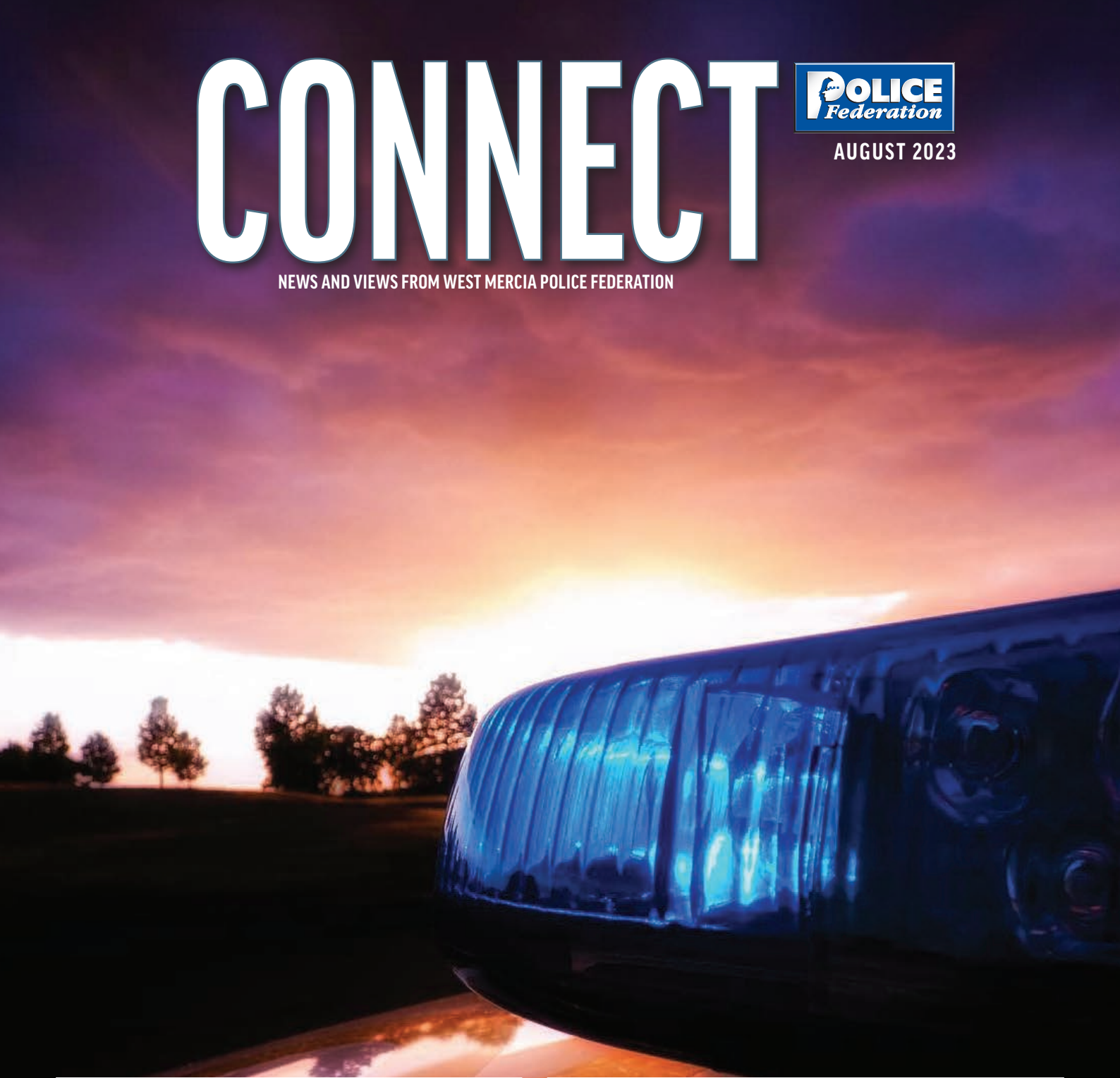


# CONNECT



AUGUST 2023

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM WEST MERCIA POLICE FEDERATION



## REMEMBERING ANDY BOARDMAN

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# VIEW FROM THE SECRETARY

By **Pete Nightingale**, secretary of West Mercia Police Federation



Police pay and conditions have been at the top of the agenda for many years now so we were relatively pleased to accept the seven per cent settlement the Government announced earlier in the summer.

