

CONNECT

POLICE
Federation

OCTOBER 2023

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM WEST MERCIA POLICE FEDERATION



**REMEMBERING FALLEN COLLEAGUES
PLUS NEWS FROM THE FEDERATION CONFERENCE**

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Chair: Barry Horton
Secretary: Pete Nightingale

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VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

By **Barry Horton**, chair of West Mercia Police Federation



It's fair to say that this year's Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) annual conference was as important as any that I can remember in the 10 years since I started representing officers.

There are so many issues facing our members, the Federation and policing in general, and with a general election seemingly on the horizon, it felt like a pivotal moment.

It was a time for us to come together with a purpose so that when an election does come, we can advocate for you and ensure policing is front and centre on the

political agenda.

Pay and conditions continue to dominate our work. Of course we welcomed the seven per cent pay rise earlier in the year but even that doesn't keep pace with inflation, let alone take us back to where we were when austerity and the stringent cuts began.

We need root and branch reform of how our pay is reviewed so that it's a truly independent process. At the moment the review body has a remit set by Government, its recommendations are reviewed by Government and those recommendations aren't binding.

We also need investment in the infrastructure that supports our members - things as simple as a room in a police station for officers to debrief after a job, or just to have their lunch or a cup of tea.

We'll keep pushing this Government, and the future Government, to ensure it properly recognises and rewards officers for the unique job they do, and that their health and wellbeing are a priority.

The Home Secretary's speech to conference gave the odd crumb of comfort, such as the 24/7 mental health crisis support line for current and former officers.

However, that in itself is long overdue given the stresses and strains that members are increasingly placed under.

I thought, on the whole, her speech was lacking in real substance and I was so disappointed that there wasn't an announcement for an Elizabeth Medal to recognise our fallen colleagues.

Formal state recognition would ensure their courage is properly recognised and it would mean so much to the loved ones who are left behind.

It's a crying shame such a medal doesn't exist.



It seems like such a simple yet meaningful step to introduce an Elizabeth Medal, but we're still waiting.

We were able to pay our own respects to fallen colleagues at the annual National Police Memorial Day.

This year's service took on even more poignancy following the death of one of our own, PC Andy Boardman.

We were devastated when we heard the news about Andy, and the thoughts of everyone at the branch were with his family, friends and loved ones on memorial day.

“ WE’LL KEEP PUSHING THIS GOVERNMENT, AND THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT, TO ENSURE IT PROPERLY RECOGNISES AND REWARDS OFFICERS FOR THE UNIQUE JOB THEY DO, AND THAT THEIR HEALTH AND WELLBEING ARE A PRIORITY.

Our secretary Pete Nightingale, represented the branch at the event and was joined at the service in Cardiff by Chief Constable Pippa Mills, to reflect on the sacrifices made by our colleagues and to offer support to their loved ones.

Andy was one of eight officers who had died in the line of duty in the past 12 months and it's always a deeply emotional moment when their names are read out.

The National Police Memorial Day ensures we'll never forget them, and we hope that the Elizabeth Medal will soon be another way to honour our heroes.

Dog handlers

We were pleased the Force is backdating mileage payments for dog handlers, bringing us in line with other forces.

It's been a long road since a 2019 High Court ruling that handlers required to use their own vehicle to take their dog between work and where it sleeps should be paid an allowance.

In doing so, our Force is not only honouring the court judgement but is also in line National Police Chiefs' Council guidance.

It's with great reluctance that we've made the decision to increase Police Federation subscriptions from 1 January 2024.

Subs increased by 3.1 per cent in October 2022 following a democratic vote by the National Federation.

As a branch, we decided to cover the increase from our own reserves, which had the effect of freezing them for members.

A CHANGE TO SUBS

Police Federation subscriptions increased by 3.1 per cent in October 2022, but this rise was not passed on to members of West Mercia Police Federation.

Instead, the branch took the decision to cover the cost of the increase from its own reserves and it has continued to do that to try to help members already feeling the effects of below-inflation pay rises and the cost of living crisis.

But, from 1 January 2024, it can no longer fund the difference in the cost of subs following the increase. This will mean members will pay £24.31 per month for their subscription, though this reduces to £19.45 once tax relief is applied.

“The decision to increase subs by the same percentage as the annual pay award was taken at the Federation's conference in May 2022,” explains Pete Nightingale, secretary of West Mercia Police Federation, “It was a democratic decision with 221 voting for the increase and 170 voting against.

“But, as a branch, it just didn't sit right with us, even though we appreciated that the Federation itself was facing increased

costs, and we wanted to do what we could to help our members. We knew they were struggling with increased fuel and household bills and we didn't want to add to that burden.

“We decided to pick up the extra cost of the subs, in effect freezing them for members, and I believe we were only one of three branches in the country to do this.

“We always knew that we could not sustain this forever but we will have covered that increase for 15 months when we finally put that cost back to members in the new year.

“If we could have covered the costs for longer we would but it is critically important that the branch remains financially viable so that it can continue to provide a full range of support services for our members.”

Barry Horton, branch chair, added: “It's not been an easy decision and we're fully aware of the impact that the cost of living crisis is having, but we also have to ensure the long-term security of the branch so we can fully support our members.

