



NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You

Help For Officers' Mental Health

Walnut Tree Health & Wellbeing's services for police officers and staff suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have "saved officers' lives", Norfolk Police Federation has said.

New national figures under the Freedom of Information Act show that nearly 10,000 police officers had to take time off for mental health in the past year.

officers have been referred to the service.

Norfolk Police Federation Secretary Sam Hawkins said: "Walnut Tree does mindfulness, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing – a form of psychotherapy), and gets people back into the workplace.

"Before people can process trauma, they need to make sure they have the resilience to deal

"They have one car for Norfolk and one for Suffolk, with a doctor, nurse or paramedic. They go out and find the officer and do emergency care.

"I think Walnut Tree has saved some officers' lives. Other forces don't offer this."

Federation Chairman Andy Symonds stressed that there still needed to be more help for officers who are not as high risk but still have

"I think Walnut Tree has saved some officers' lives"

But in Norfolk the figures have gone down: 108 officers were signed off due to psychological problems in 2019-20, compared to 162 the previous year.

Two years ago, Norfolk Police Federation approached Walnut Tree, a not-for-profit organisation who were providing mental health services to military veterans, and asked them if they could help police officers and staff.

Norfolk and Suffolk Police forces approved the plan, and now fund the care. Since then, 78

with those memories. So they do a lot of wellbeing work beforehand then move into EMDR for PTSD.

"It gives officers help and treatment much quicker than waiting on the NHS, but it's also better for them and their families, it's better for the police force as a whole.

"They also have a community response team. We've had examples of officers in crisis in the middle of the night and we can let Walnut Tree know that they're high risk.

mental health problems.

He said: "We need to do more work with the Police Covenant to improve the service further for people who don't quite meet the criteria to go to Walnut Tree.

"We've got a whole load of people who have mental health issues but are still functioning and coming to work. We deal with the symptoms of it when they go off sick, but we need to invest in helping them. I think it will pay dividends in the long run."

Fatigue Made Worse By Covid

“**C**oronavirus has exacerbated a problem that was already there”, Norfolk Police Federation has said, as it emerges that fatigue is a growing issue for officers.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, police officers were fatigued, according to the first national wellbeing survey, which was carried out between November 2019 and January 2020.

Almost half of the police officers who responded said they were getting fewer than six hours of sleep a night, with shift workers being more likely to experience poor sleep quality.

effects of the stripped-back services.

“There is some data that suicides have gone up in COVID, and attending things like that increases fatigue.

“And then the things officers used to do to let off steam, like go out as a team or see their extended family, those release mechanisms have gone.”

Andy added that this situation had led to an increase in the number of Post-Incident Procedures (PIPs).

He said: “We had a meeting with our Chief Constable and we gave him examples of our officers stepping in in all situations.

“We used to be the service of last resort, now we’re the service of first resort.

“Demand for policing continues to rise, and COVID has exacerbated that”

Norfolk Police Federation Chairman Andy Symonds said: “Demand for policing continues to rise, and COVID has exacerbated that.

“And all the other stakeholders – the mental health services, the NHS, the ambulance services – are struggling themselves.

“This leaves our members at risk of dealing with all sorts of things that they wouldn’t normally deal with.”

Norfolk Police Federation Secretary Sam Hawkins added: “We’re being called to more things. We’ve had a mental health crisis in the community.

“And our officers are worrying about their kids being at school, the rising COVID cases, then they’re out in the community seeing the

“Then when something happens, because we’re there, we have to go through a PIP, invariably run by the IOPC.

“Usually an officer has done nothing wrong, but it affects their wellbeing and increases fatigue.”

Locally, the Federation has succeeded in getting the force to change shift patterns temporarily so officers can work fewer night shifts while there is less night-time demand for policing.

Andy has also urged officers to share their views in the PFEW’s annual Demand, Capacity and Welfare survey. Officers will have been sent a link to the survey on their police email addresses.

He said: “It takes 35 to 40 minutes to fill in and it really helps locally and nationally.”

