

FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation

February/March 2025



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- see Pages 15 to 24

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WELCOME

Welcome to the February/March 2025 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: Sergeant Paul Williams, and his wife, Jemma, at the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards. Paul won the overall award and goes forward to the national Police Bravery Awards in London in July.

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The Federation has a crucial role in policing



By **Jess Davies**, acting chair of West Midlands Police Federation

I was four years into my role as a workplace representative when an unusual sequence of events – including the national Federation's suspension of our branch chair Rich Cooke – forced an election which put me into the position of acting chair of West Midlands Police Federation in the run-up to Christmas.

I'll be completely honest and say I was a bit nervous on taking up the role, at pretty short notice and in unexpected circumstances. In December, in those first days in the job, it was something of a rollercoaster and it was definitely a case of being thrown in at the deep end.

I had never chaired a meeting in my life, and I suddenly had two to chair within a week of each other. I had to really force myself out of my comfort zone, but once I had done that it was actually not as bad as I had built it up to be and I really enjoyed doing it. Weeks into the role, I'm now getting myself out and about meeting different people, staff networks and associations and building up really valuable relationships with key partners. I'm learning so much about other people and departments; it's really positive work.

I had always wanted to put myself forward for one of the full-time roles in the Federation office due to my passion for the Federation and, despite feeling a little apprehensive at first, it's fair to say the other full-time officials were incredibly supportive, helping me get to the grips with what is an incredibly different role to my usual 'day job'. Now, with a few weeks under my belt, I feel I am getting to grips with everything entailed and thoroughly enjoying filling in during the chair's period of enforced absence.

One of the highlights so far has been attending the West Midlands Police Federation Police Bravery Awards which were held at Tally Ho at the end of January. You can read all about the awards in this magazine.

I was in the unusual position of not just representing the branch at the awards, but also to receive an award as part of a team of officers from Solihull so I was doubly proud to be there, and to see our brave officers recognised in this way.

All too often, police bravery is taken for granted. But it should not be. Police officers will tell you that they were just doing their job when their bravery is recognised, but that doesn't mean heroic actions should not be highlighted. They absolutely should be.

But equally I am aware that police officers do not sign up to policing to win awards. They do so out of a desire to serve their communities, to fight crime, to protect the vulnerable and to keep order.

For me, policing was always in my blood. My Dad was a West Midlands Police officer and my Mom was a member of police staff. But it goes further back too as my Grandad was a police officer in Poland before the war. But, despite these family roots in policing, it was never actually a childhood dream for me to

become a police officer. It came later when, as a teenager, I witnessed a huge fight outside a restaurant when I was at my works Christmas meal. Just watching the police arrive and take control of it all - doing what we do best - was the lightbulb moment for me and I knew I wanted to be a part of that.

My fondest memories are the first eight years of my career on the E3 OCU on Response. I was then a motorway traffic officer on Central Motorway Police Group before leaving the Force in 2016. But, four years later, I was back again working at Coventry and Solihull on Response, becoming a workplace rep for the Federation in September 2021 and gaining promotion to sergeant in autumn 2024.

I was a temporary sergeant on Response at Solihull and was due to start my substantive sergeant post on Birmingham LPA in January this year when an opportunity arose to cover two days a week for the Federation deputy chair role, and this very quickly turned into full-time cover when we also lost Rich a couple of weeks later.

For me, this was a golden opportunity, and one – despite the nerves – that I really wanted to make the most of. I had first become a rep after getting outstanding support from the Federation at a particularly low ebb in my career and that had made me determined that one day I would provide that same support to other people in need.

It can be challenging to accept that you can't fix everything for the member you are supporting and there are times when you don't get the result that the officer had hoped for so it's vitally important to constantly manage expectations. You can very easily suffer from burn-out as a Fed rep as it's natural to want to help everyone all the time. The biggest challenge for me has been to manage my own

“ **WHEN YOU ACHIEVE A GOOD OUTCOME FOR A MEMBER AND YOU CAN SEE THEIR RELIEF AND GRATITUDE, THAT'S A REAL 'FREEZE THE MOMENT'. IT MAKES YOU REALISE JUST HOW IMPORTANT THE FEDERATION IS, NOT JUST TO ITS MEMBERS, BUT ALSO TO THE FORCE AND THEREFORE THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.** ”

wellbeing and workload levels.

But when you achieve a good outcome for a member and you can see their relief and gratitude, that's a real 'freeze the moment'. It makes you realise just how important the Federation is, not just to its members, but also to the Force and therefore the communities we serve.

Policing is a unique career and we don't have the same industrial rights as other groups of workers, however, we put our lives at risk every day and that has to be recognised by police leaders, key decision-makers, politicians and the Government. It's crucial we have the Federation as the voice of rank and file officers and to ensure the Police Regulations are followed.

“ I HAD FIRST BECOME A REP AFTER GETTING OUTSTANDING SUPPORT FROM THE FEDERATION AT A PARTICULARLY LOW EBB IN MY CAREER AND THAT HAD MADE ME DETERMINED THAT ONE DAY I WOULD PROVIDE THAT SAME SUPPORT TO OTHER PEOPLE IN NEED.

Unfortunately, there are times when officers find themselves unfairly treated or under investigation and again the Federation is crucial in these circumstances for expertise in the fields of the Equality Act and police conduct and performance. There's so much more the Federation also does to help members too, from helping with uniform and PPE issues, to engaging with local MPs and to ensuring when officers are assaulted on duty they are treated just as we would treat members of the public who are victims of an attack.

While from a personal and professional perspective, I am experiencing a big learning curve, stepping back from my member work to concentrate on the work of the branch chair, I am pleased that we now have a new branch council and workplace representatives who are steadily picking up their own workloads.

I am not quite sure what the next few months will bring in terms of the election of a branch chair but for now I am proud to be acting chair, to stand in during Rich's absence, to continue to progress the work he was involved in and to do all I can to support the other branch officials but, above all, do my best for the membership, putting them, and their wellbeing, at the heart of all I do.

Call for sustained investment in recruitment

Force police officer numbers are still down on where they were at the start of the austerity measures in 2010, despite a small increase in the headcount in the last 12 months.

The Government has published the police workforce statistics for the 12 months up until the end of September 2024 for all forces across England and Wales with the majority showing either a small drop in numbers or remaining the same when compared to the previous year's numbers.

In the West Midlands, there were 7,995 full-time equivalent officers in September 2024, compared with 7,874 in September 2023, a 1.5 per cent increase. But in the six months between the end of March and the end of September last year, the numbers fell from 8,000, a drop of 0.1 per cent.

At the end of September 2010, West Midlands Police had 8,400 officers.

"The Police Uplift Programme which was launched by the previous Conservative Government saw 20,000 police officers recruited nationwide in the three years up until the end of March 2023," says Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"Of course, forces welcomed the influx of new recruits to boost officer numbers which had fallen so low that many forces were struggling to provide effective policing services for the communities they serve.

"But, sadly, that recruitment drive only just took us back to the officer numbers nationwide that we had in 2010 when austerity measures were introduced and force budgets were slashed. In the intervening years, we saw the very nature of policing change with the demands placed on the service increasing beyond all belief.

"Not only were police forces dealing

with 'traditional' crimes, burglaries, theft, assaults, but they were also learning to adapt to new, emerging and growing crimes, such as human trafficking and cyber-crime with reduced resources, but they were also picking up the pieces for other services and organisations that were struggling to cope due to their own budget cuts.

"The police service became the service of first and last resort, the service that could never say no. Police officers were put under huge pressure, they suffered mentally as they tried to do more with less but they also suffered physically due to a rising number of officer assaults with their assailants rarely receiving appropriate sentences.

"In the context of the changing nature of crime, the increased and changing demand, the complexity of investigations and the inexperience of the new influx of officers, you cannot really assert that numbers have risen appropriately or that numbers are sufficient. We are in a transitional phase with a learning group of officers in their thousands who will need time and investment to flourish. We are already seeing the usual tensions with disproportionate under performance from student officers and an inability to provide the support they need.

"In addition, now we are seeing that, while the uplift programme brought in more officers, recruitment has trailed off and that means forces are not maintaining their numbers. There is an officer retention crisis that is impacting on numbers and we now need to see sustained investment in recruitment. It should not just be about keeping officer numbers at the current level but also making sure we recruit more to get us back to 2010 levels."

[Police workforce statistics – 30 September 2024.](#)

'Honoured' widow receives Elizabeth Emblem on Mac's behalf

The widow of a brave West Midlands Police officer killed on duty has spoken about the moment she received the new Elizabeth Emblem from His Majesty The King.

Helen Walker was among the first to receive the emblem during a reception at Windsor Castle.

It has been created to posthumously honour emergency service workers who have lost their lives serving their communities.

Helen's husband, PC Malcolm 'Mac' Walker, was 46 when he died on 4 October 2001 while on motorcycle patrol.

He had tried to stop a stolen car which drove straight at him on his motorbike.

Helen attended the reception with her son, Sean, a Force Special, shortly before Christmas.

She said: "It was an honour to be able to accept the award on my husband's behalf. He made the ultimate sacrifice. He gave his life to the police force and for the public.

"This is a worthy recognition of the sacrifice he made."

"I'VE SEEN THE OUTSIDE OF THE CASTLE BUT TO ACTUALLY GO IN WAS A MAGIC MOMENT. THERE WERE CHRISTMAS TREES, THERE WAS A QUARTET PLAYING, IT WAS ALL JUST MAGICAL.

Helen said the King made it a special occasion for each family.

She explained: "He asked how old Mac was when he died and that he was so very young.

"I said that he'd missed out on so much, with grandchildren and everything.

"Some of the COPS (Care of Police Survivors) members were wearing badges, which he mentioned," added Helen, who has been part of COPS since it was started in 2003.

"I told him that COPS has been an absolutely wonderful organisation for me – that it was a lifeline because you meet families who have been in the same position.