Members are reminded that they can claim tax relief on their subscriptions. [Find out more.](#)

FEDERATION SURVEY MARKS WORLD MENOPAUSE DAY

All officers should take part in the second national menopause survey in a bid to help improve understanding and support.

That's the view of West Mercia Police Federation chair Barry Horton.

“The Federation jointly launched the ‘EveryonePause’ survey (18 October) to mark World Menopause Day which aims to raise awareness and highlight the support available to improve health and wellbeing,” says Barry.

“I think we have come a long way, in society in general but also in policing, in terms of talking more openly about the menopause and developing the support people need but there is still more work to be done.

“I hope the results of this survey give a snapshot of how the police service is implementing policies that help those experiencing the menopause while also identifying best practice and also where improvements are needed.

“Please take the time to fill out the survey and share your views and experiences.”

National Federation women's lead Hayley Aley, who is taking the lead with the survey, continued: “We are asking as many people as possible to take part in the online survey,” she explained: “Across the Federation, women representatives have reported that there is improvement since the first survey findings and the progress forces have made

to support officers and staff are welcomed. However, the picture varies from force to force and we now want to see what still needs to be done to support all at this difficult time in their lives.”

She added: “To support organisations in realising the scope and scale of issues around the menopause, we are asking officers, staff and line managers for their support with this survey. It's not solely about personal experiences, we also want to understand the awareness of line managers and senior leaders around this subject and what training is in place. It is anticipated that the findings of the second survey will help with the education, standardisation, understanding and right support for all.

She added: “The purpose of this survey is to give us the evidence we can provide to leaders to action what needs to change, to praise those that are getting it right, to share some good practice and to ensure forces provide the right support and guidance to all.”

The survey is open for six weeks and is a joint project being conducted by researchers at the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), and on behalf of PFEW, UNISON, the Police Superintendents' Association, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

[Take part in the survey.](#)

ANDY BOARDMAN IS HONOURED AT NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY

West Mercia PC Andy Boardman was among those honoured at this year's National Police Memorial Day (NPM Day) (NPMD).

Federation branch secretary Pete Nightingale and West Mercia Chief Constable Pippa Mills attended the event to commemorate colleagues who have died in the line of duty.

They were joined by police chiefs, politicians and religious leaders as well as the families, friends and colleagues of fallen officers at the service in Cardiff on Sunday 24 September. It was the 20th event of its kind.

Pete said: "The National Police Memorial Day service is one of the most significant dates on the policing calendar, made even more poignant this year with West Mercia's Andy Boardman sadly added to the Roll of



PC Andy Boardman.

Honour.

"The day gives us all the chance to reflect on the sacrifices made by colleagues in the previous 12 months and offer our support to the loved ones left behind.

"As always, the service was a moving occasion and it was an honour and a privilege to represent West Mercia Police Federation in Cardiff."

National police chaplain and NPMD co-ordinator, the Reverend Canon David Wilbraham MBE welcomed those attending.

He said: "Grief is a universal experience that affects all our lives and today we gather to support each other and pay tribute to those lost in service."

Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford, Home Secretary Suella Braverman and



Candles were lit in an act of remembrance.

shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper each gave a reading.

The Act of Remembrance saw candles, one from each of the four nations in the UK, lit to remind people of the 'undying flame of devotion and commitment, exemplified by those whom we remember today'.

Sid Mackay, father of Metropolitan PC Nina Mackay (25) who died in 1997 after being stabbed by a wanted man, represented England.

Dorothy Ellis, the mother of Gwent PC Adrian Ellis (29) who died in 1989 in a road traffic collision, represented Wales.

Scotland was represented by David Taylor, the son of Strathclyde Police PC George Taylor (27) who died in 1976 when he was attacked with an axe.

And Northern Ireland was represented by Mervyn and Dorothy Reynolds, parents of PC Philippa Reynolds (27) who died in 2013 following a road traffic collision.

The names of officers who had lost their lives during the past year were read by Police Federation Welsh affairs lead

Nicky Ryan.

This year's Roll of Honour featured:
PC Andrew Boardman, West Mercia Police
PC Bruce Lister, Hertfordshire Constabulary
Police Community Support Officer Daniel William Gower, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
Sergeant Steven Creal, Sussex Police
PC Richard James Joseph Kemp, Lancashire Constabulary
PC Neil Pattinson, Northumbria Police
Inspector Gareth Earp, Dyfed Powys Police
Sergeant Graham Saville, Nottinghamshire Police
Sergeant Paul Frear, West Midlands Police.

"We give thanks to God for their courage and their dedication," said Nicky, as the petals of remembrance fell, representing those who had lost their lives.

The event ended with audience members standing in silence, as the orchestra played 'Abide with Me' and the Last Post sounded.

The National Police Memorial Day 2024 will take place in Glasgow next year.

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National chair Steve Hartshorn.

