

News & views



Derbyshire
Police
Federation

The members' magazine of Derbyshire Police Federation **SUMMER 2019**

Police Officers Representing
Police Officers



Wellbeing theme

By Tony Wetton, chair of Derbyshire Police Federation

As a Federation, we are committed to supporting officer wellbeing.

We all know when we join the police that we are going to be dealing with traumatic incidents but I don't think any of us are ever fully prepared for the impact these incidents can have on us.



This edition of our Federation ezine has a wellbeing theme and details the personal experiences of a number of officers who, for one reason or another, have found their wellbeing has suffered due to the role they carry out or the circumstances they find themselves in.

They are sharing their experiences in the hope that any other officer finding themselves either in a similar situation or perhaps struggling for other reasons will realise they are not alone and support is available to them.

We have also highlighted a number of organisations that offer help, support and guidance specifically for police officers, police staff or emergency workers. The list is not exhaustive and I would like to assure any officer concerned about their wellbeing – or that of a colleague - that the Federation is also on hand to offer support. No one should suffer in silence and no one should feel they are alone.

Away from the wellbeing theme, this edition includes details of the Derbyshire nominee for this year's Police Bravery Awards. PC Kim Wheldon may be relatively young in service but she has already demonstrated that she has all the qualities needed to be a fantastic police officer.

It is worth noting that, in line with so many nominees for the bravery awards, Kim doesn't even consider she was brave. She did what police officers do. She saw a situation where a crime had been committed and a member of the public had been injured. Without so much as a thought for her own safety, she stepped in. This is just part of the reason why police officers have such a unique place in society. It is also why their wellbeing can be affected.

We congratulate Kim on her nomination and wish her well at the awards ceremony in July.

Contact us:

Derbyshire Police Federation
Unit 104 Coney Green Business Park,
Wingfield View, Clay Cross, Chesterfield,
Derbyshire S45 9JW

Tel: 01246 252329

Mob: 07813 693638

Email: Derbyshire@polfed.org

Web: polfed.org/derby

Brave Kim in line for national award



PC Kim Wheldon.

Parked outside a petrol station in a marked police car PC Kim Wheldon couldn't quite believe it when she saw a man attack the customer ahead of him in the queue right in front of her.

She quickly explained she needed to end the call she was on and went to the victim's aid but was shocked to find he had been stabbed.

"At first as I watched from the car, I thought it was two people who knew each other having a bit of an argument to be honest. I could see it getting heated but I'd taken an important call on my radio so had to explain to the person I was speaking to that I needed to go as I saw it starting to turn into a bit more than just a few cross words. I saw the victim point over at me, as though to point out to the other male that I was there and could see what he was doing," Kim explained.

"As I went over, I thought the victim had

been punched, he was holding his neck so I couldn't see any injuries. It was only when he pulled his hand away I saw he was bleeding heavily and he told me he'd been stabbed. I was completely shocked, you don't expect that to happen right in front of you - even doing this job. At that point, I just wanted to get the offender detained and in the police car so he couldn't hurt anyone else."

Kim's instinctive reactions, with no real concern for her own safety, have now led to her being put forward as this year's Derbyshire Police Federation nominee for the national Police Bravery Awards and in July she will attend a Downing Street reception and a gala awards ceremony for brave officers from across England and Wales.

But Kim, who is in her third year of service and is currently based at Swadlincote, does not even consider what

she did was brave.

"It all happened so quickly and my first thought was: is he being serious? I'm sat in a bright marked police car a few metres away from him. I didn't realise what he had with him or even that he had stabbed anyone. If anything, the fact that I had no time to prepare or think as I would have if I had been called to an incident like this after it had happened made my instinct and training kick in more," she explains.

"It was instinctive. Really it's my job as a police officer to protect the public and apprehend offenders, but I really like to think that I would have stepped in to help regardless of whether I did this job or not. I couldn't stand back and watch somebody be stabbed for no reason and potentially lose their life or be seriously injured."

Kim also knows she would do exactly the same if she was in a similar position in the future.

"Had I realised as I approached what he had with him and his prior record for violence towards the police, I probably would have approached him a bit differently. It's easy for me to look back now and think of how I would have acted differently, which I did think straight after it happened, but in all honesty if I had known who he was and what he had done I probably wouldn't have had the same outcome as it might have given him more time to think and probably act differently towards me as I would have been more cautious."

Tony Wetton, chair of Derbyshire Police Federation, has praised Kim for her actions.

"Kim is a very worthy nominee for the bravery awards which are held each year to highlight the brave and selfless actions of police officers across the country who day in, day out in carrying out their duties protecting and serving the public put their own lives on the line," he says.

"Thankfully, Kim was not injured in this incident but the outcome could have been very different. The individual involved was clearly violent and unpredictable and Kim put herself in an extremely dangerous situation to ensure that no one else was injured. She acted in the finest traditions of policing and I will be very proud to accompany her to the bravery awards where her commitment to serving the public will be honoured."

The incident had unfolded in July last

“ YOU ARE A CREDIT
TO DERBYSHIRE
CONSTABULARY AND THE
WIDER POLICING
FAMILY. ”



Chief Constable Peter Goodman presents PC Kim Wheldon with her Chief's Commendation.

year when Kim went to the Asda service station in Woodville to re-fuel the police vehicle. She saw the two men arguing in the queue. On witnessing the physical assault, she stepped in, arrested the attacker, handcuffed him and put him in the car so she could give first aid to the victim.

