

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

February/March 2020

Marathon legend backs Team #WMPMND

—see Pages 18 and 19



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Welcome

Welcome to the February/March 2020 edition of *federation* - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role – though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

Cover photo: Marathon legend Paula Radcliffe signs one of the water bottles donated for each #WMPMND runner taking part in the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in support of ACC Chris Johnson - see Pages 18 and 19.

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Representing and supporting officers



By **Jon Nott**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

The start of any new year gives us all a chance to set ourselves a few objectives and, of course, this has been particularly important for me this year since I am only a few months into my role as chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Moving into my full-time Federation position was delayed a little as, at the time of taking on this role, I was tied up in court as a result of a criminal case I was involved in with my previous post.

So, with that now concluded, I have welcomed the opportunity to start to get fully to grips with the responsibilities involved with being the Federation chair.

I had already noticed that my diary had quickly filled up with various meetings Force-wide and also with Federation training courses and meetings, both regionally and nationally.

But, for me, the most important meetings have been with Federation members. Face to face contact and telephone conversations with members are critical if I am to represent your views at all the meetings I attend and, for that reason, I want to get out around the Force as much as possible to encourage officers to talk to me, share their concerns and suggest areas where they feel the Federation could help.

My primary objective, in a nutshell, is to represent and support Federation members in all that I do, and that is an objective shared by all our branch officials, workplace representatives and staff.

While we will keep this at the heart of all our activities, we are also putting the emphasis on three main streams of work – issues around officer recruitment and retention with the clear link to pay and conditions, assaults and officer safety and the wellbeing of officers.

In terms of officer recruitment and retention, we are, to a certain extent, in the hands of both the Government and the Force.

We have concerns over whether the Force will be able to recruit the number of new officers it has been allocated under the first year of the Government's three-year plan to boost officer numbers nationwide by 20,000.

It has a target of taking on 366 and, while the allocation, which was the second highest in the country behind only the Met, was welcomed it will not take the Force back to the establishment figures pre-budget cuts.

The new recruits will eventually help officers currently struggling with a high workload that has taken its toll on them, but this is not going to happen overnight and throughout the three years that we are taking on these new officers we will, of course, still be losing current officers through retirement, resignation, dismissal or transferral to another force.

We need the Government to devise a long-term funding strategy that allows forces to properly plan (see Page 6) and recruit to respond to identified demand but

we also need the Force to consider some of the issues that are affecting officer retention.

For example, we all know officer morale has been low due to the effects of the funding cuts, with fewer and fewer officers seemingly expected to do more and more work resulting in record levels of officers reporting stress and mental ill-health. But what is being done to tackle this?

We are hearing stories of young in service officers transferring to other forces almost as soon as they come out of their training period. This represents a wasted investment in my opinion. Do we know why this is happening? And how can we tackle this?

We have started 2020 as we mean to go on, raising a number of issues of concern at the first Force assaults meeting of the year (see Page 12) and we welcome the Force's response; a sign that officer wellbeing is being taken very seriously at chief officer level.

This then links in with the wider issue of officer wellbeing. Officers are currently under enormous pressure with the reduction in numbers meaning there are less to respond to the public demand and we also have investigators carrying a far bigger workload. This has an effect on both their physical and emotional health, and we will continue to push the Force to properly support officers who are both off work and those who have remained at work.

Before signing off, I would just like to give an assurance that we are monitoring developments around police pensions and will be pushing the Federation's National Board to ensure the best possible outcome for all officers.

“ We have started 2020 as we mean to go on, raising a number of issues of concern at the first Force assaults meeting of the year and we welcome the Force's response; a sign that officer wellbeing is being taken very seriously at chief officer level. ”

Chair urges new MPs to support officers

West Midlands Federation chair Jon Nott has urged the region's MPs to put safeguarding officers at the heart of the new Parliament by backing the new Police Powers and Protections Bill.

Jon has written to all the West Midlands MPs to update them on the Federation's work and map out the priority areas for members.

And he has encouraged them to ensure officers who put their lives on the line to protect the public have the resources they need and the full support of the criminal justice system.

"Government's Police Powers and Protections Bill to give, among other things, police drivers better protection from prosecution," Jon wrote.

"Tim Rogers, our deputy secretary and the Federation's national response driving lead, has led the campaign to change the law to ensure highly-trained police drivers, chasing suspected criminals on the roads and driving to the very high standard required by their training, are better protected from the risk of lengthy investigation and potential prosecution.

"In addition, the bill will institute a Police Covenant to recognise the contribution that police officers make and seeks to guard and improve officer welfare and increase sentences on those who assault officers."

He added: "The issue of assaults on

officers is one we will continue to push throughout the year with the Force to ensure thorough investigations take place, and with prosecutors and the courts to ensure that offenders face the correct charges and full sentencing powers are used following conviction. All too often lenient sentences are handed down for those who assault our officers."

Jon, who said he would welcome the opportunity to meet MPs to discuss the Federation's and officers' concerns further, told the MPs that he welcomed the pledge to recruit 20,000 new officers but urged the Government to commit the funding to return numbers to the levels of 2010.

He said: "West Midlands Police has lost more than 2,100 officers since 2010 when the Government's budget cuts began and with those numbers has gone a considerable amount of experience.

"It should also be noted that there has been no corresponding fall in demand, in fact, I would say the opposite is true. While the allocation of new officers is welcomed, it will not take the Force back to the figures of pre-budget cuts. The new recruits will help officers currently struggling with a high workload, but it won't happen overnight.

"We're also concerned that nationally a disproportionate number of new recruits will be directed to low crime areas and not allocated based on the very real needs of forces, such as the West Midlands, to be able to

tackle the serious threats we face."

And he said that the pressure placed on officers by decreased numbers as well as the threat of violence against and an increased workload was linked to the wider issue of wellbeing.

"Being a police officer takes its toll both physically and mentally. Rising violent crime (particularly against officers), cuts to police budgets and increasingly complex crimes such as cyber-crime and historic sexual offences mean that officers are stretched more than ever before," he said.

"With a growing number of assaults on officers and, more than ever before, officers being absent from work due to stress, depression or anxiety, we have been campaigning for measures that can further support the physical and mental wellbeing of our officers.

"In recent years we have been encouraged much has been done to address officer welfare. This includes the pledge to recruit 20,000 new officers, legislation to double the sentences for assaults on officers, the Government's support for a Police Covenant, and £10 million ring-fenced funding for an increased roll-out of Taser."

He added: "There is more that can be done but we hope you can support this bill as it will go far and away to improving the lives of the brave men and women who police our streets and keep us safe."

Response driving: Tim in Home Office discussions over new law

The setting of standards for police drivers under the new legislation that will give them better protection from conduct and criminal proceedings is likely to sit under the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

Currently, police drivers are judged by the standard of the careful and competent under driving laws but this takes no account of their unique role, their training and their experience.

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation response driving lead, met with Home Office officials on 20 January to discuss the finer details of the changes set to be introduced under the Police Powers and Protections Bill which will allow for police drivers' skills to be taken into account.

"Setting the standard by which police officers' driving will be assessed is likely to fall within policing due to the main

experience and knowledge on the matter sitting with relevantly and recently experienced officers. The accepted proposal is for the management and referral process to be governed through the most relevant NPCC group," says Tim.

"The driver training strategic group headed up by Lancashire Deputy Chief Constable Terry Woods seems most appropriate as it has access to the regional driver training leads, the very people who assess officers as reaching the national standards expected in line with the licence provided by the College of Policing."

However, Tim says the process through which this will be facilitated presents some challenges.

"Consistency of material provided is critical," he explained, "My strong view is that as this is an expert witness function with the duty being not to the investigator but the process of truth then all available evidence

must be provided. Currently, the Independent Office for Police Conduct sends only some of the evidence asking for an opinion which, of course, is flawed.

"The Home Office supports this stance and, albeit the IOPC was responsible for the almost collapse of the previous steering group due to its view that it wasn't independent, the legislation will make this fair process obligatory."

Ahead of the Home Office meeting, Tim met with the police liaison lead at the Department for Transport (Dft) to get an update on the national review of roads policing and also submit evidence on behalf of the Federation.

The two-year review has eight strands and will look at how roads policing currently operates, how effective it is and where improvements could be made.

- Progress but work still to be done – see Page 16.

Long-term police funding settlement is needed

The Government needs to come up with a long-term and sustained funding settlement for policing to end the boom and bust one-year settlements that prevent forces making strategic plans to fight crime and support communities, according to the national chair of the Police Federation.

John Apter put forward his arguments in the Federation's submission to Phase 1 of the Strategic Review of Policing, launched by the Government last year and being carried out by The Police Foundation, and called for an end to the current system where policing has been at the whim of political drivers with annual budgets set by national and local government.

The submission also demands a full review of the police funding formula to end the current postcode lottery where richer regions get more resources for policing.

Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, believes the national chair is right to push for longer-term funding as a means of ensuring future stability.