"Then he asked if anyone else was in the police, and I introduced Sean and they spoke. He probably only spoke to us for about 50



The King talks to Helen and Sean Walker after presenting them with the Elizabeth Emblem recognising West Midlands PC Malcolm 'Mac' Walker.

seconds, but we were made to feel special. He shook my hand, gave me the award and wished me a happy Christmas."

Helen described visiting Windsor Castle as 'magical'.

"I've seen the outside of the castle but to actually go in was a magic moment," she said. "There were Christmas trees, there was a quartet playing, it was all just magical.

"It was nice to share it with people we knew, taking photographs and wondering who in history had sat in the chairs and walked the rooms.

"Afterwards, I had a glass of Champagne. I'm not usually a Champagne drinker but it was the nicest I've drunk."

Among the first recipients of the Elizabeth Emblem were the families of Greater

Manchester PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone, who were ambushed and killed as they responded to a hoax 999 call in September 2012.

In 2021 Nicola's father, Bryn Hughes, joined forces with the Police Federation of England and Wales to launch the 'Medals For Heroes' campaign calling for formal state recognition for emergency service workers who lose their lives while protecting others.

It was announced in March last year that the King and the Government would introduce this with the Elizabeth Emblem, named in honour of Queen Elizabeth II.

The emblem features a Tudor crown and a rosemary wreath. The inscription reads 'For A Life Given In Service' and the recipient's name is engraved on the back.

"IT WAS AN HONOUR TO BE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE AWARD ON MY HUSBAND'S BEHALF. HE MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE. HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO THE POLICE FORCE AND FOR THE PUBLIC. THIS IS A WORTHY RECOGNITION OF THE SACRIFICE HE MADE.

Photo courtesy: The Royal Family Channel on YouTube.

'Moving service' honoured officer killed 100 years ago

The Federation joined the family of a West Midlands PC at a service to mark the anniversary of his death.

A ceremony to mark the 100th anniversary of the murder of a West Midlands Police officer 'did us all proud', his grandson said.

David Willits said the service in honour of his grandfather, PC Albert Willits, was 'moving, poignant, and touching'.

Albert was 24 and an officer with Wolverhampton Borough Police when he was fatally shot trying to stop three young men in Vicarage Road on 18 January 1925.

His life was remembered at a ceremony at Wolverhampton Central Police Station attended by his family, as well as police officers and staff.

They included David, his wife Glennis, their son Daniel, David's sister Susan King and her husband Roderick.

David said: "It was amazing to think it was 100 years ago and to have a service dedicated to him and his memory was wonderful.

"It was a very moving, poignant and touching service. It was a little overwhelming. They did us proud."

The service included a guard of honour, the playing of the Last Post and a Force chaplain led the gathering in a prayer.

West Midlands Police Federation was represented by branch deputy secretary Chris James and treasurer Darren Neville who, until



David Willits (right), grandson of PC Albert Willits, with his wife, Glennis, and son Daniel.

recently, was a Wolverhampton Federation representative but is now a Birmingham rep.

After the service, they attended Albert's grave to lay a wreath and say a few words. They were accompanied by Jon Morgan, a Wolverhampton officer who has recently stood to become a local Federation representative.

Force heritage manager Corinne Brazier, who helped arrange the anniversary service, said: "Albert's story is a poignant reminder of the dedication and sacrifices made by police officers to protect the public, prevent crime and catch criminals.

"We wanted to remember and honour Albert, along with his family members, to ensure his legacy lives on. He will forever be part of our policing family."



West Midlands Police Federation representatives laid a wreath at the grave of PC Albert Willits.

“IT WAS AMAZING TO THINK IT WAS 100 YEARS AGO AND HAVE A SERVICE DEDICATED TO HIM AND HIS MEMORY WAS WONDERFUL. IT WAS A VERY MOVING, POIGNANT AND TOUCHING SERVICE. IT WAS A LITTLE OVERWHELMING. THEY DID US PROUD.

Court case highlights real-life consequences for officers doing their job, says Fed

Police officers are often in a no-win situation when tackling crime, says West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers.

Tim said that, while officers were expected to keep the public safe, the reality of policing meant they could face prosecution themselves for simply using their training to keep the public safe.

He was speaking after a retired police officer was cleared of causing serious injury by dangerous driving after a collision with an e-bike.

The court heard former PC Tim Bradshaw touched the back wheel of the e-bike with his marked police car, causing two suspects to fall to the ground.

Mr Bradshaw, a now retired Sussex Police officer, said the use of a 'tactical contact' manoeuvre had been authorised by his superiors, and he was permitted to use 'reasonable force'.

However, he was accused of causing injury to a 'prolific' offender who had more than 40 convictions. The passenger, who had 26 previous convictions including assaulting emergency workers, suffered minor injuries.

The former officer denied the charge, saying he acted to protect life. The jury at

Portsmouth Crown Court took less than an hour to clear him.

Tim Rogers said: "I am always saddened to see an officer put through this ordeal for simply doing as the public expects of them."

He said the case raised 'the usual and ongoing' issues for frontline officers.

"Officers are expected to act to keep the public safe," he said. "And they absolutely do, often without thinking about the personal consequences."

"In this instance – and in many others across the country – serial recidivists are a common source of complaint and were officers seen to do nothing they would be criticised, and yet, where they act instinctively to keep the public safe, they are vulnerable to prosecution."

"Officers are increasingly being placed in an impossible situation, criminals become aware of this and exploit it."

"The Government eventually believed the police needed better facilities and powers to effectively deal with menaces on two wheels when they finally introduced a new standard test for police-trained drivers in November 2022."

"Sadly, PC Bradshaw narrowly missed being able to avail himself of this new law and

was prosecuted even with this, though vulnerabilities still remain."

Tim said there were parallels with the case of the W80 firearms officer and the use of force by officers.

West Midlands Police Federation has previously said the effect of the W80 ruling would impact officers in all arenas, not just firearms, and would make them 'hesitant' to act.

Officers are making split-second decisions every day before acting but have those actions analysed by people who have the benefit of hindsight and no frontline experience, the branch has said.

West Midlands Police Federation has [called for the Supreme Court's judgement in the W80 case to be overturned](#). If the ruling is not overturned, the Federation said, it would have to explain the 'double jeopardy' faced by officers.

Tim said: "Not engaging and dealing with offenders goes against every cop's professional and moral fibre – but that's the reality of what our members are faced with."

"A change in legislation may well have averted this particular prosecution."

"However, as it is, our members see the real-life consequences and are more nervous than ever about using their powers."

Local MPs raise knife crime in Parliament

Solihull West and Shirley MP Neil Shastri-Hurst has welcomed a Government commitment to halving knife crime within a decade saying that, as a former trauma surgeon, he had seen first-hand the devastating effects of knife and other serious violent crime.

But, speaking in the House of Commons in the run-up to Christmas, the Conservative MP called for more detail on Labour's broader commitment on serious violent crime, highlighting the fact that no specifics had been given and asking the Solicitor General Lucy Rigby which crimes would be included.

Ms Rigby replied: "We know that effective local policing is vital to tackling knife crime, which is why we are putting 13,000 more police and police community support officers on our streets, because we are determined to make our streets safe. The Home Secretary has also commissioned a rapid review to understand how these weapons are sold online and delivered to under-18s and identify gaps in legislation and the most effective ways to stop this."

The Labour MP for West Bromwich, Sarah Coombes, also spoke during the same session referring to a recent incident in her own constituency.

She told MPs: "A couple of weeks ago, people in West Bromwich were met with the terrifying sight of young people wearing balaclavas and wielding machetes running around the town centre in broad daylight. It was a shocking, dangerous incident that has put people off going into the town centre. What is the Solicitor General doing to work with other Ministers to crack down on these zombie-style knives and ensure our town centres are safe?"



Solihull West and Shirley MP Neil Shastri-Hurst.

Ms Rigby said: "I am very sorry to hear about that shocking incident in my honourable friend's constituency, and she is right to raise it in this House. These kinds of weapons have absolutely no place on our streets. That is why this Government took quick action to ensure it was illegal to possess machetes. I hope and expect that there will be timely prosecutions in this case."

She also admitted knife crime was still too high, with more than 50,000 instances in the year to June 2024.

The Solicitor General explained: "Every single victim of knife crime is one too many, and this Christmas there will be some constituents, including my own, facing the heartbreaking reality of a loved one who is no longer with them due to knife crime. That is why, as part of our plan for change, the Government are 100 per cent committed to tackling knife crime."

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, said he welcomed local MPs speaking out on knife crime in Parliament and repeated an invitation for all those representing West Midlands constituencies to meet with Federation officials to discuss the issue and others affecting policing in the region.

"We are pleased to hear that our MPs are taking an active role in the Commons, speaking out on matters affecting their communities," says Tim, "Knife crime is devastating people's lives, with young people losing their lives and their deaths having a life-long impact on the families and friends they leave behind."

"We have welcomed the Government's pledges to tackle knife crime but we need to see tangible results, notably a reduction in these types of incidents. We are keen to engage with our MPs to discuss knife crime, other violent crime and a wide range of other matters that are impacting on policing in the West Midlands."

"We have now written to our MPs several times since the General Election, seeking to meet with them but sadly we have so far only been able to arrange a handful of meetings and, while a few more are in the pipeline, we are really disappointed that more MPs have not taken up our invitation."

"All too often we hear MPs talking about the importance of an effective police service and the need to invest in policing but it would seem that few are interested enough in law and order to speak to the Federation which represents the interests and views of those who day in, day out our out in their communities, seeking to fight and prevent crime, keep order and protect the vulnerable."

