

Recognising outstanding detectives

Some of our finest detectives were recognised at the PFNDF awards ceremony held on Thursday 12 October. As in previous years, we received some truly astounding nominations – all demonstrating tenacity, perseverance and dedication to investigating some of the worst crimes imaginable.

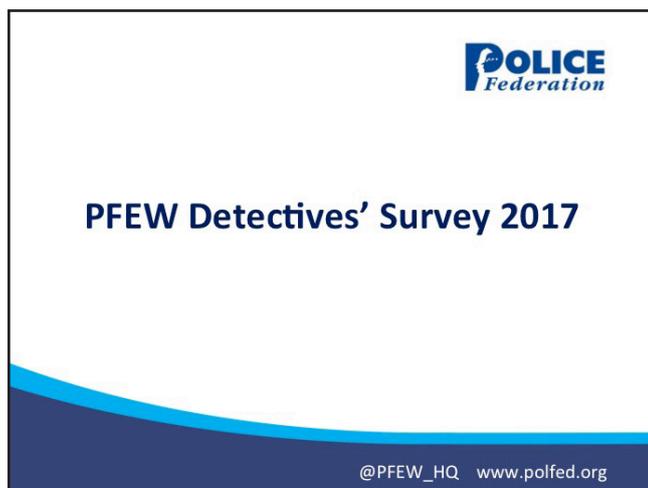
Congratulations to all our nominees and winners – they are a credit to the service and we are grateful for the work they do.

Here's a summary of some of the investigations and key issues that were presented throughout the two days.



Karen Stephens
Interim National Board Member and Secretary for PFNDF

What we already know but worse – results of national detectives' survey

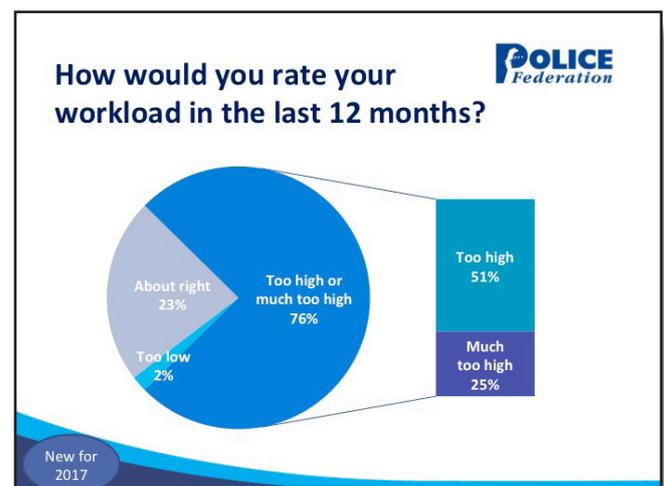


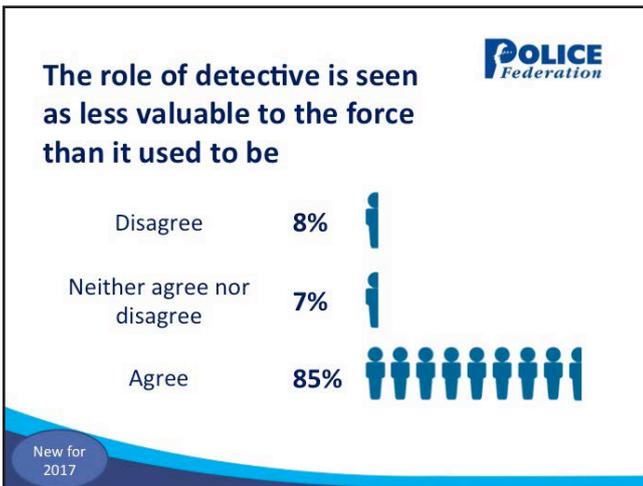
Last year we spoke about morale being low and sadly this has continued to plummet – the results of our national survey are shocking, but sadly not surprising. As we all know, detectives are over-worked and stressed.

Nearly 8,000 responses and views on: Impact of service cuts – workload and job demands – Job-related stress – Views about the job- Training and CPD – attraction and retention.

More than half who responded (56%) said service cuts

had hugely impacted their morale, whilst over a quarter of detectives felt their physical and mental health had been affected. Half of respondents also blamed cuts for a substantial increase in fatigue (53%) and stress (49%) as they battled to keep up with demand. Nine out of ten of respondents who had taken sickness absence due to their mental health and wellbeing said that the difficulties they experienced were caused, or exacerbated, by work.





Over three quarters (76%) of those surveyed said their workload had increased in the last year and the same proportion thought their workloads were too high in the last 12 months. 73% of officers felt that they were not able to provide the service victims needed most or all of the time.