The knifeman was searched by other officers who responded to calls for assistance who found he was also carrying what looked to be a viable firearm though it was later found to be a BB gun.

Stocky and significantly larger than Kim, it was discovered he had previous for assaulting police.

KNIFEMAN JAILED FOR EIGHT YEARS

The attacker pleaded guilty to wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm and was sentenced to eight years in prison – a custodial term of 56 months and an extension of 40 months.

He was also given a concurrent sentence of nine months' imprisonment for three counts of having a blade/article sharply pointed in a public place.

'DON'T BE A HERO'

Kim says that after the incident she was in two minds about whether to tell her family about the incident as she knew they would just be worried.

"Their favourite line is 'don't be a hero'... but I have to remind them that I'm not trying to be a hero - and I'm definitely not a hero! It's my job to protect the public and I can't just stand back and not act when things happen," she says.

"My partner was shocked at what had happened and was worried I could have been hurt myself but I just reminded him that I have a brilliant shift where we all look after each other and I've done training to deal with situations like this. My family and

friends are all proud of me for doing this job but, of course, they worry, as I'm sure every other police officer's family does."

Kim will be taking partner Paul Kilbane with her to the awards reception and presentation night and is excited about the day.

"It's hard to choose one thing I'm most looking forward to as so much has been planned in that I'm really excited for. I'm really looking forward to the awards ceremony, meeting officers from other forces and hearing their stories and getting to wear traditional uniform for the night like I'm off The Bill but also just going to Number 10 Downing Street," she says.

Kim has already received a Chief Constable's Commendation for her actions.

The commendation stated: "You are a credit to Derbyshire Constabulary and the wider policing family."

She has also been praised by BCU Commander Chief Superintendent Jim Allen who said: "A nicer, kinder, more unassuming officer than Kimberley Wheldon you couldn't hope to meet."

Kim says she is completely shocked to have been nominated for the bravery award.

"I never thought I would be put forward. I had already received the Chief Constable's commendation which I was so grateful for and I thought that was the end of it. We all deal with difficult things daily and I just thought 'who, me?' I didn't do anything that any other officer wouldn't have done in the same situation," she explains.

The bravery awards could be one of the first official engagements for the new Prime Minister. The Downing Street reception is hosted by the Prime Minister with the Home Secretary and police minister also usually in attendance.

Officer wellbeing: more needs to be done



in place to identify officers who need help and says that while some specialist officers receive mandatory counselling there is little in place for uniformed staff.

"That needs to change," he argues, "Not only do they deal with the horrific scenes as initial responders, they get abused regularly, assaulted, work shifts and also have large crime workloads that are more complex and risky than ever. They need measures in place to protect them. The measures need to be intrusive and regular, not once or twice a year.

"There is little support on hand for first line managers either. As I mention in my blog, I have seen an above average amount of horror in my time but have only ever had a follow-up once. I think we need an anonymous route for reporting concerns around health as we do for corruption. Even if it is not used much, it is still better than nothing. I think it will do good and does not need to be complicated."

Adam says he has no doubt opportunities were repeatedly missed to help him until he finally gave up and believes a line manager, who didn't even contact him while he was off sick, had a duty to look after his wellbeing.

"I received much more advice and friendly support from my colleagues within the Federation than those paid to look after me. The best advice I can give anyone else is to contact the Federation when you go off even if it's not something you would think to do we can signpost you to external organisations that are much quicker than the NHS and ensure you are being adequately looked after. My friends also rallied around me as I think they recognised I had lost the plot," he says.

[Read Adam's blog.](#)

More needs to be done to identify officers who may need help due to stress and mental health issues, says a Derbyshire Police Federation workplace representative who believes a lack of intervention contributed to him taking time off work with mental illness.



Adam Bryan

who finds themselves struggling due to work or personal issues.

"It's an odd time in your life, you will not feel comfortable with what you are experiencing. But, things will go full circle. If you've had a dream ended for whatever reason then you will find another in the future. Talk to someone, me if you want – you are not on your own but will feel like you are," Adam explains.

"If you're off sick, don't feel guilty and don't rush back. You won't realise just how unwell you are. If you are off sick, part of your recuperation will involve going out and doing things, that doesn't mean that you are better and ready to go back to work. The fact you feel guilty doing things means that you are a good person with good morals and that is enough to reassure you that you are not swinging the lead. Those weeks you are absent are crucial to the rest of your life and you need to make the most of it."

He wants to see more proactive methods

But Adam Bryan is also encouraging officers to look out for their colleagues and calling on people to speak up if they feel the pressures of policing are getting to them.

"It's startling to think that every year around 30 officers kill themselves, the challenge is on to ensure that one of your colleagues is not in that statistic," he says.

Adam has now written a blog about his own experiences and offers advice to anyone

SEEKING SUPPORT?.....

Looking after your health and wellbeing

The Federation has produced a health and wellbeing booklet offering members advice and information on a range of health conditions as well as tips on staying healthy and losing weight.

You can find a link to the booklet at www.polfed.org on the health and wellbeing pages.



The Police Treatment Centres

The Police Treatment Centres (PTC) is a registered charity supported by voluntary donations from the police family primarily in the northern forces of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Officers currently make a donation from their pay of £1.80 per week.

