"Cancer is a horrible disease, particularly when it affects children, so it's an opportunity to raise awareness and to give something back."

Phil said that after a change in personal circumstances, he was determined to make 2024 a year of challenge and change.

"It's a big year for me," he said. "I've just achieved a master's degree and this opportunity came up and I thought I'd go for it.

"It's about pushing yourself, reinventing yourself, and I wanted to do something different.

"This year is about new challenges and trying to test myself.

"I've never run this distance before so it's a challenge, but it's all for a really good cause."

Donate to the West Midlands team by visiting their [JustGiving page](#) or directly to Phil [here](#).

“ IT'S A REALLY GREAT CAUSE THAT HELPS SUPPORT CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES. WE ARE FUNDING ALL THE TRAVEL OURSELVES SO NOTHING IS COMING AWAY FROM THE CHARITY. ”

PRAISE FOR JO



Jo Rixon-Plant and Sergeant Gemma Turner.

Officer goes 'above and beyond' to help elderly man off streets

A West Midlands Police Federation member has praised the work of her colleague who saved a man in his 70s who was sleeping rough in his car in the depths of winter.

Sergeant Gemma Turner said Jo Rixon-Plant had gone 'above and beyond' in helping the vulnerable man off the streets.

Jo, West Midlands Police vulnerability and early help officer, worked with community groups, partner agencies and charities to find the man accommodation.

Gemma said: "Jo has rescued him from a desperate situation. She has done a fantastic job and shown the very best of West Midlands Police."

The Force was initially contacted when neighbours became concerned about the man's safety. They had not seen him for a few days, his car had gone and the door to his property in Wolverhampton was unlocked.

Through their enquiries, Wolverhampton response officers found he was living in his car at a truck stop and, after carrying out welfare checks, referred him to Jo.

"He'd had a massive change in his circumstances due to his home being repossessed," said Jo. "He was having an all-day breakfast at the truck stop as his only meal. He was using their facilities and he was sleeping in his car.

"It was December and it was really cold. He was so vulnerable."

Jo contacted housing services to try to get him accommodation and to make him a priority because of his vulnerability.

She also contacted the [Red Cross](#), which supplied blankets, food parcels, and essentials such as toiletries.

The man was eventually offered a flat by Bromford Housing and moved in during January.

Jo said: "I was in touch with a lot of organisations to get him a bed, to get him furnished because the flat had nothing, no cutlery, no white goods.

"I was pulling out the stops to get in touch with local organisations and charities that could support him and get him up and running in his flat."

Jo has also been in contact with Age UK, adult social services and financial wellbeing services to provide ongoing support.

Gemma said: "Jo realised he was in a vulnerable situation, which is why she has gone above and beyond to help. She has kept in touch with him almost daily to make sure he's okay. She has been someone to give him that reassurance that people are trying to help him."

Gemma added: "It's a wonderful story. It's an example of how important it is to have someone like Jo in our department. Her caring and thoughtful nature has saved someone from a vulnerable and desperate situation.

"With her commitment and passion, she has used her contacts within organisations and partners to ensure he has a safe place to live with the appropriate support."

“JO REALISED HE WAS IN A VULNERABLE SITUATION, WHICH IS WHY SHE HAS GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND TO HELP. SHE HAS KEPT IN TOUCH WITH HIM ALMOST DAILY TO MAKE SURE HE'S OKAY. SHE HAS BEEN SOMEONE TO GIVE HIM THAT REASSURANCE THAT PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO HELP HIM.



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www.NARPO-Wolverhampton.co.uk

Police Unity Tour: registration open

Taking part in the Police Unity Tour can be challenging, but is immensely rewarding according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich, who has previously completed the 180-mile sponsored cycle ride to help raise money for the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) charity, wants as many officers as possible to take part.

"It is incredibly important that we remember our fallen colleagues and show our support for their families," says Rich, "Taking part in the Police Unity Tour is one way to do that. It can be challenging, you are covering a long distance over the two days of the tour, and some parts of the route can be quite hilly but when you see the families of our fallen colleagues at the end of the event, it brings it home to you how important this is to them."

The Police Unity Tour cyclists will set off from their home forces on Friday 26 July and will make their way to the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire for the annual COPS service of remembrance on Sunday 28 July.

They all wear a wristband engraved with the name of a fallen officer and at the end of the ride, where possible, present this to the family of that officer.

West Midlands Police officers ride as part



of the West Midlands Chapter of the region which also includes cyclists from West Mercia Police.

The Police Unity Tour is now in its 12th year and has raised more than £1.2 million to fund the invaluable peer support offered to families through COPS.

To take part this year, entrants have to [register online](#). Registration costs £150 which is non-refundable registration fee but offsets the costs of two nights' accommodation and a

Police Unity Tour cycling jersey.

