

# YOUR VOICE

Ffederasiwn Heddlu Gogledd Cymru /  
North Wales Police Federation



JUNE 2017

*Conference  
special*



Representing • Negotiating • Influencing

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# Giving officers the best protection



**By Richard Eccles, Secretary of North Wales Police Federation**

**As I drove towards the nearest Police Federation conference that I had ever attended, in Birmingham, events conspired against me and I found myself driving towards, and eventually around, the largest unexploded World War Two bomb discovered to date in the UK.**

The theme for our conference was Protecting The Protectors and there were no shortage of West Midlands officers protecting the queuing motorists as they negotiated the diversions on that night.

The following two days under that banner of Protecting The Protectors showed everyone just how many areas of policing and Federation activity that theme covered.

It is not simply about assaults upon police officers, it covers so much more and our conference highlighted that as a fact for everyone watching or attending.

There were sessions to cover a number of areas where police officers need regular

ongoing support and it was clear that in many cases that duty to afford protection fell onto the shoulders of the Federation representative.

The support ranged from some very basic knowledge around entitlements under Police Regulations for officers through to specialist skills required to assist you through IPCC investigations or mental illness.

It was extremely clear that there is a growing need within policing to ensure that officers who are tackling the toughest jobs are covered and protected to avoid huge impact upon their health and wellbeing.

Listening to colleagues setting out their experiences of lengthy scrutiny while under investigation, or struggling to cope with mental illness while juggling their duties, it was clear to me that they all relied heavily upon support from the Federation.

It was equally clear that in many cases the support from other people was not forthcoming and many of the speakers struggled to explain what real support was actually offered to those in need.

With that as a reality, it is therefore crucial that we as the Federation set ourselves up with representatives skilled and ready to assist colleagues locally and nationally.

The plan within North Wales is to deliver bespoke training to your representatives to fill any skills gap and to afford you fuller protection as you carry out your duties.

The hope is that you will have the best protection possible without having to worry about that as you deliver your style of policing for your community.

That is the least that you can expect from your Federation on a local level.

**PROTECT  
THE PROTECTORS**

# Conference success



By *Simon Newport, Chairman of North Wales Police Federation*

**This year saw the start of the new generation of the annual Police Federation of England and Wales conference as per Recommendation 29 of the independent review report of January 2014.**

A new venue, a new agenda, a much slimmed down audience and many other new experiences whereby, overall, I have to report back to colleagues that the new shorter, reformed event was the best Federation conference that I have had the privilege of attending since being elected onto the North Wales Board many years ago.

The venue, the ICC in Birmingham, was

superb; a truly fantastic centre for such a conference as it was central, easy to get to and was more than capable of catering for our needs.

The new style agenda was packed with interesting, informative and relevant topics that were complemented with good guest lists of people who knew their subjects well.

The first day saw the agenda run over time. However, unlike previous years when conference would become impatient, this year no-one left until the end which has to be a great indicator as to the level of satisfaction shown by all for the sessions we watched.

If I had one criticism, it would be that conference was not given the time it richly deserves to ask questions to keynote speakers and other professional guests at the end of each session. Had that have happened, it would have scored a 10 out of 10 from me as it was a great conference to be involved in.

Feedback that I have heard this year across the country has also been hugely positive and, given the success of the conference, it has been difficult reviewing it under a critical eye as I have found it difficult to pick fault.

I very much look forward to next year's conference should I be re-elected in the forthcoming Federation elections later this year. It will give another great opportunity to discuss the important issues of the day that are affecting our police service and the colleagues who serve to protect.



“ FEEDBACK THAT I HAVE HEARD THIS YEAR HAS BEEN HUGELY POSITIVE.

## Chair's positive introduction

**National chair Steve White gave a strong and positive introduction to conference. He set the scene by reflecting on the founding principles of the Federation and drawing parallels with today.**

He was able to seamlessly move on to the theme for the two days - Protecting The Protectors.

Steve effectively used a range of examples to demonstrate the many hazards faced by our members across the country on a daily basis from death and serious injury to assaults.

He also drew our attention to the less visible but corrosive and damaging effects of work-related stress.

In summary, he captured the sacrifices made by our members, making the case for the Federation and its mission to ensure that our members get the recognition and support of the public and those in Government.

*Jason Higgins, North Wales Police Federation representative*

## Second jobs



North Wales Police Federation Chairman Simon Newport put a question on second jobs to the Home Secretary.

Simon said: "The starting salary for an MP is £75,000. For a police officer it's £19,500. We are seeing officers using food banks but still having stringent rules on second jobs. MPs can take second jobs yet officers are so locked down on what they can do.

"Can I ask, if you are re-elected, that you look at the rules and regulations to allow officers to do second jobs because officers are struggling and need second occupations to make their families work?"

Amber Rudd replied: "I will consider it and think about the pros and cons. I'm willing to discuss it and see what would work and what wouldn't."

*Home Secretary Amber Rudd and national chair Steve White take part in a Q and A session.*

## General Election limited content of speeches

**By Simon Newport, Chairman of North Wales Police Federation**

**The keynote speeches delivered to conference this year were somewhat muted due to the forthcoming General Election.**

As usual, the national Federation chair, Steve White, spoke first.

In his speech, he reminded the Home Secretary not to overlook the country's security. This was acknowledged by a nodding Amber Rudd.

He also said policing should not be used as a political football and we were reminded of the terrorist atrocities that had occurred in Nice and more recently Westminster, in what I believed was an attempt to drive the message home that the police service cannot, and should not, be cut further.

Steve asked the Home Secretary for a commitment to support the Protect The Protectors campaign to force stiffer sentencing on those who choose to assault public servants such as police, paramedics, fire and rescue and prison officers by increasing their numbers, providing additional recognised equipment and importantly a change in the law to finally show that assaulting public sector workers will not be tolerated any longer.

An emphasis was placed on the police service being used by many others as the first and only point of contact when an emergency strikes whereby it was stated that the service is at breaking point attempting to fix everyone else's problems.

A plea was made to support and offer police officers involved in pursuits the protection of the law, otherwise it would be the duty of the Police Federation to advise police drivers not to pursue as for doing their job they could end up in prison.

Finally, pay and conditions was mentioned when Steve warned that officers were facing the biggest personal financial crisis since the 1970s with young in service officers facing a daily struggle to feed their families, many turning to social welfare and food banks to survive.

A compassionate plea was made to allow the independent police pay review body to accept the recommended annual pay award of 2.8 per cent which would cost £90 million to implement, together with more arguments to help officers financially as, since 2008, they have seen their pay packets squeezed by 15 per cent.

Overall, the speech was balanced and touched on all the points that were pertinent to our current plight but I could not help thinking that the speech had lost some of its passion given the fact an election had been called and it was unclear

as to whether Amber Rudd would actually be the next Home Secretary.

In response, the Home Secretary opened up her speech thanking the country's police officers and stated that the country owed an incredible debt to them, making reference to the events that took place on her workplace doorstep back in March when PC Keith Palmer paid the ultimate price protecting the country's democracy.

We were then brought back to reality as she informed conference that the reform of policing must, and will, continue and that the Conservative Party was the party of law and order. The speech then turned in to something of a party political broadcast on behalf of the Conservative Party with point-scoring remarks being made about her shadow cabinet counterparts.

But with a General Election just weeks away, it was only to have been expected though still a little disappointing.

Due to this, the speech did not reveal any real promises or demands as has been the case in previous years, and I stick to a tweet I made at the time whereby I said that the Home Secretary promised nothing but a status quo if she was re-appointed as Home Secretary in what was in my opinion, a very disappointing speech.

# Home Secretary's Q and As

**Amber Rudd was put under tough questioning from Federation reps when she took part in her first Q and A session.**

**Delegates wasted no time in raising their concerns on issues including pay, funding, mental health, spit guards and demand. Here is a selection of the questions and answers.**

**Steve White:** "... Are we going to see investment in the police service? Because we either invest or divest and you can't keep fudging it and saying it's down to the chiefs when they don't have the money."

**AR:** "We have made a commitment to maintain the police budget from 2015-2019/20 and I expect that to continue... I believe it's right to say the police should be locally run and that chief constables working with PCCs is the right way forward."

**SW:** "I think you're saying 'no'."

**On a pay rise, AR:** "It's not for me to offer the pay rise. It's important to have a remuneration committee. The public sector pay rise has been fixed at one per cent and I understand that's difficult and unwelcome but we need to have a stronger economy so there has to be public sector pay restraint. The pay restraint will remain until 2019/20."