“WE ARE PLEASED TO HEAR THAT OUR MPS ARE TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE COMMONS, SPEAKING OUT ON MATTERS AFFECTING THEIR COMMUNITIES. KNIFE CRIME IS DEVASTATING PEOPLE'S LIVES, WITH YOUNG PEOPLE LOSING THEIR LIVES AND THEIR DEATHS HAVING A LIFE-LONG IMPACT ON THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS THEY LEAVE BEHIND.

Working for you: workplace representatives form new Branch Council

A total of 51 workplace representatives are set to form the new West Midlands Police Federation Branch Council.

Around half of the reps will be new to the branch and their initial training programme will begin as soon as possible.

"I would like to put on record our thanks to all those members who put themselves forward as workplace representatives," says Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, "The workplace rep role is a critical piece in the policing model, being an asset to the senior leadership teams and members alike, their work and influence is invaluable. The role can be demanding and rewarding in equal measure. It is our job, as a Federation, to ensure they are sufficiently supported for maximum effectiveness.

"They carry out their Federation work alongside their regular duties as police officers, giving up their own time to do so. It takes a lot of commitment on their part so we welcome the fact that they have volunteered to work with the branch to support colleagues in their time of need.

"We now want to get the reps fully equipped and trained as soon as we possibly can so they can hit the ground running in terms of working for members and providing value to them."

All new reps will undertake an initial training course introducing them to the broad range of Federation work and they can later choose to do further courses if they wish to specialise in conduct, health and safety, equality and other aspects of the staff association's remit.

West Midlands Police Federation also provides a mentoring scheme for new reps, so that more long-standing reps can share their experience and offer support and guidance.

The new Branch Council has been formed as part of the nationwide Police Federation triennial elections.

Members were invited to put themselves forward as candidates in the workplace representative elections when the nomination period opened on 30 December 2024.

In March, the new reps can put themselves forward to become members of the branch executive, the West Midlands Police Federation Branch Board and, from there, a regional or national role.

Once the Branch Board has been selected, its members can choose to stand as branch chair and, if more than one rep puts themselves forward, there will be a vote among the membership – again online.

Later this year, all members will be able to vote in the elections for the national Federation chair, again if more than one candidate stands.

The Police Federation elections will continue for much of this year (see schedule right) with all stages being completed by 1 October 2025 when the new National Board will be in place.

THE ELECTIONS PROCESS

- The Branch Council votes for the Branch Board members
- Members elect the local branch chair
- The Branch Board elects the local branch secretary
- The chairs and secretaries from branches across England and Wales make up the National Council
- The National Council votes to elect the National Board
- All members vote to elect the national chair
- The National Board selects the general secretary
- The National Board votes in the remaining principal officers.

The Police Federation of England and Wales, which has 139,000 subscribing members, was established in 1919 and has represented the interests of officers from the ranks of constable to chief inspector ever since. Specials have been able to subscribe to the Federation and access its help and support since 2022.

Elections timetable

LOCAL BRANCHES

Workplace representatives

- **30 December 2024** – Nominations open
- **24 January 2025** – Nominations close
- **3 to 23 February 2025** – Voting takes place
- **27 February** – Results are announced.

Branch Boards

- **17 March** – Nominations open
- **6 April** – Nominations close
- **14 to 28 April** – Voting takes place
- **30 April** – Results are announced.

Branch chairs

- **2 May** – Nominations open
- **9 May** – Nominations close
- **13 to 27 May** – Voting takes place
- **28 May** – Results are announced
- **1 June** – Branch chair and other officials take office.

Additional national members

- **28 May** – Nominations open
- **4 June** – Nominations close
- **5 to 12 June** – Voting takes place
- **13 June** – Results are announced, completing National Council.

National chair

- **16 June** – Nominations open
- **23 June** – Nominations close
- **30 June to 14 July** – Voting takes place
- **15 July** – Results are announced
- **1 August** – National chair takes office.

National Board

- **1 August** – Nominations open
- **10 August** – Nominations close
- **12 to 19 August** – Voting takes place (regional stage)
- **20 August** – Regional stage results are announced
- **21 August to 28 August** – Voting takes place (National Council stage)
- **29 August** – National Council stage results are announced
- **1 September** – National Board members take office, with the exception of national secretary.

Key national roles

- **1 to 30 September** – Key roles on National Board, including secretary, are selected
- **1 October** – New National Board in post.



Nicky sets up support group after son's cancer diagnosis

A West Midlands Police detective wants people to come together to share their experiences and offer support.



Nicky (far left) and Ollie (far right) with their family in Rome last year (2024).

"He had been playing rugby on the Sunday and, by the Wednesday, we were told he had cancer," Detective Sergeant Nicky Simms recalls.

Her son, Ollie, was just 14 when he was diagnosed with Burkitt's lymphoma, a fast-growing, aggressive cancer.

Two years later, she is creating a support network for West Midlands Police officers and staff who have experienced a child close to them being diagnosed with cancer.

"The diagnosis was completely out of the blue," Nicky recalled, "Ollie had played rugby on the Sunday and told us his back was hurting. By Thursday, we were in urgent care, getting an x-ray."

The x-ray showed that Ollie's right lung had collapsed, and doctors had found a 'mass' that turned out to be cancer.

"We were told that this is such a rapid form of cancer the cells would have doubled in just 24 hours. From his chest to pelvis, Ollie's body was riddled with tumours," continued Nicky, 44.

"I don't know how long he had had it for,

but I know we were fortunate that we didn't leave it any longer."

The following day Ollie had surgery to insert a chest drain to drain 6kg of fluid from his lungs and to have his central line fitted ready for chemotherapy.

"It's only when I look back I think about how difficult that time was," Nicky said. "But it was Ollie who was our inspiration - we drew our strength from him. My husband - who is also in the Force - and I had to tell him that he had cancer. We were both devastated, and he looked at us and said 'Don't cry, Mum and Dad. I've got a bit of cancer, I'll have a bit of chemo and then I'll be back playing rugby again'. We definitely drew our strength from him."

Mother-of-two Nicky added: "It was really hard, especially at the beginning."

The day after Ollie's central line was fitted, his dad, Gavin, tested positive for Covid, which meant he could not visit the hospital for 10 days.

"It was a very difficult time. Gavin couldn't visit due to having Covid, which meant I stayed with Ollie - but that meant not being at home

with our daughter, Maisy. Between us, we pretty much lived in hospital for five months," said Nicky, who has heaped praise on the Force and her manager, saying she could not fault them at all: "The support I received was fantastic. Everyone around us was amazing."

Ollie's rugby club and school together raised £28,000, but, instead of Ollie taking the money for himself, he decided to split it between three charities: [The Teenage Cancer Trust](#), Rugby Against Cancer and the [Children's Hospital Charity](#).

Ollie was treated for five months before he 'rang the bell' to mark the end of his cancer treatment on 18 August 2022.

"It has been a struggle for Ollie at times," said Nicky, "All he ever wanted to know is if he could play rugby again - and would you believe it, in the November of that year, he played his first match after being diagnosed."

Ollie, now 17, is currently working towards his A-Levels and is part of a national rugby programme.

"Of course, Ollie faced certain restrictions and challenges in life, but he is now officially cancer-free," said Nicky, who is creating a support network within the Force for others who have shared a similar experience to her.

She added: "I feel very passionately about creating a safe space for people so they feel comfortable opening up. It's a space to feel angry, sad, frustrated - however you want to feel, without feeling guilty about it."

"And it's not just emotional support we can provide for one another, but the practical bits too. For example, I didn't realise that the Federation's Group Life Insurance covers children. Or I didn't know what pillow to buy to ensure Ollie was most comfortable, or how I could claim disability allowance, or how I could apply for a blue badge. All of these little things actually turn out to be really big, helpful, useful things."

The network is inspired by the Force's 'Cancer Club', a network launched for those who have experienced or are living with cancer.

The group will be specifically for police officers and staff who have experienced a child close to them being diagnosed or living with cancer.

The first support meeting took place on Monday 27 January. For more information about the group and details of future meetings email cancerclub@westmidlands.police.uk

Drones unit set sights higher



Federation member Inspector Mark Colwell reflects on another successful 12 months for West Midlands Police's drones unit and his growing passion for an innovative area of policing.

Part of the Force for 29 years, Mark says he gained a new lease of life as an officer when he was approached to join a pioneering drone project in 2017.

The unit was then still very much in its infancy, having started out with a single dedicated cop before growing into what it is today – the only standalone drones team of any UK police force, boasting more than 20 full-time pilots.

This means the unit can offer a 24/7 operation to the Force, and Mark believes it is getting better all the time.

"I think it's fair to say at this point that drone technology in policing just works – from the very start, it's been so effective," he explained. "In the beginning, the unit could carry out pre-planned jobs like missing people and area searches. There was also a tasking where our drones filmed the detonation of an unexploded World War Two bomb in Aston.

"Along the way, our capabilities have increased, and we have had a huge impact catching offenders, conducting drugs warrants and policing public order incidents at football matches, to name a few examples. And, success creates demand.

"The drones are becoming more influential as we go on and it's been an absolute privilege to witness and be a part of that, to be honest."

Mark, who had a small cameo in Sky Coppers – a documentary on the drones team produced by Channel 4 in 2023 – went on to



discuss the unit's exploits in more recent times.

A counter-drone capacity has now been taken on, meaning pilots will aim to mitigate the threat of other devices being misused for terrorism and illegal interference, as well as drones innocently caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

As standard-setters, the Force is making big contributions to this pursuit both regionally and nationally.

Furthermore, Mark and his colleagues are two-and-a-half months into a nationally funded five-year project to extend the drones' line of sight beyond their current limit of 500 metres.

"This line-of-sight work could be huge – it could mean the drones become the first wave of police response to many different incidents and offences," he said.

"The drones would give us vision on a location far sooner than we could physically

arrive there, meaning we could be even more proactive in getting control over the situation.

"We are always thinking about how we could become more proactive – for instance, in car chases, armed and unarmed sieges, and public order before a disturbance escalates, rather than only afterwards.