COPS was founded in 2003 by Jim McNulty and Christine Fulton (MBE). Jim was a retired police officer from Strathclyde Police while Christine's husband PC Lewis Fulton was murdered on duty in Glasgow in 1994.

The charity contacts the survivors of every officer who loses their life on duty, explaining what support the charity can offer and inviting them to get in touch if they need such support.

[Find out more about COPS.](#)



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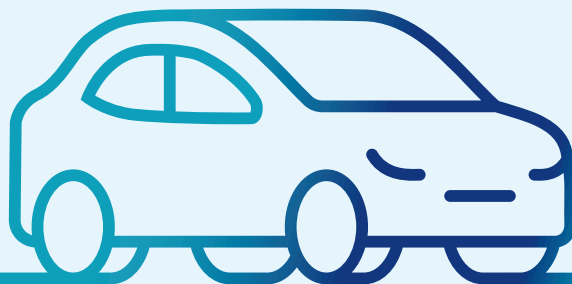
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West Midlands Police Museum scoops award



West Midlands Police Museum staff and volunteers celebrate.

West Midland Police Museum's heritage manager has paid tribute to the 'new lease of life' behind its recent success in the region's Tourism Awards for 2024.

Corinne Brazier joined the museum in 2017 and was key in securing lottery funding for its relocation to the Lock-Up on Steelhouse Lane two years ago.

The resounding success of the move was underpinned at this year's Tourism Awards ceremony, as staff accepted first prize in the New Tourism Business category.

“THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE MUSEUM WASN'T EVEN ACTIVE AFTER ITS OLD SITE AT SPARKHILL POLICE STATION CLOSED, BUT A GROUP OF US DECIDED TO GET IT BACK OPEN AND GIVE IT THE LOVE IT DESERVED.

“We're all so happy to receive the award. It's a real honour,” said Corinne. “To get this recognition means a lot because it's been seven years in the making.

“There was a time when the museum wasn't even active after its old site at Sparkhill Police Station closed, but a group of us decided

to get it back open and give it the love it deserved.”

Following refurbishments to the Lock-Up building, the institution re-opened its doors in April 2022 and has since welcomed more than 40,000 visitors, many of whom have been left impressed with the quality of information and guidance on offer. Corinne says this has been evidenced by an instrumental factor in their award win: the high number of positive reviews left by customers on Google and Tripadvisor.

She added: “We get so many reviews that will actually namecheck both staff and volunteers for their excellent service. The people here are incredible. The museum has never been so popular and accessible and it's not hard to see why.”

Included in the team of engaging personnel are retired police officers, who will share experiences and stories from their careers with visitors. According to Corinne, initiatives such as this have meant the museum's value to West Midlands Police has been realised more in recent times.

“I think in the past, the Force has seen the museum as not much more than a nice little piece of the area's furniture. Nowadays,

however, they can see we are achieving engagement with the community for good, effective change,” Corinne continued, adding that she hopes the museum is helping to build bridges between the police and the public.

The heritage manager added that the museum is always keen for current police staff to pay a visit too.

“WE GET SO MANY REVIEWS THAT WILL ACTUALLY NAMECHECK BOTH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR EXCELLENT SERVICE. THE PEOPLE HERE ARE INCREDIBLE. THE MUSEUM HAS NEVER BEEN SO POPULAR AND ACCESSIBLE AND IT'S NOT HARD TO SEE WHY.

“If you're an officer and you haven't been down for a while, come and have a look at how well we've got things going here. Perhaps you could even speak to some visitors yourself – we're always looking for more volunteers,” she said.

“If not, why not just come and immerse yourself in the history of our police force and remind yourself of why you do what you do?”

Find out more about the museum, including opening times and ticket prices by [visiting its website](#).



Do you need family law advice?

Family law specialists Gorvins Solicitors will be holding monthly surgeries throughout 2024 for West Midlands Police Federation members.

They can advise on all the main areas of family law, particularly divorce and financial settlements, children matters, cohabitation disputes, civil partnerships and Inheritance Act claims.

Gorvins will hold regular surgeries at the Federation office as well as by telephone. The initial consultation is free of charge.

The 2024 dates for up-and-coming surgeries at the Federation office at Guardians House are:

- 21 May
- 18 June
- 16 July
- 20 August
- 17 September
- 15 October
- 19 November
- 17 December

Gorvins is a team of highly skilled, professional and approachable solicitors, who always put the needs of Police Federation members and their families at the heart of

what they do.

Under family law, some of the services Gorvins can support Federation members with include:

Child maintenance

When a relationship between two parents breaks down and ends in divorce or dissolution, child maintenance is usually arranged where regular financial support is paid by one parent to the other to help with everyday costs of a child. Parents tend to either reach an agreement together or have someone else help to resolve the situation.