The charity provides two treatment centres – one in Harrogate, the other in Auchterarder - where serving and retired police officers can receive treatment following an illness or injury with the aim of assisting their return to better health. Almost 4,000 people attend the centres each year with most receiving intensive physiotherapy. Others seek support with stress-related conditions or anxiety and depression as part of the PTC psychological wellbeing programme.

Force leading the way on mental health

The Force has been praised for its commitment to mental health and wellbeing by a former police sergeant who, after experiencing severe depression as a result of his job, now offers support to others suffering similar difficulties.



Ed Simpson.

But, while Ed Simpson believes Derbyshire Constabulary is leading the way, he is also keen to stress there is still much work to be done and only the continued collective efforts of officers and staff at all levels of the organisation can finally drive the service towards a permanent and truly positive change.

"I honestly believe that the number one priority for all police forces should be the wellbeing of its people; not tackling burglary, not cutting crime but looking after your people because how can you provide a service protecting the public when you are not taking care of your own?" he asks.

"If you look after your staff it will solve so many other problems. But actually everyone should also have a collective responsibility to look out for their colleagues."

Ed first talked publicly about his own experiences at the Federation's national conference a few years ago, driven by a desire to raise awareness of the impact of policing on officers' mental health but also to tackle the stigma still surrounding the issue.

"When I returned to work after being off due to my own depression in 2013, a lot had changed for me and I started to be honest about what had happened. But I also recognised that I wasn't alone in suffering with my mental health but no one else was

talking about it. I wanted to change that," he explains.

From that conference appearance, he found himself in demand to address other groups, including a staff training day for Mind, and was also asked to be involved in five wellbeing days for Derbyshire officers by the Force's current Federation chair, Tony Wetton.

He has since been involved with other forces but none to the extent of Derbyshire where he has been involved in raising awareness of mental health issues with more than 400 officers.

"It came as no surprise to me that there was sense of me not telling them anything they didn't already know in terms of how many officers were struggling due to mental health issues. I told them it was scary, I told them they are not alone and there was not a time when at least two people didn't come to speak to me after the session, either in the room or in the car park, about their own experiences," says Ed.

"I encourage them to speak to a trusted work colleague about how they are feeling or to contact any of the support organisations and charities available to them. You feel you are the only one struggling but you really are not and there is help and support out there."

Having delivered the first five sessions, he did hesitate when asked if he could do five more due to the impact it had on him but, on balance, decided to continue sharing his experiences to help others.

He was then spurred on when, after speaking to the Force's senior leadership team, supporting mental health and wellbeing among officers and staff was made one of the Force's key priorities. Derbyshire, he believes, is the only force in the country to offer a day's wellbeing training for its officers and staff.

About Ed

Ed Simpson was a sergeant with North Yorkshire Police until he was medically retired in 2016.

He had become depressed over a relatively short period of time but believes the trigger was accompanying the parents of a teenage boy killed in a road accident as they identified his body in a mortuary

Although he had attended many traumatic incidents up until that point, it was the Mum's reaction that had a profound effect on him.

His health deteriorated to such an extent that he recalls driving to work each day wishing he was dead. When he finally shut down completely mentally, he was on sick leave for a year and took anti-depressants.

He has since become an ambassador for the mental health charity Mind's Blue Light Programme and has used his experiences to help other officers through mental health problems.

"This is massively forward-thinking," he adds, "But also massively important."

Generally, he feels we have all come a long way in talking more openly about mental health, admitting that when he first started sharing his own experiences he did so with a feeling that he had nothing to lose in doing so.

But he still wants to see more progress.

"All too often we are seeing policies being put before people; procedures and policies need to be there so that people are treated equally but that should not mean there is a 'one size fits all' approach, people will have different needs and we need to acknowledge that," Ed explains, "We are not just numbers, we are individuals and we needed to be treated on a human level."

While there is a growing awareness of mental health issues, he also wants to see better training for officers based around prevention rather than just treatment of illness. He is currently working on a training package with a psychologist and hopes this can be rolled out across the country.

Tailored support

While funding for Mind's Blue Light Programme specifically for emergency service workers has now ended, the mental health charity has pledged continued and tailored support for 999 personnel.

The Blue Light Programme was launched with LIBOR funding administered by the UK Government. Following four years of funded activity, the programme came to an end in March 2019. Much of the support the programme offered continues to be available, but the way Mind works in the sector has changed.

[Find out more.](#)

Rebuilding lives for a brighter future

Police Care UK provides practical, emotional and financial support for serving and former police officers, staff and volunteers who suffer harm as a result of their policing role.

The charity's mission is to reduce the impact of harm on police and families.

[Find out more.](#)

The Blue Lamp Foundation

The Blue Lamp Foundation was set up by PC David Rathband who was blinded when he was shot by Raoul Moat.

The charity supports members of the emergency services who have mental or physical injuries after being injured on duty.

[Find out more.](#)



Performance hit by menopause

Almost half of women (45 per cent) from Derbyshire Constabulary who responded to a national survey said their performance at work had been negatively affected by the menopause with 21 per cent saying they felt this had affected their manager's and colleagues' views on their competence.

Three quarters (76 per cent) said the symptoms of the menopause were either moderately or extremely problematic.

And 17 per cent said they had considered leaving the job because they had found it difficult to deal with the menopause at work.