"Policing has been hard hit by the cuts to budgets over the last 10 years," says Jon, "In the West Midlands alone, we have lost more than 2,100 officers since 2010 under a Government that told police forces they could do more with less.

"We warned that the cuts would have consequences and those consequences have been felt by our communities who have, for example, seen a reduction in policing presence and an increase in violent crime. But our officers have been hard hit too. They have put themselves under pressure trying to maintain an effective service and all too often have suffered stress and ill health as a result.

"The new Government is saying it wants to reinvest in policing but we need action and not just soundbites. It must agree to a sustained funding settlement so that police forces can put in place long-term plans to fight and prevent crime, keep order and protect the vulnerable."

Jon, while welcoming the Government's commitment to recruit 20,000 new officers nationwide over the next three years, also questioned whether this was achievable.

"Due to the number of officers retiring or resigning, we would actually need to recruit 55,000 officers to increase our overall numbers by 20,000 and then you have to also take into account that would only take us back to the number of officers we had in 2010," says Jon.

"The pressure to recruit such a large number of officers in a relatively short time-frame could also bring its own

problems. During the cuts programme, we have seen police stations close, we have seen training departments diminished and, of course, we do not have a store full of uniform and equipment just waiting for new recruits to be taken on.

"We welcome the Government's recruitment drive but there is a lot of work to be done to actually get these new officers in post, trained and equipped to serve their communities."

The Police Federation submission to the Strategic Review also called for:

- **An examination of the adequacy of mental health services and impact of the increasing number of elderly and vulnerable people in society**
- **A re-examination of a complaints investigation protocol which is labour intensive and often disproportionate to the magnitude of a complaint**
- **Proper analysis of the 43-force model of policing which 'may not necessarily best serve the needs of the public'.**

Describing the Strategic Review as a 'once in a generation opportunity to help right the wrongs of austerity', the national Federation chair said: "It's almost 60 years since the last Royal Commission, and we have been calling for another since 1999. This review is an important opportunity for us to help shape the future of policing into the century.

"While appreciating that the police service is a 24/7, 365 days a year service, it does not mean it is best placed or best equipped to deal with all public demands. This is an opportunity to help determine what the public wants and expects of their police service."

Following the conclusion of the first phase of the review, a further second phase will examine workforce, equipment, accountability mechanisms, structures and resources in early 2020.

“While appreciating that the police service is a 24/7, 365 days a year service, it does not mean it is best placed or best equipped to deal with all public demands. This is an opportunity to help determine what the public wants and expects of their police service.”

'Our Force is stretched thin': PCC calls for more officers

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) David Jamieson has called for officer numbers to be returned to 2010 levels in a letter to the Prime Minister.

Mr Jamieson said he was concerned new recruits promised by Boris Johnson would be 'directed to low-crime rural areas' when they should be allocated on the 'need of forces'.

The West Midlands had lost 2,131 officers since the start of the previous decade, but only expected to receive funding for around 1,200 new recruits under the Government's current three-year recruitment drive, Mr Jamieson said.

"I request that officers are allocated based on the crime threat and need of forces, so that areas like the West Midlands can tackle the serious threats we face," he said.

Mr Jamieson was setting out his key asks of the new Government in a letter to the Prime Minister, which included an invite to see for himself the major investment in policing required in the West Midlands.

He also wants support to reduce the number of school exclusions to prevent children being driven into drug-related county lines; and for the restarting of the Ministerial Taskforce on Vehicle Crime.

His calls have been backed by Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, who said: "We welcome Mr Jamieson's letter and urge the Prime Minister to commit to funding the police to the levels of 2010. A decade of austerity and cuts to budgets and officer numbers have had a huge effect on

policing.

"Our Force is stretched thin and our officers are under huge pressure, which is having knock-on effects on their morale, health and wellbeing. Ultimately, we want to give the public the service they expect and we need proper resourcing to keep our communities safe but also to ensure the physical and mental welfare of our officers."

In his letter to the PM, Mr Jamieson wrote: "One of your key promises during the election was to recruit a further 20,000 police officers across the country. This I welcome. My concern, however, is that there is a danger that a disproportionate number of these recruits will be directed to low crime, rural areas of the country such as leafy Surrey and not where they are most needed.

"I refer of course to urban conurbations such as ours which has been hit hardest from Government cutbacks from 2010 onwards."

He added: "I am concerned that resources have once again been divided using a blunt and outdated formula that disadvantages areas like the West Midlands and helps leafy, lower crime areas that have lost fewer officers than forces like ours."

The PCC also called on Mr Johnson to put pressure on local education providers to reduce the numbers of children excluded from education and to offer alternative positive solutions and support.

"This will help prevent excluded children from being driven into violent, drug-related county lines," he said, "We also seek the

ending of the practice of 'off rolling students' for the purpose of protecting school satisfactory Ofsted reports and inflating examination pass rates which exposes children to harm still further through school exclusion."

Mr Jamieson also pointed to vehicle crime as another key area which he says has 'increased hugely over recent years'.

"The previous Government set up a ministerial taskforce on the issue," he said. "West Midlands Police and my office were members of the group, working with the Home Office and manufacturers to tackle vehicle crime.

"That group has not met for many months, I urge you to restart it immediately. Vehicle thefts are driven by poor vehicle security standards and a poorly regulated market in scrapped vehicles, parts and road worthiness certification.

"There is a danger these crimes are seen as merely property crimes. They do involve, on many occasions, considerable violence. The pursuits involved also present a real risk to both officers and the general public. I would be grateful for further urgent progress on this matter, especially progress with manufacturers on security measures."

OFFICER NUMBERS

Government police workforce statistics illustrate the reduction in officer numbers in the West Midlands. Figures for each year are as at 31 March:

2010	8,626
2011	8,149
2012	7,826
2013	7,615
2014	7,288
2015	7,133
2016	6,944
2017	6,756
2018	6,581
2019	6,495



Force tutors: 'We need to attract the right people for the right reasons'

A shortage of officers putting themselves forward to act as tutors has prompted the Force to mandate officers to take on the role.

But, according to one experienced tutor, this could lead to difficulties further down the line due to the challenges of tutoring.

"There are inherent problems with mandating officers to perform the role of tutor," says DC Chris Smith, a Federation workplace representative who has acted as a tutor for around 23 years, "Ideally, the Force would have a cadre of skilled and willing volunteers.

"The role should be attracting the right people for the right reasons and, as an organisation, we should be able to retain those officers and their skill sets. Tutors used to be rewarded for their tutoring efforts and I think this is something the Force should look at again for recruitment and retention in the role.

"Mandating officers to perform the role of tutor could result in an unmotivated workforce providing poor standards of learning."

Chris, who is currently based on an investigation team at Brierley Hill Police Station, believes all officers should have the attributes to be a good tutor – patience, an ability to listen and good communications skills – but says a sense of humour can also help.

However, he understands that just because officers have the skills it doesn't mean they would want to take on the role although he thinks all supervisors should at least do a spell as a tutor.

Chris took on a tutoring position shortly after coming out of his probationary period, having joined the Force in July 1995, and put himself forward after his sergeant suggested he would be good at it.

"At the moment, I'm tutoring two student officers on Force CID. Tutoring is best done on a one to one basis but I have looked after as many as four students on one day which was challenging," he explains.

"Tutoring is a full-time job in itself and that's when you're only tutoring one person



Police Now officer Jack Crane (left) who was tutored by Chris Smith (right) met former Prime Minister Tony Blair.

at a time. It requires a great deal of time, focus and patience. We often have to balance this with our own investigation workloads and I also have to balance this with my work as a Federation rep.

"I've tutored under a number of different systems, I've tutored PCs and prospective DCs, students by normal entry routes, Police Now entrants and one of the Force's first inspector direct entrants. I've mentored and I've coached, I've found all to be enjoyable and if I had my time over I would definitely do it again.

"I believe tutoring is an undervalued role within the organisation. But I find it can be immensely rewarding. It's great to see people develop during their time with me. I like this

kind of hands on practical learning which is ideal preparation for student officers beyond independent patrol.

"Students have different learning styles and rates of learning so it can sometimes be challenging and tiring for the tutor - and student. However, I've found the most recent experience of tutoring very uplifting, the students are keen and enthusiastic and that kind of motivation rubs off."

Chris has been a Federation member since joining the Force and became a Federation rep about 18 months ago, having put himself forward for the role due to concerns about the reduction in staffing levels, increased workloads and mounting stress levels among officers.

“I've found the most recent experience of tutoring very uplifting, the students are keen and enthusiastic and that kind of motivation rubs off.”

'The tutoring I received has had a lasting effect on my career'

Sergeant Ryan Gardener says that even after 14 years as an officer he still remembers much of the advice he was given when he was tutored by Chris Smith.

Chris became Ryan's tutor at Brierley Hill where he was stationed after completing his 18 weeks' initial training. He was with Chris for nine weeks and had to complete a portfolio to achieve independent patrol and work on his own.