NATIONAL CHAIR DISAPPOINTED AND FRUSTRATED AFTER HOME SECRETARY FAILS TO SIGN OFF 'MEDALS FOR HEROES' CAMPAIGN

The chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) says he is 'disappointed and frustrated' after Home Secretary Suella Braverman failed to sign off the Medals for Heroes campaign during this year's annual conference.

While Ms Braverman threw her support behind the campaign during her keynote address, she was unable to sign it off - a move that had been anticipated by many.

The Medals for Heroes campaign, which seeks to award a posthumous medal to emergency workers killed on duty, was

launched by the Federation, the Police Superintendents' Association, and the Prison Officers' Association last year.

Ms Braverman said: "There is no greater privilege as Home Secretary than working with the heroic men and women of our police.

"It is always deeply sobering - and moving - to hear the roll call of officers who have fallen in the line of duty in the past year.

"Words cannot do justice to the debt we owe them, nor to how keenly we feel for

their colleagues and loved ones. They will be forever cherished. I support your campaign for a Medal for Heroes."

Although the Home Secretary was unable to confirm the creation of a posthumous medal, she hopes the Government 'will be able to announce something soon'.

Following her speech, national Federation chair Steve Hartshorn said: "We were really hoping for an announcement today. It would have been a real gift to policing."

Acknowledging the fact that Bryn Hughes MBE - who's been a driving force behind the campaign after his daughter PC Nicola Hughes was killed on duty in 2012 - had made a special trip to Manchester where this year's online conference was filmed, Steve added: "I'm disappointed, it would've been special. To us, it seems so simple and I'm very frustrated."

“ NOBODY JOINS THE JOB EXPECTING AN EASY LIFE. BUT THEY DO EXPECT TO BE APPRECIATED, VALUED AND SUPPORTED.

Steve was speaking after his keynote address, in which he called upon Ms Braverman to 'protect officers from burning out'.

He mentioned this year's seven per cent pay award, calling the move 'a step in the right direction' but urged the Home Secretary to 'put things right to ensure police pay is fair', noting that police officers are 'at least 17 per cent behind where we should be'.

Steve told how members feel there has been 'a real breakdown in the special relationship that has existed between governments of all political colours and the police' which has led to the organisation 'talking about seeking greater industrial rights'.

He later added: "Nobody joins the job expecting an easy life. But they do expect to be appreciated, valued and supported.

"Regrettably, it does not always feel that way - whether it be the media, senior police leaders and, sorry to say it, Home Secretary, but Government too.

"For several years now, we have called out the need for sustained, long-term funding for policing. Funding that would allow us to plan for the future, rather than depend on yearly hand-outs which can only ever provide a short-term sticking plaster to a deep wound.

"A five-year inflation-linked funding settlement would be a good start."

Continued from Page 5

Steve later called on the Home Secretary to 'protect officers from burning out'. He explained: "Another issue facing officers, because of increased demands and workloads and less downtime, is that of fatigue.

"The Health and Safety Executive identifies fatigue as a major factor when it comes to people's health, their performance, and the increased likelihood of accident or error. Your support to protect officers from burning out would be appreciated Home Secretary."

The national chair ended his speech with this year's asks for the Home Secretary:

- **We want to keep politics out of policing**
- **We want fair pay and a truly independent pay mechanism**
- **We want police officers to have access to the best possible protective kit and equipment**
- **We want a fair, open and transparent process of vetting and time limits on misconduct investigations**
- **We want the removal of unnecessary bureaucracy that prevents officers from getting on with the job**
- **We want long-term funding for policing so we can plan and make best use of economies of scale**
- **We want to know you have our backs and appreciate what police officers do, that you understand the difficult, dangerous and demanding environment in which we work.**

He ended: "And [finally] that you support us and speak up for us Home Secretary - in your words and your actions."

Speaking via video link Ms Braverman addressed her recent decision to launch a review into police impartiality, having accused officers of 'being involved in political matters'.

She said: "I'm not fighting my campaign against political correctness in policing only for the sake of the law-abiding majority who want to see officers patrolling the streets,

“ THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE IDENTIFY FATIGUE AS A MAJOR FACTOR WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE'S HEALTH, THEIR PERFORMANCE, AND THE INCREASED LIKELIHOOD OF ACCIDENT OR ERROR. YOUR SUPPORT TO PROTECT OFFICERS FROM BURNING OUT WOULD BE APPRECIATED HOME SECRETARY.

not policing pronouns on Twitter.

"I also know that's what the majority of you signed up for, too.

"You need clarity from political leaders and I could not be clearer: I believe in the Peelian Principles of policing, I believe in investigating every crime, and I believe in keeping the public safe by catching criminals.

"Anything that distracts from this is unwelcome - whether that's enforcing non-existent blasphemy laws, unnecessarily recording a non-crime hate incident or joining in with political demonstrations."

Ms Braverman praised forces for agreeing to 'follow all reasonable lines of enquiry for all crime types', adding: "I expect to see significant improvements in the way police approach crimes like phone theft, car theft, shoplifting, and criminal damage - in order to solve more crimes and restore public confidence in local policing.

"Crime investigations should not be screened out solely on the basis that they are perceived as "minor" and all crimes merit investigation where there is a reasonable line of enquiry to follow up.