"Leading response would be the biggest thing to come out of the unit so far, and I think it could really shape police tactics on these offences I've mentioned and many, many more."

The 53-year-old also revealed the unit's aspirations of internal drones, which would see its capabilities furthered in respect of operating in indoor settings.

Looking back on the unit's continuous progress, he said: "It's been another very successful year. The team is going from strength to strength and is even looking to expand in the near future.

"I think the thing I am most proud of since we started is the lives we have saved. When you look in the news and see drones being used for war and destruction, we're using them for the complete opposite purpose.

"Personally, I needed a new challenge in the police and this opportunity came along at a fantastic time – and it's turned out to be one of the best jobs I've ever had."

“ I THINK THE THING I AM MOST PROUD OF SINCE WE STARTED IS THE LIVES WE HAVE SAVED. WHEN YOU LOOK IN THE NEWS AND SEE DRONES BEING USED FOR WAR AND DESTRUCTION, WE'RE USING THEM FOR THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE PURPOSE.

Win a £500 voucher for your groceries

Great prizes are up for grabs in the first Police Mutual free draw of the year.

There are four £500 e-gift cards being offered as prizes and they can be used in a supermarket of your choice from the following list:

- Aldi
- Asda
- Marks & Spencer
- Morrisons
- Sainsbury's
- Tesco.

Entries can be submitted now and the competition closes on 31 March 2025. The draw takes place on 1 April and prizes will be delivered within 48 hours.

Police Mutual offers a range of products and services that are only available to police officers, staff, their families and the wider police family, and publishes regular factsheets with a focus on wellbeing and finances.

[Enter and view the full terms and conditions.](#)

Anniversary craft ale down to final stock

Officers and staff within the Force have the chance to take up an exclusive offer and treat themselves to West Midlands Police Museum's limited edition Lock-Up Ale.

The craft ale, created in conjunction with Smethwick based brewery Davenports, was brought out by the museum last year to help commemorate the Force's 50th anniversary.

Davenports run The Queen's Head pub, which is near the museum on Steelhouse Lane in Birmingham, and is where many police officers have enjoyed socialising over the years.

Sold at both the police museum - where 500ml bottles are currently available to visitors at £4.50 each - and The Queen's Head over the last year, Lock-Up Ale has been a hit with many customers, says museum heritage manager Corinne Brazier.

"This is another special item we were very proud to introduce in 2024 for the Force's anniversary," Corinne said.

"There has been a lot of positive feedback on the ale - it would be best described as a bitter, so it's obviously good for ale drinkers but, as someone who tends to prefer lager, I can say I really like it too.

"It's an opportunity to celebrate the Force you represent as an officer and enjoy some quality ale, or it could even make a great gift for a colleague, friend or family member."

As well as in-person sales of individual

bottles, cases of 12 bottles of Lock-Up Ale can be bought on the West Midlands Police Museum website for just £30.

While orders can be collected from the museum, cases can now be delivered exclusively to West Midlands Police officers and staff at any Force station or place of work for an extra £4.99.

To take advantage of this offer, simply follow the instructions at the check-out.

"We have around 60 cases left, and we anticipate these will go soon, so make sure you get your orders in before we sell out," Corinne added.

An expert description of the ale can be found on the [British Guild of Beer Writers website](#).



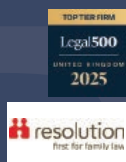
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With over 20 years' experience of working with police, Gorvins have been a leading provider of legal services in all matters arising from relationship breakdowns and disputes concerning children. We understand the importance of family and the impact that a family breakdown can have upon all of those closely concerned and that is why our service (with discounted fees) is offered not just to serving and retired police officers and police staff, but also to their partners and immediate family members.

Part of our commitment to supporting those whose vital work supports us all includes a prompt initial consultation - free of charge.

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Brave Paul to be honoured at national awards ceremony

An officer who saved the life of a woman being savagely attacked by two dogs will represent West Midlands Police Federation at this year's national Police Bravery Awards.

Sergeant Paul Williams was named the overall winner at the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards at the end of January and now goes forward as the branch nominee for the national awards.

He was presented with the PC David Green Shield after rescuing a woman from a mauling by two German shepherd-type dogs in a street in Yardley, Birmingham, in the early hours of 23 May last year.

Paul said: "I'm a bit overwhelmed. It's a lot to take in. West Midlands Police is a massive Force area and our officers do stuff every single day that is really brave – as brave as what I did – but it's not always recognised.

"For me, it's nice to have that recognition and to share the evening with everyone else who has been recognised for what they have done."

The shield he received at the local awards ceremony is named in honour of 20-year-old PC David Green, who was stabbed to death by a mob in Birmingham city centre in 1975. In David's 15-month career, he was commended 3 times for his bravery.

Paul also received a West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Award for the Birmingham area, which was sponsored by Axon.

He was singlecrewed when he arrived at the scene to find the woman being mauled by the two dogs. She already had serious injuries and was close to dying.

Paul got out of his car and tried to use his Taser to subdue one of the dogs, but was unsuccessful.

The dogs charged at him, forcing him back into his car, before they returned to continue their attack on the woman.

Paul got out again and this time his Taser brought down one of the dogs. The other latched onto his arm, but he managed to shake it off and get back into his vehicle. Colleagues arrived in support and took the victim to hospital, while both dogs were captured.

The woman was in intensive care for four weeks, while Paul described his injuries, which required dressing and injections, as superficial.

He said: "As police officers, we're the ones who are called and we're the ones who need to take action and we're the ones who sign up to do that.

"I couldn't just sit there and watch her get killed in front of me. And if it wasn't me, nobody



West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards winner Sergeant Paul Williams.

else was going to do anything, so that's what I did."

Paul was nominated for the bravery award by Inspector Matt Baldwin.

The citation said: "Despite the obvious danger and fear, you distracted the dogs allowing the woman to reach safety.

"You were attacked yourself, receiving injuries to your arm, but were able to frighten the dogs using your Taser.

"Your courageous actions undoubtedly saved the woman's life."

Paul attended the awards ceremony with his wife Jemma.

He will represent West Midlands Police at the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) Police Bravery Awards in London later this year.

He said: "It's an honour to have won this award and to go to London on behalf of West Midlands Police and be part of that.

"To be with other officers from across the country who have done brave acts, it will be a real feel-good occasion."

Jess Davies, West Midlands Police Federation acting chair, said: "Congratulations to Paul, who was a worthy winner of the PC David Green Shield, and to all of the winners at our second annual bravery awards.

"The evening was a huge success and was made possible with the support of all our sponsors, including headline sponsors Slater and Gordon.

"Our members are doing incredible acts of bravery and making selfless sacrifices every day, and it was great to be able to celebrate and share their stories."

Tim Rogers, branch secretary, said: "We are really proud of all our award winners, who demonstrated the very best of policing and of West Midlands Police.

"Selecting an overall winner was incredibly difficult. However, the way Paul put his own safety at risk, and no doubt saved this woman's life, was absolutely admirable.

"It made him a worthy recipient of the PC David Green Shield and to represent the West Midlands at the national Police Bravery Awards."

PC Ben Chilcott (second from left) with Olly Barrow of sponsors George Burrows (second from right).



Daring duo stopped murderous knife attack

A PC who received a bravery award for stopping a murderous knife attack says he was just doing his job.

PCs Ben Chilcott and Callum Dee saved the life of a victim who was being repeatedly stabbed in the chest at an address in Wolverhampton.

The officers were responding to reports that a man armed with a knife and a hammer was behaving aggressively.

When they arrived, they could see the armed attacker through a large front room window.

As the unarmed officers approached the window, the attacker began stabbing the victim in the chest.

The front door to the property was open

and Callum and Ben ran in. They used their PAVA spray on the attacker, which caused him to drop the knife.

After a struggle, he was handcuffed and detained outside.

The officers then returned to the victim and provided first aid. They received relatively minor wounds, despite sustaining four stab wounds in the chest.

Ben and Callum were awarded the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Award for Wolverhampton, which was sponsored by

George Burrows, for their actions on 4 January 2024.

Ben was at the gala awards dinner to receive his award in person, while Callum has since moved to Australia.

Ben said: "We were only doing our job but it is really nice to get the award. We don't go into it to receive awards, but it's good when we get the recognition for what we do."

Ben added: "I spoke to Callum before the awards and he said he hoped it all goes well. It's just a shame he couldn't be here with me."

The pair were nominated by Sergeant Alix Hadley for putting themselves in harm's way to save the life of the injured party.

The citation said: "This is for your exceptional bravery shown on 4 January 2024 at an address in Wolverhampton, when you saw a man being stabbed repeatedly within, entered without hesitation to prevent a murderous attack in progress and certainly save the victim's life."

“ WE WERE ONLY DOING OUR JOB BUT IT IS REALLY NICE TO GET THE AWARD. WE DON'T GO INTO IT TO RECEIVE AWARDS, BUT IT'S GOOD WHEN WE GET THE RECOGNITION FOR WHAT WE DO. ”

Courageous cop in high-speed car chase

Steve Grange (second from left) of sponsors Anns and Grange Associates presents PC Josh Gorman with his award.



PC Josh Gorman said he was lost for words after winning a West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Award for arresting a car thief who had driven at high speed into his vehicle.

Josh overcame whiplash injuries and concussion following the crash to arrest a man suspected of stealing cars in Dudley.

He was a passenger in a car being driven by PC Jo Prejbeanu pursuing a stolen Jaguar in May last year.

Josh, who had taken off his seatbelt ready to pursue the suspect on foot, was first thrown into the windscreen after the vehicle was struck at around 80mph before being thrown into the back of the vehicle.

As he was getting his bearings, he saw the door of the Jaguar starting to open. He climbed out of the car, chased the suspect and made the arrest.

