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News and views
from West Mercia
Police Federation



WINTER 2018



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Connect

Welcome to the first edition of our new quarterly magazine.

We want to keep you up to date on the work of West Mercia Police Federation, its full-time officials and the workplace representatives and give you updates on the regional and national issues affecting you at work.

But, just as importantly, we would like you to get involved in the magazine. What are the issues that concern you the most? Are there elements of Police Regulations that you don't understand? Is there an equality matter that you want us to explain?

We want to hear from you so that we can make the magazine informative and interesting for members.

The magazine is part of a new communications strategy that will also involve the re-launch of our members' website in the New Year. Again, please let us know if there is anything in particular you would like to see on the website.

The West Mercia Police Federation Branch Council wants to be fully representative of the membership and to put them at the heart of everything it does. But we need your help to do that.

So, please speak to your local workplace representatives or contact the Federation office and let us know your thoughts so that we can improve our communication with you.

Sarah Cooper, West Mercia Police Federation chair

Our cover shows just a few photos from the 2018 policing year which included a change of Home Secretary, issues around our pensions, the national Federation conference, the Police Unity Tour and National Police Memorial Day.

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Chair: Sarah Cooper
Acting secretary: Steve Butler

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Legal action over pay award

Legal proceedings are now being started by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) after the Government's failure to accept the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for the second year running.

The Federation has lodged an application to judicial review proceedings into the lawfulness of the Government's decision.

PRRB recommended a three per cent rise from September but the Government awarded two per cent. The Federation argues this is actually worth 0.85 per cent to constables.

PFEW had sought a 3.4 per cent increase in a joint submission to PRRB with the Superintendents' Association.

John Apter, national Federation chair, said: "We must have confidence in an independent pay review system and for that to be ignored by Government undermines the whole process. Our members do not have industrial rights so it's important they know we will stand up for them and fight their corner."

He continued: "Now more than ever it is imperative pay is adequate and fair, acknowledging the incredibly demanding job officers do. It is unacceptable to see officers struggling to make ends meet whilst working all the hours under the sun to keep the public safe because there simply aren't enough officers to meet the increasing demand.

"Police officers must be treated fairly and have confidence that any independent pay recommendations will be accepted in full by the Home Secretary.

"I know the deep sense of anger felt by many of our members about the way they have been treated. This is why we have taken this action and make no apology for doing so. Doing nothing was simply not an option."

■ The 0.85 per cent is derived from the fact that only one per cent of last year's two per cent increase was consolidated. That one per cent has now been removed for this year's pay award so, taking into account pension contributions, the actual uplift is worth around 0.85 per cent to constables.

Tougher sentences for assaults on officers

A new law introducing tougher sentences on those who attack police officers and other emergency service workers has been welcomed by West Mercia Police Federation chair Sarah Cooper.

The new Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act came into effect on 13 November and creates a new aggravated offence of an assault against a member of the emergency services, doubling the maximum sentence for these acts from six to 12 months.

The act follows the Federation's Protect the Protectors campaign which called for better protections in law for police and blue light colleagues as well as increased roll-out of Taser, body-worn video and spit and bite guards.

"Sadly, attacks on police officers and other emergency workers have become more and

more common and to such an extent that some people just saw it as part of the job," says Sarah.

"But no-one should come to accept being assaulted while at work so I am pleased that this new legislation should enable courts to suitably punish those who seem to think it's OK to attack us and provide a deterrent to others."

National Federation chair John Apter now wants to see prosecutors and the courts fully using the provisions of the new law to send out the message that attacks on police and emergency service workers will not be tolerated.

He still wants stronger sentences but says the new act is a significant step in the right direction.

'We will get law changed to protect police drivers'

The Federation's national response driving lead has expressed his 'bitter disappointment' that a Private Members' Bill proposing better protection in law for police drivers has been delayed once again.

Tim Rogers has spearheaded the campaign for a change in legislation and has spoken out after the second reading of Sir Henry Bellingham's Emergency Response Drivers (Protections) Bill, proposed on behalf of the Police Federation, was put back from 23 November to March 2019.

"While the lack of progress for the bill is, of course, bitterly disappointing, we have to take stock of what has been achieved over the past two years. It's certainly not all bad,"

said Tim.

"We want to get the current legislative flaw remedied to ensure officers can do simply what society expects without the reserved right to prosecute them.

"Currently, using the tools policing has given them, officers break the law where they are judged against the standard of the careful and competent driver - and can be charged with a criminal offence for using a trained tactic."

The bill proposes legal exceptions for police pursuits and emergency response drivers to recognise their skills and training and Tim is confident there will eventually be a change in the law.