It was still below the rate of inflation and nothing like the 17 per cent that would have made up for two decades of low or zero offers but it was a step in the right direction and hopefully a platform for acceptable increases in the coming years.

Unfortunately, it was too little and too late for the officers leaving the police service in record numbers.

The latest officer number figures released by the Home Office didn't come as much of a surprise to anyone connected with policing but it would be foolish to ignore them.

Pay is still the main reason for people handing in their notice but other factors such as an ever-increasing workload and the growing demands and pressures of the job also need to be addressed.

We have faced many years of under-investment which means shortages in manpower and resources and failures in systems and processes.

The result is an overstretched, under-pressure workforce with officers having to deal with more issues than ever before.

The crisis will continue to deepen until we see these issues being addressed by a series of robust, sustainable measures.

Policing needs urgent investment across the whole service or good, experienced officers will continue to take their talents elsewhere.

Too many colleagues have decided enough's enough and when they leave the Force they take with them a wealth of knowledge and hard-earned experience which is impossible to replicate. The police service is poorer for their departures.

Despite the challenges and setbacks we all face, the police family is thriving and this was highlighted at the end of July when officers and staff from across the country got back in the saddle for the Police Unity Tour (PUT) cycle ride.

The PUT, which raised funds for Care of Police Survivors (COPS), has become a highlight of the policing calendar and this year's event had added poignancy for the West Mercia Police team after the death earlier this year of PC Andy Boardman, and more recently Specials Chief Inspector Chris Smith.

Andy and Chris, as well as their loved ones, were very much in the hearts and minds of the West Mercia riders throughout the weekend and particularly at the COPS service remembrance which is always held at the end of the event.

The police family is a close-knit one and the loss of a colleague always has a huge impact on the Force.

I'll end by congratulating Chief Constable Pippa Mills on her appointment as an Assistant Commissioner with the Metropolitan Police on behalf of everyone at West Mercia Police Federation

We have always had a good working relationship with the Chief and found her to be engaging and a very visible presence in her two years with the Force.

We wish her all the success in her new post at Scotland Yard.

“TOO MANY COLLEAGUES HAVE DECIDED ENOUGH'S ENOUGH AND WHEN THEY LEAVE THE FORCE THEY TAKE WITH THEM A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND HARD-EARNED EXPERIENCE WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE TO REPLICATE. THE POLICE SERVICE IS POORER FOR THEIR DEPARTURES.”



# FEDERATION WISHES CHIEF CONSTABLE SUCCESS IN NEW MET POLICE ROLE

West Mercia Police Federation has congratulated Chief Constable Pippa Mills on her appointment as an Assistant Commissioner with the Metropolitan Police.

Chief Constable Mills, who has led West Mercia Police since September 2021, has announced she will be leaving to return to the Force with which she began her policing career.

Branch secretary Peter Nightingale wished her success in her new role and said he hoped her successor will continue to have a positive relationship with the Federation.

He said: "I would like to congratulate our Chief Constable on being successful through a rigorous selection process to become Assistant Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police.

"The Federation has a good working relationship with the chief officer team and has regular meetings to discuss force issues.

"Our Chief has been engaging and very visible in her two years with the Force and



*Chief Constable Pippa Mills is leaving West Mercia Police.*

I hope that we can continue the positive relationship with her successor.

"We wish her all the success in her new post."

West Mercia Police's first female boss, Chief Constable Mills joined the Force from Essex Police where she was Deputy Chief Constable.

She said it had been "an incredible privilege" to serve Worcestershire,

Herefordshire and Shropshire.

She added: "While I am, of course, pleased with the opportunity it is bittersweet as I am leaving an incredible force, made up of officers, staff and volunteers who are passionate and dedicated to delivering a quality policing service and protecting people from harm.

"In my two years here the police service nationally has faced some of the biggest ever challenges and that's why I'm particularly proud that we have maintained high levels of public confidence in the Force."

She continued: "The local communities, and my colleagues here in West Mercia, can be certain that the Force will continue to go from strength to strength."

Chief Constable Mills' start date with the Metropolitan Police is yet to be confirmed but West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, John Campion, will now begin a process to ensure an interim Chief Constable is identified ahead of a full selection process.

