

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

October/November 2017



Remembering fallen colleagues

See Pages 18 - 19

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Welcome

Welcome to the October/November 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.

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Federation is printed by Heron Press UK on behalf of the Joint Branch Board of the West Midlands Police Federation. The articles published do not necessarily reflect the views of the Joint Branch Board. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit any material submitted.

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Cover photo: National Police Memorial Day in Cardiff. See Pages 18 and 19. Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography.

Were we all really in this together?



By **Steve Grange**, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation

Back in 2010 when the new Government announced the whole nation would need to tighten its belt so that we could all play our part in tackling the budget deficit, I think we all accepted that if that was what was required we would all do what we had to do.

I am pretty sure we were told by the Prime Minister of the day, David Cameron, that we were all in this together – or words to that effect.

However, as the years have passed, it has certainly felt like some of us were more in it than others and there has been a growing feeling of frustration, resentment and indeed anger that, as public sector workers have seen their wages fall in real terms due to the one per cent cap on their pay increases, MPs have seen fit to back their own pay review body's

recommendations and increase their salaries in double figure percentages.

This anger has grown as a result of the Government's announcement on police pay in September and, let's be honest, it did make it even worse that we were supposed to find out the outcome of our latest pay review in July but the Government made us wait for a few months, for no apparent reason, while MPs enjoyed their long summer recess.

There was perhaps the hope that the Prime Minister had asked the Chancellor, who had made it clear that he felt the country couldn't afford to give us a bigger than one per cent pay rise, to go away and re-do some calculations during July and August.

It soon became clear that, even if he had been asked to do so, he hadn't managed to shake the proverbial money tree as hard as the Government had back in June when it needed to bolster its own reduced majority in the House of Commons.

But, even more infuriating was the fact that the Government tried to make out police officers were getting a two per cent pay increase. We are not. The two per cent is made up of a one per cent increase and a one per cent bonus – non-pensionable by the way – that needs to be funded by hard-pressed forces; yes, those very same forces already struggling to balance resource and demand due to the heavy funding cuts they have faced in recent years.

As a Federation, we totally understand why our members are now feeling irate and exasperated and we have made sure Prime Minister Theresa May is aware of the strength of feeling among rank and file police officers.

However, the way pay is awarded now is not something on which we - or any of the other interested parties – can negotiate with the Government. The Police Negotiating Board made up of the Official

Side – for the Government – and the Staff Side, including representatives of the Police Federation, was scrapped by the previous Conservative coalition Government and replaced by the current Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB).

The Federation, and others, are now restricted to submitting written evidence in support of their pay claim. This year the Police Federation of England and Wales, in a joint submission with the Superintendents' Association, presented a well-evidenced claim for a 2.8 per cent pay increase.

Members of the review body visited forces and took evidence from interested parties and I have presented evidence on this basis prior to the 2016 pay award. The PRRB is supposedly an independent organisation that makes its recommendations based on the evidence that it receives, however, this comes with a huge caveat that it also has to act within a remit and this remit is set by the treasury which, for the last three years, has stated no award should breach the one per cent public sector pay cap. What must also be remembered is that the PRRB only makes recommendations to the Government which then either accepts or rejects them.

Over the past few years, the recommendation of the PRRB has been a fully consolidated one per cent uplift to all police officers' pensionable pay and this has been accepted by the Government and implemented. This is in spite of many interested parties stating the pay should be targeted at a few officers rather than across the board.

This year the PRRB made the recommendation that there should be a fully consolidated two per cent uplift to all officers' pensionable pay. But the Government ignored the PRRB recommendation and decided to make an award of the one per cent consolidated and one per cent as a bonus for this year only, funded from existing budgets.

From my monitoring of social media, I am fully aware of the groundswell of opinion from members that many would like to reject the offer and I have expressed these views along with the anger that this announcement has caused in every media interview I have given since the pay award was announced. But I have to be mindful that the opinions I have seen expressed on social media may not necessarily represent the views of the majority of officers who are in desperate need of a pay rise no matter how derisory and potentially short-lived. It must also be remembered that because of the way our pay is reviewed, we do not have the ability to simply reject the award.

My personal view is that the structure of this pay award is a method seen by the Government firstly to force PCCs to use their reserves and secondly to send a message to the College of Policing that it needs to convince the PRRB next year of the merit of targeted pay and point out it now has a pot of money to use.

Hence this year's one per cent bonus may be taken away from some and given to others next year. This is something the Federation strongly opposes. The Federation has, so far, successfully convinced the PRRB this could be divisive, and I hope this is something it can continue to do.

I would just like to emphasise that we are genuinely aware of the strength of anger at the way we have been treated by successive Governments over the past six years and will ensure we get this across to the Government. But we must remain focussed on achieving the best results we can for all concerned.

Finally, I would just like to mention another issue that will have an impact on some officers considering retirement. A stalemate between the Home Office and forces means officers in the Police Pension Scheme 1987 will not benefit from a suggested amendment to regulations that affect them if they retire when they have between 25 and 30 years' service.

The Home Office had agreed to amend the regulations to lift a commutation restriction affecting these officers. However, it insisted that forces would need to fund the difference between the original provision and the larger commutation payment this would have allowed.