'Officer welfare must be at the heart of all we do'

Sarah Cooper admits there are plenty of challenges ahead after taking up the position of West Mercia Police Federation chair.



But she says she wants to put officer welfare right at the heart of the Federation's work.

"I think nationally the challenge will be to build the trust and confidence of members, and deliver a service that officers have faith in," said Sarah. "And I think we have a similar challenge to the national Federation in terms of restoring members' faith in our local Federation.

"We are working hard at this but I recognise it will take time. We have a team of committed reps in place and we are all striving to ensure that our colleagues can have confidence in us.

"I want to ensure that officer welfare is at the heart of all we do and that officers are confident that this is our ethos."

Sarah acknowledges that police officers and the service more widely also face considerable challenges.

She said: "I genuinely worry for my colleagues who are working in ever more demanding circumstances. I think the biggest challenge at the moment is to stay safe, both physically and mentally. Officers are under such pressure and this was reflected in the results of the Federation's national pay and morale survey.

"There are no easy answers in terms of resourcing but there needs to be proper representation of the issues and a will to listen, and I hope we can assist with this.

"The Force appears to be going through perpetual change, and has been for many years. This is taking its toll and I think we need to be mindful of change for change's sake.

"We seem to reinvent the wheel repeatedly and historically I think there has been a failure to listen to the voices of those on the ground who have really valuable knowledge and opinions on how things could, or could not, be done better or differently.

"There are clearly significant challenges

around finances and maintaining a service to the public while ensuring our officers are working safely."

She added: "My view is that the police service is on its knees. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that policing is in crisis and it's incredibly sad for those of us who care about the job we do and want to serve the public.

"I regularly speak to really good officers who feel that they can no longer do a good job because of the pressures they are under and they are actively looking for other employment.

"It's a huge challenge but, at some point, the Government needs to wake up and see what is happening to this country as a result of the gross under-investment in public services."

So how does Sarah aim to meet these challenges?

"I strongly believe that my role as Federation chair is to represent the views of officers, ensure that their voice is heard and negotiate on their behalf," she said.

"This applies at all levels of the organisation from local management to chief officers. We are in incredibly testing times and I see my role as working with the Force to bring real improvements around welfare and health and wellbeing.

"There is a feeling that there has been a lot of talk around this, and little substance, and we need to put this right so that welfare is prioritised and is tackled in a proactive, rather than reactive way."

Sarah has been a serving officer for more than 20 years after joining the Force in 1996. Her first posting was in Kidderminster and she has worked in a wide range of areas including response, CID and training as well as having undertaken some strategic work with HMIC inspections and safeguarding.

"Work in domestic abuse is my passion and where I feel I have really been able to make a difference to individuals," she said.

Sarah first became a Fed rep in 2012 after being elected to the women's reserve

constable role.

"I had some personal experience around issues in the workplace but had no support and I wanted to be able to help colleagues who may have been in a similar position," she recalled. "I had no idea what I was walking into and I can remember attending my first meeting and thinking this isn't for me.

"It was like something from Life on Mars, but I was persuaded to stay by colleagues who also had an appetite for change and understood that the only way to do this was from within.

"I'm glad I stuck with it now because my role as a rep has given me some of the most satisfying work of my career. I genuinely joined the police to help people.

"I was finding that, under the pressures of policing currently, you can help the public less and less. I want to do a good job for people and that's really hard in today's environment. My Federation role gave me that fix, I was just helping colleagues rather than the public."

Sarah has been in her role for six months after being elected in June and said it is a privilege to be West Mercia Federation chair.

"The election process was an incredibly challenging few weeks for me," she said. "By the time the results were due I had already talked myself out of any prospect of success.

"It was amazing and terrifying in equal measures when I had the phone call from the national general secretary to congratulate me on being elected.

"It is an enormous privilege to be voted into post by your colleagues and I fully intend to ensure that I represent officers to the best of my ability."

So why did Sarah decide to stand as branch chair?

"I absolutely love my Federation work and being able to make a difference to people," she said. "I have represented officers who were absolutely on their knees and to be able to help them in overcoming issues and moving on in their career, or life outside the police, is incredibly rewarding.

"The welfare of officers should be at the



I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT MY ROLE AS FEDERATION CHAIR IS TO REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF OFFICERS, ENSURE THAT THEIR VOICE IS HEARD AND NEGOTIATE ON THEIR BEHALF,

heart of all we do as a Federation, yet I was consistently being told that welfare is not our problem.

"I felt there was a huge disconnect between what was going on in the real world for our colleagues and the issues that were being prioritised internally.