The Derbyshire results were in line with the national findings of the EveryonePause survey carried out by the Police Federation last year.

"This survey, the first of its kind in policing,

should really open everyone's eyes to how the menopause affects police officers and staff. Around a third of women officers are over 45 so this is something that should not be ignored," says Kirsty Bunn, secretary of Derbyshire Police Federation.

"The survey was aimed at those who have gone, or who are going, through the menopause but also at line managers. We now need all forces to recognise the impact of the menopause and the effects it can have on officers and staff members at work."

Kirsty has praised the efforts of Derbyshire Constabulary to help women going through the menopause and the work of the Force's Menopause Action Group which was set up over a year ago and is led by the Gender Agenda.

Derbyshire Police Federation worked with

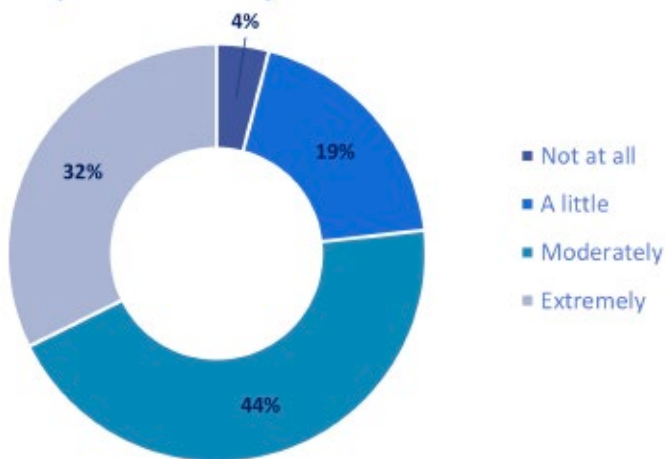
the Gender Agenda to push for the women only Job-Related Fitness Tests which have now been introduced by the Force. One has already been held and three further dates have been scheduled.

The Force, at the Federation's instigation, has also agreed to provide cooling clothing for women who need workplace adjustments to keep them at work.

The survey was carried out for six weeks from the middle of October 2018. It was initiated to help improve working conditions for Federation members, soon caught the attention of others in policing when UNISON, the Police Superintendents' Association, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing got on board to help promote it to their members and staff.

[Read the survey report.](#)

Overall, how problematic have symptoms of the menopause been for you at work?



'I considered leaving the Force'

Derbyshire PC Helen Gallear went from feeling competent in a position to feeling totally and utterly useless as a result of hitting the menopause.

With 17 years' service under her belt, Helen feels her life has changed dramatically recently and admits that she was one of the officers who said she had considered leaving policing when she filled out the national Federation's menopause survey.

"I remember visiting my GP two years ago and telling her how unwell I felt. I genuinely thought I was suffering with some incurable disease. It was only when she said the 'M' word that it all sort of fitted into place. It had never even occurred to me that I was peri-menopausal," Helen says.

"No one I knew had even talked about it before me and so I was just oblivious as to what to expect. Since I have been talking about it, I feel much more confident as I know I am not the only person feeling like this.

"But the biggest issues for me have been loss of memory and the overwhelming feeling of anxiety and fatigue. Bladder issues are something which I believe have been swept under the carpet.

"I was mortified to have to tell my male line manager that I had to go home to change. This has just not been addressed at all. I explained to him that it only ever happens when I run very suddenly and yet I am still in a job where I am expected to run after people. I feel no-one really understands and it is still a little bit like mental health,

some people just don't 'get it'."

While Helen's symptoms are complex, and changing, they also include: brain fog – which she describes as a major issue, mood change, hot sweats – although calming down recently due to starting Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), heart palpitations, weight gain, loss of libido, chronic joint pain and fatigue.

The HRT is helping but Helen is also taking medication for anxiety although she is concerned that her memory loss is still appalling.

"I have even asked my GP if I have signs of early onset dementia. I haven't – by the way. I take the HRT tablets daily. I sleep an awful lot and rest as much as I can when I can. My husband is very understanding and lets me rest. I also do mindfulness and exercise as much as I can as well as eating a very healthy diet," she says.

Helen is doing everything she can to manage the menopause and stay in policing and admits that she can't really come up with ideas for what the Force could do to help women officers, although she would like line managers to receive more training on the issue.

One solution, she believes, could be controversial.

"Maybe we should look at alternative roles for officers who have other skills to offer in alternative areas of policing. Women who have been in the job for many years have lots of transferable skills which aren't always used," Helen explains.

Have your say on pay and morale

All Federation members are being urged to complete a survey on pay and conditions and officer morale.

The Police Federation of England and Wales conducts a national survey on these issues each year with the findings being used as evidence in the Federation's submission to the Pay Review Remuneration Body (PRRB).

"This is possibly the most important survey officers will be asked to complete this year so I would urge all Federation members to take the time to take part," says Tony Wetton, chair of Derbyshire Police Federation.

"It should take no more than 20 minutes to answer the questions but the findings could provide crucial information for the Federation when it considers its submission to PRRB later this year. This is the only national survey that gives members a chance to share their views and inform the Federation's work on pay and conditions and general police morale."

"The Federation is often criticised for not listening to or engaging with members and for not fighting their corner hard enough. This is YOUR opportunity to engage and contribute to the work that goes on to improve our pay and conditions. Give us the information we need to make the best possible case in negotiations."