You can find a link to the [media release](#) and 2017 [national headline report](#) here.

Detective Investigation of the Year



A team of Thames Valley detectives won the Detective Investigation of the Year award for tracking down an organised crime group, which had profited in the region of £1 billion from mass corruption, blackmail, conspiracy to defraud, fraudulent trading and money laundering.

The investigation uncovered how the gang had targeted a significant number of small businesses across the UK with victims losing their family businesses and homes as a result.

The team interviewed 424 people, gathered over 1,000 statements and more than 3,000 exhibits. Their expertise and resilience was tested further with the added complication of linking money and suspects across the UK, Europe and America.

But their hard work and tenacity paid off, with six out of the seven defendants being found guilty, receiving sentences totalling 96 years.

On receiving the award, Detective Superintendent Nick John and Detective Inspector Tim Hurley said: "It is a fantastic achievement to get this recognition. All the hard work of the team has been rewarded by our peers and it's fantastic."

Runner-up – Operation Yawler

Runner-up in this category was Detective Inspector Suzanne Baker from West Midlands Police for her work on the investigation into the Paris and Brussels terror attacks.

The investigation involved working closely with international agencies to investigate suspected terrorists.

The officer's first major counter terrorism investigation as a SIO, the investigation was complex - balancing the management of ongoing risk with intelligence gathering in order to protect the communities of the West Midlands, and further afield.

The impressive decision making skills shown prior to, during and after arrest were proven to be evidentially sound.

The trigger for arrest also relied upon international police taking action and supporting the UK investigation. Within the limited custody period in the UK, this officer conducted evidential interviews with the suspect, leading to a successful conviction.

On receiving the award, Detective Inspector Suzanne Baker said: "I feel really privileged to receive this award – thank you very much. I feel very honoured but I wouldn't have achieved this without a great team behind me working on this investigation."

Third place – Operation Zilch



Third place went to a team of detectives from Northamptonshire Police for Operation Zilch.

The team of officers were involved in a case review of two rape victims who reported historical sex crimes by the same perpetrator.

During the review, intelligence was gathered on the suspect spanning back twenty years. It became apparent that this could involve multiple victims over a ten to fifteen year period. Subsequently the operation worked to identify potential victims and witnesses.

From the initial investigations, 32 people were visited which then generated a further 30. Considerable time, effort, support and compassion was needed to gain the trust and confidence of the victims for the investigation to be able to move forward.

As the suspects were identified and put on remand, the investigation team continued to support those who were going to be called to give evidence at the trial.

The trial took place in May 2017 and the suspects received significant sentences - one received a life sentence and the other received 18 years imprisonment.

On receiving the award, Detective Constable Cathy O'Connor said: "I'm shocked – it was joint working with all our witnesses that enabled this result – we couldn't have done it without them. I'm so grateful that they trusted in us. Our job was the easy job, theirs was the difficult one. I'm so grateful to my team, and to the prosecution team."

Services to Detectives



Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Andrew Cunliffe, Greater Manchester Police, and Detective Inspector Steven Nelson from Essex Police jointly won the Services to Detectives award.

T/DCI Cunliffe, who dealt with the aftermath of the Manchester Arena bombing, was honoured for his drive and commitment in recognising potential detectives and encouraging professional development.

DI Steven Nelson was recognised for his work with forces to improve responses and victim support in child abuse cases.

T/DCI Andrew Cunliffe, has a policing career spanning 27 years, having worked in various divisional detective roles, specialist public protection and major crime.

He has continuously strived to improve professional development and recruit staff into investigation. He has a strong reputation and is an excellent role model.

DI Steven Nelson has primarily worked as a Detective Constable and Detective Sergeant within Special Branch. His forte for the last nine years has been working with victims of child abuse.

DI Nelson worked hard to integrate a focus on child abuse into local policing, to break down barriers, and ensure that the policing response to children and families met the needs of individual victims. His drive and commitment to improving detective skills in the child abuse area has enabled him to lead on staff training across the force and all ranks including specialist staff in the Serious Collision Investigation Unit, in the rapid response process to child death.

Despite the significant contributions that this officer has made over the years, he has very much remained the 'unsung hero', refusing to accept credit for successful investigations and prosecutions, often putting his staff and their improvement ahead of his personal triumph or accolade.

T/DCI Cunliffe was unable to be at the awards but his colleagues received it on his behalf.

On receiving the award, Terry Macmillan said: "For twelve years he was my DI in the volume crime team. He was instrumental in making me become a detective – he helped me through my application and encouraged me to be a detective and a good investigator, giving me the building blocks to become a half decent detective I guess. Knowing Andrew quite well he would be delighted with this."