IOPC Must Be Held To Account For Long Inquiries

Long investigations by the IOPC have as much of an impact on officers’ psychological welfare as assaults do, according to Norfolk Police Federation.

Chairman Andy Symonds made the comments after the PFEW submitted evidence to a Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into the IOPC, highlighting the detrimental impact of lengthy disciplinary investigations.

Andy said: “This inquiry is a direct result of the Federation campaign. Also my colleagues and I have spoken to MPs and raised local issues and I think that all helps produce that lobbying pressure.

“It’s really good that this is being talked about in a public forum because it gets the IOPC



thinking about what they’re doing. It’s a good bit of scrutiny.

“Things have improved, but we need to keep the pressure up on the Time Limits campaign. These long investigations have as much of an impact on officers’ psychological welfare as assaults do.

“Some of these cops have been suspended for a long period of time and are under pressure that they might lose their job.”

Andy said Norfolk Police Federation was lucky to have a good relationship with a regional operations manager for the IOPC, whom it meets every three months.

Andy explained: “He’s helped speed up and smooth over some of the obstacles that are in the way of these investigations, so there have been improvements.”

Three New Reps To Help You

Welcome to three of the newest Norfolk Police Federation Branch Council Reps: Melanie Irwin, Andy Barnes and Adam Fello.

Melanie has been an officer for 27 years and is currently working as a Custody Lead for Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies.

She explained: "I wanted to become a Federation Rep as I am a firm believer in fairness and transparency in the workplace."

Melanie (pictured right) added that her experience and skill of being a TRiM practitioner, as well as having been a Samaritan since the age of 17, allows her "to listen carefully to what people say".

She continued: "The Federation is so important to members – it provides so much knowledge and guidance, and assists the organisation in communicating with colleagues."

"My sole purpose is to be able to assist colleagues in times of need. Especially as we are living through an unprecedented time of uncertainty and stress, so the need is stronger for support."

Similarly, Andy (pictured centre) stressed the importance of support, saying: "The Police Federation allows officers to do the job they joined to do, with the knowledge that someone has their back."



"I was interested in supporting members through the number of police Regulations in place to protect them in the course of their duty."

"I'm most looking forward to ensuring officers are aware of their entitlements and represented when things maybe don't go to plan, but they have the best intentions in the role they perform."

Andy said the experience he has gained from his 19 years policing in both rural and urban areas and meeting a variety of people in the job will help him as a Rep.

He said: "I feel I am a good listener and provide a calm and supportive presence."

"I will make myself available and approachable to support members."

Adam (pictured left) joined Thames Valley Police in 2001 and transferred to Norfolk in 2010. He is now a response sergeant in south

Norfolk supervising a team of eight PCs.

He explained: "I wanted to become a Federation Rep to give people a voice."

"I have always enjoyed the welfare side of things when an officer is being investigated. I want to experience more of that."

"The Police Federation is so important as it offers that intrinsic support to its members."

"I'm a decent listener and I'll make time for people if it helps them or reduces some of the anxiety they may be feeling."

"I think officers find it comforting to know that their Federation support comes from people who have experienced sometimes very similar incidents. I'm proud to become a Federation Rep and I will do my best to support those who count on me".

You can contact these officers via email on adam.fello@polfed.org, andy.barnes@polfed.org and melanie.irwin@polfed.org.

POLICE

Time To Release Body Cam Footage

Norfolk Police Federation has said releasing officers' body-worn footage to the public would "dispel some myths".

Home Secretary Priti Patel wrote to NPCC Chair Martin Hewitt, stating that the actions of officers are "deliberately misrepresented" in videos posted on social media, which could undermine trust in the police.

Norfolk Police Federation Andy Symonds agreed, saying: "What we're allowing at the moment is a social media furor on some of these complaints, when there are snippets of the incident and people are editing a three-minute video into 10 seconds."

"I think it is healthy that we get out early as a police service, and it's not for the Federation to do this, it's for us to encourage, influence and push this. It's for the police service to do, to protect our members. These cops

go out and do difficult jobs on behalf of the community.