"I'm pleased that the police have all committed to attend the scene of every domestic burglary. It's a terrible crime which causes misery and fear for victims.

"Nor must we ignore the havoc wreaked by anti-social behaviour. The Government's action plan takes the fight to perpetrators, including through the dispensation of immediate justice.

"Neighbourhood policing is the bedrock of keeping the public safe and making sure they feel safe."

The Home Secretary spoke of the Government's work surrounding stop-and-search powers, the banning of zombie-style

knives and hopes to approve new Taser devices next year.

In response to concerns surrounding fatigue, Ms Braverman said: "It is perfectly understandable that you are worried about levels of fatigue in policing and its effects on wellbeing.

"Long, irregular, and uncertain hours doing an exceptionally demanding job are inevitably challenging - but that doesn't mean we should just accept that it will take a terrible toll."

Ms Braverman drew attention to Phase 2 of the Government-funded fatigue project and the launch of the first national family support package, both being co-ordinated by the National Police Wellbeing Service, Oscar Kilo.

She said: "Mental health matters just as much as physical health", adding: "Indeed, mental ill health can, tragically, claim lives - as some of you know all too well.

"I am very pleased to be able to announce that we will provide additional funding to set up a 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Support Line for current and former members of the police workforce.

"There are employee assistance programmes in a number of forces, with telephone counselling available, but there is no national 24/7 suicide prevention line."

The Home Secretary ended with a final thank you: "You have chosen a job that is never easy. But it is also immensely worthwhile. Indeed, it is essential - the consequences of not having a world-class police force are too terrible to contemplate.

"And so, my final message is a simple one: thank you."

[Conference Q & A: Read how the national panel were questioned on firearm officer protections, media criticism and CEO pay.](#)



HOME SECRETARY GRILLED ON POLICE PAY AND OFFICER MORALE



Home Secretary Suella Braverman.

Home Secretary was grilled by Federation members on topics including police pay, misconduct and why seasoned officers are saying they would not join the service if they had their time again.

Following her keynote address, she took questions from viewing members as well as conference host Ian Collins.

Ms Braverman said: "I was very pleased to announce in July that the Government had accepted the Police Remuneration Review Body's recommendation to award the consolidated increase of seven per cent. I believe that that does reflect the commitment, hard work and the economic climate within which we are working."

Describing it as a "large pay increase", the Home Secretary added that it reflected the Government's gratitude and appreciation for frontline police officers.

Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn disagreed, saying the award was a "step in the right direction but 10 per cent short" of where the Federation's research and the Social Market Foundation said it should be.

Challenged by a viewing member about plans to give chief officers the power to hire and fire, the Home Secretary said public confidence in policing needed to be restored.

"We hold chiefs to account for the culture and standards in their forces, and therefore it's important that chiefs have a leading role in determining who should be dismissed," she asserted.

The national chair characterised the move as a backward step and a return to the "kangaroo court system".

He repeated earlier assertions that chief constables are broadly content with the current situation where legally qualified chairs preside over misconduct panels.

When asked by a viewing Federation member what assurance the Home Secretary could give to firearms officers and their families, after a high-profile case where an officer was cleared of an unlawful killing but now faces a charge of gross misconduct.

The Home Secretary said she had ordered a review to report by the end of the year, to ensure that the "legal and operational frameworks within which the police operate are robust and that they

command the confidence of both officers and the public".

She accepted that firearms officers do "an extremely challenging job" in "fast-moving situations, and life-threatening scenarios".

National chair Steve, a blue card-carrying officer himself, said firearms colleagues are not afraid of scrutiny, adding: "Colleagues want to know they can do their job properly and professionally, without worrying before they use their use of force. And this doesn't just extend to firearms officers, this now extends to every officer who may use force, or indeed senior officers who authorised an operation."

A viewing member who has been a police constable of 29 years' service told the Home Secretary that if he could go back 30 years, he would tell his younger self not to join the police - a view he said was widely held among colleagues.

The Home Secretary replied that this was "disappointing" to hear but it doesn't tally with the new recruits she meets as part of the 20,000-officer uplift.

"Whenever I meet those new recruits, I tell them, it's a privilege and an honour to wear the badge," said Ms Braverman. "You occupy a leadership role in your communities, but also in your country.

"People will look to you in their gravest hours, and it will be you who will potentially save their lives and change the course of their lives. And that is a great honour. I'm constantly inspired by the new recruits who are coming energetically into the ranks every day."

“ COLLEAGUES WANT TO KNOW THEY CAN DO THEIR JOB PROPERLY AND PROFESSIONALLY, WITHOUT WORRYING BEFORE THEY USE THEIR USE OF FORCE. AND THIS DOESN'T JUST EXTEND TO FIREARMS OFFICERS, THIS NOW EXTENDS TO EVERY OFFICER WHO MAY USE FORCE, OR INDEED SENIOR OFFICERS WHO AUTHORISED AN OPERATION.

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National secretary
Calum Macleod.



NATIONAL SECRETARY ADMITS HE WOULD TELL YOUNGER SELF TO CHOOSE ALTERNATIVE CAREER

National secretary Calum Macleod told this year's Federation conference that he would not join the police if he had his time again.