The survey will close on Monday 29 July.

Contact the Federation office if you have not received a link to the survey.

Annual leave and the PTC

The Force has taken steps to ensure that officers and staff visiting the Police Treatment Centres (PTC) for support and treatment for mental and physical conditions do not have to do so in their own time.

While there was no policy or management guidance in place stipulating officers had to take leave to attend, duty management systems have now been amended so that time at the PTCs can only be classified as duty time or sick or compassionate leave.

"In reality, none of the 40 or so officers and staff who visited the PTC last year had to do so in their own time but I am pleased our systems have been updated to fit in with the Force stance on this issue," says Kirsty Bunn, secretary of Derbyshire Police Federation.

"The PTC offer a great service to our members and I would not like anyone to feel discouraged from attending when so often time spent at one of the two centres can actually get a sick or injured officer back to work far quicker than they would otherwise have been able to."

“ NO ONE I KNEW HAD EVEN TALKED ABOUT IT BEFORE ME AND SO I WAS JUST OBLIVIOUS AS TO WHAT TO EXPECT. SINCE I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT, I FEEL MUCH MORE CONFIDENT AS I KNOW I AM NOT THE ONLY PERSON FEELING LIKE THIS. ”

A career break helps Laura regain her love of policing

“ I HAVE GAINED
PERSPECTIVE AND HAVEN'T
QUITE FINISHED WITH BEING
A COP. IT STILL FITS WITH
MY VALUES, BELIEFS AND
PURPOSE. ”

Around 15 years into her policing career, Laura Barker felt 'lost' and unsure if she wanted to be a police officer so decided to take a two-year break.

But now, having taken time out, she is returning to the Force – five months earlier than originally intended.

"I have gained perspective and haven't quite finished with being a cop," she says, "It still fits with my values, beliefs and purpose. I was on the Local Policing Unit before I went on my career break and this is where I felt that I was unhappy because I wasn't in alignment. I couldn't give the best service that I wanted to give. I am returning to Erewash on another Safer Neighbourhood Unit."

Laura's first posting on joining the Force was at Peartree Police Station where she was assigned to front-line policing of Derbyshire's multi-cultural community.

She then moved into Safer Neighbourhoods Policing working in an area with gang associations and activity. With stints as an acting sergeant, Laura also worked on the mental health triage car which then led to one of her career highlights, being asked by a chief officer to join the strategic steering group for the Mental Health Street Triage Pilot. She subsequently attended the Department of Health in London to give a presentation on the project.

But, there were still some low points in her career, particularly when she had to choose which crimes to investigate as she didn't have the capacity to investigate them all and acknowledging that she could not give victims of crimes all the support they needed.

Laura was also concerned about colleagues who were unhappy and demoralised but felt, even though she gave them as much support as she could, she was unable to solve their problems.

But it was being forced into a conduct hearing to give evidence that had a major impact on her.

"I had support from my sergeant at that time but nobody else. It was awful. I wouldn't put my epaulettes on for months afterwards as the hearing was published on the Intranet," she explains.

But now, having received coaching and tried Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Laura has found a new focus and is returning to the Force after a chance meeting with Chief Inspector Frank Burns.

"He was a guest interviewer for a job that I had applied for with a local authority while on my career break. He contacted me afterwards and asked to meet with me to discuss why I wanted to leave and how he could provide support in re-considering and coming back. He gave me his time, was really supportive and this has played a big part in me coming back," Laura admits.

While she will initially join the Safer Neighbourhood Unit, she has applied for a police officer assessor role too.

"I am hoping I can put my coaching and NLP skills to use to facilitate and enhance the student journey," she explains.

Laura Barker gives an insight into her journey back to the Force

'I eventually found myself lost'

When I became a PC, I was proud and excited about the journey ahead of me. I am quite certain that most, if not all, other officers can share this emotion with me. We get our uniform and badge number and proudly identify ourselves, in my case, as a Derbyshire Constabulary PC.

Those first few exciting moments still put a smile on my face. Identity is a huge thing for any human but I am curious if we are at risk of confusing our identities as we go through our complex and all-encompassing lives?

How often have you phoned to say you will be late home from work - again, or that you can't make your child's show? How often have you been asked: 'Have you forgotten you are a parent or wife, husband, daughter or son?'

We are affected and influenced by people and situations. They shape us and become a part of who we are, how we identify with ourselves and how we are driven to respond to any given situation.

In my case, on too many occasions with the multiple roles I was performing, I eventually found myself lost. I felt lost with who I was and with what I should be doing, and how to feel happy. Sadly, I have heard this is all too familiar with fellow officers. The good news is nobody must feel this way or go through their life or career lost or going around in circles. It's taken me 15 and half years of policing and a six-month career break to dust myself off and free myself from the lost property store.

I want to share my new-found knowledge to help others who, like me, have needed a helping hand at some stage in their life; whether this be their own hand or the hand of another. It's incredibly hard and brave to take a hand reached out to help you. Often, for individual reasons, a hand cannot be taken, and this is where coaching and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) can be so valuable. Coaching and NLP should never replace mental health treatment – such as counselling - when needed but from my experiences, this was certainly my own personal emergency toolkit.

To kick start you, do you know who you really are? What your values are? What your beliefs are, not your partner's? What do you feel your life purpose is on earth? You need to take these questions seriously.