**SW:** "Does that include politicians?"

**AR:** "The expenses scandal meant MPs' pay was put into the hands of an independent regulator and ministers' salaries were cut."

**Ian Collins:** "Give me a moment while I just weep quietly over that at the podium."

**John Apter, Hampshire:** "... the reality is that the Force Welfare Fund, a charity, is now seeing officers come for food vouchers to put food on their table or fuel in their car to get to work. Is that right for the public and the country?"

**AR:** "I'm sorry to hear that, I understand that must be difficult. An average officer's earnings is about £40,000 (there was lots of sniggering and scoffing at this point). Again, I don't want to make misleading commitments about pay but we have to make sure we get the borrowing numbers down and get back to a stronger economy. We have to... make sure we continue to limit expenditure to protect the economy which will be better for you and your families."

**Nigel Mortimer, West Mercia:** "What can you do to try to influence and cut down the length of time officers find themselves under investigation because the CPS can't be bothered to read some files or the IPCC can't do the investigation?"

**AR:** "I'd like to see IPCC acting more quickly. I think it's disgraceful that officers are kept on suspension for so long. We have set up a new board to replace the IPCC and it's not just a change to the name on the door, there are more funds, new staff and a new direction to

make sure the processes are much swifter and I'll be keeping a close eye to make sure that happens."

**Louise Bates, Bedfordshire:** "Assaults while on duty result in mental health issues so officers are away from work, leaving fewer officers to deal with the workload. How will you support officers injured on duty?"

**AR:** "Mental health is incredibly important and the Prime Minister has said there will be new legislation put in place for mental health issues at work. Steve has put a bid into the Police Transformation Fund and I hope to be able to support that if I'm re-elected."

**SW:** "The issue of welfare in the service is gaining traction at long last. But we need to make sure that officers, wherever they are, benefit from a level of care regardless of issues within their force. I think this will be truly transformational if it works and I'll hold the Home Secretary to what she's said in terms of supporting the bid if she's re-elected."

**Paul Bennett, Northumbria:** "Do you accept there is a direct link between officer workload, mental health and morale and what are you going to do to help us?"

**AR:** "I would acknowledge that link in any form of work, any walk of life and in policing on the front-line and with events we've seen recently, even more so, yes."

**AJ Secker, Avon & Somerset:** "We want you to tell the public that we don't have the capacity to deal with your incidents. Our Chief Constables have to tell the public but we want you to tell them, we want you to be honest with them and tell them we're 20,000 cops down so we can't go to some of their cries for help because of your policies."

**AR:** "The independent crime survey has stated very clearly that, until the recent rise in violent crime over the last year, which is a different issue, crime has fallen by a third. Also, the PEEL reports show different areas having different successes so some areas are able to have strong responses and they are not the forces with the largest amounts of money but they have got excellent leadership. So I don't agree it's all about numbers and money, it's about great leadership being able to deliver with a tighter budget."

**Nick Smart, West Yorkshire:** "(Chief Constables) don't have the money to deal with demand. Will you give us more money for more cops? This is happening everywhere and if you're being told it's not happening, you need to change your advisors."

**AR:** "I'm sorry to hear the description of your force. I have visited forces over the past eight or nine months now and I haven't seen that situation."

## Spit guards: 'Yes, yes, yes'

The Home Secretary's 'Yes, yes, yes' answer to questions about spit guards was met with rapturous applause from conference delegates.

Mike Stubbs from North Yorkshire Police told Amber Rudd that even though his force was small and rural, a number of officers had suffered the 'degrading and humiliating experience of being spat at in the face'.

He joked about the appearance at conference the previous day by shadow home secretary Diane Abbott, saying: "Your counterpart got about as lost on it as she did on the stage afterwards."

He then posed a question in three parts: "Do you understand what spit guards are? Do you understand why they are necessary? And will you support and back chief constables who choose to issue them?"

The Home Secretary simply gave her three word, three syllable answer and facilitator Ian Collins also joked: "So that's how you answer the spit guard question!"

**Nick:** "Until you tell other agencies not to place the burden of first resort service on us, until you resolve that, we are always on the back foot."

**AR:** "We are trying to address the issue of making sure the police isn't the agency for every issue. I accept your invitation to come to West Yorks if I'm in position after 8 June."

**Andy Symonds, Norfolk:** "We're relying on officers' goodwill because HR cannot fill the gaps. We are firefighting and officers have had enough."

**AR:** "I don't have an answer to that but when I go on a tour around after 8 June, I'll come to see you..."

**Andy:** "But when you arrive at a force they've probably got officers on over-time they wouldn't normally have and jobs will be withheld while you're touring round so I implore you to put a surprise visit in and see what is actually going on in forces."

**AR:** "Andy, you're going to be my first surprise visit."

**Phill Matthews, Nottinghamshire:** "Can I ask you to show your support for our members and police officers up and down the country to devote some Parliamentary time for looking at increasing sentences for those that assault our members, the police officers out there trying to keep you all safe?"

**AR:** "All assaults on public servants are treated as an aggravated crime so sentencing already reflects that and we have the legislation to do that. But I will keep it under review and keep looking at the numbers of crimes against police officers which are reported separately."



# Officer welfare should be number one priority

*By Mark Jones, North Wales Police Federation representative*

**The welfare of police officers should be the number one priority for the service's leaders and managers.**

If you don't have welfare right then how can we be expected to deliver an effective service to the public?

Despite the belief by some managers, officers are not just a number and need to be cared for.

Over the years, with rapidly increasing demands combined with a shrinking workforce, morale within the police service is hitting new lows.

The panel in the first conference session PFEW Welfare Survey – What Does It Mean To You? consisted of NPCC chair, Chief Constable Sara Thornton, HMCIC Sir Thomas Winsor and Matthew Scott, the APCC's lead for mental health.

They were asked directly what THEY are going to do to tackle officer welfare; to improve standards and increase morale. CC Thornton responded with a simple, three-step practical plan to help get things right:

- **Increase employee engagement, escaping from the 'boss knows best' attitude;**

- **Not to forget the 'people angle' when making changes – always considering how a proposed change will affect people, and**
- **Looking more closely at whether the balance is right between learning and blame.**

She also highlighted that workplace wellbeing should be paramount and that the police service needs to move away from the 'be strong' culture where it's taboo to show any sign of emotion.

Sir Thomas reiterated that welfare is a matter of first importance and that forces were now expected to report to HMCIC on the current state of the workforce in an annual report.

While Sir Thomas did describe his admiration for police officers and their dedication, bravery and commitment, it did feel like a missed opportunity for the HMCIC to actually hold forces to account for their lack of welfare provision for their officers.

I personally felt that Matthew Scott from the APCC was a let-down. There seemed to be a lack of connection and relevance to the specifics of police officer mental health. Though I am in admiration for some of the work he has achieved in promoting mental health, I wasn't there

to listen to his curriculum vitae.

Looking closer to home, North Wales Police are showing encouraging signs towards officer welfare and mental health. The introduction of the mental health peer support programme will go a very long way for colleagues to identify concerns and be able to signpost officers to the help they may need when in crisis.

Senior managers are now more acutely aware of the additional pressures now facing officers so it's paramount that there is an appreciation of there being the right welfare support and provision.

There is still a long way to go to reaching utopia, as during the recent national welfare survey 60 per cent of officers said there is insufficient time to deliver a service to the public that they can be proud of, which is causing morale to be low.

Police forces have a duty of care towards their staff and by actually taking some time to look at how important their staff are, undoubtedly the greatest asset, then they will see that there is always room for improvement in the care of colleagues; colleagues who are having to deal with life's most challenging events.

*Sir Thomas Winsor, chief inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.*



# It's time to talk...

By Kim Owen, North Wales Police Federation representative

**Ed Simpson, an ex-North Yorkshire Police sergeant, talked about his experiences of suffering with mental health issues during a Tuesday break-out session.**

He was a very good speaker who was definitely speaking from the heart. While he was talking about his experience I could picture each scenario.

The session made delegates realise that support is vital for officers, so they do not feel isolated or abandoned. It also highlighted how officers can feel at different stages of mental health illnesses and how little things could be a trigger point for them.

I will be taking back to the Force that health and wellbeing have to be a priority. Awareness is key for officers and supervisors and there needs to be more consideration of how to talk to officers who may be struggling and need support.

Supporting officers is vital and reviews should be supportive, not just a tick box exercise.