“ I’M LOST FOR WORDS. IT WAS A CASE OF ME JUST DOING MY JOB AND ANYONE ELSE WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING, BUT IT’S ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC TO RECEIVE THE AWARD.

Now Josh, who suffered a bloodied nose in the collision, has received the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Award for Dudley, which Anns and Grange Associates sponsored.

Josh said: “I’m lost for words. It was a case

of me just doing my job and anyone else would have done the same thing, but it’s absolutely fantastic to receive the award.

“The Chief Constable is here, my own Chief Superintendent is here, it’s a really great event and lovely to be recognised for the job that we do.”

Josh was nominated for the award by Sergeant Matt Ingram.

His citation said: “This is for your exceptional bravery shown when, while in the process of searching for a stolen Jaguar, and your police vehicle having been struck with tremendous force, such as to write off both vehicles, you maintained your composure, despite injuries, to immediately pursue, apprehend and detain the criminal who was escaping, ensuring the thief was promptly brought to justice.”

Pair's actions get guns off the streets



Mark McIntyre of sponsors Serve and Protect Credit Union (centre) presents awards to PC Tim Small (second from left) and now retired DC Ash Forster (second from right).

A 'routine inquiry' ended with two West Midlands Police Federation members taking two guns off the streets and receiving a bravery award for their actions.

DC Ash Forster and PC Tim Small said their training kicked in when faced with a man with a shotgun during what they thought was a standard call.

The officers, who were unarmed, disarmed the man and arrested him on suspicion of conspiracy to murder and firearms offences.

A woman was also arrested on suspicion of the same offences during the incident in June last year.

For their actions, Ash and Tim received the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Award for Sandwell, which was sponsored by Serve and Protect Credit Union.

Tim said: "It was a routine inquiry. We've been to those types of jobs 100 times before

and you just don't think anything of it."

Ash, who retired in November, added: "To win awards is not what we signed up for but it's nice to receive.

“TO WIN AWARDS IS NOT WHAT WE SIGNED UP FOR BUT IT'S NICE TO RECEIVE.

"I had 27 years of service and it's great to see so many people doing really good things and being recognised for it."

The incident began with the officers receiving information of a potential conspiracy to murder.

The suspect was unknown to the officers and to satisfy themselves there was no danger to the public they arranged a meeting at an address in Dudley.

When they arrived, a vehicle pulled onto the drive and a man got out of the passenger side and sprinted into the house.

Tim spoke to the female driver while Ash went into the property, but initially could not find the man.

The officers continued to talk to the woman in the kitchen, before the man came in through a rear door and immediately went back out again.

It raised Ash's suspicions and he followed the man into the garden where he found him in possession of a shotgun.

The officers managed to disarm and handcuff the suspect before a wider search of the address found an improvised firearm, which was deemed live and viable.

Tim said: "It was a really good result and it's nice to have that recognised with the award."



Two PCs who were unarmed when they arrested three men suspected of a double stabbing in Coventry have spoken of their pride at winning a bravery award.

PCs Molly Stanley and Jack Cox were praised for their 'intelligent and courageous' work in tracking down the suspects and recovering an axe and a 10-inch knife.

The officers received the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Award for Coventry, which was sponsored by Bluline Health.

Molly said: "It was really nice to receive the award – it's something that we're both proud of.

"The awards night is a fantastic event to be involved in and it's great to see so many other brave acts getting recognition."

Jack added: "It's a really good feeling to pick up the award and to be recognised."

Molly and Jack made the first of the arrests in Trinity Street, Coventry in October, two days after a double stabbing in the city.

They were on plain clothes patrol and

Coventry couple win following knife attack arrest

unarmed when they identified three suspects.

They approached the men after radioing for support and, while two ran off, they managed to detain the third suspect and recover an axe.

Later that night, now on uniform patrol, Jack was crewed with Sergeant Richard Smart,

while Molly was nearby with PC Mark Cooper, when people of interest were spotted in Lady Herbert's Garden, near Trinity Street.

Jack approached the men, who were the suspects they were looking for, drew his Taser and ordered them to the floor. The suspects were arrested and a 10-inch knife was recovered from some bushes.

Sgt Smart nominated the officers for their award. The citation said: "You acted intelligently and courageously to arrest all three men helping prevent further serious violence or risk to other members of the public."

“IT WAS REALLY NICE TO RECEIVE THE AWARD – IT’S SOMETHING THAT WE’RE BOTH PROUD OF. THE AWARDS NIGHT IS A FANTASTIC EVENT TO BE INVOLVED IN AND IT’S GREAT TO SEE SO MANY OTHER BRAVE ACTS GETTING RECOGNITION.

Hometown hero reaffirms commitment to policing

PC Rachel French is congratulated by Bob Thomson of sponsors Thomson Financial Solutions (second from right).



An officer who single-handedly disarmed a high-risk person of a knife says she would 'do the same again' as her heroics were honoured at this year's West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards ceremony.

PC Rachel French was the local winner for the Walsall area – individually sponsored by Thomson Financial Solutions Ltd.

Bloxwich had one of its own to thank for keeping its streets safe when Rachel gave an incredible solo chase after a man wielding a bladed weapon in her hometown last April, sprinting across busy roads and through side streets over a three-minute period before eventually catching up to him.

After catching the offender, the courageous cop withstood verbal intimidation while waiting for back-up to complete his arrest.

It was later discovered that Rachel's pressure had forced him to abandon the knife along the route of the chase.

When her actions were recognised at the awards ceremony, she said: "Obviously, it's an honour. You just come to work every day and

do your job, and you don't expect to get an award for it. I'm still a little bit shellshocked.

"I just go to work every day to do my job, and I'd do the same again."

“ I JUST GO TO WORK EVERY DAY TO DO MY JOB, AND I'D DO THE SAME AGAIN. ”

The 32-year-old was alerted to the incident after a taxi driver had been on the receiving end of threats from a hostile man holding a knife – who was believed to have been on something of a 'rampage' of aggressive behaviour and vandalism beforehand.

The arrest of an initial suspect had meant the police presence at the scene had reduced, leaving Rachel and a student colleague to take further details from the victim.

But when the taxi driver pointed out another man still at large, unequivocally believing him to be the offender, Rachel

immediately advanced towards him on her own.

Ahead of the ceremony, she described her thought process in these moments.

"I just started running after him, not wanting to lose eyes on him for a second. No one was running with me, but I knew he was still a potential risk to other members of the public with his aggressive and erratic behaviour.

"He needed stopping, so that's all that went through my mind.

"I didn't want to let the victim down, nor the public. I am born and raised in Bloxwich, so I have real knowledge of the town and I want to make sure everyone here stays safe," she said.

Attending the awards alongside partner Nathan, Rachel said of the ceremony: "It's not what I'm used to – I'm used to just going to work, getting on with my job, and not coming to something like this and getting an award.

"It's out of my comfort zone a little bit, but in a nice way."



Bravery Solihull officers PC Steve Worrall (second from left), Sergeant Jess Davies (centre left) and PC Charlene Scott (centre right) are congratulated by Adrian Keeling KC of sponsors No 5 Barristers' Chambers.

Solihull trio touched by recognition at ceremony

Pride was felt three-fold at the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards for Solihull officers who acted courageously in a showdown involving a loaded handgun last year.

Sergeant Jess Davies and PCs Charlene Scott and Steve Worrall won the award for the Solihull area which was individually sponsored by No 5 Barristers' Chambers.

They were recognised for their decisive actions last February when they found themselves in a critical position after attending a disturbance at the borough's Marston Green Tavern.

Although much of the disorder had dispersed by the time they arrived at the pub, erratic behaviour from a nearby black Mercedes raised the suspicions of the trio, who were in a police car being driven by Jess.

After the vehicle in question eventually made its way into the officers' path and came to an abrupt stop, Charlene and Steve – now on high alert – decided to approach the car on foot.

But matters turned dangerous when, opening two of the vehicle's doors, Charlene,

and soon after, Steve, both had a gun pointed at them.

Ahead of the ceremony, Steve revealed how they had to make their way back to the police car with 'absolutely no cover' from potential gunfire.

And looking back further on the event, he said: "You block it out a bit. I don't really think about it all that often – only at times like this.

"We all know that incident could have happened to anybody, and you don't do it (policing) for this, but it is lovely to be recognised."

After Steve and Charlene had eventually made their way back to Jess – who was also exposed to the firearm and a possible vehicle-to-vehicle assault – the trio managed to depart the scene.

The Force's firearms unit followed up,

seizing the offending vehicle and recovering the handgun, which was confirmed to be real and loaded with two bullets and 12 rounds of ammunition – a revelation the officers previously described as 'surreal'.

"We were all doing our job, at the end of the day. That's what we're paid to do," explained Jess, who is currently acting chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"But I echo what Steve has said – it's really nice to be recognised."

Speaking about the incident, Charlene added: "I just remember driving away [from the scene] with so many questions going through my head.

"In my whole career, I'd never experienced anything like that before."

And it was Charlene who rounded off the group's thoughts at the bravery awards ceremony, as she was supported on the night by partner David, while Jess and Steve attended with husband Scott and dad Brian, respectively.

"Every day, people (in the Force) go to jobs that are just as rewarding and deserving of awards, so it's really nice to be recognised and on behalf of everyone who works really hard, I'd like to share this with them," she said.

“WE ALL KNOW THAT INCIDENT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ANYBODY, AND YOU DON'T DO IT (POLICING) FOR THIS, BUT IT IS LOVELY TO BE RECOGNISED.

'To be honoured with this is an inspiration'

An officer who fought through a whole host of danger while leading an arrest has described attending the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards as a 'massive honour'.

PC Jodie Cox was named as one of two local winners for Birmingham.

She has been recognised for her sense of duty which persisted against arson, a vitriolic attack and threats to kill when she attended a domestic disturbance on Tyburn Road last May to provide back-up to the situation.