"My view was that, despite the hard work of locally based reps, we as a Federation had a poor reputation among officers and there were times when I was embarrassed to admit that I was a rep.

"I just wanted to make a difference and speak up on the real issues. It is easy to complain and criticise, and I have become more aware than ever of that since I stood for election, but sometimes you need to stand up for what you believe in, and that is all I did."

She added: "I don't think it's any secret to say that things have been incredibly challenging since I took over in June and, unfortunately, this has impacted on our day-to-day ability to achieve much of what I set out to do in the short-term.

"I hope that we are starting to find our feet now, and we have already made changes to ensure that we are working for the good of the members.

"Examples of this include a new approach to meetings of the Branch Council where we now discuss the issues that matter to members, we have reviewed the previous approach to charitable donations and have now set up a charity pot so that our members have a say in where this money should go and can apply for donations to specific charities that they are fund-raising for.

"Importantly, I am also working closely with chief officers around health and wellbeing."

Sarah wants to improve the communication between the Federation and members, including getting out to meet officers in the field.

"My priority now is to concentrate on fulfilling the role of chair effectively and that means a real focus on ensuring that we meet the needs and expectations of our members," she said "I want to ensure that I can get out into the local policing areas and meet officers face to face to understand what challenges they are facing and also where things are working well.

"This magazine is one part of our efforts to improve communication, but please let me know if you have any other ideas, suggestions or observations.

"I recognise that you are working in the most challenging of conditions currently and that this is often compounded by internal workplace challenges.

"Please approach your local reps, or those of us in the office, if you feel we could help in a situation that would make your life easier, whether that it is a practice or process, or something more personal such as a flexible working application.

"We are here for more than just misconduct and we want to help."

Every officer should know about PIP

By T/DCI Lesley Williams, West Mercia Police Federation workplace representative, trained in advocacy, conduct, PIP and equalities



Perception and distortion, anonymity and a Staffordshire Police pursuit incident resulting in a road accident involving members of the public were all discussed at this year's Post-Incident Procedures (PIP) seminar organised by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

Delegates at the seminar, which was held in Leicestershire in October, were told the new IOPC guidelines governing deaths and serious injuries (DSI) involving police contact will likely see an increase in the number of incidents involving PIP but should see officers benefiting from inclusion in the process.

Ensuring we work to current Authorised Professional Practice (APP) will help and we await a new non-firearms APP in the near future.

Historically, PIP has been seen as a process for firearms officers but as many of our members can tell us, it is often more routine policing areas that see them subject to PIP. Roads policing, custody, and general operational business actually invokes PIP far more regularly than firearms incidents.

That aside, the Force recently had a firearms PIP - a first in more than 20 years - which, in my opinion, was one of the smoothest processes we have had to date, despite its severity.

With an increase in mental health-related incidents we are dealing with, the use of restraint and the awareness of Acute Behavioural Disturbance (ABD), officers will find themselves involved in PIP regardless of whether they carry a firearm.

Having been an initial TFC and pursuit commander, SIO, working across professional standards and now as a Federation rep, I have a desire to see an understanding of PIP implemented far

wider across our organisation.

Every officer should know about PIP. Whether you are a response officer, an investigating SIO, on call DS or DI, custody sergeant or Federation rep answering queries or concerns, PIP can affect you.

Working closely with our Force lead post-incident manager (PIM), we have achieved awareness sessions, made accessible to Federation reps, officers, detectives, IOPC and PSD. A session on PIP will now be included on the senior detective forums and also on driver, custody and Taser training. We are looking to continue this wider education moving forward.

A CPD event has been planned by the protective services operations department for January 2019 and will see partners and colleagues who may have any involvement with PIP from across the region attending.

Good working relationships are key to this process so it is of real benefit to our members to be able to say that we, as a Federation, have the support from our internal PSD, regional IOPC and our PIMs to make PIP the best we possibly can.

As your Federation, we want to reassure officers that we have specific PIP reps, trained by the Police Firearms Officers' Association (POFA) on behalf of PFEW, who will support and guide you through every step of the PIP along with the PIM, legal advice and welfare support.

Feedback is always welcomed and a recent example of this is as follows: "Just a quick email to bring to your attention the fantastic support that X is providing as PIP Fed representative. From my own personal observations and comments from those involved over the weekend, X has provided them with exactly what they need at a time when they need it most."

You can find out more about PIP on the PFEW website, CoP APP or the inet pages for Force policy.