When considering reducing the pay of officers suffering a mental health illness, it must take into account the impact it could have on an officer when the decisions are made, as it could be a tipping point.

Mental health issues can lead to a long-term illness and support should be available throughout and should not just be a few sessions of counselling but as many as someone needs.

Invest in officers' wellbeing and the Force will hopefully keep an officer in work once they are better.

There is still a lot to be done around this subject, both locally and nationally, in ensuring that support is in place for officers who find themselves suffering with their mental health.

We must make sure they don't feel abandoned, as at the moment it is all lip service and there appears to be very little action.



## Training needed

North Wales Police Federation Secretary Richard Eccles asked why there was not more training for officers to help them recognise and support colleagues experiencing mental health difficulties and to assist them in the short-term. He said it seemed something that would be 'really, really simple' to set up, but that appeared to be lacking.

Matthew Scott said mental health first aid training was recognised as part of the solution. Che Donald, national Federation lead in this area, referred him to a scheme in South Wales being rolled out, training provided for Fed reps, and said the nine-point plan going out to consultation included specific reference to training that was bottom up as well as top down.

Sir Thomas confirmed the new Force Management Statements would identify the need for training so officers can recognise the signs in their own colleagues.

In a straw poll on the conference App asking: "Is your force doing enough to provide access to the necessary assistance for officers and staff who need help for mental health?" 86 per cent said 'No'.

“ MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES CAN LEAD TO A LONG-TERM ILLNESS AND SUPPORT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT AND SHOULD NOT JUST BE A FEW SESSIONS OF COUNSELLING BUT AS MANY AS SOMEONE NEEDS.

INVEST IN OFFICERS' WELLBEING AND THE FORCE WILL HOPEFULLY KEEP AN OFFICER IN WORK ONCE THEY ARE BETTER.

# We must Protect The Protectors

By Mark Jones, North Wales Police Federation representative

**An assault on a police officer is an assault on society. This was the message, loud and clear, from the Police Federation at conference under the title of Protect The Protectors.**

This session focussed on the epidemic that is assaults on police and highlighting what needs to be done to support and protect officers as well as severely punish those responsible for assaults.

There was a push for better equipment including further roll-out of body-worn video and an unequivocal message that spit guards MUST be standard issue to all officers.

There were emotive videos of police officers, including an officer from West Yorkshire who spoke about the trauma of being head-butted in the face, which damaged her teeth.

From the conference stage, there was also a frank and graphic account from a West Midlands Police officer who had been spat at in the face which resulted in him having to undergo tests for Hepatitis B. Thankfully, despite an initial positive result for Hep B, he was given the 'all clear'.

I was impressed by the passion of Holly Lynch, former Labour MP for Halifax, who is seeking re-election. She has promoted the Protect The Protectors campaign within parliamentary circles and called for tougher sentences for those offenders who commit the crimes.

Unfortunately, like most parliamentary proceedings that aren't flavour of the month, the change in legislation process is painfully slow and riddled with unnecessary



**Holly Lynch.** bureaucracy and obstacles.

Holly promised conference that, if re-elected, she would continue the fight and campaign to get that needed change in law to offer better protection for officers and other emergency service workers.

Sadly, like many colleagues, I've been subject to an assault at work. Thankfully, I never sustained serious injuries but the effects can still be profound. It's not said enough but nobody should ever go to work and expect to be assaulted as 'part of the job'. It's wrong on completely every level and we need all to see it.

As a Federation representative I've also been supporting numerous colleagues who have been assaulted during the course of their duties; some relatively minor, others more serious. The most serious was such that it cost the officer their job as they could no longer police. What was the sentence for the offender? A small fine. The sentence to the officer? Loss of job, financial impact, effect to family life and inevitable stress. It is completely unacceptable.

The Protect The Protectors campaign by the Police Federation has been excellent and

I can only foresee it getting better as it gathers more momentum. We're fortunate in North Wales in that the Force has now adopted the Seven-Point Plan for officer assaults ensuring that officers get the best possible welfare support and that every evidential opportunity is taken to ensure that justice is served.

My message to colleagues would be: report it! There are still far too many assaults and injuries that go unreported. Officers see it as another administrative burden or that there is little point.

Please believe me; there is every point to it. For only when we know the true extent of the number of assaults can the Police Federation fight for better equipment, better staffing and better training. If you have any queries regarding how to submit an injury on duty then please speak to one of the Fed reps.

Progress is being made but we need to be united in voice when it comes to officer assaults. We need to continue the pressure on the law-makers, senior leaders within the police and the public that we must Protect The Protectors.

## **Protect The Protectors**

With her background (parents are police and nurse), she fully appreciated the work undertaken by the police. She has experienced the dynamic and dangerous nature of police work by going on patrol with her local force. She had spoken to officers who were assaulted and undertook to do all she can to Protect The Protectors (equipment and legislation).

**Essi Ahari, North Wales Police Federation representative**

PC Mike Bruce (second from left) is interviewed by facilitator Ian Collins (left) as West Yorkshire Federation chair Nick Smart and Holly Lynch look on.



# PC recalls spit dripping off his face

A West Midlands officer, who endured injections, medication and 'six months of worry' after being spat upon by an assailant, has called for politicians to help change legislation to give police more protection.

PC Mike Bruce told the Federation's national conference in Birmingham that he had 'spit dripping off his face' after an incident outside a pub in Holbrook, Coventry in April last year. His colleague, PC Alan O'Shea, had blood spat in his face when he came to help.

It was the start of a long process of tests to make sure that neither officer had contracted HIV or Hepatitis B or C and also led to PC Bruce's two children, aged one and nine, requiring blood tests too.

None of that worry would have had to have been endured had legislation been in place to make the arrested man take a blood test to see if he had any of the diseases that could be contracted.

And PC O'Shea's ordeal would not have happened either had PC Bruce had a spit guard at his disposal. West Midlands Police are currently discussing that possibility.

"Myself and Alan were just about to go off duty when we heard an almighty scream of a back-up call over the radio from a response officer," said PC Bruce. "When we arrived, I saw a colleague struggling with two men, a father and son.

"I pulled the father away and he started throwing punches and kicking me. We went on the floor and I was trying to restrain him but he turned round, looked me in the eye and spat in my face. It went in my left eye and down my mouth. I had spit dripping off my face. It was

disgusting. I would rather have been punched in the face.

"PC O'Shea came over and was acting as a peace-maker. The guy had a bit of blood in his mouth and spat that blood in Al's face. If we had the spit guards, I would have pulled it out after I had been spat on and that would have protected Al.

"We were carted off to hospital because it went in our mouths and eyes and was treated as a needle injury. We had injections and medications to stop the onset of possible HIV and Hepatitis B and C.

"There was six months of worry. Within my first month of medication, the GP told me I tested positive for Hepatitis B, which later proved to be a false reading. At the time, my whole world caved in. My wife and I were thinking about having a third child and I thought we were never going to be able to do that because of a positive test. My one and nine-year-olds had to have blood tests and Al and I went back every two weeks for more blood tests.

"If there was legislation in place for the prisoner to have a blood test, it would have stopped all of that worry but he is under no obligation. He was charged with assault on me and Al. He got a suspended sentence and had to pay me £250 and Al £500.

"These spit guards are solely there so that if someone is spitting or trying to bite, there is something there to protect us. I would invite politicians to come out with us and see what goes on. It's about getting out there and educating them."

## 'Society's punchbags'

Prospective parliamentary candidate for Halifax, Holly Lynch, has called for the issues surrounding the Protect The Protectors campaign to 'dominate the agenda in Parliament' after the General Election on 8 June.

She told the Federation's national conference that there should be increased police numbers and stiffer sentences for those who assault them.

With the help of the Federation, she has drafted new legislation which will lead to tougher sentences and better protection if adopted.

Also addressing the conference, the chair of West Yorkshire Police Federation, Nick Smart, agreed something needed to be done quickly as he believed that police officers had become 'society's punch bags' and that there was 'no deterrent' for those who assault them within current legislation.

Ms Lynch has been a strong advocate of stiffer sentences for those who assault police officers, staff and other emergency service workers since she went out on patrol with the West Yorkshire Police in her constituency and saw exactly what officers have to deal with.

She told delegates she was so scared for an officer's safety at one stage during an altercation that she called 999 from

the police car to request back-up.

"I saw for myself how quickly situations can escalate and how vulnerable officers are when they are out on their own," she said.

"To assault an officer shows complete disregard for law and order and our shared values. If officers are not safe, then our communities are not safe.