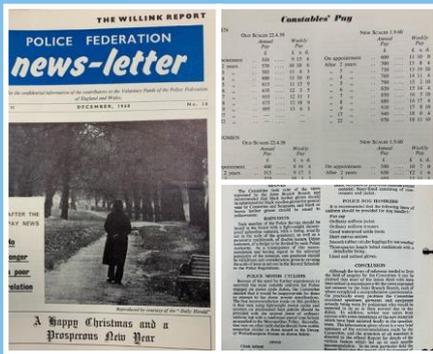
"The Chief Constable will ask officers to do stop searches on organised crime groups and drug traffickers, and at the end there may be a complaint and a clip on social media. Then the officer is subject to an awful environment on social media and they've got no right of reply except a long investigation."

"These things can change the public's view of the police, when a year down the line that cop is exonerated from doing anything incorrectly. This is the reality of what cops face every day and a lot of the time it's hostility, a lot of the time they fear they'll be assaulted, or that people might have a weapon on them."

He said showing body cam footage would "show the reality – this is the pressure cops face trying to police the community you live in".



Federation History Lesson



Old articles from a Police Federation newsletter have been dug up, covering uniform changes and police pay.

One article compares the annual pay of male and female constables by old and new scales, which were brought into operation on 1 September 1960.

In 1958 men's annual pay 'On Appointment' was £510 and when the new scales came in it went up to £600 a year – women's annual pay was £460 and went up to £560. When the 'Official Side' received the new scale figures, they described it as "breathtaking".

Another article discusses in detail suggestions made about police uniform in 1957 by the Joint Branch Boards and considered by the Statutory Police Council in 1958.

They were considering changes for open-neck jackets in winter, uniform in hot weather, gloves, standard specifications for waterproof raincoats, uniforms for police motorcyclists and dog handlers.

The outcome of the suggestions was positive, recognising them as a "growth and development of the police service in this country".

MPs' Policing Interest



Norfolk Police Federation has succeeded in "spiking the interest" of MPs about the concerns of officers.

Chairman Andy Symonds (pictured) sent a briefing document to Norfolk's nine MPs during party conference season to detail the issues officers are facing both locally and nationally.

Due to COVID-19, this year's party political conferences were held remotely.

Andy said: "During COVID I have spoken to a number of MPs virtually, raising issues around the pandemic, the access to PPE and being able to police the regulations that keep coming and going.

"We're seen as the bad guys when we go out issuing tickets, which is a shame.

"I've just sent a briefing document to our nine MPs about issues we are facing locally and nationally. I've raised issues around COVID and the impact on resourcing and policing, making

them aware of exactly what is affecting officers in Norfolk."

He said officers' pay and conditions was "always a standing item".

The issues around police pursuit driving had "spiked the interest of two MPs", Andy said.

He explained: "I spoke to Chloe Smith, Minister of State for the Cabinet Office and MP for Norwich North, and she was really interested in police pursuits and the length of IOPC investigations.

"She said she wants to support police in the county and will be contacting the Home Secretary and asking what she's doing to support officers in Norfolk."

Andy added that Jerome Mayhew, the MP for Broadland, was interested in the issues as well, but that the long-standing South Norfolk Conservative MP Richard Bacon had not yet engaged with them.

Police Family Shaken By Death Of Sgt Matt Ratana

"The death of a police officer shakes all police officers; we're like a big family."

Norfolk Police Federation Chairman Andy Symonds has paid tribute to Metropolitan Police officer Sgt Matt Ratana (pictured), who was fatally shot at Croydon Custody Centre.

He said: "Even though Norfolk cops may not have met Matt Ratana, it does shake everybody. Especially custody sergeants, as it's a death in a custody environment, which is very rare.

"With policing it's really difficult to mitigate every single risk. You can put so much in place and have so much PPE, but someone might be hell bent on causing serious injury or killing a police officer."



Norfolk Police Federation Secretary Sam Hawkins had previously been a custody sergeant.

She added that in the role: "You tend not to wear your body armour routinely and there are issues if you're wearing that all day. Sadly police officers get killed, but to actually get killed in a police station rocks people even more."