If you are in employment, a job role or a relationship that does not fit in or align with your identity, how can you can feel balanced, content and happy? You're just causing conflict with yourself and low mood can begin to set in. This is when my low mood set in.

Once you know who you truly are, you can look at your jigsaw and see where the pieces fit. You may even identify stray pieces from another jigsaw, where you've desperately tried to make it fit because it's easier than finding the correct missing piece.

A tool that helped me immensely was 'The Two Circles Exercise'. When I used this tool, I felt overwhelmed, lost, like my brain wanted to explode and that I had very little control of my life. How could I improve how I was feeling?

I firstly drew a circle, almost the size of my A4 paper, to represent how I felt my life was at that present time. I drew another circle – about the size of a mug - to represent how I would like my life to feel. I then wrote down on the same page what would be required to make my huge circle shrink, to meet the smaller circle. Then I looked for any marginal gain to start the process.

For me, at that time, I needed to reduce my working hours to achieve the better work-life balance I so desperately needed. I looked at the effect of this on my income and decided money is merely a contributing factor - the short-term gain was worth it.

I have also learnt some harsh lessons with decision-making. Life is based on the decisions we make. Decisions are affected by many factors and each person will be different as we have only lived our own, individual lives. Deciding you must be happy and content is something we can all do if we choose to. The short-term effort and effect may be painful but long-term it will be for the best.

Any difficult decisions we choose not to make still actually mean we have decided. It is then how we choose to move forward and accept the decision made. I didn't feel I had the power to make decisions – difficult or easy - but I now know I do. The feeling of fear we associate with making a decision is often worse than making the actual decision. Once the decision is made, the emotion is released.

I decided on a career break as I believed I was done with policing and I actively pursued other avenues of work; avenues I felt were more aligned to my identity. After seven months, I am now coming back to policing.

One great thing about being in the police force is that you have the extraordinary opportunity to apply for other posts, areas of work and go through multiple promotions. Often, we say that the opportunities aren't there, or your face must fit. I hold my hand up to some of these comments. But really, we just need to be focused, committed and tenacious. As the saying goes 'where there is a will, there is a way'.



Support for breastfeeding mums

PC Jo McGee and her two children.

A breastfeeding mothers in the workplace working group has been set up within the Force to try to offer mums returning to work extra support.

The group was established at the instigation of PC Sarah Spencer who, after a series of negative experiences, asked senior management for help and called for a change in the Force's approach to nursing mothers.

With support from PC Jo McGee, they met with other mums across the Force and identified common issues they faced when returning to work particularly for those who choose to breastfeed long-term.

While Sarah has been on maternity leave to have her second child, Jo has continued to lead the working group which has highlighted the lack of available support and information available to pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and their line managers.

Jo has twice returned to work while still breastfeeding and encountered some issues due to a lack of awareness and education of what nursing mothers needed which, if not managed properly, could result in ill health and affect their wellbeing.

She has found that she was not the only officer to face these issues and was surprised by the sheer lack of knowledge shown by some supervisors and ignorance displayed by colleagues across the Force.

"The working group has identified

officers who stopped breastfeeding prior to returning to work due to them feeling as though they would not be supported," says Jo.

"One officer expressed their milk while sat in their car due to a lack of suitable facilities during work hours and another mother has reported that on one occasion she was pumping in an interview room and various people walked in.

"One officer reported she had little support from her supervisors who didn't allow any allocated time which led to health problems such as mastitis and blocked ducts. Another explained that during a meeting, she was told by supervisors that it is not medically necessary to breastfeed an older baby and to 'just stop', and it's not the

organisation's responsibility if she wishes to continue.

"Someone else told us that while searching for breastfeeding help on a Force idea platform, she was told by a colleague that her issues were an NHS problem, not a Force issue. Another has been forced to move job roles several times due to her need and commitment to breastfeeding."

Jo and the working group are now working to ensure the Force gets up to speed with what is required within the workplace for mums who breastfeed so they can focus their efforts on their daily job instead of facing unnecessary hurdles.

"While we are aware of the benefits, the demands of breastfeeding can be physically and emotionally draining, even for mothers who choose to feed for longer periods of time, where occasionally the exhaustion can be incomprehensible. The need to eat and hydrate regularly is key for mothers who are regularly breastfeeding as energy levels can be seriously affected," she explains.

"Managing this can be tough at times and with the additional challenge of work responsibilities, receiving the relevant support can make all the difference.

"When the time comes to stop breastfeeding, we also have to consider how hormone levels shift which can cause surprisingly severe emotional upsets, much like baby blues after birth. Weaning depression and anxiety are more common among mothers who wean their children quickly or suddenly and in some cases outside treatment needs to be sought."

Having first served as a Special, Jo joined the Force as a regular in 2006 and is currently based at St Mary's Wharf in Derby.

She has two children, returning to work after a year with her first and continuing to breastfeed until he was 22-months-old when she fell pregnant with her second child. Jo returned to work gradually after 10 months and is still breastfeeding her 18-month-old.

"I have experienced a real lack of understanding from supervisors but also a general lack of knowledge in respect of what support and facilities are required," she explains.

"I am fortunate that my role is office based and in the early days of my return I

“ WE DON'T WANT OTHER MUMS FEELING THEY HAVE TO GIVE UP BREASTFEEDING WHEN THEY RETURN TO WORK AND WE CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO HEAR OF ANYONE HAVING TO GO OUT TO THEIR CAR AND SIT IN A CAR PARK TO EXPRESS THEIR MILK. ”

could control my break times more easily around my need to express compared to others in more demanding roles.