Children's matters

Helping parents to agree on separation issues for the wellbeing and continued happiness of the children involved, following a relationship breakdown.

Civil partnership dissolution

Dissolution and relationship breakdown of same-sex relationships can be highly emotional times for the people involved. A specialist solicitor can provide expert advice, helping to ease the pressure and reduce the stress.

Cohabitation disputes and agreements

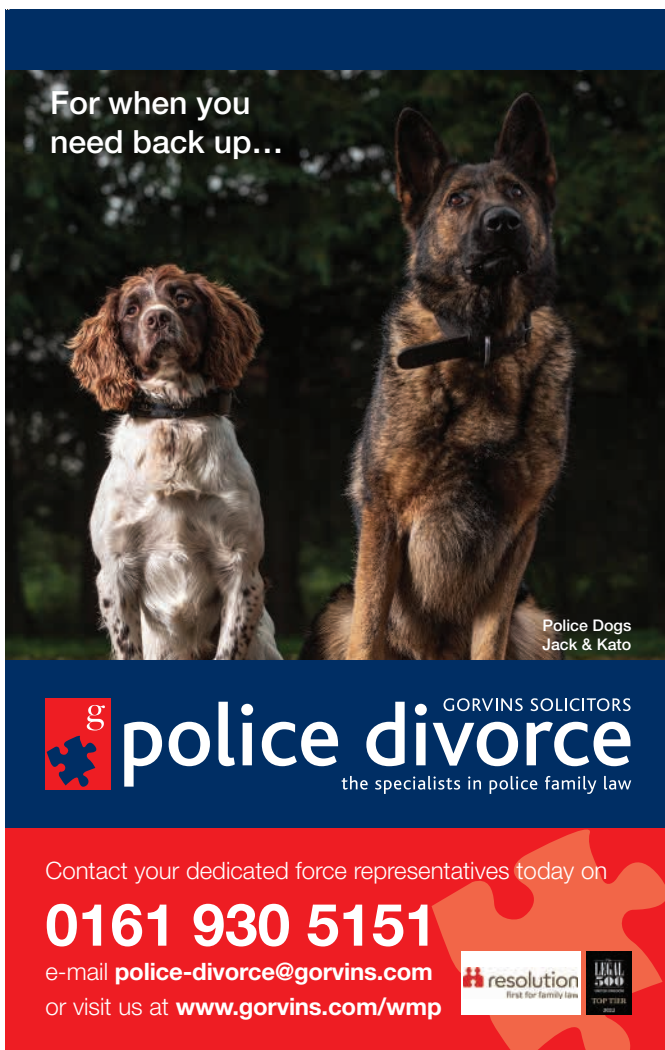
Cohabitation, or living together without being

married, is now a very popular agreement in the UK. Unlike marriage and a civil partnership, cohabitation is not legislated for - so if the cohabiters happen to be homeowners or joint parents, only general laws that relate to any arising issues will apply. If you have any assets or own a property prior to being in that relationship, it is worth seeking professional advice, just in case that relationship should break down.

Domestic violence

The team at Gorvins are highly experienced when it comes to dealing with and advising on difficulties within a relationship. If you are facing a testing time and feel there is no alternative than taking legal action or you want to make sure you and your family are kept safe from abuse, contact the family law team.

To arrange an appointment at the Federation office or alternatively by telephone or Teams, members are advised to contact Gorvins either by calling **0161 930 5151** and asking to be put through to the family team. Alternatively, you can e-mail the family team directly at familyteam@gorvins.com



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We also supply our legal advice to you at a discounted rate and are able to offer a **fixed-fee divorce process**.

Our family and divorce law specialists understand the aspects that particularly impact upon the police with reference to pensions in divorce cases and shift patterns in relation to arrangement for children.

Other Legal Services

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- Dispute Resolution and Civil Litigation
- Commercial Property

Policing history is documented in new book

West Midlands Police Museum has teamed up with a researcher and author for a new book on the history of policing in Wolverhampton.

Elaine Goodey, who is doing a PhD in English literature at the University of Birmingham, spoke about writing 'Wolverhampton Borough Police: 1848 to 1966' for World Book Day (Thursday 7 March).

The book documents the Force from its early formation in 1848 to 1966, when it was merged into West Midlands Constabulary.

Elaine said: "It was so much fun to research and pull together the different resources into one coherent book. It's been one of the highlights of my PhD."

West Midlands Police Museum said the book provides a captivating journey through the annals of policing in Wolverhampton. It sheds light on the individuals who have shaped its legacy, police vehicles through the ages, former police stations and even compliments and complaints about Wolverhampton officers.