He said policing had changed considerably since he joined in the 1990s and that, with the levels of pay, lack of support and increased scrutiny, he would not sign up to serve.

Speaking during his update on Day 1 of the annual two-day event, he said: "I question why people would for the salary they achieve, for the support they do not achieve, why people would place themselves and their families at risk under the current climate.

"I'm not saying it can't be redressed, but if my 11-year-old came to me and said he wanted to join the police I'd be encouraging him to look in a different avenue."

Calum, who is also the Federation's pay and rewards lead and a Region 7 (Wales) representative, said pay and the levels of scrutiny were among the reasons for officers leaving the service, as he called on the political parties to make policing more of a priority.

"The Government needs to recognise policing," he added. "It needs to be higher up the agenda.

"I would encourage any political party to not only place policing higher up their list of priorities, as the safety and security of the public should be, but also include it higher up in their manifesto."

Talking during a question and answer session with conference host Ian Collins, Calum said that pay would continue to be his top priority as he revealed he had been contacted by officers for whom the recent seven per cent pay rise had "kept a roof over their heads or food on the table for their families".

Asked to comment on officers who were forced to take on second jobs, he said: "I would ask why is one job not enough?"

"The plain and simple answer is police officers should be remunerated to an appropriate level to support them, their families and be comfortable for the risks they undertake for society.

"How can it be right police officers struggle to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table and then be expected to run into a situation where someone is carrying an axe?"

"Police officers should be appropriately paid. Let's start with what they're already down, 20p in the pound less than they had in 2010. That's ridiculous."

CEO APOLOGISES TO MEMBERS ON BEHALF OF FEDERATION



Federation CEO Mukund Krishna.

The Police Federation's chief executive officer has apologised to members for the organisation's failure to challenge the Government's change in pensions policy.

Mukund Krishna told the annual conference: "I am deeply sorry to those members who have been impacted by the decision. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for putting the situation right."

He announced an independent review to understand what went wrong and what steps will be required to create a Police Federation fit for the future. Mukund admitted that the court judgement was a "hammer blow" that had left the Federation financially exposed and was one of the main reasons for the conference to be held virtually this year, albeit from a venue in Manchester.

As a 'not for profit' organisation reliant on member subscriptions to fund services to members, we are "not financially designed to withstand these types of group claims", Mukund conceded. And he warned that the National Board will have to make difficult decisions to safeguard the Federation going forward.

Mukund is a global management consultant by background, who specialised in working with boards and organisations to deliver change. He has spent nearly 15 years working within the UK criminal justice system.

Defending the National Board's decision to appoint a CEO during a time of tight finances, he said it was necessary to have independent business sector expertise to professionalise the Federation.

[Read more from Mukund's speech at this year's conference.](#)

POLICE OFFICERS CHOOSING TO BE ASSAULTED OVER MISCONDUCT FEARS

Police officers are choosing to be assaulted rather than use force for fear of being hauled before a misconduct hearing, the conference heard.

National Board member Phil Jones said more than 100 officers were attacked in their jobs every day.

But, he explained, many were reluctant to use force when they're attacked because they could face disciplinary proceedings.

Phil, a conduct and performance lead on the Federation National Board and a Region 3 representative covering the Midlands, was speaking during a debate on Government proposals to allow chief constables to chair misconduct hearings rather than an independent lawyer.

Under the proposals, a finding of gross misconduct would automatically result in a police officer's dismissal, unless there were exceptional circumstances.

Phil said: "We have 110 officers assaulted every day but people are choosing to be assaulted rather than use force because ultimately they could be found wanting in a gross misconduct arena, which, if the Home Office brings in these regulations, you're looking at automatic dismissal. That can't be right."

Phil asked how many senior officers had been held to account for "systemic failures" that have contributed to where policing is today.

"There were senior officers in post then that are in now, and how culpable are they and how many have been held to account?"

"Whereas, with the changes that are proposed, it's my view our members are disproportionately disadvantaged with the gross misconduct element where there's a presumption of dismissal," he said.

Chief Superintendent Michael Allen, head of Greater Manchester Police professional standards department, said the changes were "a rebuttable presumption of dismissal".

"There is still scope for an officer to be found guilty of gross misconduct but receive a sanction lower than dismissal if there are extenuating or mitigating circumstances," he said.

Addressing Phil's point about leaders being held to account, he added: "Professional standards departments (PSDs) across the country will be accused of going for the low hanging fruit.

"Everyone is responsible for high



Ian Collins (left) leads the panel session featuring Phil Jones (centre) and Chief Superintendent Michael Allen.

standards of professional behaviour. The PSDs must look upwards as much as they look downwards.

"Senior officers set the standards and the culture. When you go to the College of Policing guidance on outcomes in dismissals, those of the higher rank should suffer the hardest fall and PSDs should be switched on to that."

John Bassett, a barrister and president of the National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs, said legally qualified chairs (LQCs) were introduced to make the process "open, transparent and fair".

He asked: "We have had the Home Office review and there's been a number of announcements in the press suggesting dismissals by LQC-chaired panels have been reduced since their introduction, that we are 'fundamentally soft', but when you read the review itself that is simply not substantiated.