On receiving the award, DI Nelson said: "You're only as good as your team and this award is based on them. You don't win an award like this without a team like that."

Smarter Detective – Tread Finder



Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Julie Henderson and Acting Sergeant Jason Hall from the Metropolitan Police scooped the Smarter Detective award for their innovative work in developing new technology to improve the forensic sampling of footwear. 'Tread Finder' has improved crime detection rates and reduced reoffending.

Both officers identified a gap in the forensic sampling of a detained person's footwear.

A bid was put in and secured to the Home Office for funding to enable the design and development of this new technology. The Tread Finder is designed to work in conjunction with existing IT systems in order to enhance current crime reporting and intelligence capabilities.

Footwear is captured through a digital scanner and automatically coded by the Tread Finder system, which gives each image a unique identification number. Tread Finder is 92% faster and 96% cheaper than the existing paper based process and enables intelligence sharing across all police forces as well as national boundaries.

During the 18-month trial period, Tread Finder has led to 212 crimes being detected, which have been mostly for residential burglary - 86% have resulted in a conviction at court.

On receiving this award, T/DCI Julie Henderson and Jason Hall said: "We're thrilled - it's absolutely brilliant. More than anything it recognises the hard work that's been put in over the last four years."

Runner-up – DC Steven Tisseyre



Second place in this category was awarded to Detective Constable Steven Tisseyre from Bedfordshire Police for his work on identifying suspects using drone technology to drop contraband in prison grounds.

For the past seven years, DC Tisseyre has sat as an advisor on the Cross-Government Threat and Mitigation Working Group.

His work has involved issues around the emerging unmanned aerial vehicle technology – more commonly known as drones. There was an increase in reports of these being recovered within prison grounds - a new trend and previously unexplored for policing.

He took the initiative and recovered a number of drones which had been kept in storage around police stations in the UK.

Through reverse engineering, data was extracted from the devices that showed where and when they had been flown, and also provided residential information to help locate those responsible. This attracted attention from the Ministry of Justice as well as other government stakeholders including the Home Office.

A significant moment was when DC Tisseyre recently used the skills he had developed, leading to the arrest of two offenders caught flying contraband into a prison. A judge at Luton Crown Court later handed down the highest sentence to date in the UK to a person who had committed this crime.

On receiving this award, Detective Constable Steven Tisseyre said: "I feel very honoured to have received this award. It is something I feel extremely passionate about and it would not have been achievable if it wasn't for the support I was given by colleagues and in particular my family as well, especially my fiancée, giving me the support to pursue something I strongly believe in and bring people who want to fly contraband into prisons to justice."

Third place – Operation Tropic



Third place went to Acting Detective Sergeant Duncan Montague and Detective Inspector Luke Whinnett from Hertfordshire Constabulary's Operation Tropic, for their contribution to tackling Human Trafficking.

Acting DS Montague and DI Whinnett initially spoke to colleagues to identify best practice, and it quickly became clear that force procedures needed to change.

Both officers quickly set about to ensure new processes were created which could effectively capture information, including that from intelligence referrals.

Together they prepared and delivered a training package to ensure that frontline intervention officers and detectives were

aware of these processes and what they had to do. The officers also liaised with partner agencies to make sure that they were meeting legal requirements.

To date, over 1,000 officers have received training. Referrals are not being missed and potentially vulnerable victims are not being lost in the system. The best possible service is given and government priorities are being met.

With processes in place, the officers went on to set up the Operation Tropic team to ensure that staff infrastructure and operating procedures were in place, an intranet page created and remit set.

The Operation Tropic model has been commended by the Prime Minister as well as other key leads for anti-slavery.

On receiving the award, Acting Detective Sergeant Duncan Montague and Detective Inspector Luke Whinnett said: "We've worked really hard on human trafficking over the last 18 months, so it is nice to be recognised for that work."

New Trainee Detective – DC Emma Kunne



Detective Constable Emma Kunne from Leicestershire Police won the New Trainee Detective of the Year award for making an impact early on in her career.

In particular, she was recognised for her work in the immediate aftermath of a murder within a community where tensions were high, acting as the family liaison of the deceased.

In all the investigations that this officer has been involved in, she has consistently shown professionalism and dedication to supporting victims, as well as making sense of complex situations and grasping enquiries very quickly.

DC Kunne has been involved in many cases as a trainee detective - one particular case that stands out was when the officer was called out to deal with the aftermath of a murder.

Working long hours, she managed to assist with completion of the remand file and was part of the professional handover to the murder investigation team. This officer's contribution defused what could have been a potential flashpoint on the estate, and helped a family at a time of great distress.