Chief officers say forces cannot afford to do this.

For more details on the pay award, turn to Page 6.

John is elected as our new deputy chair

John Williams has been elected as the new deputy chairman of West Midlands Police Federation and will be working full-time at Guardians House.

Describing himself as a "late joiner", by the time he started as a West Midlands Police officer he had held a number of jobs from military service and trade union shop steward with GMB to financial adviser.

On joining the Force, he began work on a response shift at Solihull and later joined a neighbourhood team. In 2007, he became a Federation workplace representative following first-hand experience of the support the Fed could

offer after being under investigation due to a complaint.

John is also the chair of the West Midlands Benevolent Fund and over the last few years he has focussed on increasing benefits and membership among officers and staff.

As deputy chair of the Federation, he wants to continue to meet locally with members.

"I will speak up on their behalf, airing their concerns and addressing the issues that matter to them, be that locally, regionally or nationally," John says.

WMPF hits the road again

The next West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) Roadshow is being held in Coventry.

The event will take place in the Gavin Carlton Room at Coventry Police Station on Wednesday 18 October between 10am and 3pm.

Member services providers will be available to talk to officers and discuss the services they can provide.

Members will be able to discuss any concerns they have with Federation representatives and members of the WMPF executive who will be attending.



There is no need to book – just turn up on the day.

Members can also enter a prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher, look out for flyers locally.

A further roadshow is planned for Stechford on 9 January 2018. More details will be announced nearer the time.

Heading for retirement?

Retiring from the Force marks a major change in any officer's life so, with this in mind, West Midlands Police Federation organises seminars to ensure members are properly prepared.

The seminars are open to officers in their last three years of service and are also open to their husband, wife or partner. They are held at the West Midlands Police Federation office at Guardians House in Sheldon.

Topics covered include:

- Managing change and uncertainty
- CV writing and interview techniques
- Transferable skills
- Police and state pensions
- Managing money and financial changes
- Budgeting
- Starting your own business
- Taxation
- Savings
- Investments and finances.

The next seminars on 19 October and 14 December are fully booked but there are spaces available on the following dates:

- 1 February 2018**
- 12 April 2018**
- 24 May 2018**
- 5 July 2018**
- 16 August 2018**
- 4 October 2018**
- 22 November 2018**

There is one date already scheduled for 2019 – 10 January.

To book a place on any of the seminars, please email westmidlandspf@polfed.org with your name, work email address, personal email address, personal phone number, proposed retirement date and number of places required. Please put 'Retirement Seminar' and the date you wish to attend in the subject line.

“Pay award is insulting”

The misleading way in which the Government has attempted to claim it has given police officers a two per cent pay increase is insulting, according to West Midlands Police Federation.

The Federation’s leaders have hit out at MPs enjoying above inflation pay awards while the police have been hit hard by austerity measures that have left them “skint beyond belief”.

And they have also accused the Government of mischief-making by claiming an officer who joined in 2010 would have enjoyed a pay increase of around 30 per cent with no mention of the individual’s starting salary.

“This is not a pay rise in any way, shape or form,” says West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Tim Rogers, “Relative terms including the below inflation capped rise of one per cent and two years of no increase at all mean that cops are simply skint beyond belief.

“We have always understood the need for austerity but it’s abhorrent that MPs have given themselves large pay awards, accepting and implementing the recommendations of their pay review body and yet ignoring the recommendations of ours. Police officers put their lives on the line to protect their communities and years of austerity have left them physically, mentally and financially drained.”

The West Midlands Police Federation officials’ views on the pay award, heralded as a two per cent increase and a break from the

one per cent cap on public sector pay rises, echo those of the national Police Federation chair Steve White who has said it would leave many officers “angry and deflated”.

He explained: “Police officers do not join the service to make huge amounts of money; they do it out of a sense of duty and this year in particular have been tested to the max. However, they expect to be paid suitably for the immensely demanding role they perform and this simply is not the case.”

The two per cent award, which came into effect from 1 September 2017, is a one per cent pensionable pay rise across the board, plus one per cent as an extra amount this year, non-pensionable.

“We asked for 2.8 per cent and provided compelling evidence to support this, which on first review appears to be reflected in the recommendations made by the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) – the body which makes recommendations on police pay – to the Government. We were not greedy in what we asked for. Officers have been taking home about 15 per cent less than they were seven years ago. While it is a step in the right direction, the Government should have done this sooner but we don’t feel that non-consolidated pay awards are the way forward.”

There are also concerns about how this will be funded.

The PRRB report contains four recommendations including an increase in London Weighting and Dog Handlers’ Allowance, the introduction of “targeted

arrangements” in the year ahead to give chief officers the flexibility to make extra payments to officers in hard to fill roles and the development of an integrated police workforce and pay reform plan through to 2020.

The 76-page report ends with a commitment from the review body to help develop an effective police officer package which supports delivering a policing service for the public.

It states: “We conclude that the environment for the 2018/19 pay round will be challenging but could also present opportunities for the parties to take a more flexible approach with a view to the significant reforms ahead. On a more general point, we commented at the start of this report on the importance of pay restraint not undermining the “contract” with society in which the public expects to have an effective police service enabled by fair remuneration.