"There has not been a reduction in the number of dismissals."

He added: "What is intended to be achieved by the proposed change other than to give chief officers more power over the process than they currently have?"

"At the moment we're the best thing that prevents unfair dismissal of officers as they can't bring claims in employment tribunals."

Phil said there was no place in policing for officers who abused their position, and added that chief officers already have the power to dismiss under certain circumstances where the evidence was incontrovertible.

"They can go to accelerated fast-track

hearings," he said. "They have that mechanism already.

"But where there have been genuine mistakes and learning, that has to be an option."

Ch Supt Michael Allen said: "We have still people serving who have been found proven in terms of allegations of abuse of position for sexual purpose where they predated on vulnerable females, where they've tested positive on a drugs test, where they've lied in evidence, where they've been found going equipped.

"These are serious matters that are completely incompatible with policing yet within the 2016 and 2020 system those individuals have been allowed to remain in policing, which is a problem operationally.

"It's those officers who don't deserve to be in policing and that's why policing has asked for a chief constable or assistant chief constable-chaired hearing to exit those individuals.

"The chief constable as the employer should have a greater say."

Phil said officers should be able to expect "a fair and transparent process".

"We like to think we're not politicised, but we are," he said. "Police and Crime Commissioners are politically aligned, and who's to say that a chief officer may make a decision based on the fact they're having a contract extended in six months' time, or not as the case maybe?"

"We know public confidence is huge, and it needs to be, and that police officers have to be accountable for the actions they do or don't do, but even those officers deserve a fair hearing."

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MEMBERS URGED TO CALL ON LOCAL MPS TO BACK #SIMPLIFYDG6 CAMPAIGN

Members were urged to call on their local MPs to back the #SimplifyDG6 campaign when the chair of the Federation's National Detectives' Forum addressed conference.

Ben Hudson who was speaking as part of the 'Disclosure and redaction - championing change' session was joined by Surrey Police Chief Constable and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) disclosure lead Tim de Meyer, who opened the discussion with: "Disclosure isn't an afterthought, it's the main event of an investigation."

Ben began by updating conference on progress made in the past 12 months, and specifically since last May when the Attorney General's office released its Annual Review of Disclosure.

"On reviewing the guidance, it became clear to me that the issue wasn't necessarily the guidance," recalled Ben, "The issue was the Data Protection Act and the restrictions it placed on policing when passing material to the CPS.

"So on 30 August last year [2022], the Police Federation officially launched the #SimplifyDG6 campaign."

Ben explained that the campaign asks the Government to make amendments to

the Data Protection Act to simplify the redaction obligations placed on police officers and calls on the NPCC, the College of Policing, and the CPS to jointly work with the Federation to ensure all members across the country receive face-to-face training on disclosure procedures.

On 10 January 2023, the campaign was picked up by Suffolk MP Peter Aldous who raised the issue in the Parliament and asked Edward Argar, minister of state for victims and sentencing, about his awareness of the impact of disclosure rules on policing and its unintended consequences.

The campaign has also been championed by Loughborough MP Jane Hunt, who in Ben's words has 'put simply, been fantastic'.

"With Jane and Peter's support, the campaign has been propelled," continued Ben, who has since sought legal advice and had an appropriate draft annex prepared to facilitate the transfer of personal data between the police service and the Crown Prosecution Service prior to charging decisions, "We hope this draft can be simply inserted into the Data Protection and Digital Information (No 2) Bill.

"Since last addressing you, we have taken big steps forward. I am now calling



Ben Hudson.

upon the Government to adopt our amendment into the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill."

Ben is now urging MPs nationally to ask ministers, especially those within the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology who are the bill sponsors, 'why isn't this being supported, why the amendment simply isn't being adopted into the act, and why they don't want to help put officers back into their communities and enable both victims and those accused of crimes to receive swifter charging decisions?'

He ended with: "I call upon the Government to assist policing by adopting this simple and straightforward, low-risk amendment to the Data Protection and Digital Information Act."

[Read more on the Federation's #SimplifyDG6 campaign.](#)

CALLS FOR GREATER INVESTMENT IN OFFICERS' HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Police Federation's joint wellbeing lead has urged Home Secretary Suella Braverman to "invest with meaning" in officers' health and wellbeing as he spelt out the challenges they face.

Paul Williams told the annual conference that 344 officers took their own lives between 2001 and 2020 - more than one per month.

"The number is rising, the issue is serious and real and the wellbeing of our cops needs real time and real investment," he said.

Paul said there have been more than 40,000 assaults on police officers in the past year, with more than 11,000 resulting in physical injury.

"Our officers face this on a daily basis throughout their career," he said. "There's still that assumption by many it's part of being a cop and we shouldn't expect anything else. It's wrong. It can't be an acceptable culture."

He said that attacks on officers along with attending traumatic incidents, heavy workloads, increased bureaucracy, intense scrutiny and trial by social media were having an impact on officers.