"If an officer is assaulted at any time, it must be recorded and must be subject to a robust investigation. Officers must have the confidence that those involved will be investigated and prosecuted accordingly.

"An assault on an officer is an assault on society. This severity of violence directed at police officers is just unacceptable.

"With the Federation, we have looked at drafting a new piece of legislation. My bill would open up much tougher sentences and the second part of that bill will deal with the hideous acts of spitting and biting.

She added: "We need to restore and protect the brave men and women behind the uniforms."

Nick Smart said that everyone in the room needed to put pressure on those in power to make urgent changes after the election.

"At last year's conference Theresa May said that some of the sentences (for assaulting officers) were too soft and that was wrong. But 12 months later, we are still

fighting for officers' rights and stiffer deterrents, for spit guards, for increased roll-out of Taser, for protection for drivers – and it's quite a frustrating thing to constantly plead for something that should already be there," he said.

"There is stuff going on to cops on a daily basis and it is stuff that the public don't see. It's a sacrifice that they are making and a lot of the time, the sentences do not reflect the physical and mental injuries sustained.

"Less than 10 per cent of offenders get a custodial sentence. That is not justice. Our cops don't think it is and that is why they don't bother recording it because they have no faith in the criminal justice system.

"The vast majority of MPs agree with us – so that begs the question: why is it so damn hard to change legislation to bring in stiffer sentences? It is our responsibility to continue the debate.

"We are calling for stiffer sentences. If there is no deterrent, how are people going to change their behaviour? Assaults are going up and more violent assaults are going up. Something needs to change.

"We have drafted legislation for the Home Office. It's there to go. It's there to go for aggravated assault on a police officer."



# Leading politicians address opening day of conference

**Police minister Brandon Lewis and Yvette Cooper, a former shadow home secretary, addressed conference in Tuesday morning's simply titled 'political session'.**

Diane Abbott, who currently holds the shadow home secretary portfolio, was due to take part in the session but was delayed by the launch of the Labour Party manifesto so instead West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson spoke to delegates.

Yvette Cooper was invited to conference as chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee which was carrying out a review into the future of policing at the time the election was called.

## Our reps' views:

### **West Midlands Chief**

West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson highlighted the financial challenges which we are, and will be, facing. Recruiting and retention will be a problem facing all forces.

He said he appreciated why members feel over-criticised and under-valued. The organisation must do its utmost to protect the Protectors and care, nurture and indeed develop them. The wellbeing of officers and staff is paramount.

Having the public on our side is arguably our best way to protect the police. Of course, new equipment, IT and training are important too. We are operating in a complex and unfair world with lots of ANDS and no ORS.

**Essi Ahari, North Wales Police Federation representative**

### **Yvette Cooper**

Acknowledging the significant drop in police numbers in recent years, Ms Cooper highlighted the change in crime patterns i.e. online criminality, CSE, modern slavery and safeguarding. Yet the police have less front-line, detectives and CSI to deal with emerging issues.

Terrorism and public safety are a serious threat to us, she explained, adding that safeguarding the vulnerable when other agencies ought to, is an extra burden on the police.

Hate crime via social media and lack of action by the super rich (social media sites) is unacceptable. Perhaps the police should step in and take action with the Government making the sites pay for the service in the same way that football clubs pay towards match day policing.

The potential damage to information sharing with Europe (post-Brexit) should not be underestimated, she told delegates.

**Essi Ahari, North Wales Police Federation representative**

Another candidate pitching for re-election. Another very good performance. Yvette had the advantage that she had been chairing the Home Affairs Select Committee holding the inquiry into the future of policing.

This struck a chord with conference as the Federation has long been calling for a Royal Commission on policing. She had the added advantage of not having been in Government since 2010 so she couldn't be blamed for the difficulties currently facing the service.

She also paid a very moving tribute to PC



West Midlands Police Chief Constable Dave Thompson.



Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott.

Keith Palmer. You really got the sense that he was Westminster's local bobby and could appreciate the sense of loss felt by MPs.

Yvette was well-informed about policing matters referring to the important work being done by her colleague, the now prospective parliamentary candidate, Holly Lynch while serving as a Halifax MP.

She made no apology for doing a bit of electioneering and why should she? She demonstrated a clear understanding of the increased pressures faced by officers in the wake of cuts across the public services.

She demonstrated empathy with the service and certainly gave the impression that in Government she would seek to support the police and deliver the resources that we need.

**Jason Higgins, North Wales Police Federation representative**

#### **Brandon Lewis**

The police minister concentrated on professionalism, IT and Protect The Protectors.

Professionalisation of the police (degrees, apprenticeships) will make the force more suitable for the 21st century and its demands, he said.

National standards will enable officers to be easily deployed in different regions and indeed more freedom for officers to move if they wish to do so, he explained.

Digital evidence and IT systems that can identify criminals wherever they may be or operate from are needed. It is imperative to invest where it matters most. The Home Office wants to have the police force, he pointed out, but won't run the police.

He felt it was the duty of the chief constables and their respective PCCs to look at police numbers. But he failed to accept that the cuts imposed by the Government had any

undesired effect on the ability of the chief constables to manage their forces.

The minister said the police are valued by the Government and the Home Office will take measures to Protect The Protectors.

**Essi Ahari, North Wales Police Federation representative**

His approach began in a friendly and supportive manner by thanking us for our standing ovation for Tobias Ellwood but rapidly became a two-pronged approach of trying to distance his Government from the reform agenda and dismissing Labour's manifesto claims.

He talked about improving IT and working practices and increasing professionalism. Increases in recorded violent crime were dismissed by him as an increased appetite on the part of victims to report crime. This was challenged by delegates in the questions after his address.

Overall, I felt that he had tried unsuccessfully to get conference to accept that cuts in police numbers were necessary and had led to a better service for the public.

Faced with the reality that his political opponents are claiming that they will work towards restoring police numbers, he had to dismiss this as unachievable.

**Jason Higgins, North Wales Police Federation representative**

#### **Diane Abbott**

The shadow home secretary was critical of the Government and its cuts in police budgets and numbers. She valued our work and stated that the rise in violent crime and, in particular, knife crime was as a direct result of police cuts.

She discussed equipment to protect the police but was unsure of the need for spit

guards. She did not fully appreciate the medical implications and indeed the disgusting nature of being spat on.

She promised 10,000 extra police to remedy the damage done by the Government and highlighted the fact that it is the poor who have most suffered from police reductions.

**Essi Ahari, North Wales Police Federation representative**

Firstly, all credit to Diane for making the effort to come and address conference on what was a crucial day for her party with the launch of its manifesto. She paid tribute to PC Keith Palmer and indeed others who have fallen in the line of duty this year.

She impressively got their names right. However, Diane quickly lost the audience by delivering a well-prepared speech in a slightly haughty and remote way. From time to time it was clear that she was reading from a script as she misread the odd word or two and had to correct herself.

What she was offering was far better than the opposition. The problems started for Diane when the question of spit guards was raised. Diane seemed to forget her audience and stuck firmly to her beliefs and her own opinions.

She referred to regular meetings with her Borough Commander but didn't give his name. Had she done so, she would have gained more credibility with our Metropolitan colleagues.

She gave a qualified answer on spit guards which didn't inspire confidence. She also handled the question of stop search in rather a clumsy manner given her audience.

**Jason Higgins, North Wales Police Federation representative**



Yvette Cooper.

Police minister Brandon Lewis.

# Diane Abbott under fire for spit guard scepticism



**Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott came under fire from delegates for her sceptical views on spit guards during her conference session.**

Ms Abbott delivered a speech in which she praised police for their work in a difficult climate and reaffirmed the Labour Party's commitment to introduce an extra 10,000 officers if they win the upcoming General Election.

But at the end of her address, she was put on the spot during a question and answers session, having been cautious towards the use of spit guards in the past.

She explained that she needed to see more evidence on the health implications of using them before she was prepared to back a nationwide introduction.

"I have been looking at the evidence in relation to spit guards and I continue to look

at that evidence," she said. "I have never said I am against them in principle but like any fresh equipment or power, I want to see the evidence of what they would do, particularly in relation to the health risk.

"Among the groups that I have consulted with are groups who represent those with Hepatitis C and those with HIV, and they argue that you don't catch Hepatitis C or HIV from being spat at. It's about looking at the research and coming to a view."

Officers advocating the introduction of

spit guards argue that the very act of being spat upon should be enough to warrant protection for police, whatever the risk of infection may be.