“The service is also at risk as pressures on the police officer workforce rise in the context of changing demand, reduced workforce numbers and restrictions on officers. Against this background our terms of reference require us to take a consistent, strategic and holistic approach to police officer pay and conditions. We therefore stand ready to play our part in developing an effective police officer package that supports delivering the service to the public.”

Federation demands answers in open letter to PM

Police Federation officials from across England and Wales have sent an open letter to the Prime Minister demanding answers from the Government on the police pay award.

Representatives from all 43 Police Federations in the country endorsed the letter, saying “members were angry” and forces “had been put in an impossible situation”.

“We feel the Government has not been truthful and honest about the pay award given to officers, and that is insulting. The two per cent awarded has to come from existing policing budgets which means forces may have to choose between officer numbers and public safety. That cannot be right,” said Calum Macleod, vice chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

The letter was sent on behalf of all 43

Police Federation branches.

It tells Theresa May:

- The pay award of, on average, less than £10 a week is insulting.
- A two per cent rise is not a rise when it has to come from existing policing budgets.
- It’s a disgrace you have dressed it up as a pay rise.
- Funding must come centrally; it is unfair to make the public suffer with fewer officers available to fight crime.
- It’s a disgrace you have ignored the recommendations from the independent Police Remuneration Review Body – the very body you set up to advise on police pay.
- Forces cannot cope with any further falls in police numbers.
- Communities will be further under threat

at the very time protection is needed the most. Community policing plays a vital part in intelligence gathering to help combat terrorism and it has been decimated.

- ‘Extra’ police officers are not ‘extra’ police officers. They are the same officers doing longer hours, being called back in when they are off or being given extra responsibilities.
- Crime is not falling.

The letter concludes: “We don’t want meaningless platitudes. We want a properly funded and well-resourced police service. The public rightly want and expect this.

“For the sake of those who put their lives on the line for the public, we demand you address these injustices and give us answers.”

You can read the letter in full at polfed.org

Tim secures review of law on pursuits



The Home Office has announced a review of the law and guidance surrounding police pursuits and response driving after a hard-fought campaign led by West Midlands Police Federation's deputy secretary Tim Rogers.

Tim is the Police Federation's national pursuits driving lead and has tirelessly lobbied for a change in the law to protect police drivers with his dogged determination finally securing a review.

He first delivered a presentation highlighting the risks drivers faced at the national Police Federation conference in 2016 and at this year's conference, held in Birmingham, he gave an update and secured a commitment from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead in this area, West Mercia Chief Constable Antony Bangham, to work with the Federation on the issue.

Police minister Nick Hurd has now confirmed the review will involve the Federation, the Department for Transport, the Department of Health, the Attorney General's Office and the IPCC, as well as the relevant national policing leads, representatives of the other emergency services and groups representing other road users.

Tim explained: "Momentum has been gathering in recent months and this marks a significant step in bringing about the change we feel is necessary.

"We have been fully engaged with partners including the Home Office, College of Policing and national roads policing leads, as well as MPs, to push for the change. There is light on the horizon and we won't let up in our efforts to better protect our members in the face of the dangerous role they perform to keep us all safe."

The recent spike in moped related crime has been cited as a key factor for the review.

In the summer, the Federation, in a letter signed by Tim, wrote to all its members reminding them that officers responding to emergency calls or engaging in pursuits could be prosecuted for driving offences just like any other motorist.

Current legislation means that regardless of their training and experience, officers are judged by the standards of the "careful and competent driver" who is unlikely to go through a red light, cross the wrong side of bollards and so on. This means those engaging in a response or pursuit are vulnerable to a prosecution charge of dangerous or careless driving.

Speaking at the national Federation conference in May, Tim said the current law was unsatisfactory and unworkable leaving

officers risking their liberty and livelihood.

The letter sent to Federation members in the summer stated: "A typical response or pursuit drive is likely to involve the officer contravening traffic signs and or speed limits. A course of driving involving contravention of traffic signs and speed limits is very likely to fall within the definition of careless or dangerous driving."

It continued: "There are no legal exemptions from the offences of careless or dangerous driving for officers responding to calls for help from the public."

Officers were advised that they should drive in a way which is lawful and does not contravene the laws of dangerous or careless driving.

The Federation has been campaigning for a change in the law for the past seven years.

“ We have been fully engaged with partners including the Home Office, College of Policing and national roads policing leads, as well as MPs, to push for the change. There is light on the horizon and we won't let up in our efforts to better protect our members in the face of the dangerous role they perform to keep us all safe. ”



Cuts Have Consequences

A hard-hitting video showing the effects of funding cuts on policing in the West Midlands has been sent to all the region's MPs as part of a Police Federation initiative.

West Midlands Police Federation teamed up with Birmingham based video marketing and production company Tinker Taylor to produce the innovative video book for the second wave of its Cuts Have Consequences campaign and is urging MPs to do more to encourage the Government to re-invest in policing.

The video highlights some of the effects of the cuts – a drastic reduction in police officer numbers and a rise in crime - and features footage of closed police stations, closing custody suites and a bustling Birmingham city centre with no police in sight.