"Chris was brilliant, he would review my portfolio and see what competencies I needed to achieve. At the start of shifts, he would visit the dispatchers and tell them what sort of incidents I needed to attend. This enabled me to complete the portfolio on time as I was able to experience a variety of scenarios," says Ryan.

"I felt that I gained a lot of experience in a very short space of time. I had an increasing workload to manage due to the number of arrests we were making. I made 19 in my first month. The large workload enabled me to develop my skills in prioritising and decision-making in relation to investigations. Chris was also an experienced detective and was able to provide me with expert advice for interviewing suspects increasing my confidence for future interviews.

"From a response officer point of view, I always remember before the days of sat navs, Chris telling me to read every road sign as you turn into the street so I always know where I am should I need assistance. I had to rely on this many a time and I still do this now.

"The tutoring I received has definitely had a lasting effect on my career. Even though it was 14 years ago I can still remember the majority of incidents we dealt with, how we dealt with them and I can remember clearly the advice Chris gave me throughout."

Ryan only had one tutor and stayed on the same department during that stage of his training. Students now get moved between departments and are allocated different mentors for every phase.

He found his tutoring experience so beneficial that after passing his two-year student officer phase he enrolled on a tutoring course so he could support new recruits.

"I was able to pass on everything I had learnt from Chris to others and found the role extremely rewarding," he explained, "Tutoring is an extremely important part of a new officer's development and a tutor and student should be given the time and opportunities to enable the student to develop. After all the student could be employed for 30 years and, as an organisation, we need to give them the best opportunities from the start."

Having joined the Force in 2005, Ryan now works on the service improvement team for the criminal justice department and is based at Lloyd House.

Assault on Police Employees

10 Point Plan



1

Assaults on police officers and police staff should be investigated with the same care, compassion and commitment as an assault on a member of the public. *This sounds obvious, but too often our response to assaults on officers and staff can be rushed or treated as secondary to other offences.*

2

The assaulted officer / staff member must never be the OIC for the investigation into their own assault. *This is not appropriate on any level and even taking statements from witnesses may be inappropriate. The integrity of the investigation and the impartiality of the officer could be called into question, which could undermine the case and/or heighten the impact on the employee.*

3

The assault is to be raised as a discussion point at the next available local DMM. *The DMM chair is to ensure that early welfare support is put in place and confirm that the Employee's Supervisor is aware.*

4

Colleagues recover better and more quickly if they receive the right welfare and supervision. *This also helps to avoid long-term negative consequences. The assaulted person's supervisor should contact them as soon as it is practical to do so, preferably within 24 hours. The employee may play down the impact on them, but supervisors must recognise the potential effects of the incident.*

5

The iCASS report must be completed by the supervisor along with, where practicable, the employee, for all assaults regardless of severity. *If the employee is not available, that should not delay the completion of the report.*

6

The supervisor must ensure that the Local Command Team is informed, should the Police Employee be hospitalised then the on call chief officer is to be notified. *This will allow them to provide continuity of welfare support, and to ensure it is discussed at the DMM.*

7

The supervisor must ensure that they notify the Police Federation or Trade Union Representative. *The Staff Associations and trade unions can provide additional valuable support to the employee.*

All assaults on police officers and police staff will be treated seriously and WMP will seek to ensure appropriate redress through the criminal justice system.

8

Charges relating to the assault of a police officer or staff member should not be dropped because charges relating to more serious crimes are being brought. This can send the wrong message to offenders and doesn't recognise the effects the assault could have had on public confidence in the Police Service.

To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented.

9

Victim personal statements should be used and whoever is investigating the assault needs to fully understand the 'points to prove' for assaults on police officers or staff. An officer's self-written statement provided straight after the event could be made in haste and might not contain all of the key facts. As a result, cases sent for prosecution sometimes fail to meet basic evidential needs.

10

The Victim Code applies to all victims and therefore to assaults on police officers and staff. *Complying with the Victim Code means keeping the employee updated, discussing outcome options, and taking account of the employee's point of view before imposing an outcome.*

Assaults on police: courts urged to use full sentencing powers

The courts must use their full sentencing powers to punish those who assault police officers and also deter others, says the chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Jon Nott spoke out after new figures from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) revealed it had prosecuted more than 50 assaults a day in the first year since a new law came into effect making it a specific offence to attack an emergency services worker.

"I find it shocking that each and every day 50 of the very people who seek to help others in their time of need find themselves subjected to violence simply for doing their job," says Jon.

"These new figures show that in 90 per cent of these cases the victims were police officers. An attack on a police officer is an attack on society itself and therefore anyone convicted of these assaults should feel the full weight of the law so that they are punished for their crime but also to serve as a deterrent to others.

"On a daily basis here in the West Midlands, we are hearing of officers who are being assaulted at work. Just two days into this year, we saw a woman jailed after biting

one of our officers and assaulting another in an incident in the opening minutes of 2020.

"Our officers suffer physical injuries in these attacks that take them away from their duties but there is also a psychological impact and many can find it difficult to return to serving their communities through fear of being assaulted again.

"But, all too often, I am hearing officers saying it's just part of the job but it's not and nor should it ever be accepted. We need the courts to use the legislation and send a clear message that an assault on a police officer or other emergency services worker will not be tolerated."

Between November 2018 and November last year, almost 20,000 offences were charged under the new Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act – three quarters of which were assault by beating. The first cases to go through the courts also show a conviction rate of 90 per cent.

In addition to publishing the statistics for the first year under the act, the CPS has launched a new set of guidelines reminding magistrates to use their full sentencing powers and also stating that victims' views should be taken into account when pleas to other offences are accepted or cases

discontinued.

The new guidance aims to ensure prosecutors seek the maximum sentence in court and play any body-worn video footage and underlines the requirement to treat assaults committed on bail or licence as an aggravating factor.

National Federation chair John Apter has welcomed the CPS stance, saying: "It is good to see the CPS recognising that the current system is not working and issuing new guidelines for prosecutors.

"Now I urge magistrates to do the right thing and heed any advice passed down to them; and to use their full sentencing powers so the law provides the deterrent and punitive effect it was intended to."

At the Federation's centenary celebration event in London in November, Home Secretary Priti Patel said she would double the maximum sentence under the new act from 12 months to two years and John has said he will be discussing officer assaults when he meets her in the coming weeks.

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act followed the Federation's 'Protect the Protectors' campaign which highlighted the violence emergency service workers face while doing their job.





The Federation has raised concerns about the number of officers being injured in incidents involving vehicles.

Force acting to tackle officer assaults

The Force is considering including vehicle extraction techniques in officer safety training courses.

The move comes after the Federation raised concerns about the number of officers being injured in incidents involving vehicles.

The Force's initial response had been to put together a video training guide but, while a second training video is due out soon, the Federation does not feel this type of training is suitable and has called for a more hands-on approach.

"We don't believe that these techniques can be learned by watching a video," says John Williams, deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation, "It is far better for officers to see someone demonstrate the techniques and then try them out themselves while a trainer can assess what they are doing and give them tips on how to improve what they are doing.

"It is critical that we get this training right and I am pleased that the Force appears to be listening to what we are saying. Officer safety has to be of paramount importance."

John was given an assurance that the learning and development department would look into further options for developing officer safety training 'sooner rather than later' when he attended the latest Force meeting on assaults on Tuesday 14 January.

The meeting was led by Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson who, John explained, was keen to see improvement in the Force's approach to assaults.

As part of the Force's 10-point plan on assaults, the Federation should be informed if an officer is assaulted so that it can offer support. However, this is not always happening, an issue raised at the meeting

by John.

The ACC has agreed to ensure this happens in future.

"We welcome the ACC's support on this and we are pleased he is driving forward progress on the way in which assaults are handled," says John, "Once we start to be notified of all assaults, we can then assess if the 10-point plan is working as it should and put forward recommendations if we feel improvements are required.

"Mr Johnson, in line with the Federation's stance, has also stressed that the Force is looking for positive outcomes with the CPS and the courts when officers are assaulted."

The Force is going to carry out analysis of officer assaults to identify any patterns and see if steps can be taken to prevent attacks and offer better support to officers where required.

PCCs to bid for Taser funding

Forces could find out their share of the £10 million extra cash for Taser as soon as February, the Home Office has announced.

From mid-January Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) could bid for a share of the ring-fenced funding which it is hoped will equip 10,000 more officers with Taser.

"This is great news for the police service and for individual police officers," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, "For some time now, we have been calling on the Government to give forces the funding they need to train and equip more officers with these devices.

"The latest nationwide survey on routine arming conducted by the Police Federation in 2017 revealed that only 15 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police, for whom it was applicable to their role, has access to Taser at all times while on duty compared to 22 per cent nationally.

"That same survey revealed that 82 per cent of respondents from our Force said they wanted access to Taser at all times. Since then, we have seen an uplift but it has been difficult for the Force, along with others across England and Wales, to be able to fund this while struggling to meet demand with reduced resources due to the Government's

budget cuts and competing priorities.