## BRANCH SECRETARY PRAISES FORWARD-THINKING FORCE FOR IMPLEMENTING 'RIGHT CARE, RIGHT PERSON' APPROACH EARLY

The secretary of West Mercia Police Federation has welcomed the news that police forces across England and Wales will not always need to respond to mental health calls, a move that will free up hours of time for cops.

The changes come as part of the 'Right Care, Right Person', a model shaped around the way emergency services respond to calls involving concerns about mental health - with the aim being to ensure individuals in a mental health crisis are seen by the right people. Albeit, officers will still respond if there is a threat to life.

Branch secretary Peter Nightingale says the 'recent developments are most welcome'.

He said: "Policing has been stretched for years and following the cuts to other services during austerity we have been left to pick up the pieces.

"The demands of mental health on policing have increased massively and adversely impacted our ability to do what the majority of the public would consider is our core policing duties like preventing and detecting crime.

"For a long time, the Federation has



*The national partnership agreement will help people with a mental health crisis.*

been saying that we cannot continue like this, and these most recent developments are most welcome."

The national partnership agreement, which was confirmed in July, sets out a consistent framework and expectation across the country that police forces will work with the local NHS, to ensure people suffering mental health crisis will get a health response and not a response from the police.

And while the approach was officially agreed nationally by policing, the NHS and other relevant partners last month,

West Mercia Police was one of the few to introduce the initiative when it was first launched in April.

"So often the Federation is calling for change but in this instance, I would like to praise West Mercia Force for being so forward-thinking," added Peter.

"It is really important that the public get the correct and appropriate support and that may not always be police.

"Our members are not medical or mental health professionals and continuing to use them as such also places them at risk."

Peter said he hopes that the developmental changes will give officers and line managers the confidence they need when making deployment decisions.

"Our teams need to feel empowered are supported when they have made evidence-based decisions even in light of adverse outcomes. We will review the impact but this is a really positive move for our members."

By March 2024 it is expected that 24-hour mental health crisis phone lines will be in place across England and Wales and, over the next two years, funding is being put in place for mental health ambulances.

# ANDY BOARDMAN HONOURED AT ANNUAL COPS SERVICE

West Mercia PC Andy Boardman was among the fallen officers remembered at this year Care of Police Survivors Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 30 July.

Andy (43) died on duty on 11 April this year after collapsing when responding to an incident alongside West Midlands Ambulance Service paramedics.



PC Andy Boardman.

His widow, Luci, who is also a West Mercia Police officer, was at the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) service along with Andy's colleague and good friend Rob Seewoosaha, a West Mercia Police Federation workplace representative.

Chief Constable Pippa Mills represented the Force at the service and was among those to welcome a group of cyclists from the Force who took part in the Police Unity Tour, a sponsored cycle ride undertaken by hundreds of officers from forces across England and Wales.

During the ride, which covered a 200-mile route from the Force to the arboretum, the cyclists, who set off on Friday, wore a wristband dedicated to a fallen officer and a black armband in memory of Andy.

The West Mercia contingent also remembered Specials Chief Inspector Chris Smith who died on Sunday 23 July.

The families of fallen officers were joined by officers of all ranks at the service, with this year being the 20th annual event.

The service included a roll of honour for all officers, including Andy, who had died since last year's COPS remembrance service: **PC Daniel Golding** of the Metropolitan Police who died on 18 August 2022;

**PCSO Daniel Gower** of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Police who died on 23 November; **PS Steven Creal** of Sussex Police who died

on 21 December; **PC Richard Kemp** of Lancashire Constabulary who died on 27 December; **PC Bruce Lister** of Hertfordshire Police who died on 30 January; **PC Neil Pattinson** of Northumbria Police who died on 27 February, and **Inspector Gareth Earp** of Dyfed Powys Police who died on 29 June.

The remembrance service was opened by Christine Fulton, co-founder of COPS and the charity's life vice-president.

She talked about the dark days that followed the death of her husband of two years in Glasgow in 1994. PC Lewis Fulton was just 28 when he was stabbed to death as he sought to detain a knifeman who had already injured a police sergeant.

But her life changed when retired police officer Jim McNulty encouraged her to attend a COPS service in America.

Thinking it would be an 'interesting holiday', she was unprepared for the impact the trip to the States would have on her and recalled that it was the first time she had found herself in a room full of people who understood how she felt which lifted a huge weight off her shoulders.