"I am at a station that has good facilities including a clean, private and lockable room out of the way so it wasn't obvious to my colleagues when I needed to express.

"I also have storage facilities which, though not perfect, I manage with OK. This is clearly not the case for so many people around the Force who are experiencing difficulties around this sensitive area.

"The option for a lockable fridge was not available, this would have been something I would have pushed for if my job role and location was different, as the integrity of the breastmilk is vitally important to the health of my baby."

Jo continues: "The Force could help more by having readily available guidance for nursing mothers and their line managers to ensure the relevant support and facilities are available. We are aware that this is a sensitive issue and the objective of the working group is not in any way intended to offend or undermine the decision not to feed, or difficulties faced by non-breastfeeding mothers, we would like to make that clear.

"This is to simply bridge the gap and ensure new mothers who are breastfeeding and return to work and those who continue to feed long-term, are supported physically, emotionally and psychologically, whether that be internal or signposted to external services that are available.

"The 'gold standard' would be consistent support from line managers, triggered by a regular check-in procedure to ensure breastfeeding mums are given time to express during work hours along with mandatory breaks to refuel.

"A suitable room at every station which is private and lockable with a chair and hand-washing facilities, as well as a small, lockable portable fridge solely used for the storage of breastmilk, which the nursing mother would be responsible for.

"We hope to set up a support network in Force to offer advice through our own experiences, or signpost pregnant women and nursing mothers to relevant information and support services."

Members of the working group are available as a point of contact for support on a new email – bfsupport@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk.

"We want to be open to pregnant officers and make sure they are aware of the working group so we can offer advice and support if they are considering breastfeeding their baby," says Jo.

"We don't want other mums feeling they have to give up breastfeeding when they return to work and we certainly don't want to hear of anyone having to go out to their car and sit in a car park to express their milk."

Jo can be contacted by email at joanna.mcgee.3254@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk

Get to know your workplace representatives

Workplace Federation representatives are on hand to offer colleagues help, advice and support.

Here three of the Derbyshire Police Federation reps give an insight into their Federation background.
[Contact details for your Federation representatives.](#)

BRIAN COLLINS

'We are here 24/7 – ready to help'

All officers will at some stage in their careers need help from the Police Federation, says Derbyshire workplace representative Brian Collins.

Brian became a Federation member on the advice of a rep who came to see his cohort of new officers when he joined the Force in January 1998.

"It was good advice," he says, "None of us ever know when we are going to need the help and support of the Federation but all of us will need it at one stage or another of our career."

"It may be that as an individual you mess up or make a mistake due to being over tired or under pressure or you may be subject to a vexatious complaint but the Fed is here 24/7 ready to help."

After needing help from the Federation in his own hour of need, Brian said he decided to return the favour and became a workplace rep in 2010, attending the initial reps' training course at the national Federation headquarters in Leatherhead. He has since also completed a conduct course and will be undergoing the Post-Incident Procedures (PIP) training later this year.

He has helped officers going through some difficult situations and admits he finds it hard to see people he knows in real distress.

"Most of the members I have helped have been suffering health issues brought on by work-related stress and pressure," he explains, "I am seeing more and more officers struggling with their mental health often with some supervisors not understanding how their approach to management affects the staff in their control."

"As a Force, we do not always teach people management as managing people is a skill that not everyone has but it is one that can be taught."

Brian believes the challenge ahead for Derbyshire Police Federation is to work with the OLCE (formerly PSD) to develop a better more reasonable and fair approach to conduct.

But, in terms of the police service itself, he wants to see a new Prime Minister deal with the current crisis in policing as a matter



of urgency.

"In the last 10 years, this Government has ripped the heart out of policing in the UK. It has demoralised and devalued the core role in UK policing - the office of constable," Brian says.

"It has verbally bullied and abused us, financially stripped us of our standard of living and pushed many to breaking point. I know we are due a change of Prime Minister and the new Conservative leader must deal with some of these issues as a matter of urgency."

Brian became an officer when, seeking a change of career, he saw the Force was advertising for new recruits. He has been a response officer, on traffic and spent time as a DS in the domestic violence unit. He has been based in the digital forensics unit since 2010.

GARETH PODMORE

Funding is a major issue

The police funding cuts have had a massive impact on the Force, the mental wellbeing of officers and the service provided to Derbyshire's communities, according to workplace representative Gareth Podmore.

Funding, he argues, underpins everything the Force can achieve and hope to do now and in the future.

"For Derbyshire, the loss of 400 front-line and support officers as well as countless police staff has left our job harder and more stressful and the public with a service struggling to deliver the kind of outcomes and support our communities rightly expect," says Gareth, who is currently on Group 4 High Peak LPU based at Buxton and is also the Federation deputy health and safety lead.

"This has had a massive impact on those front-line staff in CID, PPU and OPS, for example, and most crucially LPU Response, as the ones who deliver 24/7 policing are in a perilous state due to swathing cuts thanks to the abysmal lack of support from the Government.

"For me especially, LPU and CID cuts are very worrying and the mental health of those that work in that environment are of deep concern as there is no resilience. Yet demand is increasing and becoming more complex so my hope is that a sea change of Government may hopefully see an about-face to the approach of the past.