Speaking at the ceremony, she said: "Honestly, it's a massive honour (to be here). Just for doing your job, you don't expect to have anything like this."

"To be honoured with this is an inspiration and just a huge honour."

Jodie arrived at a maisonette on the day of the incident to find clear signs of disorder coming from the building's upper flat, which was in complete darkness.

After attempting to approach the flat from a flight of stairs, she and colleagues were met with threats to kill from a man, who then set fire to a pile of rubbish on the maisonette's landing to block off the officers.

“HONESTLY, IT'S A MASSIVE HONOUR. JUST FOR DOING YOUR JOB, YOU DON'T EXPECT TO HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THIS.

While flames gathered, the quick-thinking officers used a fire extinguisher to put out the blaze before it got out of control.

But that was far from job done for Jodie, who knew there was no way this could be considered anything close to a full de-escalation.

Ahead of the awards ceremony which she attended with wife, Kimberley, she told how she and three other officers had a caustic liquid thrown in their faces by the man, following his aggressive charge down the stairs for a closer exchange.

"Immediately, I couldn't see a thing. I was violently coughing and my skin was burning so badly."

"The pain was unbearable, and I remember thinking to myself, 'is this the end of my career?'"

"As I heard the others shouting out in pain and panic too, I tried to calm myself down, and smelling the liquid, I realised it was ammonia."

She added: "To be honest, it's a bit of a blur – we get there, you don't know what to expect,

PC Jodie Cox is presented with her award by Lucy Todd of sponsors Irwin Mitchell.



and then your training just kicks in and it's just automatic.

"But I'd got two brand new student officers with me (not involved in the vitriolic attack), who were only on day two [of response policing], so that was kind of a big thing and I had to take control of the situation and make sure they didn't get hurt."

And take control is exactly what Jodie continued to do, as she reassured her colleagues – who all, including Jodie herself, made a full recovery from their injuries at Dudley Road Hospital – they had not been attacked with acid.

But long before she could receive this

treatment, Jodie, still in a world of discomfort, helped further Force assistance secure an arrest.

Fast forward eight months, and she has seen her determination acknowledged with a bravery award for the Birmingham area, individually sponsored by Irwin Mitchell solicitors.

"Unfortunately, the gentleman in question had severe mental health issues, so it was a case of we didn't want him to get hurt, we didn't want to get hurt, [but] it was either him or us," she said.

"We just wanted to try to resolve it as best as we could," she ended.

'You get used to the abuse and become desensitised'

PC Zara Basharat says her experience of physical assault and hate crime is not unique to her and that many other officers regularly face the same abuse.

Zara has been subjected to racial slurs and assaults on at least 42 occasions during her five-year career with the Force.

Now she is drawing on her experiences to support colleagues in similar situations and help boost their resilience.

Her work was recognised with the Sam Hughes Inspiration in Policing Bravery Award, supported by the [West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner](#).

Speaking after receiving the award, Zara said: "It's nice to receive the Sam Hughes award and to be recognised by for the work that you do.

"As I have become used to this abuse, it does make you become desensitised. But when you hear it being read out, it can be quite emotive.

"I faced more abuse while I was on response and, at its worst, I've had my headscarf pulled off, I was told to go back to my prayer mat and someone threatened to burn my headscarf."

She added: "My experiences aren't unique. A lot of frontline officers face this every day but we still carry on."

Zara is helping develop a resilience programme, which includes improving the way supervisors and the organisation support colleagues who are subjected to abuse at work.

She is working with the Force's Black and Asian Police Association on the programme and has had support from its chair, Chief Inspector Chris Grandison.

She said: "It's been really positively received, especially on Sandwell local policing area. The senior leadership team are really supportive."



The Sam Hughes Inspiration in Policing Award winner PC Zara Basharat is pictured with West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster.



Sam Hughes.

Zara has also met with the Force's wellbeing lead, Sophie Petrie, to provide feedback about the lack of diversity in the TRiM (trauma risk management) practitioners.

She has stressed the benefits of being able to speak to colleagues from similar backgrounds who would be able to better understand and empathise with a situation.

Zara has shared her experiences of the policing of the Palestine protest with the Gold Commander, which has led to learning being

shared with senior leaders.

She now plans to highlight some of her cases where there have been convictions as a deterrent to others.

She said: "What we go through, it needs to be out there more, and more support from supervision and accountability.

"Hopefully, along with the resilience programme and other work, it will have a positive, lasting impact on officer welfare and support."

“IT'S NICE TO RECEIVE THE SAM HUGHES AWARD AND TO BE RECOGNISED FOR THE WORK THAT YOU DO.

'All award winners are really deserving'

West Midlands Police Federation has praised the everyday heroism of its members.

Deputy secretary Chris James said the branch's annual bravery awards provided a 'snapshot' of members' courageous and heroic work.

He said: "All the award winners are really deserving. The bravery awards are just a small snapshot of all the work of our members across the whole of West Midlands Police."

His message was echoed by Tim Rogers, branch secretary, who encouraged members to ensure their brave actions are nominated for next year's awards.

Tim said: "Policing is often a thankless task and our members do it in the face of adversity."

"They get criticised in the media and people are very quick to complain about our officers and our members."

"These awards are a snapshot of what is happening each and every day."

"We would encourage our colleagues when they do acts of bravery to get it written up and recognised for evenings like tonight."

Acting branch chair Jess Davies was also a winner at the bravery awards, which were supported by [Slater and Gordon solicitors](#).

Jess collected the [award for Solihull](#) with colleagues PC Charlene Scott and PC Steve Worrall. The award was supported by [No 5 Barristers' Chambers](#).

She said: "Congratulations to all our award winners. We've heard it said that we're just doing our job, and we are, but it is nice to get that recognition."

"It's quite nerve-racking to go up and collect an award, but it does make you feel good, particularly with family members there."

[Sergeant Paul Williams was the overall winner](#) at the awards after saving the life of a woman who was being savagely attacked in the street by two dogs.

Paul will represent West Midlands Police



Acting branch chair Jess Davies.

“CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR AWARD WINNERS. WE’VE HEARD IT SAID THAT WE’RE JUST DOING OUR JOB, AND WE ARE, BUT IT IS NICE TO GET THAT RECOGNITION.”

Federation at this year's national Police Bravery Awards in London.

Chris said: "Coming up against two really angry dogs must have been a terrifying experience. Paul is a really deserving winner."

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Retired PC reunited with woman he saved during knife attack

A retired West Midlands Police Federation member who saved a pregnant woman's life when she was the victim of a violent knife attack has described being reunited with her as 'very emotional'.

Roy Beasley said the attack on Natalie Queiroz, who was 36 weeks pregnant at the time, was the most difficult he had to deal with during his 32-year career.

And, eight years after the incident in March 2016, he was shocked to be presented with his medals by Natalie as a retirement gesture on his final visit to Sutton Coldfield Police Station.

Roy said: "It was all very emotional. When I was coming up to retirement, one of the PCSOs on the team asked me about my service and one of the questions was what's the worst thing that I've had to deal with?"

"I mentioned this incident and the PCSO got in touch with Natalie and asked her to come and present me with the medals.

"I had no idea that she was coming to the police station, so it was a big surprise to see her. It was really nice.

"It was also really nice to have the time, at that point, to sit down with her and talk to her about that particular day, and to see how it's changed her life."

Roy, who was neighbourhood PC based in Sutton Coldfield, was on regular patrol with his colleague, PC Dave McCallum, on the day he first met Natalie.

He recalled it was around 3pm when they could hear screaming and shouting coming from Trinity Hill in the town.

Roy said: "As we went up Trinity Hill, we could see that there were a few people there in a state of panic.

"I couldn't see what was going on because the attack was taking place in the entrance to a church. We could just tell by the way people were behaving that something was not right."

Roy described seeing Natalie on the ground, while brave members of the public who had tried to stop the attack were also injured.

He and Dave quickly disarmed and handcuffed the attacker, who was known to Natalie, before turning to take care of Natalie.

Roy said: "It was a case of being in the



Natalie Queiroz congratulates Roy Beasley on his retirement.

right place at the right time, to be able to stop it when other people had tried to and had got injured.

"But I didn't realise how badly injured Natalie was until we'd got him secure. Because of the ferocity of the attack, she had lost a lot of blood and she needed to be taken immediately to hospital."

Natalie was airlifted to hospital for treatment and her unborn baby survived.

She is now an author and campaigner and, in 2022, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to young people and the prevention of knife crime.

Her attacker was jailed for 18 years.

Roy said that he and Natalie were able to fill in details of the day for each other.

"There were things that happened on that day that she didn't know about, and I could sort of fill in the gaps for her," he explained.

"One of the things that Natalie told me was that she has since met the helicopter pilot and crew that saved her life.

"The pilot was given a written warning for landing where he did for endangering the helicopter, because it was so close to trees and streetlamps and things.

"But he decided that it was that serious that he had to try to get this helicopter down and get her out of there."

Roy, who is now working as a postie, added: "It's the one incident that will stay with me forever."

"I HAD NO IDEA THAT SHE WAS COMING TO THE POLICE STATION, SO IT WAS A BIG SURPRISE TO SEE HER. IT WAS REALLY NICE."

Did you know...

The West Midlands Police Federation group insurance scheme brings you the full range of RAC cover:

- ✓ Roadside
- ✓ Recovery
- ✓ At Home
- ✓ Onward Travel
- ✓ European Motoring Assistance
- ✓ Mis-Fuel

The scheme also includes:*

- £150,000 Life Assurance
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- Best Doctors Service
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- Personal Accident Cover
- Sickness benefits
- Worldwide Family Travel Insurance
- Legal Expenses Insurance
- Care First Counseling Service
- Mobile Phone/Gadget Cover

All for **£29.32**** per month,
by payroll deduction.