Realising how valuable that support would have been if she had received it at the start of her grieving process, Christine wrote to all chief constables when she returned to the UK seeking support for the launch of a similar organisation but was largely told that it was a 'dreadful idea' and that families did not want to remember their loss, but wanted to forget.

Undeterred, Christine forged ahead, telling the service that she expected 34 survivors to attend the first event, but 64 turned up.

Peer support, she explained, was at the heart of the charity, adding that 300 family members were at this year's service.

The family weekend could be life-changing and life affirming, said Christine.

"It proves you can move forward but you don't leave your officer behind," she added, "They are always with you. They are part of you, and always will be."

Caroline Cox, younger sister of Inspector Mark Estall of Essex Police who died on 5 January 2017 talked about the positive impact COPS had on her life, describing it as 'an incredible charity'.



Andy with his wife, Luci, and their two daughters.

She began by thanking all the PUT riders.

"You will never know how much it means to us," said Caroline on behalf of fallen officers' families, "To us, it means everything."

In a similar vein, Katy McMurray, daughter of PC Alan McMurray of Lothian and Borders Police who died on 4 February 2006, when she was just two, talked about how the charity had helped her.

Katy recalled how meeting other children who had lost a police officer parent through COPS had helped her process her emotions and access support when she needed it.

The service also included music from the West Midlands Police Brass Band, songs from vocalist Diane Whyllie and an address from Gill Marshall, the COPS national president.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Office of the Lieutenant, the High Sheriff's Office, the Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire & Rescue Services, the National Police Chiefs' Council, Blue Light, the Police Unity Tour, the National Memorial Arboretum and COPS.

As Sir Peter Fahy, chair of the COPS trustees, prepared to close the service, the National Police Air Service helicopter flew over and performed a 'bow' to the congregation.

Families and other guests then made their way to The Beat – the avenue of trees dedicated to each force and to some individual officers – to lay red roses and wreaths.

# POLICE UNITY TOUR: RIDERS WEAR BLACK ARMBAND FOR FALLEN COLLEAGUE

A team of cyclists from West Mercia Police completed this year's Police Unity Tour (PUT) cycle challenge with each rider wearing a black armband in memory of PC Andy Boardman who collapsed and died while on duty in April.

The 16 riders set off from Force HQ on the morning of Friday 28 July and reached the finish line alongside hundreds of officers from across the country at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on Sunday 30 July.

They then attended an emotional COPS service of remembrance before laying flowers and wreaths.

Andy's wife Luci, who is also a West Mercia Police officer, attended the service during which the 43-year-old father-of-two's name was read out on the roll of honour along with 10 other fallen colleagues.

"The mood was always lighter when Andy was around," said Luci.

"He was so kind and caring, we miss him incredibly. He has left a massive hole in our hearts and in our lives."

Luci told how she and the couple's two daughters talk about Andy 'all of the time'.

"I want it to be as normal as possible for the girls, talking about their dad," she continued.

"He was always a really hands-on dad. Because I'm a police officer too, we couldn't always get time off together, so he would take the girls away on his own in the caravan - he loved spending quality time with them."

Andy had completed his public order training, as well as evidence-gathering training, which is where he met colleague-cum-good friend, Rob, a fed rep with West Mercia Police Federation.

"I first met Andy in 2017 and quickly, we became more than colleagues, we became good friends," said 48-year-old Rob.

Rob continued to explain how he, Andy and DC Lawrence Smith soon formed an 'unbreakable trio'.

"It sounds bizarre but they felt like brothers to me," said Rob.

"We respected each other so much. There was a sense of camaraderie and brotherhood between us."

Having desperately campaigned to be deployed together, Rob told how they were 'over the moon' when the trio were picked to attend [COP26 in Edinburgh in 2021](#).



Roads policing officers supported the PUT.

"I'll never forget the sound of Andy's voice when he called me to tell me we had all been picked to go to Scotland. It was great. We just knew how to work together," he continued.

"I felt safe working with him. I really trusted him, and felt so much better if Andy was by my side in difficult situations."

Rob recalls the moment he found out Andy had died, explaining how he was in disbelief and shock.

"I just felt a massive empty space form in my life," he added.

"A few days later I broke down to my wife. I've never been like that with a colleague before."