Ms Abbott then claimed that the Metropolitan Police could be the first force to use them – clearly unaware that around half of the forces in England and Wales already do.

Che Donald, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) lead on firearms said he was astonished by her comments.

"Not only was she ill-informed, she was ill-advised and for some of those comments, I stood with my mouth open because I could not believe what I was hearing from the shadow home secretary," he said.

"I would rather be punched in the face than spat at. It's unacceptable, it's a blight on society and it needs to be eradicated. If it takes education to stop people doing this then so be it. Anyone who comes to work and puts their life on the line like our officers do on a daily basis deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

"And if we're going to be spat at, and our assault figures shows that it happens on a regular basis, then we need to have the appropriate protections there to protect it from happening further."

Earlier in her address, Ms Abbott had criticised the Conservative Party's cuts to policing.

"Tory speeches say one thing but their cuts to policing say another," she said, "Tory cuts may prove even more damaging to the public than the cuts to the NHS and education are proving now."

Facilitator Ian Collins was applauded by delegates when he offered some clarity on the use of spit guards.

The shadow home secretary, in answer to a question on the issue, said she wanted to see evidence as to what they would do, particularly in relation to health risks.

Ian said: "Let me help you out, I am not an expert on this but I think the theory is if someone spits in your face you use the spit guard to stop them doing that."

“ LET ME HELP YOU OUT, I AM NOT AN EXPERT ON THIS BUT I THINK THE THEORY IS IF SOMEONE SPITS IN YOUR FACE YOU USE THE SPIT GUARD TO STOP THEM DOING THAT.

# Officers unimpressed at crime figures claim

**Delegates seemed unconvinced when police minister Brandon Lewis claimed crime had fallen by a third since 2010.**

Making his conference debut having taken over the post last summer, Mr Lewis took part in the conference's simply titled Political Session.

He acknowledged that there were now 20,000 fewer officers than there were in 2010 and said: "As these police officer numbers have changed we've actually seen crime fall by about a third since 2010."

While officers seemed to laugh at his claim, he did admit recorded crime had increased but said it was a good thing as it showed victims of crime had more confidence in coming forward in the first place.

He started his speech by saying he wanted to focus on three key areas – professionalisation, IT and Protect The Protectors but first paid tribute to PC Keith Palmer who he said had given his life in the line of duty and that he was owed a debt of gratitude before going on to praise all officers who he said risked their lives to 'enable us to be safe and feel safe'.

"We truly do have the best police service in the world," he told delegates, adding that the Government's reform programme had been about recognising the professionalism in evidence in policing every day.

Reform was being led by people in policing and the service's professional body, the College of Policing which he said was delivering progress.

"We want to ensure the police workforce is flexible, capable and professional," he explained, adding that it was not just about developing new entry methods to policing but also giving existing officers access to training and career development.

Policing, he said, was dealing with the increased challenges of dealing with cyber-crime, child sexual exploitation and modern slavery. Tackling these issues needed varied skills and the police service had to adapt to meet the challenges of the future and tackle the growingly complex nature of crime.

There was a need, Mr Lewis explained, to move into the modern world with inter-operable IT.

"Our IT must move rapidly and evolve



*Police minister Brandon Lewis.*

rapidly," he said, adding that it needed to do so to keep up with cyber-crime.

It was now a case of making sure the police service had the skills to rise to these challenges with collaboration, he claimed, offering huge opportunities for greater efficiencies. Common standards were also needed across the whole criminal justice system.

Turning to the Protect The Protectors campaign, he said those who attacked police officers should 'face the full weight of the law' and that justice should be seen to be done.

He said: "What I can promise you is that both the Home Secretary and myself know your true value and we know how you deserve to know that justice will be served."

## Much work to be done as the country 'stands at a crucial moment for policing and security'

Yvette Cooper believes the country 'stands at a crucial moment for policing and security' ahead of the upcoming General Election.

The former shadow home secretary called for more immediate work to be done to help the police service

deal with the new challenges it faces in tackling crime and protecting communities.

Ms Cooper was invited to speak at conference as the chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee working on the inquiry into the Future of Policing. That was, however, brought to an abrupt end by the announcement of a snap General Election.

Ms Cooper praised the work of officers across the country and paid tribute to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

She explained how the inquiry had been launched to recognise the needs of modern policing and the crucial work police did for defending public safety every day.

"We stand at a crucial moment for policing and security. For the safety of our communities and for the new challenges we face. There are many strengths of the police



*Yvette Cooper.*

that we should be proud of but we need a workforce that is supported and not overstretched," said Ms Cooper.

"Your work on the Protect The Protectors campaign is immensely important to make sure that the police are not stretched to the limits.

"But there is a serious shortage of detectives and a lack of investment in communications and IT for the police.

"We have important partnerships in our communities but they are at risk of being undermined by the way in which services are being pulled back. We also lead the world in counter-terror but careless handling of the Brexit process could put that at risk.

"We have seen crime changing and some of that is falling but other crimes are going up. We have seen a big change in the scale of online crime, now likely to be equivalent to all other crimes put together.

"We see growing non-crime demands and around 70 to 80 per cent of the pressure on forces is not crime, but the wider issue of public safety and protection.

"The past Home Secretary has said that the purpose of policing is crime. No more, no less. I just strongly disagree.

"The purpose of policing is never less and is always so much more about the security

and safety of our public and making sure we have strong and resilient communities and keeping people safe for now and in the future. Too often picking up the pieces where other services fail."

Ms Cooper challenged the Government to come up with more resources and a proper plan to help the police tackle their work after the General Election.

She also criticised Google and Twitter and said that social media companies needed to do more to help police deal with online crime.

"There is some fantastic work being done but we are simply not keeping up," she said. "The HMIC has raised the red flag recently and they were damning words which we must take seriously.

"The practical issue is that we simply need more police on our streets. Some 20,000 police officers have been lost over the last six or seven years. We were told that would have little effect on front-line policing - but it has. We still don't have the resources to make sure that the police can do their job. I want to see 10,000 more police officers on our streets across the country.

"We should all make sure that policing is central to the debate over the next few years. Police are the public and the public are the police."



# Workplace reps - never under-estimate the work we do!



Federation representative Mark Jones.

**No-one should underestimate the importance of front-line reps, they are the 'lifeblood' of the Federation, North Wales Sergeant Mark Jones told conference.**

A front-line, Taser carrying officer and member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team he is also a workplace Fed rep and had played an active part in the conference planning.

He told conference in the last year alone his Federation caseload has included at least 38 injury on duty notifications; providing welfare support to one officer battling cancer and another whose 12-year-old son is battling cancer;

representing officers in two IPCC investigations and others in internal conduct investigations; mediating and

“ THE FEDERATION WORK IS CHALLENGING BUT PRIMARILY REWARDING... FOR ME THE KEY PART IN MY ROLE IS ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, GETTING THAT RAPPORT WITH THE KEY DECISION-MAKERS AND ACTING AS THE VOICE OF REASON AND SENSE WHEN QUESTIONABLE DECISIONS ARE MADE.

supporting officers in grievance enquiries and supporting an officer through the Regulation 13 process .

He has represented members at Force meetings covering topics such as health and safety, fleet and mobile data and says: "It's now been recognised by chief officers that the Federation is a pivotal part, an integral part in Force decision-making. That has not happened overnight, but is the result of continuous and persistent efforts by our team."

He has also nominated an officer for the Police Bravery Awards, written articles and much more.

And yet, for the first 10 years of his career in the police force, he told conference, he had no real contact with or requirement for the Police Federation.

In 2014 that changed when he found himself being systematically bullied: "It was a very lonely, very intimidating and very unpleasant time in my career. At the time it had a profound effect on my health and I have no doubt it had an adverse impact on my family life and certainly on my working life," he explained.

At a loss, he picked up the phone and spoke to his Fed rep. The response he received was 'brilliant'. The issues were resolved in a speedy and low-cost manner without any fuss.

Understanding what a difference such support could make and wanting to help others as he had been helped, Mark became a workplace rep.

His work, he says, is replicated by hundreds of Fed reps around the country. And he added: "The Federation work is challenging but primarily rewarding... For me the key part in my role is about building relationships, getting that rapport with the key decision-makers and acting as the voice of reason and sense when questionable decisions are made.

"The most important role of the workplace rep is that of welfare support. In times of crisis and despair for colleagues, team mates and even friends they have someone to turn to. Nobody should ever under-estimate the value of our front-line workplace reps. They are the lifeblood of the Police Federation and continue to do their work while juggling so many other commitments and demands."