Visit the Federation website
for further details:

<https://www.polfed.org/westmids>

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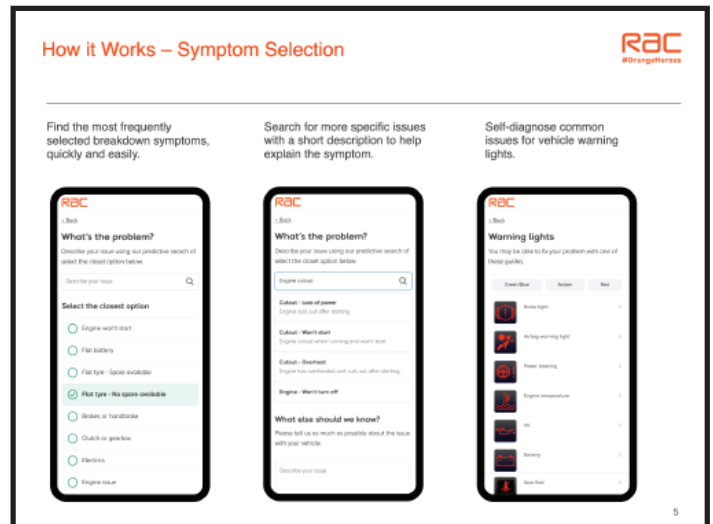
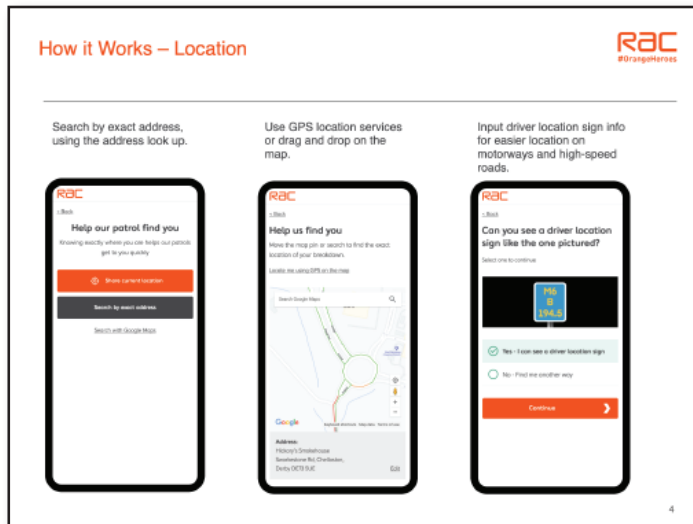
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*Terms and conditions apply. Full details of the cover including exclusions and limitations can be found in the policy wording, which is available from the Federation.

**The premium includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) and the Federation's administration fee and is correct at 1 September 2024.

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Motor breakdown cover: Rescue Me digital service



RAC motor breakdown cover for personal cars and motorcycles is included for all serving and retired members and their partners who subscribe to the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme.

Cover is comprehensive and includes roadside, recovery, at home, onward travel and even European assistance on a 'personal' basis for the member in any vehicle they are driving or in which they are a passenger.

Partners will also be covered for RAC motor breakdown if the member is subscribing for spouse/partner Life Assurance benefits.

Those covered can report a breakdown digitally with RAC's [Rescue Me](#) which gives the following benefits:

- The customer can easily and accurately log a breakdown online via their mobile phone
- Verbally spoken issues – such as noisy environment at the roadside and understanding of different accents – are removed
- Increased location accuracy by using the phone's location information to avoid having to describe unfamiliar locations
- Increased customer satisfaction.

When using Rescue Me, members will hear an interactive voice response (IVR) message telling them of an alternative method to report a breakdown and a website address.

The member can choose to stay on the phone call or use the digital channel and a text message is sent to the customer containing the

URL link if they choose the digital channel option.

The form can validate the customer's membership, using information such as a collar number for a serving officer or the officer's name for a partner or child of an officer, the location, the problem with the vehicle and provide helpful advice depending on the chosen issue.

All outbound member updates remain with customers receiving updates via the phone and text messaging service as appropriate. But, if a member experiences any issues during the digital journey, they can choose a dedicated voice route back into the contact centre.

If the member wishes to use the service again, they can head to the [Rescue Me facility](#) without ever needing to phone the RAC again.

Further information can be found in the [RAC policy April 2024](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens if a customer doesn't validate or experiences an error?

If the customer has any issue while going through the digital service, there is a dedicated contact number to call back into the RAC where trained call takers will provide help.

Can Rescue Me identify different makes and models of vehicles?

Yes, the digital breakdown channel can identify all different types of vehicles from the information the customer provides.

How does the platform support vulnerable customers?

From the information provided by the customer, it can identify if a customer is on the motorway or at a safe location. RAC also upgrades the priority for customers who give information about a specific vulnerability – such as a disability or medical need – in the notes section.

Can customers in the Republic of Ireland use Rescue Me?

Currently customers who have broken down in Southern Ireland will not be able to use this service, however, the RAC can still provide help to these customers over the telephone.

Can the customer log a breakdown in the portal without phoning RAC?

Yes, the customer can access Rescue Me anytime.

Policy limits and exclusions may apply, please see [policy wording](#) for full terms and conditions.

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Couple discount for partner officers – see Page 28.

Group Insurance Scheme: couple discount for partner officer subscribers

The West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme provides its subscribers with comprehensive cover, tailored to the needs of police officers and staff, at a competitive price.

And, if two serving officers are married or are co-habiting partners, they could qualify for a rating discount on one of their subscriptions and still qualify for the full cover provided.

Adding a spouse or partner to a serving officer's policy usually costs an extra £11 a month, for life assurance of £75,000, critical illness cover of £7,500, legal expenses cover, personal accident benefits, RAC breakdown and mobile phone/gadget insurance only.

However, if you and your partner are both serving officers for West Midlands Police and individually subscribe to the scheme you are

able to get one of the serving officer policies at a reduced rate due to some cover duplication. This will give the spouse or partner the full scheme cover for a reduced cost of £23.14 a month, a saving of £6.18 a month on a serving officer's policy*.

The Group Insurance Scheme package may include the following:

- Care on Demand
- Life assurance including terminal illness benefit and Child Death Grant
- Additional life insurance option
- Critical illness cover with the option for extra cover for an added monthly cost
- RED ARC
- RAC motor breakdown cover
- Legal expenses cover
- Personal accident cover
- 'Best Doctors' cover
- Regulation 28 - sickness insurance
- Worldwide family travel insurance ***
- Mobile phone/gadget insurance.

*Only available on serving officers' policies as part of the Group Insurance scheme. Prices include Insurance Premium Tax and the Federation administration fee and are correct as at January 2025.

***Health restrictions apply to some sections of the policy. Prior to booking a holiday or commencing a trip, please ensure you read the 'Pre-existing medical conditions' wording which can be found on Page 6 of your policy document. [See the website for more information.](#)

If you are not a member of the Group Insurance Scheme and want to sign up, please fill out the relevant application form which can be found on our [scheme pages](#) on the Federation website.

Policy limits and exclusions may apply, please see policy wording for full terms and conditions.

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- Fixed fee divorce service
- Price certainty options.

Our experts:

To speak to a specialist member of our team, please call Amy, Mark or Clare for an initial chat:



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Apprentice Chartered Legal Executive
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☎ +44 (0)7407 796 625



Mark Hands
Partner
✉ mark.hands@irwinmitchell.com
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Clare Wiseman
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Extended hours and recall to duty



In the latest in a series of features putting the focus on Police Regulations, we answer common questions about extended hours/recall to duty. Remember you can find the answers to many of your queries about regulations [on our website](https://www.polfed.org/westmids).

Q I had to remain at work at the end of my shift what can I claim?

A This depends on what notice you were given. If you were told prior to starting your shift that you would be required to stay on duty then the over-time is planned. If you were told after the start of your shift then the over-time is unplanned.

Planned

You are entitled to payment or TOIL (your choice) for the full amount of time you work over at time and a third. There is no deduction of the first 30 minutes as the over-time was planned.

Unplanned

You are entitled to payment or TOIL (your choice) for the full amount of time you work over at time and a third. However, the first 30 minutes is deducted as the over-time was unplanned.

If you work unplanned over-time on four occasions during the same week then on the fifth and any other occasion in which you may have to work over-time you no longer lose the first half hour for the rest of that week.

Q I was retained on duty which has resulted in me having less than 11 hours before I am back at work, what am I entitled to?

A If you are retained on duty then you should be given 11 hours before you start your next shift. If this means you start later than your rostered start time then this should be facilitated. You are still entitled to finish your shift at the original finish time. If there is an operational reason why you cannot start late and be given the 11-hour break then you must be given the compensatory rest within two weeks.

For example, if you are required to return to work after nine hours, you are entitled to two hours of compensatory rest (time off) to be taken at another time within two weeks.

Q What is a recall to duty?

A A recall to duty is where you are required to work between two separate tours of duty.

If you are recalled to duty on a working day then you are entitled to claim payment or TOIL (your choice) at time and a third for the

hours worked plus travel time (30 minutes each way).

If you are recalled to duty on a rest day then the regulations around rest day working apply. (See working into/on a rest day).

Q I had a work-related telephone call while I was not at work can I claim a recall to duty?

A Answering the telephone does not necessarily constitute a recall to duty and therefore may not attract the minimum four hours' rest day or public holiday compensation provided in regulations.

If a constable or sergeant receives a call which requires necessary action or duty to be performed, this may be a recall to duty, and the member may be eligible for appropriate compensation.

Q I was due to work extended over-time but have been told I am no longer required, what am I entitled to?

A If the request is withdrawn and the Force no longer requires officers to work extended over-time, there is no entitlement to it.

Are you approaching retirement?

West Midlands Police Federation holds regular seminars to help those nearing retirement to prepare for this significant milestone.

Monthly seminars will be held at the Police Federation's Guardians House office on Coventry Road, Sheldon throughout 2025.