"The impact losing a colleague has on the force is huge. Andy was one of the nicest, more loveable cops and people I've ever known."

"And, while he didn't die on duty, we will also be remembering [Specials Chief Inspector Chris Smith](#). He wore the thin blue line just like me and I'll be thinking of his family this weekend."

Chris died on Sunday 23 July, having volunteered with West Mercia Police Force since 2003. Chris leaves behind his wife Kate and their three children

Rob ended: "The police are like the world's biggest gang, and we've lost a part of our family these past few months."

You can still support those who took part in this year's Police Unity Tour by donating to the [JustGiving page](#).

## NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY PROVIDES TIME "TO REFLECT AND REMEMBER"



West Mercia Police Federation secretary Peter Nightingale says the National Police Memorial Day is an important event to remember officers killed in the line of duty and to support their loved ones.

Representatives of the West Mercia branch will join police colleagues from across the UK at this year's service.

It's being held at St David's Hall in Cardiff on Sunday 24 September.

Peter said that the National Police Memorial Day was "one of the biggest events in the calendar for the Federation".

He added: "It's an important event for us to show our respects to the officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice."

"It's a time for us to reflect and remember, and to show our support for the loved ones who have been left behind."

The National Police Memorial Day was first held in 2004 and is supported by royalty, government and UK police services.

It is rotated around the four nations of the United Kingdom and is held on the closest Sunday to 29 September, which is St Michael's Day, the patron saint of policing.

It provides a dignified and sensitive service of remembrance to honour the courage and sacrifice of the almost 4,000 police officers who have been killed on duty.

A [tribute wall](#) is planned for people to share their messages of remembrance and support, as in previous years.

[Register to attend the service.](#)

The service starts at 2pm and attendees are asked to be seated no later than 1.30pm.



# WEST MERCIA OFFICER HONoured AT POLICE BRAVERY AWARDS

A West Mercia officer who jumped into a fast-flowing river to save a man's life has been celebrated at the national Police Bravery Awards 2023.

PC Chris Rogers was invited to 10 Downing Street on 13 July before attending a glittering awards ceremony in London in the evening alongside nominees from across forces in England and Wales.

Chris was accompanied to the awards ceremony by West Mercia Police Federation workplace representative Sergeant Rob Seewoosaha.

Rob said afterwards: "It was an absolute pleasure to be able to travel to London with Chris for what is one of the most important dates in the policing calendar.

"While we fully acknowledge that police officers go above and beyond while serving and protecting their communities, these awards give us the opportunity to really shine a light on their acts of bravery.

"All too often, their outstanding work goes unrecognised, and it seems it is almost taken for granted but it is worth also highlighting that each of the winners at the ceremony in accepting their award also told the audience they felt they were just doing their job and that any officer would have done the same."

In the incident for which Chris was nominated, he had been guarding a scene at Greyfriars Bridge, Herefordshire on 21 June last year, when he saw a man jump into the river from a bridge 25 metres away before landing face down.

The male appeared to be unconscious in the fast-flowing and murky water, and time was critical to avoid hypothermia setting in rapidly.

The brave PC made the decision to enter the water and dragged the man onto the river bank where he began chest



PC Chris Rogers ahead of the Downing Street reception.

compressions and urgent CPR.

The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance and made a full recovery.

West Mercia Police Federation chair Barry Horton said: "The bravery and selflessness that Chris showed that night shows that no matter where you are, or in this case which force you may be assisting, you must always have your wits about you in the event a situation like this arises.

The overall winners on the night were 14 West Midlands Police officers who risked

their lives to pull four children from a frozen river in December and perform CPR, though tragically the youngsters could not be saved.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak paid tribute to all the nominees, saying: "I am acutely aware of the pivotal role that the police play in our society. We depend on officers to fight crime and keep us safe. This is public service of the most noble kind and everyone working in policing has my enduring gratitude and admiration."

## FEDERATION PAYS TRIBUTE TO SPECIALS CHIEF INSPECTOR CHRIS SMITH

West Mercia Police Federation has paid tribute to Specials Chief Inspector Chris Smith who sadly died on Sunday 23 July.

Chris was Chief Inspector for Herefordshire and Rural Crime Team, and also a field intel officer and modern slavery single point of contact at West Mercia Police.

Branch chair Barry Horton said

father-of-three Chris was a hugely respected and much-loved Special.