"Since 2010, West Midlands Police has lost more than 2,000 officers – taking its numbers down to the lowest level since 1974 when it was first established. However, there has been no corresponding decrease in demand; in fact, the opposite is true. The Force is trying to tackle traditional crimes while also rising to the challenge of new and emerging offences including cyber-crime and an ever-increasing terrorism threat," says Steve Grange, the Federation secretary.

"In all honesty, it is struggling to do so and since it has been hit harder than any other force with £130 million cut from its budget – the highest proportion in the country – this should come as no surprise. Neither should it be a shock that we have seen an increase in crime and an inability to respond to all calls to our 101 non-

emergency number.

"Due to funding issues, there is now only one police station in the West Midlands Force area that is open 24/7 – just one. Our officers are also feeling the strain; their morale is low. The number of officers off sick is at historic high levels with a third of the current sickness stress-related, with mental health issues being reported at a growing and alarming rate.

"As a snapshot of how serious this situation is, on one day this summer, a check of the Force sickness system revealed that a total of 612 officers and staff were booked off sick with 176 suffering mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, fatigue and stress."

The Federation believes the two-minute film gives an insight into the issues officers are facing, showing the stark realities of policing in the West Midlands and explaining how communities are suffering.

It is the second video of this kind that it has produced. The first, also on the theme of Cuts Have Consequences, was launched in 2015 and again featured the impact of police budget cuts.

The latest video, launched alongside a Facebook advertising campaign, aims to show the continued effect of these cuts and the consequences for public and officer safety.

It follows the national Police Federation's ongoing Protect The Protectors campaign highlighting the growing number of assaults on police officers and other emergency service workers and calling for harsher sentencing for those who carry out these assaults and better protective equipment, including spit and bite guards, for officers.

Steve adds: "While police officers have a civic and moral duty to protect their communities, the first responsibility of any Government is to protect its citizens. We believe the time has come for MPs to speak up for the police service and would urge them to do so. It is essential that we have an efficient and effective police service, particularly in light of recent terrorist atrocities and the wider policing landscape.

"The Government needs to properly fund policing, fully value the police service and recognise the unique role police officers play in society. It is time for MPs to act."

The Federation is hoping to meet with local MPs to discuss its concerns.

You can view the latest Cuts Have Consequences film used in the campaign at westmidspolfed.com

Message hits home

More than 1.3 million people saw the West Midlands Police Federation Cuts Have Consequences Facebook advert.

Figures collated by Tinker Taylor, the company behind the campaign, revealed 1,353,625 people saw the advert at least once while the number of impressions – the number of times the advert appeared on a screen – hit 2,274,269.

Just over 500 people commented on the advert, while 855 shared it and 1,500 clicked the like/dislike button.

In addition, there were 14,000 views (37,016 impressions) of the advert via the Federation's own Facebook page, attracting 17 comments and 291 shares.

Online petition calls for better protection for emergency service workers

Hard on the heels of the West Midlands Police Federation's ongoing Cuts Have Consequences campaign an online petition was launched last month by the Police Federation of England and Wales asking the public to support improved protection for their emergency service workers.

The launch on 20 September coincided with Day 1 of the Emergency Services Show in Birmingham and aims to show how much support there is for emergency service workers as part of the Federation's Protect the Protectors campaign.

The campaign is pushing for a change in legislation to impose tougher sentences on those who assault an emergency service worker. It is hoped that this will act as a strong deterrent in light of a currently unaccepted level of violence as it is estimated that an assault on a police officer takes place every four minutes.

"We hope that as many people as possible will sign the petition, particularly since a

Private Members' Bill calling for better legal and practical protections for police officers and other emergency service workers is currently making its way through Parliament," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"We have written to our own region's MPs asking them to get behind the police service and if people sign the online petition perhaps more of our representatives in Parliament will feel compelled to speak out in support of us."

The issue has already been heard in the House of Commons via a Private Members' Bill, raised by Chris Bryant MP - a second reading of the Bill is due to take place on 20 October.



Chris Bryant MP.

Mr Bryant says that assaults on the people we rely on most "is plain unacceptable and we politicians must do everything in our power to try and curb this spiral of violence against emergency workers".

Mr Bryant went on to say: "I hope this won't mean lots more people will go to prison, but that people will think long and hard before attacking an emergency worker. We have to stop the violence. We have to protect the protectors. Write to your MP to tell them to be in Parliament on 20 October to back our Bill."

Calum Macleod, vice chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, presented the campaign at the Emergency Services Show and said: "The change that we are asking for will really make a difference, not only for police officers, but also for our emergency service colleagues who are out there doing a very tough job in extremely difficult circumstances.

"These are the people we all rely on and they deserve our support and a change in the law so that they are better protected. By taking the campaign to the Emergency Services Show we can spread the word with a view to working more collaboratively with our blue light colleagues to effect the change that is so badly needed."

You can sign the petition at <https://tinyurl.com/tassault>

Assaults stats: "we need a consistent approach"

A total of 541 reports of officer assaults and injuries have been made to the Force in the first nine months of this year.

This figure comes from the Force's ICASS Data Summary from 1 January to 30 September 2017.

The Home Office has also released statistics on the number of police officers assaulted in 2016/2017 across England and Wales.

These reveal that in the West Midlands, there were 812 self-reported assaults recorded and 649 assaults without injury on a constable.