On receiving the award, DC Kunne said: "I'm so so shocked at winning this. I'm so grateful to the team I work with – I wouldn't be where I am without them. Their support was absolutely invaluable and I can't believe I've won it."

PFNDF Outstanding Contribution



The PFNDF Award for Outstanding Contribution was given this year to Martis Media, for their work within policing and support of the PFNDF.

Royston Martis worked on Police Review magazine before starting his own company (Martis Media), focusing on the issues police officers across the country face every day.

Royston has worked with local boards - advised on media campaigns and trained them on what to do and what not to do on social media. He has been a huge supporter of the PFNDF and is a regular presenter at the seminar due to his knowledge and experience within policing and media.

Seminar

Through the course of the two days, the Forum heard from the following keynote speakers:

Operation Yawler – West Midlands

The Forum heard from a team of detectives from West Midlands Police who led one of the most significant counter-terrorism investigations carried out in the UK in recent years, with direct links to the Paris (November 2015) and Brussels (March 2016) attacks.

Working with international agencies, including Belgium Police, West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit worked tirelessly with their surveillance of the suspects. During the two-year investigation, the Senior Investigating Officer and her colleagues trawled through over 573 reports of intelligence activity, including over 721 pieces of surveillance deployments and 130 exhibits.

The murder of Rhys Jones



Brian 'Dixie' McNeill – Now retired Detective Chief Superintendent, Merseyside Police was working on the Rhys Jones investigation with the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) and his team, maintaining oversight of the investigation, providing a mentoring and critical friend role. He was responsible for liaising daily with the Gold Commander and chief officers and dealt with peripheral issues, so that the SIO could focus on the case.

At the Forum Mr McNeill set out the context and background to the events in Liverpool before and at the time of the murder, relating to the Croxteth Crew and the Strand Gang – two opposing groups of youths involved in drug-related crime and associated violence. 16-year-old Mercer fired three shots from a First World War revolver, with the second of these hitting Rhys.

There were no witnesses who could identify the offender. Family

and friends attempted to cover for Mercer and those who assisted him during the investigation.

In 2008 convictions were secured against Mercer (jailed for a minimum of 22 years) and those who had tried to help him evade justice, followed by guilty pleas early the following year from his mother and the parents of James Yates who had supplied the gun.

The investigation was the first to benefit from the input of an officer in addition to the SIO. Mr McNeill ended his delivery at the Forum by explaining that after the conclusion of all legal proceedings he, together with colleagues from the service and the CPS, were invited to present to the annual National SIO conference in November 2009, organised by the Homicide Working Group.

The presentation ended with a recommendation to consider formally introducing the role that he played in this investigation into similar cases in the future in order to assist SIOs. This led to the introduction of the PIP Level 4 role, the course for which has now been delivered by the College of Policing on average three times per year since 2010. The course, titled "The Strategic Management of Complex Investigations" is 'to ensure those charged with the strategic management of investigations which are, by definition highly complex, have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the role and thereby safeguard public confidence and the reputation of the service.'

Disaster victim identification and the family liaison



Detective Constable Louise Pye from Sussex Police worked on the disaster victim identification and as family liaison for the Shoreham air disaster in August 2015. 11 men from the Sussex area died when a vintage Hawker Hunter jet plummeted onto the A27.

More than two years on, the case is still being decided upon. A memorial fund was set up and currently stands at over £200,000 and the money goes towards assisting anyone involved who needs it – including counselling.

Police worked around the clock to collate evidence from the scene. DC Pye along with her colleagues worked tirelessly on the investigation.

DC Pye ended the talk with a letter written by one of the victim's family, thanking the FLOs for all the work they did in helping and supporting them through one of the most traumatic events in their life.

Sadie Hartley murder



Detective Superintendent Paul Withers, Lancashire Police, gave an overview of the case of Sadie Hartley who was murdered on 14 January 2016 by Sarah Williams and Katrina Walsh.

The presentation focused on how Sarah Williams and Katrina Walsh had been plotting the murder of Sadie for around 18 months, with Katrina Walsh having meticulously written down details in a diary, that would later become extremely valuable in providing key evidence in the murder trial. The presentation also focussed on the first three days of the investigation into Sadie's murder, the investigation team were doing a lot of work but evidentially there wasn't a lot to go on. The murder investigation featured as part of documentary which was produced by RawCut Television Company, which aired on 1 September 2014 on ITV1.

Farewell to Nyki



Sadly this was Nyki's last PFNDF seminar and awards as she starts a new chapter in her career.

The Forum showed their love with a standing ovation and we wish her all the very best for the future.

*Have you been involved or know of any great work that you would like to feature in the newsletter?
If so, then please let us know via email: karen.stephens@polfed.org*