# Standing ovation for MP who tried to save Keith Palmer

**Delegates gave Tobias Ellwood, the MP who so memorably went to the aid of PC Keith Palmer after the Westminster terrorist attack in March, two standing ovations when he addressed conference.**

Officers stood to applaud Mr Ellwood after he was welcomed on stage by national Federation chair Steve White who said officers were touched by the efforts he had made on 22 March.

Mr Ellwood was visibly moved after being presented with the Police Federation shield and coat of arms.

He said: "I was just sorry that I couldn't, and those others with me couldn't, do more to save Keith Palmer's life but we owe you such a debt of gratitude for what you do day in and day out and it's very humbling for me to receive this award."

He began by speaking briefly about how his work as a Foreign Office minister involves dealing with extremism, poisoned ideology and the hijacking of the religion of Islam mainly in the Middle East and Africa.

"I work very hard with our international allies on trying to understand this new threat, this asymmetric warfare, that we see - and that's all usually a long way away, so when this thing happened in Westminster it was just a reminder of how much work we have to do across the police in challenging this, what I believe is, the most serious threat in the 21st century, this unconditional challenge that we actually have," Mr Ellwood explained.

"And we all have to work harder, but sometimes we fail. Sometimes these people are committed to doing something absolutely appalling and we saw that on 22 March."

He went on to say that his own background was in the Army where there is a sense of fraternity, where people care for their colleagues as one of their own, and added: "I was one of many who stepped forward (that day) to do what we thought was right."

"What came home to me after the Westminster incident was just how closely knit your fraternity is and just how you don't know what is round the corner, you really don't, and yet every day you put your uniforms on and stand in harm's way so we can continue our work."

He added that Keith Palmer was also a part of the Parliamentary community as he worked there day in day out for many years and explained: "The day after this



*Steve White joins the applause for Tobias Ellwood (left).*

happened... there was a determination that we would not allow that event to affect our way of life and that famous phrase 'we'll keep calm and carry on' was used many, many times.

"I would add to that a step further. When these events occur - tragic and rare, thankfully that they are, we don't just carry on, it gives us even more determination to defeat this sort of extremism in the way that we know how, to defend our values and make sure we stand up to this so the

terrorist does not win and that is something that resonated right across Westminster."

Mr Ellwood said his thoughts continued to be with Keith Palmer's family, friends and colleagues and concluded by paying tribute to all police officers saying: "Thank you for the work you do day in, day out. It's not said enough but it is appreciated."

Delegates gave him another standing ovation as he left the conference.

## 'A selfless act'

Tobias Ellwood's moving address to conference about the tragic loss of PC Keith Palmer brought the message home to delegates of the brutal reality facing society from the threat of terrorism.

Tobias was a true Westminster hero for his efforts to save PC Palmer.

In the domestic context, it is only the selfless acts of individuals like Keith Palmer that protect democracy.

**Jason Higgins, North Wales Police Federation representative**

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# Protecting Our Women

By Kim Owen, North Wales Police Federation representative

I attended a Wednesday lunch-time break-out session called Protecting Our Women which was chaired by North Wales sergeant and regional Federation representative Sam Roberts who chairs the Federation's Women's Reserve.

Other speakers included Emma Hawsworth, employment lawyer at Slater and Gordon solicitors and Laura-Jane Fowler, the in-house solicitor at the Federation's headquarters in Leatherhead.

The subjects covered were relevant to all reps and are daily subject areas where cases arise in Force.

It was good to have a recap on maternity leave, shared parental leave, shared parental pay, maternity and adoption leave as it is always useful to refresh on these areas.

The annual flexible working reviews will be coming up in the next few months within Force and this refresher will help when dealing with any cases.

Sam Roberts.



## The global threat of modern slavery

By Essi Ahari, North Wales Police Federation representative

This session was delivered by Simon Kempton of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

Modern slavery is everywhere, it is global and extremely profitable, delegates were told.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is a huge step to tackle this inhumane criminality with the UK being the first to legislate for this.

It was recognised that perhaps NCALT was not the best option for training and forces were urged to encourage discussions among officers to share their understanding.

The police have a major role in protecting the vulnerable and it is imperative to take each and every report seriously and investigate thoroughly. Other agencies must play their role too and use their softer powers to investigate and prosecute. POCA 2002 applies to them too.

The poor recording and attrition rate (conviction) was concerning but the Government and the police have shown a determination to address this.

Worldwide it is estimated there are 45 million victims. In the UK this is estimated at 13,000 and yet there were only a handful of convictions. The power is there and the sanctions are good deterrents.

Examples and locations where modern slavery is practised were discussed - (nail bars, car wash, farms) and we were urged to be extra vigilant.

Partnership working is essential in identifying the practice and CBMs could play an important part.

North Wales Police was among the first forces to have a DI and a trainer to drive awareness and detection.

The most important message was accurate recording, referring to the right units and positive action thereafter.

Furthermore, in other sessions at conference, many speakers mentioned modern slavery as an emerging and significant crime in our country.

In conclusion, this was interesting and informative input. The Force is already in a good position to make in-roads but keeping it topical is important and supervisors ought to constantly remind colleagues.



# Less than comfortable experience for IPCC chair



*Dame Anne Owers.*



*Vic Marshall.*



*Phill Matthews.*

**By Mark Jones, North Wales Police Federation representative**

**I think it is fair to say that the IPCC didn't have the most comfortable experience at the Police Federation conference this year.**

My heart truly bleeds for them (!) but what did they expect? Officers gushing and telling them how amazing they are? How fair and balanced they are with their investigations? How quick and efficient they have been with their investigation?

It was never going to happen and it was no surprise that Dame Anne Owers, chair of the IPCC, went straight on the defensive saying '... there are four other forces who have taken longer than we do to complete investigations' and blaming a lack of co-operation from witnesses as just one excuse. Suffice to say, the excuses were just that... excuses, and very poor ones too.

The session was opened by Phill Matthews of PFEW who said misconduct proceedings needed to be fairer, quicker and more effective.

It was highlighted during this session by Vic Marshall OBE, from the Superintendents' Association, that the vast majority of misconduct cases occur as a result of stupid mistakes or human frailty and that we need to make the titanic shift from dealing with such issues in the misconduct arena and move to the performance realms which offer an opportunity for an individual to reflect and learn from their decision.

It's been proved from other professions that a culture of learning rather than punishment is by far more worthwhile for all involved however getting IPCC, and even some Professional Standards Departments, to see this is very difficult.

One obstacle is that the Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) are perceived as being complicated when, in reality, they are quite the opposite if followed correctly. There is clearly a lack of meaningful training for line managers when it comes to UPP and if there was that investment in training then many issues could be easily resolved at a very early stage thus preventing long, drawn out investigations.

During the session, horror stories were told of IPCC-led shambolic investigations where there was a total disregard for officer welfare leaving officers waiting years for

decisions. It's very easy to blame heavy workloads, a lack of staff, poor co-operation – welcome to the world of front-line police investigations as this is a daily occurrence!

Focusing on North Wales, I have seen the IPCC in action first-hand and it isn't a pretty sight! It's also clear that the Force has had its hands tied in certain situations where the IPCC has dictated how an investigation should result. However, these have ultimately backfired on the IPCC in the end.

What I would want to emphasise to our own PSD is that the starting point should always be 'how can we learn from this?' and not 'how do we punish?' I'm not suggesting that this is entirely the case all the time but old habits die hard.

By embracing a culture of learning it will inevitably have a much more positive outcome for every single person involved.

**“ DURING THE SESSION, HORROR STORIES WERE TOLD OF IPCC-LED SHAMBOLIC INVESTIGATIONS WHERE THERE WAS A TOTAL DISREGARD FOR OFFICER WELFARE LEAVING OFFICERS WAITING YEARS FOR DECISIONS. IT'S VERY EASY TO BLAME HEAVY WORKLOADS, A LACK OF STAFF, POOR CO-OPERATION – WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF FRONT-LINE POLICE INVESTIGATIONS AS THIS IS A DAILY OCCURRENCE!**

# Do firearms officers need to be separated after a shooting?



Former Met firearms officer Tony Long.

*By Barry Andrews, North Wales Police Federation representative*

**In this session, I found DCC Simon Chesterman, the NPCC lead for firearms, broadly supported the view of the officers and by following the APP and PIP process there would be no need for separation, especially as most firearms officers now have body-worn recorders which could be kept on to prove that no collusion took place.**

Former Met firearms officer and trainer Tony Long highlighted a massive difference in investigation into death in police contact from when he joined the firearms unit in the 1970s to now.