The Force was also one of 20 forces to voluntarily submit separate data on the total number of assaults on its officers – including those involving injury – from its crime recording system as part of a voluntary submission and reported 1,312 in this category.

"The number of assaults on police officers is, of course, a major concern," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, "However I am also concerned that there is still a great variation in the way in which forces are recording assaults on their officers and staff. Work is ongoing to ensure that all forces record these incidents consistently; only when we get a complete picture of the extent of this problem can we properly tackle it."

Armed policing survey: the results

Two thirds of officers don't want to be routinely armed, according to the results of the latest Police Federation of England and Wales survey on the issue.

Just over a third (34 per cent) personally supported the idea of routine arming, compared to 23 per cent in 2006, the last time a similar survey was conducted by the national Federation.

And 55.2 per cent (44.6 per cent in 2006) said they would be prepared to carry a firearm if it was decided all officers should be armed on or off duty.

However, the greatest support (42.5 per cent) was for firearms to not be issued routinely to all officers, but for more to receive training and be issued with firearms as and when needed.

Steve White, national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: "Considering the threats we now face, the resources we don't have and the demand we can't meet, we expected to see an increase in support for routine arming.

"Despite the atrocities seen this year, a terror threat that only goes up, never down, and prolonged pressure heaped on officers, they still hold on to the principle of policing by consent, with two thirds of officers not wishing to be routinely armed if given the choice."

You can read the full report on the survey at polfed.org



"I feel broken"

– officer's heartbreaking open letter to the Chief

An officer who says she is "battling with a mental fatigue that is not healthy and not getting better" has written to the Chief Constable to let him know how she is feeling.

The female officer was inspired by an officer from Greater Manchester Police who on resigning had written to the Force's Chief Constable outlining his feelings.

Although the West Midlands officer is not leaving the Force, she said she wanted to put in writing her state of disillusionment and mental exhaustion.

In the letter, she says: "I am saying this not to create ripples, not to cause trouble, but because I need to say it, about me, for me.

"I am a female officer, with a family, a university education and with 24 years of front-line service, joining in 1993. I am qualified to the rank of sergeant and have been a NPT officer since its inception.

"I have dedicated myself to this role, getting to know my local communities, making friends, forming partnerships, solving problems. I have made a difference to many lives - I have been told as much. I have received letters of thanks from members of the public, I have felt appreciated, valued, recognised. I have made lasting friendships with many. I have been the eyes and the ears of the community. I have gathered intelligence, I have fostered relationships and I have been there when it mattered for people who matter.

"During these years I have believed in my role, I have believed in me, I have believed that I make a difference. Others have believed in me."

She continues: "Then it all changes. In the past years, I have lost count of how many 'change programmes' we have been subjected to at WMP. I say subjected to because this is how it feels, it feels like these have happened to us, not with us, not for us. Not only that, but the changes blur into one, from Paragon, to Continuous Improvement, to TS1 to TS2.....to it matters not what is next.

"Vision statements have come and gone, policing pledges have flitted by, now no longer remembered. Things have become tougher but not in a way I anticipated. Governments and the media have become mostly unsupportive towards the police, labels have been applied, we have all been lumped together as institutional racists. The CJS is at breaking point, sentences are inadequate, offenders are returned to the streets undeterred. Prisons are full and understaffed. The social care and mental health services increasingly rely on the police to paper over the cracks in their under resourced, insufficiently staffed sectors. Our actions and reactions are constantly questioned, largely by the College of Bystanders who choose to pontificate from the sidelines, but will never

walk a step in my shoes.

"The public, however, have remained largely true. They have remained supportive of the police, they have stuck with us, they have believed, they have trusted. They deserve better.

"During 2015 after successive change programmes, which mostly felt like change for the sake of change by now, the cracks started to appear with austerity measures imposed by a Government that has no understanding of the demands of policing in 2015.

"My role became influenced by politics, by financial restraints, by budgetary decisions. It became less clear, less defined, less valued. Messages from senior managers became mixed, what was expected of me became blurred, became conflicting, became difficult to manage. I started to feel pulled from pillar to post, neither one thing nor the other, mopping up demand that spilled over from inadequate staff on response, unable to carry out NPT duties, but criticised when problems were not solved and held responsible when things failed.

"The pressure started to build for me, caused mainly by too much demand, too few resources, too much de-skilling, too little support from senior managers, too little concern for welfare, for employees, for the human side of policing. I became jack of all trades, master of nothing.

"I became mentally exhausted, I became ill. My mental health suffered. I was not supported, I was not listened to (until it was too late). I was off sick for months. I did not believe I could return to it.

I did return, but as a result of my own self-sufficiency, my own strength, my own character which somehow I re-found. By this time, however, I could return only while taking anti-depressant medication, and having reduced my hours at significant personal financial expense, just so I could face it, cope with it, self-manage it, limit my exposure to it.

"Things have worsened and are still worsening since my return. I have managed to endure a further 18 months since my last episode of mental illness. Just about.

"In summer 2016, TS1, the next programme of change, was upon us. We were all being re-vamped, re-packaged, re-labelled, re-vitalised again. Senior managers told me, told us all, that NPTs were going to be an integral part of policing, we would be 'totally professionalised' as a role, given the recognition and resources we deserved. Threats from terrorism heightened the need for NPTs. We were important. Significant. Would be dedicated to our role and our communities, allowed to thrive and realise our potential.