"It is with extreme sadness to hear that Specials Chief Inspector Chris Smith has died," said Barry.

"His commitment to volunteering and dedication to supporting West Mercia Police was second to none, and that was clearly demonstrated by him climbing up the ranks to Specials Chief Inspector.

"I have no doubt he will leave a huge hole in our Specials team here at West Mercia. My thoughts are with Chris's family and friends at this extremely difficult time, especially his wife Kate and his three children, who he leaves behind."

Any members who require support from the Federation are asked to contact their local Federation representative.

# FORCE COMPLIANT WITH NEW POLICE DRIVER TRAINING REGULATIONS

The Force's driver training is compliant with the provisions of new legislation put in place to give officers better legal protection when carrying out their duties, the Federation has been assured.

Pete Nightingale, West Mercia Police Federation secretary, has discussed potential issues with chief officers and also with the learning and development and driver training departments.

"I have been reassured that as a Force we are in a strong position and are complying with the legislation. It is absolutely vital that our members receive the best training from appropriately trained, licensed staff and that, should there be any adverse incidents, the recent changes to legislation offering greater protection to our hard-working officers is afforded to them," says Pete.

Tim Rogers, pursuits driving lead for the Police Federation of England and Wales and secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, has written to all chief constables after discovering instances where police driver training has not been delivered by an accredited trainer, contrary to the provisions of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

"We fought long and hard for the changes to legislation that were needed to give police drivers better protection," says Tim, who led an eight-year Federation campaign for a change in the law.

"The new legislation means that police officers' driving will be judged by the standard of their peers, in line with their skills and training, but there are criteria attached to that – drivers have to be licensed and up to date with their training



and that training has to be delivered by fully accredited trainers and this is why we have written to chief constables as a reminder.

"This new legislation, and the legal guidance that underpins it, delivers what we set out to achieve, but we need forces to play their part and ensure they are fully compliant with this new statutory framework."

[Read more.](#)

**“ WE FOUGHT LONG AND HARD FOR THE CHANGES TO LEGISLATION THAT WERE NEEDED TO GIVE POLICE DRIVERS BETTER PROTECTION. ”**

## FED MEMBER DETERMINED TO HELP OTHER PARENTING POLICE

A West Mercia Fed member and mum-on-a-mission has told how she launched the National Police Breastfeeding Network after hearing from colleagues that they felt 'forced to stop breastfeeding' after returning to work following maternity leave.

Sergeant Kat Scrimshaw created the Facebook group 10 months ago, giving policing parents from all forces an online safe space to connect and support one another with their return to work following parental leave.

The group now has 365 members, 248 of which are official 'breast buddies' from across the nation, all of whom have received training from a midwife, providing them with the knowledge to effectively support colleagues.

"When I had my first daughter I didn't even think about how I would feed her, it genuinely never crossed my mind. She was born via c-section and the nurses placed her straight to my breast to feed and she fed," said mum-of-two Kat.

"When my return to work approached I felt very anxious about how it was going to work with my daughter and if I was still going to be able to feed her.

"The more people I spoke to, the more



*Sergeant Kat Scrimshaw.*

I realised how they would be affected simply by who their line manager was which clearly is not right. This is when I started to hear horror stories from my colleagues from my own and other forces. I became determined that I was going to try and support my colleagues with their breastfeeding journeys."

Kat explained that since launching the group, she has found that so many

women have sadly struggled to continue breastfeeding once returning to work.

"Some forces already have excellent expressing rooms and facilities in place others have nothing. It is a total postcode lottery as to how colleagues are treated," she continued.

"There seems to be a lack of knowledge and understanding from some line managers about how to support colleagues returning to work while breastfeeding."

The network has also established a working group, looking into returning to work and body armour, and Kat has been invited down to Parliament later this year to discuss national breastfeeding policies while showcasing the work of the National Police Breastfeeding Network.

Kat added: "We have helped colleagues make challenges to unacceptable behaviour, supported them in setting up expressing rooms as well as created breastfeeding work plans to assist colleagues with their return to work."

The next breast buddy course will be in November 2023. If you are interested in becoming a breast buddy then email [nationalpolicebreastfeedingnetwork@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:nationalpolicebreastfeedingnetwork@westmercia.police.uk)

To read the full story, [visit our website.](#)





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