What he clearly showed was the completely unreasonable length of time the IPCC take to come to decisions with as much as six years being taken putting extra strain on the officers involved.

He was very honest and pointed out that the stresses and strains of being involved in an incident can play havoc on the mind, when footage of one of his incidents was completely different to how he recalled it.

Sarah Green, deputy chair of the IPCC, maintained that they were independent and conducted investigations in a reasonably prompt fashion. She said officers should be separated when operationally safe to do so to gain best evidence and body-worn evidence should not be viewed before making a statement.

It was pointed out to her that 80 per cent of firearms officers are concerned regarding the guidance and if brought in they would consider their position as they are all volunteers.

All speakers including Che Donald, Police Federation firearms lead, had some valid points and expressed their views equally.

My view is that there is no need to separate officers if they are following the APP and the PIP procedure is being followed correctly.

I am not, and never have been, a firearms officer. From the input of the speakers it appears that most forces are supportive of the officers involved but the IPCC has its own agenda.

It takes a stance that there must be something to hide in order to appear independent rather than looking at the full facts and responding fairly, because at the end of the day, all the officers would want is to be treated fairly when all the facts are known and for the IPCC not to make sweeping statements to the press as it has done on so many occasions without having all the facts.



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# Changes are on their way



Chief Constable Francis Habgood.

By Jason Higgins, North Wales Police Federation representative

## Break-out: The Future of Pay and Conditions

### Speakers:

Dr Joan Donnelly, head of research and policy support at the Police Federation of England and Wales

Francis Habgood, Thames Valley Chief Constable and NPCC lead on the College of Policing's leadership review

Dr Donnelly provided an overview of how the Federation works to influence decisions on pay through its general secretary Andy Fittes who has national responsibility for pay negotiation.

She used a slide to illustrate that the subject of setting police pay is a very crowded landscape with many internal and external influences including the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB).

Dr Donnelly is clearly a very informed individual and was able to convey some clear messages about our pay. In spite of a sophisticated smokescreen, it seems many aspects of police pay are set by the Government and not chief constables.

The one per cent pay cap on public

sector pay set by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury has ensured that the uplift to police pay has been pegged for 2016/17 irrespective of the fact that the pay review mechanism recommended an increase of 2.8 per cent.

It was reassuring to hear the Federation puts officers at the centre of what it does in negotiating pay and conditions.

However, it was disheartening to discover that in 2017 police pay is lagging 15 per cent behind where it would have been with projected increases at the same rate as we had before 2010 and the gap will have widened to 23 per cent by 2020.

I felt that Dr Donnelly provided a convincing explanation as to why pay should be based on the job rank and file officers actually do rather than examinations and competency tests.

Mr Habgood talked about pay reform. He is also a very experienced and well qualified speaker.

He put forward the case for replacing the existing rank structure with a flatter structure rewarding officers for skills and experience rather than time served.

He also talked about the proposals for multiple entry points to the service according to a candidate's experience and

qualifications. This did not prove popular with conference particularly the suggestion that apprentice officers would be paid 20 per cent less than the current entry pay point to fund their training.

The chief was clearly talking about a 'work in progress' and to his credit he made this clear. He is driving the Government's workforce modernisation agenda on behalf of the NPCC which was evident in his presentation.

He did qualify his position by saying that research is still being carried out and that 'ultimately police pay has to be fair for officers and the tax payer'.

The positives are that the Federation is prepared to challenge the Official Side on the setting of police pay. The challenge is based on evidence and, in the absence of the public sector pay freeze, the Federation would fight for a fair settlement.

Dr Donnelly's department is capable of presenting a clear and evidence-based argument for a pay increase which challenges many of the Government's proposals for workforce reform.

The major concern is that workforce modernisation appears to be a Government euphemism for keeping pay levels down and could widen the gender gap in pay.

I was not convinced that the Official Side is as focused as the Federation is on avoiding unintended consequences. My personal fear is that reform could be divisive in the same way as the ill-fated SPP and CRTP.

The process of reform still has a long way to go and will face further challenges along the way. There is a chance that many of the present Government's proposals for police reform will need to be revisited in the light of the significant political and cultural shifts which may occur as a result of the EU referendum.

The Federation is working hard to ensure that pay and conditions for police officers reflect the unique responsibilities and challenges of the role and keep pace with the cost of living.

The evidence to back up our bid for better pay and improved conditions has to be gathered from the annual pay and morale survey and our members can directly influence this by completing the survey.

Setting police pay may indeed be a very crowded landscape, however, there are still effectively only two sides that have any say in the matter, the Federation and the Government. The Federation will, with the support of its members, continue to keep their interests at the heart of its negotiations.

# Are police drivers protected in law?

*Tim Rogers, the national Federation's response driving lead.*

**By Barry Andrews, North Wales Police Federation representative**

**I have seen the presentation from Tim Rogers, the Federation's lead in this area, and barrister Mark Aldred as well as the response from West Mercia Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, the NPPC roads policing lead, at both last year's conference and the roads policing conference in between.**

Tim covered the fact that every response or pursuit drive is illegal and most officers do not realise that they are not protected.

He also outlined the suggested change to legislation which would take into account the training of the officer in any subsequent case before a decision to prosecute is taken. He highlighted the need for the lack of protection to be covered in training so officers are fully aware of the possible consequences.

PC James Ellerton spoke very honestly about his experience of his case in Merseyside. He believed he was doing the right thing to protect life and property when he stopped a stolen motorcycle from riding dangerously through the streets of Liverpool. His story brought home the stresses and strains that such an investigation can impose on an officer who was doing his duty to protect the public.

Mark highlighted that there is no protection for officers on response or pursuits from prosecution as, by their training, they are driving dangerously when attempting to apprehend a suspect.

In previous debates, Mr Bangham has said that the DPP guidance was sufficient to protect officers. Since he has taken over as the NPPC lead for roads policing, his stance appears to have changed now.

He stated that training needs to improve and be given more often and it must include training around legislation so that officers know exactly where they stand. He appears to have changed his view regarding pursuit driving and appreciates that a change in legislation is needed to protect officers better. His stance regarding response driving has not changed as he believed that the DPP guidance is sufficient.

Officers need to be fully aware of the possible consequences if something was

to happen on a response drive or pursuit. I would encourage Tim to circulate the PFEW guidance suggested which says officers should stick to speed limits and not risk committing any offences.

It was encouraging that Mr Bangham was keen to work with the PFEW to get the best possible result from dealing with the Home Office on changes to legislation. It is disappointing that it has taken seven years to get this far.

## A life on hold...

Merseyside police officer James Ellerman also gave a presentation at conference, talking about his own experiences of being prosecuted for dangerous driving after preventing a man who had been riding a motorcycle recklessly in Liverpool returning to the city centre by knocking him from the vehicle using his police van.

He talked about the stress he went through during the investigation, the sleepless nights, shaking with fear at the thought of being sent to prison and the fact that the up and coming trial had overshadowed the birth of his second daughter. His life, he said, was put on hold.

He explained that he felt he had no alternative but, using his knowledge, training and experience to cause the collision. He feared someone would be injured or killed if the motorcyclist was not stopped.

"I had to stop him returning to the city, I couldn't do nothing," said James,



explaining that he felt he had to fulfil his duties of protecting the public, protecting property and that the motorcyclist posed a risk to the public.

On arresting the motorcyclist, he found he was riding a stolen bike and was disqualified from driving.

He thought that would be the end of it but it was just the beginning. He was served with gross misconduct papers and prosecuted.

The judge finally cleared him, saying of James' intervention 'he was damned if he did and damned if he didn't'.

# 'We need to support each other'

## Police officers need to look after themselves and not be afraid to speak up about mental health, around 100 delegates were told at a break-out session during the second day of conference.

The session was led by Graham Richens from the learning and development team at the national Federation HQ.

A former Met officer, Graham suffered mental illness himself and explained how many factors contributed to his ill-health, including seeing 'too many' colleagues injured and even killed in the line of duty.

During the session, delegates were invited to share their experiences of mental health.

"Around 80 per cent of officers have suffered mental ill-health," Graham explained, "One in four experience it every year.

"We see things that the public are ordinarily protected from. We experience extremes. But police officers feel isolated and alone. We need to protect ourselves – we need to talk about it and be able to identify both in ourselves and our colleagues when things aren't right."

The wide-ranging levels of trauma support were explained along with the need for Federation reps to undertake a course on mental health first aid.