"From November 2016, it became apparent this was not true, would never be true and could never be true. By summer 2017 my role

has become totally subsumed by the gaping holes that have appeared in the response teams. They have inadequate staff numbers, and demand is ever-increasing.

"I and my team are now general rubbing rags, moppers up of overspill demand and at times demand which is days old and unresourced. Daily business is P3 logs, not resourced by response. All out days are entire days devoted essentially to attempting to reduce unresourced demand.

"I am told by a manager that 'neighbourhood policing is suspended, though no-one will say it is'. But I am still expected to remain as a point of NPT contact on the police website. My profile picture demonstrates that I am here to provide the face of NPTs, our website suggests we are all singing, all dancing, here for the public, dedicated to their community issues. But the truth is very different.

"There is a lack of transparency in this deceit, in this spin. My integrity feels challenged, I feel like I am being asked to mislead at best, lie at worst. As a police officer, I rely on transparency and integrity, so I find this deceit exhausting. I start to dislike myself.

"Elsewhere, experienced officers have retired, officers are transferring in record numbers, sickness levels are shockingly high, mental health related sickness is disproportionately great. My pay rise is yet again derisory after years of austerity. My pension is much reduced, its terms and conditions altered against my will. There are fewer and fewer of us. Those that remain are expected to do the work of those that have gone. And then their own.

"Change programmes are unsettling, they keep changing things, change leads to change, leads to change. Focus is lost, visions are not clear. Rest days are regularly cancelled due to insufficient resources, flexible work patterns that are vital for work-life balance are now no longer fit for purpose because goal posts have changed. Extra officers are new recruits, with all that they entail. No-one has time to listen, no-one has time to care. I am on my own. I fend for myself. I look out for myself. I have to.

"And still, though this organisation feels as though it is broken, I feel broken, management must recognise that it is broken, there are no voices speaking on my behalf. Senior managers are not speaking for me, the Government is not speaking for me, the media is not speaking for me. So I have to speak for myself, to feel alive, to hear my voice, to know that I am still me and always will be, despite it all.

"And so I feel let down, I feel abandoned, I feel alone, I feel unvalued, I feel mentally exhausted. I feel anxious, I feel sick, I feel a black cloud descend as my last rest day approaches. I have no capacity to recharge my batteries anymore. I do not sleep properly.

"I am not a number, I am not a bum on a seat, I am not a resource to complete a task. I have to keep telling myself that because there is no-one else telling me."

"You are a valued member of the team"

Assistant Chief Constable Sarah Boycott responds to the officer's letter

Dear Colleague,

Reading your letter was deeply moving on so many levels and I want to thank you for sharing such a personal account of your experiences.

As a Force, we really value your dedication and commitment and, in some ways, this makes it even more difficult to hear your account of the support you have received as a member of the WMP team.

I think we all agree that the nature of policing is changing. Crime and public expectations are changing, as too are societies and there are new technologies which provide opportunities - as well as requirements - to work differently.

Change therefore is inevitable - imperative even - as we constantly adapt our approach to deliver our promises to the public.

As you know we're under constant pressure to deliver more for less, and with limited resources this is set to get even more challenging.

As far as I can remember in my 25 years of policing, this has often been the case. Our job as senior leaders in policing is to make a strong case to government for sustainable police

funding that helps us meet the expectations and challenges and our Chief is leading on this nationally. Despite the best efforts nationally to respond to demand challenges, I can't say I'm optimistic that this is set to change anytime soon.

Increases in calls from the public have been exceptional this summer and we are yet to experience a reduction in incidents from the situation a few weekends ago when we were at critical threat level. What has been amazing, however, is the way departments have worked together to not only respond to the calls from the public but also to resolve issues in the way we work.

Yet we know that this level of heightened intensity is unsustainable.

We need to support colleagues like yourself to understand the rationale behind our decisions and encourage more open discussion and collaboration – making decisions with you, not to you and respecting your contribution.

As lead for local policing, you will no doubt expect me to make the next comment, but we need NPU's to be reducing crime and problem solving repeat issues as well as activating citizens to help. Continuing to merely react is

not the long-term answer and that is a view that is shared by the wider chief officer team.

I'm really disappointed to hear every time you have experienced change you feel it has not been explained or you have not been able to have a say. We need to involve people better in change, explaining better the rationale for the decisions made.

We also need line managers and leaders to continually support their teams to work through the competing priorities that exist in policing, to understand what works in what situations and where the incredible efforts of our officers, PCSOs and police staff are best focused.

We have created a new department, People and Organisational Development, to assist leaders across our organisation to develop the skills we need from them. We also have made a significant investment in the wellbeing of our officers and staff – whether it be emotionally, physically, spiritually and mentally.

Improvements such as the BWell employee support scheme is offering confidential advice and counselling to colleagues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – this is accessible through the shared service portal on our intranet site. We have also appointed a Wellbeing team to shape and deliver our wellbeing strategy and we are starting to see some positive results.

I want you to know that you are not a number, you are a valued member of the team and a person who has shown great strength and resilience in articulating your experiences so clearly.