Do you know who your Federation reps are? Find them on the inet by searching 'Federation rep' or by using the link

<http://inet/smii/s00cont.asp?shid=4307>

'Demand and capacity imbalance puts us all under strain'

Police officers are feeling stressed because they cannot provide the service they want to give to the public, says West Mercia Police Federation chair Sarah Cooper.

Sarah was responding to comments by Chief Constable Anthony Bangham who has admitted there are not enough officers to respond to every crime.

The Chief was speaking at a meeting of Worcestershire County Council after news that the number of hate crimes against disabled people had risen from two in 2015 to 24 in the year up to March 2018.

Mr Bangham said: "Let's be absolutely honest here, we cannot and I don't think it is right for us to expect that we can then deploy and give a full wraparound service to every one of those incidents."

He added: "I have every single day in this area, right across Worcestershire, unresourced incidents of more significant, high impact crimes that are happening – we have got burglaries of homes, violent crimes, we have got people injured, we have injuries on the roads, we have children missing."

Sarah echoed the comments and called on the Government to 'sit up and take notice' of the strain on the police service.

"I welcome the comments from our Chief Constable, highlighting the pressures that our members are under in terms of the ever growing mismatch between resources and demand," she said.

"Difficult decisions are being made every day in relation to what we can attend and,

of course, this has a knock-on impact on our service to the public.

"As well as the pressures of demand and capacity, officers are becoming increasingly stressed because they feel they are unable to provide a service to the public that they want to.

"A recent Home Affairs Committee report highlighted a policing service under 'serious strain' and concluded that forces are badly overstretched. It is beyond time that the Government sat up and took notice of what is happening."

Sarah said that only the goodwill and extraordinary endeavours of officers had prevented policing from 'falling over'.

And she said that without extra funding there could be serious repercussions for the community and for criminal justice.

"The only reason that policing hasn't fallen over completely is because of the efforts of the Federated ranks, their senior colleagues, police staff and volunteers and their will to serve the public," Sarah explained.

"We need to consider the role of other public services in reducing demand on the police. While I recognise every public sector service is under considerable strain, it is consistently the police who are called upon to plug gaps or pick up the pieces when other services cannot, or will not, deal.

"Policing desperately needs to be properly funded and without this it is clear that there will be serious consequences for public safety and criminal justice."

Brave officer recognised



At the awards are (left to right) Home Secretary Sajid Javid, Kimberley Morris and Chief Constable Anthony Bangham.

West Mercia PC Kimberley Morris joined officers from across England and Wales at a Downing Street reception for nominees for the national Police Bravery Awards.

Kimberley was nominated for the awards by West Mercia Police Federation after giving vital first aid to a man with an eight-inch gash to his neck while keeping the suspected attacker talking.

"Kimberley was only in the second week of independent patrol when she was called to a disturbance and assault. On arrival at the address, she and her colleague found a blood-covered, hysterical woman on the driveway," said Sarah Cooper, chair of West Mercia Police Federation.

"Entering the house, they came across two men covered in blood, one was holding something up to a neck wound on the other man who was slumped in an armchair.

"Suspecting that he was in fact the attacker, Kimberly kept him talking while she gave first aid to the victim. In the finest traditions of policing and despite being very young in service, Kimberley put herself in danger to help save a life and help secure the arrest of an offender.

"She should be very proud of her actions and I am pleased her efforts were recognised at the Police Bravery Awards."

As well as attending the garden party at No 10, the West Mercia officer also attended the evening awards ceremony at which Home Secretary Sajid Javid was a guest.

The overall winners of this year's Police Bravery Awards were PC Keith Palmer GM and PC Charlie Guenigault from the Metropolitan Police.

PC Palmer was awarded posthumously after being killed in the terrorist attack near Westminster in March last year while off-duty PC Guenigault tackled three knife-wielding terrorists attacking the public at London Bridge in June 2017. He was critically injured in the attack.

Pedal power helps COPS

West Mercia Police Federation's acting secretary, Steve Butler, and DCC Amanda Blakeman were among the West Mercia officers to complete the annual Police Unity Tour (PUT) in July as part of the West Midlands Chapter of riders.

Steve cycled nearly 300 miles over three days raising money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS) with the tour ending at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on the morning of the COPS remembrance service.

With the help of a donation from the Federation, the West Midlands Chapter raised more than £10,000 for COPS, the charity dedicated to supporting fallen officers' families.



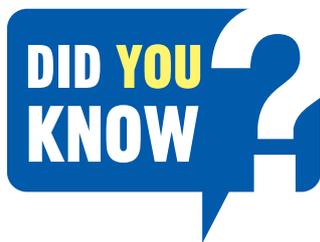
New campaign highlights officers' entitlements

Annual leave is the opening theme of a new national Federation campaign to raise awareness of officers' entitlements.