"We welcome the fact that the Government, having announced this extra investment in a roll-out of Taser before the General Election, has now acted quickly to give forces access to these funds. All officers who want to be trained and equipped with Taser should be able to do so since it not only enables them to protect themselves but also their communities."

Home Secretary Priti Patel, in opening the bidding process, said: "Our brave police officers put themselves in harm's way to protect us and I am committed to giving them the tools they need to keep themselves and the public safe.

"The rise in assaults on officers is appalling which is why I am providing funding to equip up to 10,000 more officers with Taser - an important tactical option when facing potentially physically violent situations."

The application process will involve PCCs outlining how many extra officers they plan to train to use Taser and then bidding via an online platform with their requests being based on the threat and risk in their local area.

The Home Office has said the final funding allocations for forces, which cover

“All officers who want to be trained and equipped with Taser should be able to do so since it not only enables them to protect themselves but also their communities.”

2019/20 and 2020/21, will be announced as soon as February.

The Police Federation's national chair, John Apter, has also welcomed this latest development and has urged the Government to provide more funding if the £10m does not cover what forces need.

• More news on Taser – see Page 33.



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'Officers have moral and legal duty to report near misses'

Police officers must report any near misses to the Force to help prevent injuries and serious incidents but should not be afraid to do so, the Federation's health and safety lead has stressed.

Deano Walker was speaking after a Freedom of Information request by a media outlet revealed the Force made the largest single compensation pay-out to an officer injured in the line of duty paying more than £156,000 to an officer who fell from a stool or chair.

The figures also showed the Force spent a total of £258,568.49 on 73 compensation claims between 2015 and 2019 with the majority being paid out due to slips, trip and falls by officers and staff.

"It is clearly in everyone's interest to help the Force prevent injuries because behind each of these pay-outs there will be someone who has been injured at work, perhaps with life-long effects, and who may have had to take time away from their job while they recovered," says Deano.

"So, while the figures show the monetary value of the compensation, there will be the added cost, physically and mentally, to those injured, and the knock-on effect in terms of people having to pick up extra work while someone is away from their role."

Officers and staff should record near misses on the E-safety section of the Force intranet but Deano says there can be some confusion as to what constitutes a near miss.

In very simple terms, a near miss can be defined as an unplanned event or situation

that could have resulted in injury, illness, damage or loss but did not due to chance, corrective action or timely intervention.

Therefore any event or situation that does actually result in injury, illness, damage or loss is not a near miss and should be reported as an accident or incident.

The Force has a legal duty as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees under the Health and Safety at Work 1974 but officers and staff are under an obligation to help prevent colleagues and visitors coming to harm at work.

"The most common submission we get relates to minimum staffing levels but strictly speaking this doesn't really fall under the near miss criteria – though we do appreciate officers' frustrations," says Deano.

"An example of a near miss that we get most years is a shovel or grit being missing from a grit bin. If you discover this is the case, you should report this since clearly in icy conditions a lack of available grit or a means of spreading it could lead to an incident in which someone could be injured.

"I don't think anyone should assume someone else has reported these types of incidents and I also don't think anyone should fear getting into trouble for raising an issue of concern. Everyone has a moral and legal duty to highlight near misses and help prevent someone getting injured. A near miss could be classed as an early warning that something is wrong.

"If there is an accident, clearly an investigation takes place and corrective

action may be taken, reporting a near miss can lead to that being put right before someone gets hurt.

"The Federation receives a weekly list of all the near misses reported and we raise our concerns with the Force if necessary. One area we are becoming increasingly concerned about is police buildings. The years of cuts to police budgets clearly saw many of our police stations and other buildings closed but we also saw a lack of investment in those that remained open and we are seeing some accidents occur as a result. If you have a concern about the state of any police building and you fear there could be an incident in which someone could get injured I would urge you to report it."

Other near miss examples include:

- **Premature failure of Airwave batteries**
- **Poor reception areas for Airwave or other communication devices**
- **PAVA leaks**
- **PAVA, baton or other personal protection equipment having no – or little – effect during a violent incident; if there is an injury to an officer or staff, however, this should be recorded separately**
- **Falling asleep at the wheel of a vehicle, personal or police, on the way to work or after the end of shift**
- **Exposure to extremes of temperature or bad weather on operations**
- **Vehicle faults, such as engines cutting out while being driven, brake failures or vehicle fires.**

Progress in roads policing but work to be done

The Federation's national response driving lead says 2019 brought significant progress in terms of securing appropriate legal protection for police drivers but admits there is still plenty of work to be done to ensure roads policing meets modern day demands and challenges.

Tim Rogers, who is also deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, makes the comments in a blog issued ahead of the Police Federation's annual national roads policing conference in Kenilworth on 28 and 29 January.

The conference will be attended by Federation representatives from across England and Wales but Tim is particularly pleased to have secured the attendance of National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) portfolio leads from many of the areas relevant to an ongoing Government review of roads policing as well as a representative of the Home Office who will talk about the forthcoming response driving legislative change, marking the first time the Federation has achieved this level of support.

Tim writes: 2019 was definitely a breakthrough year in terms of roads policing. But, this only came as a result of tireless Federation campaigning on behalf of its members, the hard-working officers who if not policing our roads were definitely using vehicles to police our communities.

In 2019, after years of campaigning, we finally got a commitment from the Government to change legislation so that police drivers' expertise and training is recognised in law. Cross-party support for a change to legislation means that we will no longer be judged against the careful and competent driver that is the expected standard of drivers. But then we don't expect your average 'careful and competent driver' to be going through red lights, crossing the carriageway or exceeding the speed limit to get to an emergency call. All too often police drivers have found themselves facing months, and sometimes years, of legal and conduct proceedings simply for doing their job.

The Federation campaign got underway more than 12 years ago with the then national Federation roads policing

lead Alan Jones pushing it forward with help from Craig Clifton, now a North Yorkshire Federation rep but then staff officer to the ACPO pursuits lead, the current national Federation chair and former Hampshire Federation branch chair John Apter and myself. It has to be said that at this stage, however, the focus was not on a change to the law but other solutions.

2007 R v Milton was a significant case which confirmed no account whatsoever can be taken of a police driver's specialist skills and training. He was initially acquitted on the basis that his driver training allowed him to do what he was doing on the night in question. Of course, on appeal, the law was then correctly applied and he was convicted of dangerous driving. The judgement here helped frame the solution we proposed in 2019, introducing the new test of a careful and competent police trained driver.

Two years later, the 2009 R v Craig Bannister case was a stark reminder of the issue at hand when Bannister was convicted of dangerous driving. There were numerous other cases that focused the campaign including Holden and Houghton et al these led to the introduction of the 2012 Crown Prosecutor's Guidance. This was useful when applied but, with the then Independent Police Complaints Commission taking most killed or serious injury (KSI) cases, the guidance was ignored, meaning the law was applied and leading to officers being prosecuted.

R v Lowe 2012- 2018 was a prime example of the guidance being ignored despite it fully supporting a decision not to charge. These decisions were the catalyst to start the current campaign to have the law changed as it became increasingly clear we needed a legislative remedy.

A new campaign was launched and gathered apace despite the fact that the then National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for pursuits said he would only support a partial change in the law, prompting the Federation to warn its members of the risk they could face since there were no legal exemptions for careless or dangerous driving.

By October 2017, the Home Office had ordered a review of the situation and in

December 2017 Norfolk MP Sir Henry Bellingham introduced his Emergency Response Drivers (Protections) Ten-Minute Rule Bill and won cross-party support.

The bill hit some snags along the way but in 2018 the Government launched a consultation on the proposed changes to the law and by August that year I was confidently saying we were almost there although it was not until May 2019 that a ministerial statement was issued, announcing plans to change the law to give police drivers better protection from prosecution.

Now, with the General Election out of the way, the Government has made a firm commitment to implement the new legislation during this Parliamentary calendar year as it was part of the Queen's Speech. I am grateful for the support received from the Department for Transport, the Home Office and Her Majesty's Government in making this significant progress.

While the success of this campaign represents a major breakthrough for the Federation, I am equally pleased that our calls for a comprehensive review of roads policing have also met with Government backing. The review has eight key strands and marks a huge step for roads policing and a massive opportunity to improve things since the Government seems to be conceding the 10 years of cuts have impacted on our ability to keep our roads safe. I am pleased that many of the national leads from the NPCC will be speaking at this year's conference on these key areas. You will also hear from the Home Office regarding the new legislation.

Should we now have a dedicated roads policing force along the lines of the British Transport Police?

I am also keen to ensure we look at officer safety in more detail. Too many officers are getting killed or seriously injured by people prepared to use a vehicle as a weapon. We are training people to the point that we stop the vehicle, tactical contact, boxing, tpac and so on but have nothing by way of tactics for officers once they are out of the vehicle. We need the NPCC to mandate a consistent national solution.