I'm really keen to meet you to understand how we can support you and help other officers and staff who may share similar experiences to yours.

I want you to know that you are not a number, you are a valued member of the team and a person who has shown great strength and resilience in articulating your experiences so clearly.



West Midlands morale among lowest in country



The morale of officers at West Midlands Police is among the worst in the country - according to the findings of a pay and morale survey.

Two thirds (66.3 per cent) of respondents from the Force said they were suffering from low personal morale – putting the Force in the top three. And 96 per cent said Force morale was low. This puts the Force fifth in this category – with 38 forces with a smaller proportion of respondents who feel that morale within their force is low.

The survey is carried out nationwide annually by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

Reasons given for low morale by West Midlands Police Federation members were:

- How the police are treated as a whole, 90.4 per cent
- Pay and benefits, including pension, 74.1 per cent
- Health and wellbeing, 66.9 per cent
- Work-life balance, 64.7 per cent
- Opportunities for development and promotion, 62.6 per cent
- Workload and responsibilities, 57.7 per cent
- Treatment by senior managers, 56.2 per cent
- Day to day job role, 50.2 per cent.

The survey results revealed that 72 per cent of West Midlands officers felt their workload had increased in the last year, with 63.5 per cent saying their workload was too high. Almost 74 per cent said they were worse off financially compared to five

years ago.

And an overwhelming majority (88 per cent) of respondents said they do not feel they are paid fairly for the stresses and strains of their job - ranking the Force 10th. Furthermore, 75.6 per cent said they are dissatisfied with their overall remuneration (including basic pay and allowances) and 66 per cent said they are dissatisfied with their pensions, ranking the Force seventh and eighth respectively in these two categories.

Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, said the results of the survey were of major concern but did not really come as a surprise.

"We have been saying for some time that police officers are feeling demoralised," Steve explains, "The cuts to Force budgets have meant officer numbers have been severely hit. We have lost 2,000 officers in the last seven years. With fewer officers to go around, we are finding that our members are run ragged as they try to do the job they joined to do – fighting crime, keeping the peace and protecting our communities.

"Despite a fall in our numbers, we have seen no corresponding decline in demand for our help – in fact we have seen the opposite. As well as trying to tackle traditional crimes, we are trying to rise to the challenge of newer offences and a surge in cyber-crime while responding to the ongoing threat of terrorism. As the service of first and last resort, we never say no and find ourselves picking up the pieces when other agencies are unable to respond due to cuts to their

own budgets.

"Officers do not want to let the public down but they are feeling the strain; their mental and physical health is suffering as they try to do more with less and at the same time they feel undervalued by the Government which, while voicing support for the police in the wake of major incidents, has generally failed to get behind the police service."

The Force also featured in the top five when respondents were asked if they would recommend joining the police to others – with 74.9 per cent saying they wouldn't. And over three quarters (77.5 per cent) say they did not feel valued in the police service. This compares to a national average of 68 per cent of respondents who said they did not feel valued.

Another concerning area was fairness – with just 27.3 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police agreeing that they were treated fairly and 37.4 per cent saying they are not. This ranks the Force fourth out of 43 forces for this indicator; there are 39 forces with a smaller proportion of respondents who do not feel fairly treated.

A majority of 53.6 per cent said that decisions that affected them were not usually made in a fair way – leaving the Force in second place nationwide.

And 43 per cent said that the people they worked with were not fairly treated, compared to 24.4 per cent who said they were.

The survey also highlighted a four per cent increase in the number of officers who are intending to leave the service.

This year, 13.8 per cent of those who took part in the survey said they intended to leave within two years – compared to 9.8 per cent in 2016. And, a further 20.6 per cent said they currently do not know what their intentions are with regards to staying in or leaving the police.

Reasons for intending to leave include:

- Personal morale – 85.2 per cent
- How the police as a whole are treated – 73.4 per cent
- The impact of the job on health and wellbeing – 67.2 per cent.

A total of 1,082 responses were received from West Midlands officers, representing a response rate of around 16 per cent, the national response rate for the survey, which is carried out annually and is used as evidence in the Federation's submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB), was 25 per cent.

"While the response rate is quite low, I think that the results do represent the views of the majority of our members," says Steve, "Sadly, I think officers are feeling so disheartened and demoralised that they are not even filling out these surveys because they do not feel that their views will be taken into account."



Custody seen as “punishment posting”

Almost a fifth of custody officers want to be redeployed away from detention duties as soon as possible, according to the results of the Police Federation’s pay and morale survey.

With 18.9 per cent of those working in custody saying they want to move to a different post, nearly three quarters (73.1 per cent) of officers not currently in the role say they would never want to work in custody.

The survey results back up the long-held view that custody is still perceived as a “punishment posting” by many, according to the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW). By comparison, less than two per cent of firearms officers want to switch jobs.

Andy Ward, the Federation’s deputy general secretary and custody lead, explained: “Custody is one of the most challenging areas of policing with potentially serious ramifications if anything goes wrong. The responsibility is enormous in trying to look after detainees’ rights and welfare as well as managing complex risks to ensure their safety and security.