Speaking during a session titled Workforce Under Pressure - a true picture of police wellbeing, he said: "If it's expected that policing means running towards danger, taking physical and verbal abuse and enormous trauma exposure then at least take officers from the bottom of the pile and provide appropriate and meaningful welfare support with an insistence on mandatory framework of support for forces."

[Read more from this year's wellbeing session.](#)

SURVEY REVEALS OFFICERS HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN 'UNINSPIRING' SENIOR LEADERS

Force promotions processes need reforming so that the best policing leaders can be identified and developed, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) annual conference was told.

Paul Matthews, the PFEW professional development lead, told conference that three-quarters of respondents to recent surveys said they had no confidence in their senior leaders and found them uninspiring.

He was speaking during a session called Leadership in Policing in which he said that failing leadership was "contributing towards the negative organisational culture where officers feel unsupported, demotivated and at times ostracised".

Paul said: "There's something fundamentally wrong with the current promotion process and the leaders that seem to breeze through it.

"Officers want leaders who are supportive, compassionate, loyal and inspiring. They want leaders that have sufficient policing pedigree to know what they're doing, and to use this experience to lead by example, setting the tone and culture to drive up standards.

"They want leaders that will listen and adapt to ideas rather than simply driving through change for the sake of it, ignoring the views of those around them.

"Instead, we seem to have an ever-increasing portfolio of leaders that silently progress through the ranks by delegating downwards instead of challenging upwards. Leaders that have been rewarded not by their talents but by their ability to pass through a buzzword bingo promotion process and for not rattling cages along the way.

"It's no surprise that we find in recent surveys that over three-quarters of police respondents say they have no confidence in their senior leadership and they find them uninspiring."

[Read more from Paul Matthews.](#)

NDAS USED TO SILENCE VICTIMS OF SEXISM AND MISOGYNY

A panel discussion around misogyny at this year's conference revealed that more than 234 Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA) have been handed out across the country to silence victims.

Taking place during Day 1 of the annual event, the session featured national Federation women in policing co-leads Sue Honeywill and Belinda Goodwin, chief fire officer for Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service Kathryn Billing and ITV1 Wales News presenter Justina Simpson.

The discussion shined a light on misogyny within the police service, focussing on acknowledging and accepting where policing has got things wrong, as well as changing the culture within the organisation.

Sue said: "We cannot get away from the fact that there have been far too many instances of misogyny and sexism involving some members of the police service, fire service and armed forces in recent years.

"Sadly, this has included a few police officers committing acts of violence and abuse against women, including behaviour towards colleagues.

"This has a devastating impact on every decent hardworking police officer out there doing a difficult job in incredibly challenging times. I have spoken to several male colleagues who tell me it's tough being a male police officer at the moment. It remains

our intention to take everyone on this journey, as we continue to address misogyny in policing, but by no means is it lost on me how divisive and emotive this subject remains."

“ WE CANNOT GET AWAY FROM THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN FAR TOO MANY INSTANCES OF MISOGYNY AND SEXISM INVOLVING SOME MEMBERS OF THE POLICE SERVICE, FIRE SERVICE AND ARMED FORCES IN RECENT YEARS.

The session highlighted the use of NDAs being used by forces to prevent victims from sharing their stories and experiences. According to the study, Durham Constabulary is the only force to disclose it no longer uses them.

The Federation is now calling on chief constables to stop the use of NDAs, with Belinda adding: "Many of the officers become mentally ill as a result, to endure the process of an employment tribunal and then be told you can't talk about it because of an NDA is humiliating, and it's wrong."

[Read more from the misogyny session.](#)

MUTUAL AID: CURRENT ALLOWANCES 'NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE'

The Police Federation is pushing for 'away from home' allowances for officers in England and Wales to be aligned with those in Scotland, the annual conference heard.

Operational policing lead Steve Taylor said the current system "wasn't fit for purpose" as he outlined the Federation's work in advocating to bring England and Wales in line with the Scottish model.

Speaking during a conference session on the future thinking of mutual aid, he said the 'away from home' allowance can be claimed if an officer is away from home overnight.

He added that an extra hardship allowance can be claimed where accommodation was substandard.

"The co-dependency of these two allowances is a disgrace in this modern age that's simply not fit for purpose," he said.

"Standards of accommodation vary greatly across the country. We must do all we can to level that as much as possible."

Steve said that Police Scotland worked under different regulations.

"They have a far more equitable and

sensible solution when it comes to allowances," he said.

He said Federation secretary Calum Macleod had put together an evidence paper that's been submitted to the Police Consultative Forum advocating moving England and Wales to the Scottish model.

"If it's legitimate use of taxpayers' money for colleagues from north of the border doing the same job to be in receipt of X then surely it's legitimate for officers from England and Wales to be in receipt of X as well.

"The difference between the two presently is on your best day with our current allowance you receive £80 for the difficulties of staying in substandard accommodation.

"Next door could be an officer from Police Scotland doing exactly the same role and their allowances total £210.

"It's all taxpayers' money. It's not fair. It's not consistent. And we're keen to see change in that area."

[Read more from the mutual aid session.](#)

TREASURER: 'SPENDING MUST BE BASED ON VALUE FOR MEMBERS'

The national treasurer for the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) set out a mantra of "value not cost" as he updated members on the organisation's financial outlook.