“ 2019 was definitely a breakthrough year in terms of roads policing. But, this only came as a result of tireless Federation campaigning on behalf of its members, the hard-working officers who if not policing our roads were definitely using vehicles to police our communities. ”

Marathon legend Paula backs #WMPMND runners

Legendary marathon runner Paula Radcliffe has given her support to the #WMPMND runners taking part in the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in support of West Midlands Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson.

And, while on a brief visit to the UK from her home in France, she even found time to meet the Johnsons and give an exclusive interview to Chris' wife, Sharon, and nine-year-old son, Harry, telling them that she had started running and competing at about that age.

"It was so fab to meet Paula; Mum and Dad told me all about her and her records and she has encouraged me to keep running," says Harry.

Chris and Sharon were equally thrilled. "Meeting Paula was a real honour. I am not sure who was most star-struck, Harry when he first met her or Trudy Gittins – when she offered her running shoes for the raffle! Paula was humble, warm and engaging. Even though her flight had been delayed, she didn't flinch in giving her time to meet us and support the #WMPMND cause. I hope that the practical advice that she gave for those taking part in the marathon will be of some help, she certainly inspired me," said Chris.

Sharon added: "It was absolutely amazing to meet Paula and for her to give up her time to help raise awareness around Motor Neurone Disease and the marathon efforts. She was clearly touched by our story. It was a fantastic experience and we can't thank her enough for supporting #WMPMND."

The meeting came about as a result of West Midlands DI Chris Jones getting in touch with Paula who won the London Marathon three times – in 2002, 2003 and 2005 – and set world records at the distance, holding the women's world marathon record for 16 years until 2019. She has also been European champion over 10,000 metres and in cross country and was Commonwealth champion at 10,000 metres.

Chris explained: "I first contacted Paula back in October and she has remained in regular contact since, tracking the progress of Team #WMPMND running group and the amazing momentum it has gathered.



Paula Radcliffe with Harry, Chris and Sharon Johnson.

"Paula's support to our campaign has been fantastic; she agreed to meet personally with the Johnson family in Manchester and took time out from her hectic schedule to record some personalised videos for us. Paula has also very kindly donated some items for an auction and free prize draw."

Paula was back in England to film for the BBC and met the Johnson family, Chris and Trudy – who launched the appeal to find runners to join her in taking part in the Liverpool event to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association and Primrose Hospice – the day before filming.

Trudy explains: "We got one of our t-shirts printed and the Rock 'n' Roll

Marathon event director created a personalised bib and she very happily wore both. Harry and Sharon interviewed Paula with some fantastic questions - thanks so much to those who helped with them - to help keep us all motivated.

"It really was a wonderful, surreal experience, especially when Paula said that she was going for a run with Steve Cram after the interview! You could not meet a nicer lady and nothing was too much trouble. Paula also signed some items for us along with donating a pair of her own trainers that she's ran a half marathon in plus one of her running tops. These will all be used to raise money and awareness of MND."

Paula's advice for runners

Paula Radcliffe probably struck a note with most of those in training for the marathon events in May when she said the hardest part was getting out of the door on a cold, wet day to train.

But she also stressed that you always felt better for having done so.

Paula was asked for tips for runners training in the cold, dark and wet winter weather and advised people to layer up – perhaps running a short distance, returning home to take off a layer – warm up and ensure they stretched before setting out.

She also told those taking part to build up the distance they covered slowly and avoid 'trying to do too much too soon'.

"Rest is part of training too," she told Harry and Sharon Johnson when they interviewed her, adding that during any event runners should avoid going off to fast at the start and also giving tips on eating and drinking enough as well as buying the right running shoes.

Paula explained that running had taken her all over the world and that racing in New York, London, Monaco and Barcelona were all highlights of her career.

She admitted she would have liked to have won an Olympic medal but said she had achieved other things that she didn't expect to when she set out on her athletics career.

In a message that would perhaps resonate with those signed up for the marathon events, she shared the best pieces of advice given to her by her trainer who said to aim for the moon because even if you missed you would still land among the stars, work towards a goal, set high goals but also have fun as you would work harder if you were enjoying something.



DI Chris Jones with Paula Radcliffe sporting her #WMPMND t-shirt.

Support for ACC

Police officers from across England and Wales are getting behind the fund-raising efforts to support West Midlands ACC Chris Johnson who has Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

A total of 323 people have now signed up to take part in the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon events in May to raise money for the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) and the Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove which is supporting Mr Johnson and his family.

While many of the runners are from West Midlands Police and those connected to the Force, there are also runners from 14 other forces including six runners from North Wales and a number from Derbyshire but the fund-raising team is hoping to get runners from other forces signed up with an aim of having all 43 forces in England and Wales represented.

South Wales Chief Constable Matt Jukes as chair of Police Sport UK has now spread the word nationally and the chief executive

of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Alistair McGowan, has also made a donation to the appeal.

"As you will appreciate travelling from Belfast re cost and duty credits is a bit beyond us at present. However, I have asked our accountant to make a £50 donation through your JustGiving page. So that should appear in the short-term," Alistair explained.

"I know through my wife who is a nurse what a challenging condition MND is. Chris is very brave continuing his career as long as he can. I hope the run is a huge success and that you raise a sum worthy of this great cause."

So far, the fund-raising total stands at around £5,000 with a target of £15,000. If you are not running, please consider sponsoring those taking part through <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Team/WMPMND>

West Midlands Police Federation has supported the fund-raising, making a

donation of £2,500 on behalf of all Federated officers taking part in the marathon events and supplying a branded water bottle for team #WMPMND.

If you want to take part in the Rock 'n' Roll marathon events or support the fund-raising, please email Trudy Gittins at tgittins@westmids.polfed.org

- In March, West Midlands DI Chris Jones, who works in public protection, will be part of a band recording a charity song to raise money for the appeal. The track – 'On The Run' – will be recorded at Rockfield Studios in Wales where Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody was also recorded.

Chris and his band are also looking to audition for 'Britain's Got Talent' to raise awareness of MNDA and the Primrose Hospice.

Having been forced out of taking part in the marathon due to injury, he has also spent months generating prizes from companies and individuals for a fund-raising draw.

Force is in a 'good place' to work under new conduct regulations

West Midlands Police Federation's conduct lead has said he hopes the new conduct regulations will be a 'learning device to assist our officers to be the best they can be'.

As of 1 February 2020, the system will be simplified so that any complaints can be dealt with quickly, effectively and proportionately and there will also be changes to misconduct investigations, including a requirement to provide an explanation where investigations take longer than 12 months.

Speaking about the changes, George McDonnell, conduct lead for the Federation, said the Force is in a good place to implement them next month, but there will be some challenges.

He said: "I believe PSD has done a lot of work in the background around these new regs, as it should have done, and is ready to go. Clearly, there are many more potential problems that could arise, however, we will work with it in the hope it turns out to be what the Home Office intends it to be, and that is a tool that doesn't beat our officers with the conduct stick anymore but a learning device to assist our officers to be

the best they can be."

A training input has been held for all key personnel in the Force to introduce the new conduct regulations and discuss any potential issues.

"Overall, the input was well received as the trainers made strong references to how positive this could be and then those present could either bring the Force, conduct-wise, into the 21st century or indeed continue to languish in the past," explained George.

"There are lots of positives to come out of these new regs for all willing to give them a go. As I understand it, these will be with us for the next 10 years. I made a point of saying we don't want to be waiting 10 years to get to where we want to be.

"Rather than hope they (the regs) are embedded, we will insist they are embedded as to do anything else will take us backwards.

"We have held PSD to account, and will continue to do so, and we will make the necessary challenges where we believe it appropriate. Hopefully, they will be few and far between. Time will play a part and mistakes will be made and that is

“There are lots of positives to come out of these new regs for all willing to give them a go. As I understand it, these will be with us for the next 10 years. I made a point of saying we don't want to be waiting 10 years to get to where we want to be.”



West Midlands Police Federation conduct lead George McDonnell.

acceptable, provided that all - including PSD - learn from them.

"As the input went on, it became clear that managers were to play a bigger part than they have previously played and questions around their training were raised so as to look to a more uniformed approach, which inevitably would lead to more consistent outcomes, something we have been crying out for, for many years."

Talking about the support the Federation can provide to anyone who is subject to a complaint or misconduct investigation he said: "One of our challenges is to continue to support our colleagues throughout

“ We have held PSD to account, and will continue to do so, and we will make the necessary challenges where we believe it appropriate. Hopefully, they will be few and far between. Time will play a part and mistakes will be made and that is acceptable, provided that all - including PSD - learn from them. ”

whatever process comes before them, whether that be performance requiring improvement (PRI) and/or a misconduct investigation.

“Getting the message across to our colleagues will take time and asking them to trust the new world when they had no confidence in the old world will be even more challenging.”

‘Shake-up’ for complaints system

The Home Office overhaul of the police complaints and discipline process is effective from 1 February.

The new legislation will ‘shake up’ how complaints made against the police are handled and improve the discipline system for officers.