Andy said he had contacted Norfolk's custody sergeants and listened to their concerns following the incident. The Federation will feed its members' concerns into the next Local Negotiating Consultative Committee (LNCC) meeting. A custody sergeant Rep sits on the board and will take their views to the Chief Superintendent.

Andy said: "While we're waiting for the investigation findings, we'll have a quicktime review of the procedures around detainees in custody and searching them.

"That's important to reassure cops that the force is alive to the issues, and that the policy is fit for purpose. We will make sure that concerns from our members are listened to and acted upon."

Tax Relief For Working At Home

If you have had to work at home, you can – and always have been able to – claim for increased costs due to working from home, for example, heating and electricity.

Many firms – including Norfolk Constabulary – have either closed workplaces or requested that you work from home. If you have been required to work from home, even if it is just for part of the week, you are eligible to claim tax relief due to your increased expenditure.

HMRC has specifically confirmed that claims from employees working at home due to COVID-19 measures are included.

Claiming Expenses

Apportioning extra costs such as heating, and electricity is tough to calculate. So instead you can, in simple terms, claim a rate of £6 a week. There are two ways to do this.

The first is that employers can pay you £6 a week extra, tax-free. Employers can give you an allowance up to this amount and what they give you is free from tax, so you get it all (to give you more, it will need to make special arrangements). However, Norfolk Constabulary is not offering this method.

The second is to claim tax relief on £6 a week. If your employer is not paying expenses for your extra costs incurred as a result of being asked to work from home, you can ask for the amount to be deducted from your taxable income.

To make the process easy, HMRC says that claims in line with the employer's payment (for £6 a week) will not need to be justified. This means that you won't need to keep receipts or prove expenditure. Tax relief of £6 a week equates to a gain of £1.20 a week for a basic

20% rate taxpayer and £2.40 a week for a higher 40% rate taxpayer.

If you believe you have higher increased costs than £6 a week, you can claim more, but you will need to provide evidence of the cost increases and be able to apportion these specifically to the fact you are working from home. This can be a much more laborious process.

How To Claim

For this tax year only, you only need to claim once, and you can automatically claim for ALL of this tax year at the £6 per week relief rate.

That is a gain of £62 per year for basic rate taxpayers and £124 per year at the higher rate.

If you have had to work at home at any point since 6 April 2020 (the start of the tax year) and you have higher costs due to it, there is no need to delay as you can claim immediately.

Many offices and places of work have been reopening (and closing, and reopening), but to ensure they are Covid safe, fewer employees can go into the premises at any one time. Often this is done by allowing different employees to come in on specified days and stay at home on the rest.

HMRC has confirmed to us that you can still claim the full £6 allowance for the entire 2020/21 tax year as long as you have been required to work at home and have additional expenses due to it. This also applies if:

- You have worked from home part time
- Others are going into work
- You are only needed to work at home for part of the week and were in the office for the rest of the week.

The working-from-home tax relief is an

individual benefit. So if you've had an increase in costs because you're required to work from home, you can claim it.

If two or more of you live in the same property, you're all required to work from home and it's fair to say that costs have increased specifically from each individual working from home, then you can all claim it.

Processing Claims

To process these claims, in October 2020, HMRC set up a new dedicated working-from-home microservice that will automatically apply the 2020/21 tax year's relief via your tax code.

This makes claiming the whole amount very easy. Anyone making a claim for this tax year, who hasn't already put in a claim, can use it.

You can use it to make a claim since lockdown started on 23 March – just put that date in when you claim. Do that and you'll get a refund for the whole of this tax year (which started 6 April 2020) and two weeks extra on top.

You will need to have your Government Gateway ID to make a claim. If you don't have one, you can create one as part of the process.

Don't expect to receive a cheque for this money though. It is done by altering your tax code, which is what indicates to your employer how much tax to take off your payslip. It should be amended in your personal tax account within a couple of days.

The result will be less tax taken off each month for the rest of the year, which means you'll take home more.

Visit the gov.uk website to make a claim.