Corinne Brazier, the museum's heritage manager, said: "The vast majority of our books are about Birmingham and Birmingham police, and in 2020 we did a booklet on Dudley Police for the 100th anniversary of Dudley Borough Police.

"We did a book for Coventry when it was City of Culture in 2021, and there's a retired police officer I know who is currently writing a book about Walsall, so Wolverhampton felt like one that needed covering.

"And the reaction to it has been really good."

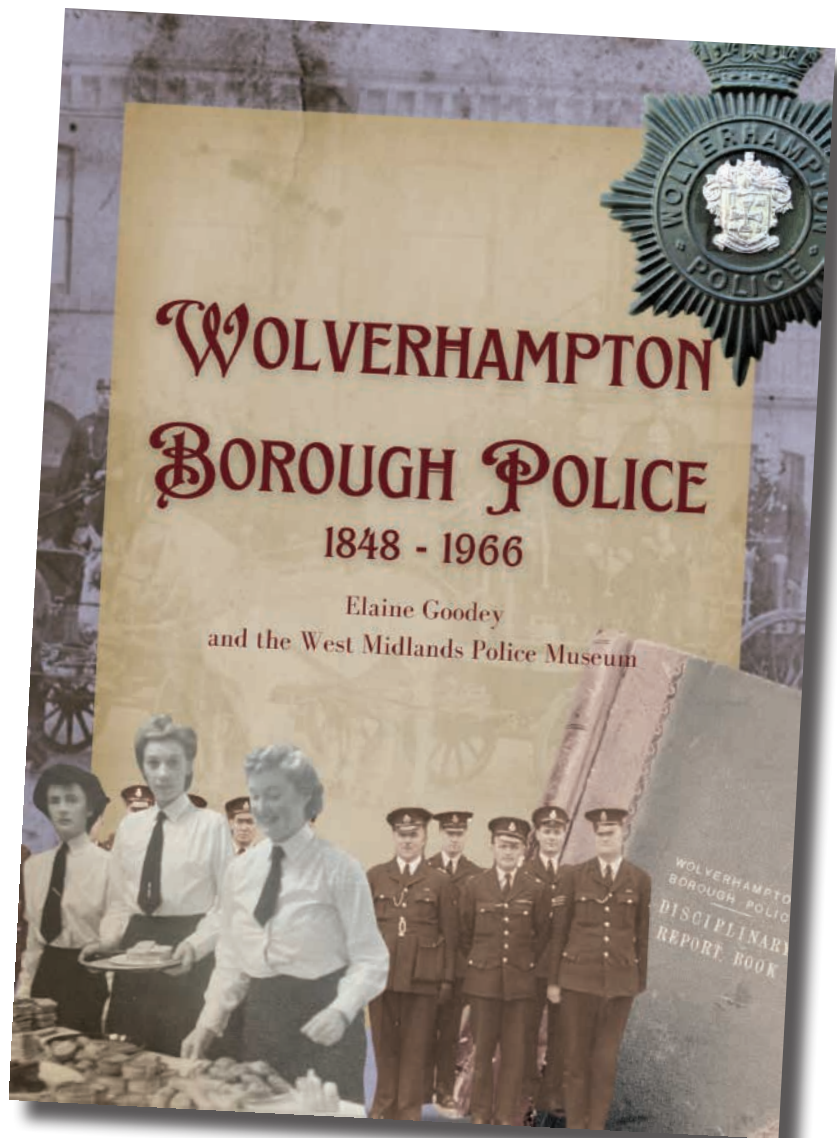
Corinne added: "It's really interesting to read about the early days of policing in Wolverhampton.

"It talks about the different chief constables, the establishment of the Force, and some of the personal stories are fascinating, particularly the story of Joe Davies.

"He was a superintendent when he retired in 1976 and seems to have had the most incredible career.

"He was the first to do lots of different things.

"We've got a picture of him with a very early radio, which was in a battery pack on his back, which was around the 1940s. He was one of the first to ride a police motorcycle.



"And there's a picture of him standing next to the first police car that's got a radio in it.

"He had the most incredible career and it's wonderful to be able to capture that and share it with people."

Elaine spoke about the work that went into researching and pulling the book together, using resources from the museum, local history websites and the British Newspaper Archives.

She said: "The idea was to provide a collative view, from lots of difference sources, of a picture of policing, not just from a crime perspective but the police's relationship with

the community they worked in.

"We wanted to give a flavour of how integral Wolverhampton Borough Police had been to Wolverhampton life.

"It's knowing where to find your sources and then picking out the bits that pull together either chronologically or thematically and start collating that into a coherent book.

"It was a proud moment to see it in print." 'Wolverhampton Borough Police: 1848 to 1966' is available from the [West Midlands Police Museum website](https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/police) and the museum shop at the Lock-up in Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham.



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