Under the new rules, there will be a requirement to provide an explanation where police misconduct investigations take longer than 12 months

As well as simplifying the complaints system, the changes mean Police and Crime Commissioners will have a greater role to increase independence and improve complaints handling

Policing and crime minister Kit Malthouse said: “The vast majority of our brilliant police are extremely professional, and standards remain high.

“When police forces fall short of these standards, it is important to have a system that can quickly establish what has gone wrong, hold officers to account where necessary and ensure lessons are learned.

“These reforms will deliver this and ensure the public can maintain confidence in the integrity of our world-class police.”

The changes, effective from 1 February, aim to ensure that complaints can be dealt with quickly, effectively and proportionately, not just for the benefit of the public but also for the police.

The reforms aim to make the discipline system more proportionate and encourage a much greater emphasis on learning from mistakes.

National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) lead for complaints and misconduct, Chief Constable Craig Guildford, said: “We have listened very carefully to the views of officers, the public and everyone involved in the complaints process throughout this work. This package addresses the valid concerns over timeliness, accountability and proportionality and puts the focus on learning, reflection and fairness.

“There will be greater involvement for local supervisors and a move away from punishment and blame for lower level misconduct to a focus on learning and development.

“The huge majority of police officers serve the public to the highest standard. Society rightly expects the service to act with honesty and integrity and any instance of gross misconduct falling below that standard will continue to be dealt with robustly.”

The Home Office has worked with the NPCC, Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, staff associations and others to develop the improvements.



Policing and crime minister Kit Malthouse.



'My one regret is not becoming a Fed rep earlier in my career'

Federation professional development lead Giles Dean has encouraged younger officers to grasp the opportunity to support their colleagues by becoming Federation workplace representatives.



Giles Dean.

Giles says he regrets waiting until he had more than two decades of service behind him before he became a rep for West Midlands Police Federation.

He said: "Federation reps are assisting colleagues on a daily basis and doing excellent work representing, influencing and negotiating. But a lot of this excellent work gets lost among bigger headline pieces such as pensions and police numbers where there are quite rightly feelings of dissatisfaction.

"When the next elections come up, I would like to see more young in service officers standing for election. My one regret is not becoming a Fed rep until I had 22 years' service."

Giles brings a wealth of experience to his role. After graduating from Manchester University with a law degree, his first job was with the Office of Fair Trading in London.

"After a while, I realised that London was not for me and that I needed a new job," he said, "I saw a coupon in a national paper that I filled in and sent off to register an interest in joining the police, and that was it!

"Six months later I was walking down West Bromwich High Street in a uniform two sizes too big for me, 'don't worry son, you'll grow into it.' Twenty nine years later I am still here."

After joining the Force in 1991, Giles' first posting was on response in West Bromwich. Currently a neighbourhood sergeant in Wednesbury, he remembers his time on the K1 B Unit with particular affection, and said: "A great team, colourful characters, camaraderie and support, just what a team

should be."

Giles added: "The arrest that made the most impact on me was of a predatory paedophile who had just started grooming children.

"The job started out with a missing person's report and from the debrief on the return of the children an area search the following day revealed the offender to be waiting near a pre-arranged meeting point.

"He was arrested and, as this was back in the day when response officers were omniscient, I did the video interviews of the children, the interviews of the offender, the court file and made the transport arrangements to crown court.

"When he was convicted and sentenced I felt a real sense of personal achievement."

Giles became a Fed rep seven years ago after attending a discipline meeting with a PCSO in the capacity of a friend.

"I thought it was an interesting experience and felt I contributed to help them remain in the post," he said, "It is the problem-solving and negotiation that I enjoy. It is not about table thumping and making demands.

"There is almost always an acceptable solution to most issues and experience has shown that, in most situations, poor communication is at the root of the issue."

He added: "Being a rep is very rewarding and is a role I would recommend to anyone who cares about their colleagues. It can, however, sometimes be difficult to manage the balance between work and repping as the

demand fluctuates significantly.

"Some months there will be very little, perhaps a health and safety walk through or two, and other months it seems everyone needs you."

Giles specialised in his professional development role three years ago, and says his priority is to ensure officers are treated fairly, trained properly and that new schemes, such as the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship and Degree Holder Entry Programme, work as intended.

"I think it is right now that policing is recognised as a profession with a vocational qualification at the end of three years," said Giles, who has recently become chair for the Federation's Health and Safety Committee.

"The increased complexities of the policing environment, the knowledge of law, policy and procedure and the decision-making skills that are required to be effective in the office of constable are of at least degree level.

"I hope this recognition of the required level of professionalism will be reflected in the future pay of police officers.

"It is unfortunate for some of us that, apart from the experience we have gained, we will leave the organisation with no transferable qualifications.

"The opportunity to obtain work-based qualifications is an important step forward and I hope there will be increased opportunities in the future across all departments to obtain properly assessed accreditations."

“Being a rep is very rewarding and is a role I would recommend to anyone who cares about their colleagues. It can, however, sometimes be difficult to manage the balance between work and repping as the demand fluctuates significantly.”

Congratulations...

Four officers from the Force named in the Queen's New Year Honours have been congratulated by West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott.

Among those honoured were two officers from the Federated ranks – Sergeant Jim Reid and PC Abdool Rohomon both of whom become Medallists of the Order of the British Empire.

Assistant Chief Constable Sue Southern and Chief Superintendent Claire Bell were awarded the Queen's Police Medal.



Sergeant Jim Reid.

"I would like to put on record my congratulations to all four officers but I am particularly pleased that Jim and Abdool have been recognised in this way," says Jon.

"At one time, it was quite unusual to see officers from the Federated ranks listed in the Queen's Honours but in recent years we have seen a real shift towards acknowledging those on the front-line who are going over and above what is expected of them, making outstanding contributions to policing and the communities they serve."

Jim, a neighbourhood officer from Stockland Green, has been honoured for his work within the local community. Licensing officer Abdool has been involved in ensuring the Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market runs smoothly and was honoured for his dedication to making sure major events are operated safely with public protection to the fore.

'I thought it was a wind-up'

Licensing officer Abdool Rohomon says he is humbled to have been nominated by his colleagues after being awarded the Medal of the Order of the British Empire.

PC Rohomon admitted he thought it was a practical joke when he found out about the award.

He said: "I was at home on Saturday and this white envelope dropped through the post, marked 'On Her Majesty's Service'.

"I thought 'oh no, what now?' I opened it and thought the paper was very posh and then read the letter many times as I genuinely thought it was a wind-up.

"I had to call them a couple of weeks later as I had not heard anything, and the person at the Cabinet Office must have thought I was mad as I asked if it was a practical joke.

"When I was told I had the award it started to sink in, but I couldn't tell anyone as it had to be kept a secret."

PC Rohomon added: "I feel very humbled, mainly that three officers that I look up to and respect think I was worthy of such a nomination.

"That they have taken the time to put this nomination through, and the work that would have undertaken. I imagine it was more than just saying 'he did a good job!'"

"It is a very surreal feeling to have the award, something you may dream about getting but never expect."

PC Rohomon revealed that his family was 'gobsmacked and very proud' at his award. He is due to receive it from the Lord Lieutenant's office and will be invited to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May.

He said: "My nine-year-old daughter

got excited as she thought she was going to meet the Queen. "She only had a minor sulk when she realised she wouldn't be able to go to the garden party and meet the Queen."

PC Rohomon's role includes ensuring the smooth running of Birmingham's popular Frankfurt Christmas Market.

"I have worked with the organisers of the Frankfurt Christmas Market for around 15 years, and helped them develop many of the measures they now put in place," he said. "It's not just me, though, and there have been many colleagues across many years who have done this with me."

He added: "This is only part of my role. It also includes what I have done in licensing, ensuring events go ahead safely, which involves scrutinising and challenging event organisers, event manuals, risk assessments."

PC Rohomon joined the police in September 1991. He started on B Unit at Steelhouse Lane Police Station.

He has been a specialist licensing officer for 17 years and has advised the Home Office on licensing matters. For the last five years, he has been a member of the National Police Chiefs' Council sub-licensing group, which is made of a small national team of licensing experts, and last year PC Rohomon became the group's deputy chair.

Did he always want to be a police officer?

"In the main, yes," he said. "I applied straight out of school and was lucky to get in. What do I think it takes to be a good police officer? Patience, a good ear and thick skin."

“ I feel very humbled, mainly that three officers that I look up to and respect think I was worthy of such a nomination. ”

What do you get for your Federation subs?

Officers often ask what they get from being a member of the Police Federation.

For many, the monthly fee comes out of their salary every month, but they are not sure exactly what they get in return.