"This single issue has created havoc for our communities and the staff who serve in them, and I'm looking forward to playing a part in turning the fortunes around for Derbyshire Police so it can become a more



Continued overleaf

Get to know your workplace representatives

Continued from Page 11

affluent, productive and supportive organisation.”

Gareth joined the Force in January 2001. He worked for Vodafone in Manchester and had been a Special in GMP for five years prior to joining Derbyshire, motivated by a desire for a change of career and his friend's Dad who was a dog handler in the Met.

He served at Glossop New Mills, Chapel en Frith and for six years was on SNT, firstly for a year at Glossop town centre then at Hadfield and Tintwistle for five years.

He took up the advice to join the Federation when he first joined the Force and became a workplace rep last year at the behest of colleagues who supported him as he regularly voiced their concerns to managers when they were worried about putting them forward themselves.

“I have only been a rep for just over a year and have found myself in a number of projects from looking at the batons issues to the more intense dilemma over the closing of the custody suite at Buxton, which has been the most demanding and controversial area of business to date for me,” he explains.

“But I find where you may fall short, and perhaps could have handled things with a bit more finesse, you learn and take with you that knowledge into the other areas of work that you find yourself involved with.

“So far I have given advice to a number of colleagues on workplace disputes and regulatory queries, as well as getting to know other reps, team leaders and management well.”

He has completed the initial reps' training and health and safety courses at the

Federation headquarters in Leatherhead and is looking forward to training in conduct, Post-Incident Procedures and other areas that might help him better support members.

Gareth wants to encourage any member with concerns at work to contact the Federation.

“I would urge anyone who wants to find out more or who needs help not to suffer in silence, please contact me or other reps to share your pain and concerns,” he says.

ADAM BRYAN

Focus on fairness

Workplace Federation representative Adam Bryan has a keen interest in ensuring fairness for colleagues and that the support mechanisms in place are implemented when they should be.

Having become a Fed rep in 2017, 11 years into his policing career, he says the role has been a real eye-opener for him.

“It amazes me how badly some people are managed and it shouldn't take someone like me to say that. It should just be obvious,” explains Adam who is a sergeant in the North Division Custody Investigation Unit.

“I am enjoying meeting colleagues from all over the county who need a hand through a difficult time and feeling like I have helped them. I actually get heartfelt emails saying thanks and seeing someone go full circle is great.

“The most challenging issue I have is when taking up issues with more senior officers who have either ignored me, not answered me or fobbed me off. The difficulty with that is that I don't give up, if I believe something is wrong and needs an answer then I won't accept being ignored.”

Adam started his policing career as a member of police staff and automatically



joined the Federation on becoming an officer. His first posting was to Clay Cross and he spent a couple of years on a Safer Neighbourhood Team before moving onto a divisional support team and then gaining promotion in 2012.

He sees his Federation role as a means to help colleagues while also developing his career and skills.

“As a first line manager, it's very frustrating to have very little influence or control over anything even my own shift or my team's future. This is a route to achieve more for me; to learn more about process and get better training. The obvious reason is I want to help people through difficult times, sharing experiences and knowledge with them, the bonus is I get to develop myself as well,” Adam explains.

He is already seeing the workload pressures on the Federation's branch chair and secretary and wants to see workplace reps share the work but also ensure there are sufficient full-time staff to meet member demand.

“Our role is very important to the officers and organisation to ensure both sides meet in the middle,” he adds.

From a Force perspective, he thinks the challenge ahead involves securing cohesion among departments, eliminating in-fighting and pulling forwards not apart by looking out for one another and building a one team approach.

In policing generally, the challenge, Adam stresses, lays with the Government – ‘whichever Government it is’.

Adam completed his Federation initial reps' course at the Federation's headquarters in Leatherhead last year and is booked on an equality course in June.



Vote for new reps

Federation members are being urged to vote for three new workplace representatives.

There are currently three vacancies on the Derbyshire Police Federation Branch Council with six officers having put themselves forward for the role.

“Being a workplace Federation representative can be an incredibly rewarding role,” says branch secretary Kirsty Bunn, “It doesn't come without its challenges but, I believe, they are far outweighed by knowing that you are doing your bit to support colleagues.

“I would encourage all members to find out more about the candidates and vote for who they feel would best support and advise colleagues.”

Any subscribing member – who has been a member of the Federation for more than two months and is not suspended – was able to stand as a candidate.

Nominations closed on Monday 17 June 2019.

The election process is being administered by Mi-Voice, the Federation's independent election provider. Voting opens on Monday 24 June and closes on 15 July. Details of how to vote can be found on Chief's Orders.

The new reps automatically become part of the Branch Council, which is made up of all elected workplace representatives.

Extra support on hand

Twenty four officers have now been trained to act as Federation Support Officers (FSOs).

They will be able to help inform Derbyshire Police Federation members on Police Regulations and local policies and procedures.

“Being a Federation Support Officer is about having the knowledge to correctly support and influence others when it comes to dealing with Federation and general welfare matters,” explains Derbyshire Police Federation secretary Kirsty Bunn.

“It is important to stress that the support officers are not elected posts, so there are no abstractions from the workplace except for the initial training.”

At the start of the year, Federation members were asked to volunteer to become FSOs, resulting in the 24 officers receiving the training.