Dates are regularly fully booked so please book your place as soon as possible.

The seminars are for members who are within three years of finishing their service.

Among the topics covered by the facilitators will be:

- **Police Pension Schemes**
- **How to retire**
- **Post-retirement schemes for police officers (West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme, Benevolent Fund, NARPO)**
- **Next steps (CV writing, transferable skills, starting a business)**
- **Taxation/state pension**

- **Investments and financial planning**
- **Asset protection (will and estate planning).**

Remaining dates for 2025 seminars:

6 March	17 April
15 May	19 June
17 July	21 August
18 September	16 October
20 November	11 December.

Booking

As we anticipate significant take up, please let us know as soon as possible whether you would like to attend by sending an email to westmidlandspf@polfed.org with the details stated below, and confirmation of your booking will follow.

Please ensure you put 'Retirement seminar' and the date you wish to attend in the subject title.

Please include:

- **Your name**
- **Work email address**
- **Personal email address**
- **Personal phone number**
- **Proposed retirement date**
- **Any specific dietary requirements.**

SEMINAR LOCATION AND PARKING

Location: West Midlands Police Federation, Guardians House, 2111 Coventry Road, Sheldon B26 3EA

Time: Coffee and registration between 8.30am and 8.45am. The full day seminar starts at 9am and finishes around 4pm. A meal deal lunch will be provided for you (please advise any specific dietary requirements).

Parking: Please park nearby on the Morrisons car park, letting Customer Services know your registration number and that you are a visitor of the Police Federation.

Feedback from past attendees

"I found the day was informative with each speaker outlining just what you needed to know in the simplest of terms on each topic. A 'not to be missed' seminar for those coming up to retirement." **PC Collins**

"A very useful and informative course which has made me give serious thought as to what to do with my pension money and how to protect it." **PC Tonks**

"An excellent forum and opportunity to help prepare for the transition to retirement." **PC McGoldrick**

"Thank you, a really useful & informative day, well worth giving up a rest day for!!" **Anonymous**

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:- £26.76 in 2025.

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

Holiday offers with our member service partners

Now's the time when many people start to plan their summer holiday or a weekend away.

But, if you haven't booked a getaway yet, then make sure you take a look at the holiday offers available through our member service partners.

West Midlands Police Federation promotes a wide range of offers on its member services website pages including deals on:

[Clothing and footwear](#)

[Discounts, holidays and leisure](#)

[Finance, mortgages and conveyancing](#)

[Healthcare, insurance and bills](#)

[Sports, fitness and wellbeing](#)

[Theme parks and tourist attractions](#), and

[Vehicles](#)

But, in this feature, we put the spotlight on the discounted holidays available – both home and abroad.

These include a selection of colleagues' holiday homes that are available for rent, such as luxury cottages in the Lake District, and a penthouse apartment in Los Cristianos, Tenerife.

Crusader Holidays also has a range of offers exclusively for police officers, such as:

- **Self-drive UK holidays in a variety of hotels to suit all budgets in city, country and coastal resorts**
- **Themed and entertainment breaks**
- **Special interest breaks which include tickets for special events.**

[Find out more about Crusader Holidays offers.](#)

Lovat Holiday Parks gives discounts on its holidays in some of Britain's most cherished beauty spots.

From luxury holiday homes and hot tub lodges, safari tents and shepherd's huts to camping under the stars, you'll find plenty of choice.

Padstow Holiday Village (Cornwall) - Luxury lodges and holiday homes which are a stone's throw from the National Trust's Bedruthan Steps, the Camel Trail, St George's Cove and numerous charming little Cornish villages.

Sun Haven Holiday Park (Cornwall) - Luxury lodges, holiday homes and shepherd's huts with hot tubs. Set in a sun-dappled wood, it is only a 15-minute walk to Mawgan Porth and

its award-winning beach while Newquay's only 10 minutes away.

Parbola Holiday Park (Hayle, Cornwall)

- Holiday homes, safari tents with hot tubs, and touring and camping. Nestled in 16 acres of mature grounds with wooded glades, this little luxury bolthole is the perfect spot to unwind.

Penmarlam Lodge Retreat (near Fowey, Cornwall)

- Luxury lodges and hot tub lodges, Penmarlam places you near the picture-postcard nautical landscape of the Fowey Estuary, quintessential Cornwall.

Green Hill Farm Holiday Village (New Forest)

- Luxury lodges and hot tub lodges, holiday homes, safari tents and shepherd's huts with hot tubs.

Waxham Sands Holiday Park (near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk)

- Touring and camping, on the doorstep of the beautiful Waxham beach, just down the road from Sea Palling and Horsey Gap.

Book online or call **0333 200 1010** and quote UNWMPF10 for static holiday home accommodation or PLWMPF10 for camping and touring breaks. Full booking [terms and conditions apply](#).

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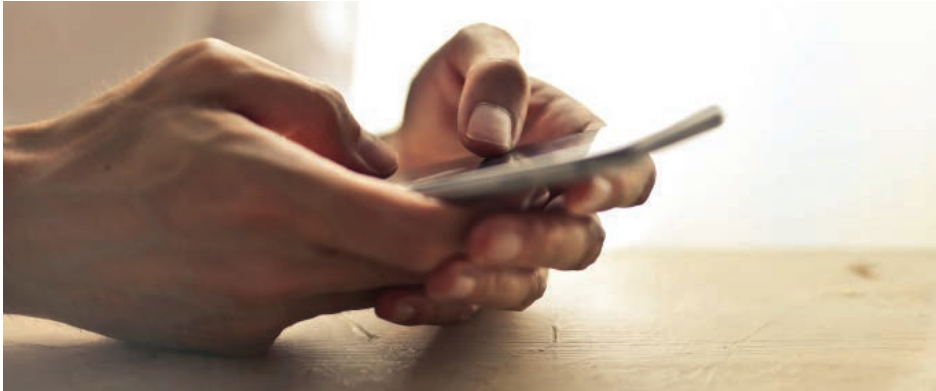


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ADV GI P 0006 West Mids 0225

New app will help you keep track on your mortgage



Fee-free independent mortgage advice is available to all West Midlands Police Federation members through member services partner Warren & Co.

Whether you're a first-time buyer, looking to re-mortgage or exploring options for investment properties, the Warren & Co team can guide you through the process, completely free of charge.

And, as an added bonus, Warren & Co has

just launched a new app, designed to make navigating the mortgage market a little easier.

The app will allow people to check their mortgage balance, which will be updated daily, keep track of interest rates and mortgage deals and show if it's worth lenders re-mortgaging and paying early repayment charges.

It will tell them when their deal is ending and they can use the app to find out how

much they can borrow and how much a mortgage will cost them each month.

The app will allow users to get quotes for solicitors and surveys and they can ask for contact from the advisers.

It will also provide:

- Access to an affordability calculator
- Direct connection to an adviser for expert guidance and support
- Updates on the latest mortgage rates and deals
- Opportunities to monitor property performance on the go
- Ideas for saving, tailored to users' unique profile.

And, from January, app users have been able to find out the value of their house, secure an agreement in principle and use a web chat facility.

Warren & Co holds regular surgeries across the Force. Find out more about the [surgery dates and venues](#).

You can download the app using the QR code below.



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warrenifa.co.uk

or following us on Facebook

[warrenmortgage](#)

Have you been affected by noise-induced hearing loss?



By Slater and Gordon

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) can drastically affect those who work in law enforcement.

NIHL is a term used to describe hearing loss, deafness or tinnitus caused by excessive noise at work when sufficient training or ear protection hasn't been provided.

NIHL can have a significant impact on those who work in law enforcement, particularly those who use firearms, due to continued exposure to loud noises and potentially harmful sounds in their line of work.

Though hearing loss is a common symptom of age, it's important to note the distinct signs

that indicate noise induced hearing loss. Some signs to look out for include:

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

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

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

colleagues or approaching emergency vehicles.

To ensure the effects of NIHL don't affect police officers, it's important for departments to implement hearing conservation programmes. These could include the use of hearing protection devices, regular hearing screenings, education on the risks of noise exposure and strategies to minimise exposure to loud sounds whenever possible. The law says that every employer has a duty of care to protect employees from suffering harm in the workplace, including noise induced injuries.

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

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

The experts at Slater and Gordon will arrange for you to be examined by a medical professional to determine what proportion of your hearing loss is due to NIHL.

Visit the [Slater and Gordon website](#) for more information ring on **0808 175 7710**.

Legal advice for Police Federation members

We've supported the Police Federation for over six decades and provide a suite of tailored legal services to officers both on and off-duty. We're specialists in Police Federation legal advice and understand the intricacies of police work so when you need us, we're here to help.

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West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund has announced its membership fees will remain frozen for a further 12 months.

We want to reassure members that your monthly contribution to our charity will stay at just £2.

We deliberately keep subscriptions to a minimum to make it affordable for everyone. Therefore, we strongly urge members to encourage colleagues, friends and family who serve with West Midlands Police (who are not currently members of the fund) to join.

The small amount members pay each month has remained unchanged for more than 13 years. In that time, we have greatly improved our benefits and services while continuing to offer excellent value for money.

Last year we gave out more than £100,000 to support members within our wider police family. This, of course, would not be possible without your continued support, so thank you!

There are so many reasons why officers and staff should join. We offer wellbeing breaks, residential physiotherapy, online counselling and sickness vouchers. We also offer life cover and a free will-writing service, as well as grants and interest-free loans to help members in times of hardship or distress.

There are lots more we offer too, including discounted holidays at our seaside retreats, family events and much more.

Visit the Benevolent Fund website to join for just £2 per month.

Discounted seaside breaks

Our holiday ballot has now closed, however, we still have weeks available for members to book.

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Any available dates will be shown on the calendars and can be booked online by selecting a week. Hurry though as remaining weeks will be booked on a first come, first served basis.

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