Benefits of being in the Federation include:

- **Free legal advice, assistance and costs to members facing investigations brought against them for an offence committed in, or founded upon something done in the course or purported performance of police duties**
- **Welfare advice and help on personal issues**
- **Advice and representation in misconduct proceedings**
- **Help with civil and criminal injury claims**
- **Help with providing the most up-to-date health and safety information**
- **Help with grievance procedures**
- **Support on legislative and political matters**
- **Advice and support on issues such as sexual, racial or other discriminatory harassment**
- **Representation at stakeholder seminars, meetings and round table discussions.**

More than £13.1 million of the Federation budget is allocated to legal services. This includes representation to cover criminal injury compensation claims, civil matters, gross misconduct and performance matters, defamation, magistrates' and crown court criminal legal representation, employment tribunals, regulations-related disputes, inquests and judicial reviews.

If officers are charged with criminal offences and attend court, their salaries are such that they would be required to make a contribution to their legal aid costs. If the offence is in relation to the performance or purported performance of police duties the Federation will assist and those officers will be represented without the need for legal aid and at no additional cost above their normal Federation subscription.

Subscription costs also pay for training for Federation reps in areas such as misconduct and grievance procedures, health and safety, equality and diversity and dealing with the media.

The elected workplace reps receive training on Police Regulations to ensure members are properly represented, should they face an issue. This could be about knowing their rights and entitlements, but it

also could mean getting them the right support if they become victim of any workplace issues.

Subs also help fund a range of events to showcase the very best in policing, including the National Police Bravery Awards and National Police Memorial Day.

Membership costs less than £22 per month. In the first year as a probationary constable, the amount is discounted by 75 per cent, then 50 per cent in the second year. Only in the third year of membership do officers pay the full subscription rate. There is no discount for direct entry inspectors.

To join download and complete the application form and either email westmidlandspf@polfed.org or post it to Guardians House, 2111 Coventry Road, Sheldon, Birmingham B26 3EA.

Membership costs less than £22 per month





Member offers:

are you missing out?

With Christmas a distant memory, planning can begin for holidays, weekend breaks and days out.

And there are some great offers available to West Midlands Police Federation members.

If it is a bit of pampering you are looking for, you can spend a day at one of Champneys' spas with full use of all facilities and a hot and cold buffet lunch, from £59. If you want to add in a treatment, prices start at £79, while a one-night stay, which includes, breakfast, lunch and three-course evening meal, will set you back from £115.

Half term is not long away and if a trip down the road to Cadbury World is on the cards then you can get 30 per cent discount



for up to six tickets. They must be booked in advance via Lancashire Police Federation on **01772 412 520**.

For the more adventurous, Go Ape, which has 33 locations across the UK, is offering 15 per cent discount on Tree-Top Adventure, Segway Adventure and Tree-Top Junior experiences. The offer is valid every day except Saturdays and bank holidays.

If a week in a forest, looking up at the stars while relaxing in the hot tub is more your thing then Forest Holidays offer members a

year-round 10 per cent discount for all holidays booked before 31 January 2021.

There are numerous of other offers too, including discounted holiday homes in Florida and across the UK, cheaper theme park tickets, discounts on pet insurance and gym memberships and hotel discounts.

There are also discounts and offers available on clothing and footwear, with details on how to get money off at Altberg and Millets, and links to websites which offer discounts to police officers across the country.

Full details of all these offers, and more, can be found on the West Midlands Police Federation website - just click on Member Services.

Exclusive discounts on new Nissans

- The Club Nissan programme offers police officers and staff exclusive discounts on a range of new Nissan vehicles.
- The deals could save you thousands of pounds on a brand-new Nissan, with exclusive finance offers also available.
- Police employees are entitled to discounts on two Nissan vehicles per year for either themselves or their immediate family (parents, grandparents, siblings and children of either the employee or their partner).
- To claim your discount, visit www.myclubnissan.co.uk to register. You can then explore the offers available and request a code to take to your chosen dealer to complete your purchase.





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www.polfed.org/westmids

Or call us on: **0121 752 4900**

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All for £24.60 per month,
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...isn't it time you joined?



* Full details are available from the Federation or George Burrows. Terms and conditions apply.

** Correct at 1 January 2020, the premium includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) and the Federation's administration fee.

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GB1501/FP12-2020/V2


GeorgeBurrows

Care on Demand – **new** benefit under Group Insurance Scheme

From 1 October 2019, subscribing members of the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) have had access to Care on Demand.



This allows Federation members paying into the GIS, and eligible dependants, to arrange an appointment 24/7 with a General Medical Council (GMC) licensed GP, whether in the UK or while on holiday.

For any non-emergency case, whether physical or mental, you can discuss your health concerns with a GP, via phone or video consultation. Calls can normally be arranged within two hours of your request. And unlike a GP visit, there is no time limit on the consultation (video consultations are up to 30 minutes) and you can ask more

than one question.

Furthermore, the Care on Demand GP can arrange for a private referral to be sent to you or a private prescription* - to be sent to a pharmacy of your choice if you are in the UK.

It's a service that is not designed to replace your own GP but to work in conjunction, entirely in line with the Secretary of Health's strategy of introducing digital solutions to the NHS.

So far, those who have used the service have been thrilled with it, and a recent survey revealed a 93 per cent recommendation rate with 89 per cent satisfied or very satisfied.

A West Midlands officer who has used the service said: "Very useful to have. Great that you offer out of hours, I was able to speak to someone in the middle of the night,

I called at 1am and I was able to speak to the doctor not long after."

West Midlands Police Federation provides the Group Insurance Scheme in partnership with George Burrows.

You can find out more about the scheme and sign up by visiting the Federation website.

* Within safe online prescribing guidelines

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Legal Services for West Midlands Police

With 20+ years' experience working with the police, Gorvins Solicitors, have been a leading provider of legal services to the Police Federation and all its members. We also act for officers, their partners, police personnel and families, so whatever level of support you require during the divorce process, we can help.

Cost effective: Fixed fees and discounted rates for officers, police personnel and families

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Would you like a free Financial Health Check?



Let the Federation help you with a free confidential one-to-one Financial MOT.

Your meeting could help you manage the financial issues that may arise throughout your police career and into retirement.

If you're struggling to understand what workplace benefits are available to you and your dependents, George Burrows could help. They have arranged for Caroline Harris, a financial welfare specialist with over 25 years' experience, to work alongside the Police Federation and provide detailed information on the range of pensions and schemes available to you.

Contact the Federation to arrange your free, confidential one to one support.

0121 752 4900

Appointments take place at Guardians House

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GB1445/FP459-2019/V3

See what your colleagues say:

"Caroline helped me put things into perspective and come away with a plan that will allow me to get back control of my finances. I feel in a good place to move forward." *Serving police officer, 2019*

"I am very grateful for Caroline's support. She could see I found the whole situation very stressful but she took that pressure from me and was wonderful. She's a fantastic lady" *Serving police officer, 2019*

"Not only did she help me to understand how the new pension will affect me but she also helped me save money!" *Serving police officer Bennett, 2019*

"Visiting Caroline Harris was well worth the time. She helped put my mind at rest with informed information rather than guess work" *Serving police officer Skidmore, 2019*

"Caroline cleared up any doubts about my pension and helped me understand my tax code better, which has resulted in a tax refund. I highly recommend any officer who is close to retirement come and speak to her." *Serving police officer Shippam, 2019*



GeorgeBurrows 

Trip down memory lane for retired sergeant

Retired West Midlands Police Sergeant Colin Barker has enjoyed a trip down memory lane thanks to a request from his daughter who has followed in his footsteps to be an officer.

Colin retired in 1996 after 30 years' service and two years later daughter Amanda Barker joined the Force, taking on his collar number to keep it in the family.

Now aged 74, Colin's policing career is just a distant memory but, as a gift, Amanda got in touch with Birmingham partnerships officer, Georgina Johnstone, to see if they could arrange a nostalgic trip for her dad.

The city's partnerships and engagement team quickly got to work organising a fun-filled day. The group, including Colin's wife, Carol, went out on a police van for a tour around Kingstanding; bringing back memories for Colin of delivering a baby outside the police station many moons ago.

They also visited the Steelhouse Lane lock-up, met officers – and dogs – from the dog section and spoke to traffic officers.

Amanda, who now works for the Force's public protection unit, sent in her thanks to Georgina and the team for re-visiting locations that once meant so much to him.

She said: "My Dad was overwhelmed that you did all that for him, and that people went out of their way to come and see him. For my Mom to experience this too was amazing. We are both so touched."

Colin started his policing career aged 20 at Kingstanding Police Station, going on to work with police horses, before turning his hand to the dog unit as a handler for eight years and then working in various roles in the Force. He asked to work his final years on Response – attending emergencies around the region - a role he loved.



Colin during his 30-year policing career.



Colin early in his policing career.



Retired police sergeant Colin Barker was joined on his visit by wife Carole.



Colin also took a tour round the Steelhouse Lane lock-up.

Supporting you

Our Federation reps and officials are keen to offer help, advice and support to all members.

It is always satisfying to find out that they have been able to make a difference. Here are some messages of thanks we have received in recent months.