Simon Kempton explained to conference: "Our reps are working day and night to improve things for police officers and so much goes unseen. That's why we know [member services] are an area that's absolutely vital to fund."

Simon highlighted the fact that members can claim tax relief for their Federation subscriptions. This reduces a £24.31 monthly membership to £19.45.

"This is not by accident or because the taxman was feeling generous," said Simon. "It's because the Federation fought to get this relief. It's worth hundreds of pounds for every officer and we must make sure every officer knows about it."

The Federation receives £29 million in income from subs but is facing rising legal bills. The presentation revealed spending last year of £11.4m on legal costs, £8m on payroll, £4.1m to branches, and £9.7m on invoices and expenses. Simon and his deputy Kevin Wilson insisted that spending was focused on areas that provide the best for members, "exactly where it should be".

'RETIREMENT CAN BE DAUNTING - BUT HELP IS AVAILABLE'

'I've been a cop for most of my working life, can I do anything else?' These are natural thoughts to have when facing the challenge of an imminent retirement, a conference session on life after policing revealed.

The discussion, which took place on Day 1 of the two-day event, heard how many officers handing in their warrant card can find it a traumatic and worrying experience.

Norfolk Police Federation secretary Sam Hawkins offered hope that a new start can be very positive: "I would urge colleagues not to underestimate the transferable skills that police officers have and our values, which are sought after in other professions."

Dave Bamber, a former National Board member for the Federation and recently retired, summed up the dilemma succinctly.

"I did have a load of anticipation and trepidation," he admits. "I've had a warrant card in my pocket for 30 years and to give that up was a big thing. It was part of my identity. When we hand back our warrant card, that's it, our licence to practise has gone."

Dave has returned to a wider role in policing to keep busy.

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS?

Noise-induced hearing loss can drastically affect those who work in law enforcement

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is a term used to describe hearing loss, deafness or tinnitus caused by exposure to excessive noise at work where insufficient or no training or ear protection has been provided. NIHL can have a significant impact on those who work in law enforcement, particularly those who use firearms, due to frequent exposure to extremely high levels of noise in their line of work.

Though hearing loss is a common symptom of age, it's important to note the distinct signs that indicate noise-induced hearing loss. Some signs to look out for include:

- **Difficulty hearing or understanding speech, particularly in environments with background noise.**
- **Tinnitus, which is a ringing, buzzing, hissing, or other sounds in one ear or both ears.**
- **Some people become more sensitive to loud noises. Everyday sounds that were previously tolerable may become uncomfortable or even painful.**
- **Difficulty accurately determining the direction a sound is coming from.**
- **Constantly increasing the volume of the television or radio.**
- **Asking others to speak louder or repeat themselves frequently.**
- **Fatigue or strain from listening for extended periods of time.**

All these signs and symptoms can vary in severity and differ from person to person.

As police officers often deal with exposure to loud sounds such as gunshots, sirens, explosions, and high-decibel events, this can and often does lead to damage being sustained to the sensitive structures of the inner ear, which can turn into noise-induced hearing loss. Though symptoms differ, this could cause a permanent decrease in hearing sensitivity, making it more difficult for police officers to hear important sounds, such as verbal commands from colleagues or approaching emergency vehicles.

Hearing loss may also compromise an officer's situational awareness, making them less able to identify any potential threats or hazards. This can impact the ability to respond quickly and appropriately to dangerous situations, potentially jeopardising their safety and the safety of others. Hearing loss could even affect an officer's job performance, especially in tasks that require good hearing abilities, such as gathering witness statements, conducting interviews, or participating in surveillance operations.

To minimise the risk of police officers developing noise-induced hearing loss, it's important for police forces to implement hearing conservation programmes. These could include training in and the provision of hearing protection devices, regular hearing screenings, education on the risks of noise exposure, and strategies to minimise exposure to loud sounds whenever possible. The law says that every employer has a duty of care to protect employees from suffering harm in the workplace, including noise induced injuries.

Madelene Holdsworth, Managing Director of Specialist Legal Services and expert in noise induced hearing loss cases on behalf of police officers, says: 'It's imperative that police departments have stringent safety strategies in place to reduce noise induced hearing loss and tinnitus amongst their staff. Having worked with police federations for over 60 years, we've seen the detrimental impact that hearing loss and tinnitus can have on officers. Employers' duty of care is crucial in safeguarding the health and safety of police officers and safety measures used must be fully effective at all times particularly around the use of radio earpieces.'

Police officers, like other employees, are protected by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. These regulations set out the standards and requirements for employers to manage and control noise in the workplace to prevent occupational hearing loss.

If a police officer believes that their hearing loss was caused or significantly worsened by their work environment, they may be eligible to make a claim for compensation.

Expert noise-induced hearing loss claims lawyers at Slater and Gordon will arrange for you to be examined by a medical professional to determine what proportion of your hearing loss is due to workplace exposures to noise, and on the basis of that independent medical opinion, you will be advised on whether you have a claim that can be pursued.



"Now the pressure's gone, I can get back to my police work."

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