The campaign – entitled Did You Know? – went live on 21 November and will focus on questions that the Federation receives from members. The aim is to highlight key issues and to make sure serving officers know exactly what they can claim as part of their role.

John Apter, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, says: "Every day officers across England and Wales go over and above the call of duty to protect the public. It's essential that they claim their basic entitlements - especially at a time when their hard work and dedication is not being recognised in their pay packets.

"We will continue to fight for members' best interests, but also hope this campaign will help officers to be



aware of - and claim - what is rightfully theirs and help them to understand what support is out there.

"Officers work tirelessly to help the public: that is what they signed up to do and will continue to do, but it is important that if their much-needed day off is cancelled, or they miss an important family event because of work they get that time back or are compensated for it. Being a police officer means other parts of your life are simply put on hold and we need to ensure they are fully supported."

On annual leave, the Did You Know? campaign raises the following questions:

- **How much annual leave am I entitled to?**
- **If I have to work on a day of annual leave what compensation am I entitled to?**
- **If I receive compensation for working a day of annual leave, what is 'a day of annual leave' and what is 'a day's pay'?**
- **How much annual leave can I carry over at the end of the year?**

Answers can be found in the updated Quick Reference Guide.

In the coming months, the campaign will also cover the topics of rest days, performance and pension buy-back. Information will be available and regularly updated at

www.polfed.org/didyounow.

Did You Know? is supported by the hashtags **#KnowYourRights** and **#DidYouKnow**.

Things to think about if you are considering a divorce in the New Year

By Georgina Chase,
principal lawyer in family law at Slater and Gordon



January is a time for making resolutions. It might be deciding it's time to kick a bad habit or get fit. But sometimes the beginning of a new year will be a point when you consider a change that will have a big impact on your life. What if that change is ending your marriage? Here are a few things to think about if divorce is on your mind in the New Year.

Is it really over?

If you decide to go ahead with a divorce, you need to be sure that there is definitely no chance that the marriage can be saved.

The Christmas period can be both a joyful and difficult time of year. It may have been challenging for you if you have been on duty and this has caused a strain between you and your spouse.

A tough Christmas does not have to spell the end of a marriage and you and your spouse may be able to work through this together, or with the support of family and friends, or counselling services, such as Relate.

When can I get a divorce?

Some people assume that they will not be able to divorce immediately, as there has been no particular reason for the breakdown of the marriage. Some people think that there has to have been an affair, or particular incident, to be able to start a divorce straight away, but this isn't the case.

If you have felt unsupported by your spouse, or feel that the two of you no longer make the effort to spend time together around your shifts etc, you could rely on this to prove to a court that the marriage is over.

When should I make the decision?

If you have decided that you do want to go ahead with a divorce, we generally advise that you speak to a family lawyer sooner rather than later to ensure you are as informed as possible. Often the first question we are asked is how an officer can try to protect their police pension and taking action at the earliest opportunity can be very important.

A spouse has a claim to an ex-partner's income, capital and pensions on divorce and these will be based on their financial situation at the time of divorce and not necessarily at the time of separation. Your spouse is likely to be successful in

claiming against the value of your pension at the time of divorce, rather than its value at the time of your separation, i.e. a claim to more of your pension. For example, we acted for an officer who separated from his wife, but waited 13 years before dealing with his finances on separation. His wife might have achieved a 14 per cent share of his pension 13 years ago, but had an argument for an increased share of some 32 per cent, 13 years later.

What about the children?

If you have children, you will need to try to agree an arrangement for them with your spouse, if you separate. The court is concerned with the welfare of the child in respect of any arrangements made. Parents are encouraged to agree a routine of care which is in a child's best interests.

You may find it difficult to reach an agreement with your spouse, or perhaps your complicated shift pattern is making it difficult to set out a regular routine. If this is the case, then you should seek legal advice and a referral to mediation can be considered.

If you would like specialist advice from a family lawyer then please contact Slater and Gordon on **0808 175 7710** and we'll be happy to help.



Going through a divorce?

Call us before your ex does.



Georgina Chase
Principal Lawyer
in Family Law at
Slater and Gordon

We've been working with the Police Federation for over fifty years – longer than any other firm. No one understands better the unique pressures of police work and how to protect your rights – including your pension. If you're going through a divorce, we offer a free initial consultation, a divorce fixed fee package of £350 plus VAT and Court fees and discounted hourly rates plus we give you access to some of the country's best family lawyers.

If you think we could help, call us on **0808 175 7710**

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