Cliff Tomkinson guided me through a 14-month gross misconduct investigation. I was served with papers and received an inordinate amount of emails; all of which distressed me to the point of seeking help from my GP and counselling. Throughout this whole time, Cliff supported me. He responded to my text messages. He returned my calls and he listened to and understood my side of the story. At times, I was not mentally well enough to act in my own best interests.

I don't think Cliff will mind me saying that he does not mince his words. He kept me on the straight and narrow. At no point did I go off sick and I kept on trucking. At times, the only person I felt was helping and supporting me was Cliff.

My email is to let you know that I told Cliff I would walk through fire to help him if

he ever needs my help. He is an honest man. He is a kind man. He is thorough in his work. He always acted in my best interests. He was my protector. I have no doubt in my mind that if Cliff had not helped me I would have lost my job and with it so much more. I joined the police to help people and I am over the moon that this is now behind me. I was given management advice and I have acted on the recommended actions.

Member, name supplied but withheld.

A student officer wanted to say a BIG THANK YOU to Clifford Tomkinson, Scott Davies (previous Fed rep) and Sam Hughes (new Fed rep) for their support over the last few months.

Member, name supplied but withheld.

To member services administrator Jayne Carpenter

Thank you very much, that was too good of a service in a short turnaround time.

Member, name supplied but withheld.

I would just like to say a huge thanks for your help and support. It is a painful situation and it is causing me a great deal of stress but you have made that very simple and straightforward for me.

Member, name supplied but withheld.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS



NARPO is a rank-free association of retired police officers, dedicated to improving benefits for its members.

NARPO has Branches across West Midlands:-

Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.

- **FREE ADVICE –** Pensions, Benefits, Computing, Taxation;
- **MEMBER SERVICES –** Welfare Support, Car, Health and Travel Insurance, Car Purchase, Domestic Appliances, Trusted Legal Advisors, Mobile Phones, Travel Discounts, Job Opportunities + National/Local Websites, National Magazine, Branch Newsletters;
- **SOCIAL EVENTS –** Keep in touch with old friends and colleagues.

Annual membership fee deducted from pension:- £20.64 in 2018.

ARE YOU RETIRING SOON?

Join on-line www.NARPO.org, or for more information, contact the secretary of your preferred Branch:-

**Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall:-
Wolverhampton:-**

www.NARPOWestMidlands.org
www.NARPO-Wolverhampton.co.uk

Approaching retirement?

The programme of West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminars will continue throughout 2020.

The one-day seminars, which are held at the Federation's office – Guardians House, 2111 Coventry Road, Sheldon – are for officers in the last three years of their service and aim to prepare them for life outside the Force, financially and generally.

Officers are welcome to take their husband, wife or partner to the seminars which run from 9am until 4pm. They start with coffee and registration from 8.30am and include a buffet lunch.

Among the topics covered by the facilitators are:

- **Managing change and uncertainty**
- **CV writing and interview techniques**
- **Transferrable skills**
- **Pensions and the state pension**
- **How do I manage money and these financial changes?**
- **Budgeting**
- **Starting your own business**
- **Taxation**
- **New horizons - what's next?**
- **Savings, investments and finances, and**
- **Protecting your wealth.**



Seminars are being held on:

Thursday 6 February 2020

Thursday 12 March 2020

Thursday 9 April 2020

Thursday 14 May 2020

Thursday 11 June 2020

Thursday 23 July 2020

Thursday 20 August 2020

Thursday 24 September 2020

Thursday 22 October 2020

To book, email the Federation office with 'Retirement seminar' and the date you wish to attend in the subject line. Include your name, work and personal email address, phone number, proposed retirement date, number of places required and dietary requirements in the email.

Book early to avoid disappointment.

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Discounted seaside breaks for West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund members

The Benevolent Fund still has weeks available for members to stay at its two holiday homes in Dorset and Devon.

If you fancy a wonderful week away at a great discounted price visit the online calendars on the holiday home web pages for more details www.wmpben.co.uk

Hurry though as weeks will be booked on a first come, first served basis.

New joiners to the Benevolent Fund can also apply as well as members who have already been to one of their holiday homes before. Available weeks can be selected via the fund's online calendar

www.wmpben.co.uk

Not a member of the Benevolent Fund? You find out how to join (for as little as £2 per month) as well as read all the membership benefits you are entitled to once you become a member on the Benevolent Fund website.

The fund has been supporting serving and retired police officers, police staff and their families for more than 45 years. To find out more visit www.wmpben.co.uk



COURT COTTAGE, DARTMOUTH

Court Cottage is a quaint two-bedroom residence situated on the luxury Hillfield Village self-catering holiday estate. Set in an idyllic spot, it's the perfect location for visitors to explore the many glorious beaches and pretty nearby towns.

For more details and to book your stay visit <https://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/court-cottage/>

PEELS RETREAT, DORSET

Just steps away from the sea, in Weymouth, Peels Retreat is a three-storey townhouse offering members and their families (including dogs) a great base to explore the Jurassic coastline. The property sleeps up to six people with a garage for one car.

For availability and how to book visit <https://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/weymouth-holiday-home/>

Renewed call for wider roll-out of Taser

With more officers carrying Taser and an increasingly violent society it's no surprise that police use of Taser is at a record high, says national Federation chair John Apter.

John published a blog about Taser after the latest Home Office police use of Force statistics were released.

He wrote: "The figures released recently do show an increase in the use of Taser. This is not surprising. Firstly, there are far more officers trained and authorised to carry Taser and, secondly, let's not ignore the fact that we live in an increasingly more violent society where assaults on police officers are increasing year on year. But it's important to understand what a 'use' means as far as the figures are concerned.

"Every time an officer takes a Taser from its holster, the red dot is aimed, the device is arced or indeed fired then this is classed as a use. In reality, of the 23,500 incidents over the past 12 months where a Taser was 'used', it was actually fired on only 2,500 occasions. That means 85 per cent of the time the officer did not feel the need to fire the device. This demonstrates an incredible level of restraint and professionalism from my colleagues who have to make split second decisions on what level of force to use.

"Taser will probably always be targeted in the news or by various campaign groups



one way or another. But my stance will always remain the same and I will continue to champion its wider roll-out and support our members who want to carry it. Taser has proven itself time and time again, it's saved lives and it's prevented a higher level of force having to be used."

He also argues that it is essential police officers are given the best training, the best equipment and the support they need to do their job with access to Taser being part of that.

John accepts any police use of force must be subject to scrutiny but points out policing in the UK is the most scrutinised and accountable in the world.

"There also needs to be an

understanding of the reality we face on a daily basis," John argues, "Many of those who criticise my colleagues who use any level of force do so from the comfort of their armchair or with the benefit of hindsight. They have no grasp of reality, they generally offer no alternative other than to have a chat with a violent offender, to talk them down from their violent attack. I'm afraid that doesn't work in the real world. We have to deal with reality and sometimes that reality is not pretty!"

The Home Secretary has announced £10 million of extra funding to allow Taser to be issued to more officers but the Federation still wants to see more investment in the devices and officer safety generally.



Expert Hand. Human Touch.

Our family team are hugely experienced in advising and supporting members of the police force dealing with separation, divorce, financial or children matters, including looking after your pension.

For free initial advice call the Birmingham office on **0121 214 5278** and ask to speak to **Clare Wiseman** or **Mark Hands**.

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What constitutes work-related stress?

By **Matthew Tomlinson**,
principal lawyer in
industrial disease at
Slater and Gordon



Stress in its simplest form can actually be a good thing. Many of us actually need stress to perform at our best. However, when stress becomes too much and manifests into something more serious, such as a recognised psychiatric condition, it can give rise to a potential personal injury claim.

One of the first questions we ask members is whether they've been diagnosed with a recognised psychiatric disorder, such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or generalised anxiety disorder. A claim for damages cannot be made if someone is suffering from 'stress' alone. A member may have been to see their GP because of work-related stress but may be unaware they've

been diagnosed with a psychiatric condition. We can assist by requesting copies of their GP records.

Secondly, was the psychiatric injury reasonably foreseeable? The key consideration for the courts is deciding whether the member's force knew, or ought to have reasonably known, about how work was affecting their health.

Good examples include:

- A previous work-related stress absence
- Previously disclosed mental health difficulties
- The member complaining to their manager that they were becoming ill (as opposed to just stressed).

Thirdly, it's necessary to show there's been a breach of duty and that it was in fact something which the force did (or failed to do) contrary to law, which has caused the illness. We often ask members what their force could have done to prevent the harm they've suffered.

Examples may include:

- A failure to refer the member to occupational health
- In an overwork case, a failure to re-allocate work appropriately
- In a bullying case, failing to investigate the member's complaints and perform a risk assessment.

The final test is whether the breach of duty complained of caused the injury as opposed to other life stressors that we all commonly have.

If you're struggling at work to the extent it's affecting your health it's extremely important that you let your work-based representative or Federation know.

If you wish to bring a claim please contact the PF Claimline on Freephone

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or visit

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where you'll get

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Contact Warren & Co to find out dates for each location on:
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