Graham added: "We need to be there for each other, listen to each other, talk to each other - accept responses unconditionally, give care and support and be compassionate. We need to understand stressors and signs of mental illness, help and support each other and give and receive care to each other."

Officers' mental health was a recurrent

theme in conference with several speakers linking a rise in reports of officers suffering mental health problems to the cuts to police budgets and falling officer numbers.

## Equality break-out training

This was a very basic and a quick input into the protected characteristics, direct and indirect discrimination.

Grievance procedures, flexible working and Employment Tribunals were also covered.

"This would be a good session for newer reps to attend and for those who are considering broadening their skills and knowledge in the equality arena," said Kim Owen, North Wales Police Federation representative.

"It is relevant to all Fed reps, even just for a refresher into the subject."

“ WE SEE THINGS THAT THE PUBLIC ARE ORDINARILY PROTECTED FROM. WE EXPERIENCE EXTREMES. BUT POLICE OFFICERS FEEL ISOLATED AND ALONE. WE NEED TO PROTECT OURSELVES – WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT AND BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY BOTH IN OURSELVES AND OUR COLLEAGUES WHEN THINGS AREN'T RIGHT.

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# Can divorce be obtained amicably?

**By Roland Humphreys**  
*Principal lawyer in family law at Slater and Gordon*



Anyone wanting a divorce should be able to obtain one without placing blame on the other party, otherwise known as a “no fault” divorce, providing they have been separated for a continuous period of at least two years and their spouse consents.

If they have been separated less than two years an individual would have to rely on the other party’s adultery or their unreasonable behaviour, bringing into the divorce an element of blame or fault of the other party.

As family lawyers, our aim is to formally bring any marriage to an end with as little hostility as possible, recognising the reason cited for divorce rarely affects the extent of financial arrangements, which are based on different criteria including need and available resources.

If there are arguments in relation to the divorce itself, these can often extend to and undermine discussions in relation to other issues, such as financial or child arrangements and therefore, the more amicable parties’ are from the outset can assist in progressing other matters.

Therefore, when drafting a divorce petition based on unreasonable behaviour we may seek to phrase any allegations in such a way to make them more acceptable to the other party, with a view to the party against whom allegations are made, agreeing to the divorce, rather than seeking to oppose it.

Until very recently, family lawyers have proceeded safe in the belief that in the absence of a completely “no fault” divorce system, a pragmatic family law judge would not look too closely at what has been said by the petitioner, providing the allegation had been made and the Respondent wasn’t opposing it.

However, a very recent example of a defended divorce can be found in the case of Tina Owens, heard in the Court of Appeal, which highlights the problems that arise in having to rely on unreasonable behaviour in the face of opposition. After being married for almost 40 years Mrs Owens wanted a divorce and cited examples of her husband’s unreasonable behaviour. This included the husband’s continued upset over a prior affair, being silent during a meal in a local pub, and making inappropriate comments about her in front of her friends and family.

Mr Owens challenged the marriage had broken down and the original judge rejected Mrs Owens application stating she failed to prove Mr Owen’s behaviour had been unreasonable, particularly in the context of such a long marriage. The Court of Appeal

expressed great sympathy with Mrs Owen’s position, but did not overturn the original decision as the judge at first instance had properly stated and applied the law to this case, and exercised his discretion correctly.

Anecdotally, there are already stories emerging of divorce petitions being returned from courts because the allegations are not ‘strong enough’. Unfortunately this may mean there are increased incidents of challenges and, ironically, more defended petitions than before, increasing anxiety and costs for all concerned.

What is clear is that the decision has highlighted the need for updating of laws relating to divorce, to reflect changes in modern society. Clients often ask: “if so easy to marry, why so hard to divorce?” and why can they not do so ‘without blaming the other party’. The government has since stated that there are no changes to the law expected in the foreseeable future.

Before proceeding with a divorce it will be increasingly important to get early legal advice from an experienced family lawyer, to reduce the risk of difficulties arising, and to ensure that matters can be resolved as amicably as possible in the circumstances.

For an initial consultation please call Slater and Gordon on Freephone **0808 175 7710** or contact us online and we’ll be happy to help.

## Pioneer Keeley takes award

Nottingham DC Keeley Mansell has been awarded the Women in Policing Award 2017 after bringing the ‘taboo’ topic of the impact of the menopause in the police workforce into the open.

Keeley, who suffered from early onset menopause, found her own force was ill-equipped to support her at work through the debilitating effects - and nor were any other forces.

So she went to work to research the issue. She held focus meetings, working groups, established a Management Guide and Policy for police forces and worked

online to highlight the issues.

Presenting her with the award at conference, Dame Vera Baird, chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, praised the many excellent nominees for the award but said Keeley had been a ‘pioneer’ in the police service and wider afield.

Accepting the award, Keeley said: “When I started on this journey I wanted to get people to talk about this taboo subject and to recognise the implications it can have. I hope many women and men feel supported in the workforce because of the work I have done.”



*DC Keeley Mansell (right) being presented with the award by Dame Vera Baird.*

# UK Police Memorial: 'Important to every single one of us'

**Help raise £10 a head for each Federation member by July and a new UK Police Memorial could be dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum next year - that was the appeal made by Lord Stevens of Kirkwhelpington, patron of the Police Arboretum Memorial Trust, at conference.**

Lord Stevens, who had himself been a Federation rep 50 years ago, was speaking as part of the launch of a public appeal for the memorial which will bear the names of 1,400 fallen officers and staff.

The police, Lord Stevens said, are a family that comes together as a sign of unity and support when one of their own dies. The new memorial, he told delegates, was 'absolutely essential' and 'important to every single one of us'.

He explained: "PC Palmer's death has put greater emphasis on the need to create a place where the nation can honour and commemorate our police service and where family, friends and colleagues of those killed on duty can go to carry out personal acts of remembrance.

"We need to establish a fitting memorial that recognises the vital contribution that policing makes to our society and acknowledges the courage and sacrifice made by police officers and police staff who have paid the ultimate price. That tribute must become part of the fabric of our



*Lord Stevens addresses conference.*

national life."

And he added: "Policing is our country's gift to the world... but to have no fitting memorial at the national place of remembrance, the National Memorial Arboretum, that honours our men and women who have lost their lives fulfilling their duty just cannot be right."

He stressed: "Families struck by the loss of a loved one on duty need to be able to remember and reflect on their death in a peaceful and tranquil environment. The service really needs a place where large acts of commemoration can take place, and society needs a place that inspires a deep understanding and appreciation of policing on the part of every one of its citizens."

So far £2.5 million has been raised of the £4m needed to complete the memorial at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire and

a corresponding digital presence which will tell the story of policing and those who have fallen, including the ability to search by names and dates, leave messages, record visits and provide an educational resource.

A Living Memorial Trust will also be established to both maintain the memorial and provide support for families of the fallen when they need it most.

The money raised so far includes many generous donations. The Government has given £1m from the Libor Fund, with Lord Stevens saying: "This is money taken from those who exhibited the worst in human behaviour but we are giving it to those who demonstrate the best."

He also explained: "A new UK Police Memorial will not replace local and regional memorials but will complement them, just as the Cenotaph complements the Armed Forces memorial at the Memorial Arboretum and the thousands of other military memorials throughout every village, town and city in our country."

Lord Stevens said that if sufficient funds are pledged by July when the Police Bravery Awards ceremony takes place it would be feasible to dedicate a new memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum next year.

To find out more about the memorial, its design and the digital projects around it go to [www.ukpolicememorial.org](http://www.ukpolicememorial.org)

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# Estates: an update on progress

**The work on our estates is moving on and we promised to keep you up to date on how the new builds are progressing.**

Llandudno Police Station is well underway and will be ready for opening in October – November 2017. The station will have a front desk, with response and safer neighbourhood teams.

In Llay, the 32-cell custody suite and office accommodation has started. This will replace Gresford and Wrexham Police Stations (in conjunction with the in town station next to the library) and some staff from Mold and the Commissioning Centre will be relocated here too.

Works are progressing well and the substructures are moving rapidly. The custody slab will be largely completed by the end of May and the pre-cast panels for custody will be starting in June.

The site has some rare mosaic grasslands, orchids and butterflies, not to mention a fair share of newts!

The project will be completed at the end of May 2018, followed by a fit-out and training period. It is expected to be operational in August 2018.



*Chief Constable Mark Polin (left) at the site with Graham Ford, Galliford Try site project manager.*





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