“There are also additional risks where those being detained are vulnerable, for instance through alcohol or drug impairment or dependency, or where suffering with mental ill-health. We have said repeatedly that police cells are not the right place for those with mental health issues, but budget cuts across the NHS and local authorities still mean that too often the police service has to step in when individuals are in crisis and need a place of safety.

“For all those reasons, the survey results are not surprising, given the immense challenges faced by those working in the custody arena. More than 60 per cent of custody officers said they had low personal morale and this is coupled with a shortage of training – we know of at least one force which has had no refresher custody training for five years.”

He also explained that the number of applications to be a custody sergeant are also dropping.

“It is not surprising that there is a reluctance to work within custody when, despite the specialist nature of the role, investment in the training and development of custody staff is inadequate. When there are organisational failures, all too often custody personnel are blamed whereas what is needed is a corporate and holistic approach, bringing together all relevant agencies and proper resources to ensure

that detainees are kept safe,” he said.

The Federation’s annual pay and morale survey included custody-specific questions for the first time.

- Other results from the survey included:
- 62 per cent of custody officers said that their workload had increased in the last 12 months
 - 11 per cent of custody officers intend to leave the police within the next two years.

Andy spoke out on the eve of the Federation’s national custody seminar which was held in Warwick in September and included discussions on deaths and serious incidents in custody, mental health policing issues and unlawful detentions, as well as the full impact of the new pre-charge police bail provisions and the restructure and reform of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

“When there are organisational failures, all too often custody personnel are blamed whereas what is needed is a corporate and holistic approach, bringing together all relevant agencies and proper resources to ensure that detainees are kept safe.”

West Midlands in top three for reducing complaints

West Midlands Police recorded one of the largest decreases in complaint cases of any force, according to new figures released by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

Complaint cases in the West Midlands were down 24 per cent during the year 2016/2017 when compared with the previous 12 months. The Force recorded 882 cases in 2016/2017 and 1,168 in 2015/2016.

Only Nottinghamshire (-31 per cent) and Cleveland (-25 per cent) recorded larger decreases.

The number of allegations against West Midlands officers also fell. There were 2,547 allegations in 2015/2016 and 2,143 in 2016/2017 – a drop of 16 per cent, while nationally there was just a one per cent drop. Nottinghamshire (-29 per cent) recorded the largest decrease while Warwickshire recorded the highest increase (30 per cent).

In terms of the number of allegations recorded per 1,000 employees in 2016/2017, the Force recorded 190, less than the national average of 279, and was one of only six forces to record fewer than 200. The highest number per 1,000 employees was recorded in Lincolnshire (512) and the lowest was in the British Transport Police (133).

However, the Force is taking an average of 213 days to finalise local investigations while British Transport Police topped the table with 94 days followed by Suffolk (101). At the other end of the scale, Northamptonshire took an average of 316 days. The national average is 166 days.

Overall, the use of local resolution increased to 42 per cent of all allegations in 2016/17 against 38 per cent in 2015/16, but there were wide variations between forces. While West Midlands Police investigated 72 per cent of complaints and locally resolved only 16 per cent, Cleveland Police locally resolved 82 per cent of its complaints and investigated only five per cent.

Overall, the figures show that 34,103 complaints – with the largest number of

allegations being in relation to “other neglect or failure of duty” and “incivility” – were recorded across the country in 2016/17, an almost identical figure to last year, when 34,247 complaints were recorded. In just over a third of forces there was a decrease in the number of complaint cases recorded.

The IPCC report highlighted three main areas of inconsistency in the approach to handling complaints from the public:

- The number of recorded complaints may not reflect the whole picture, because some forces try to address issues before they are recorded as a formal complaint, whereas others record complaints as soon as an issue is raised
- When complaints are recorded, some forces choose to formally investigate most of them, while others use the less formal ‘local resolution’ process in the majority of cases
- A dissatisfied complainant can appeal the outcome of a local investigation and this is dealt with by either the force, or the IPCC. The IPCC upholds four out of 10 appeals but the police uphold fewer than two out of 10; this figure varies considerably dependent on the force.

There will be significant changes to the police complaints system in 2018, including a greater role for police and crime commissioners, who will decide on appeals that do not go to the IPCC.

IPCC chair Dame Anne Owens said: “The public need to have a high level of confidence in the police complaints system. If they complain about their local police force they should be assured that it will be dealt with robustly and fairly.

“The current system is extremely complex and bureaucratic and this has led to some of the inconsistencies we have recorded year on year. It is also not sufficiently independent, since some dissatisfied complainants can only appeal to the force that rejected their complaint in the first place.

“While some local variation is unavoidable, it is clear that some forces need to look closely at their own performance and approach, where it is clearly at odds with the norm. It is welcome that some forces have done this during last year, sometimes with the assistance of our own oversight team.

“The new system will be simpler and more flexible, and will also provide an independent appeal right for everyone, either to the IPCC or to a Police and Crime Commissioner. This is welcome, but we will still need to ensure that complainants throughout the country can be assured that their complaints will be handled appropriately and thoroughly.”

For a full breakdown of the complaints statistics for 2016/17 please visit <https://tinyurl.com/y784q4vv>

“The new system will be simpler and more flexible, and will also provide an independent appeal right for everyone, either to the IPCC or to a Police and Crime Commissioner.”

Force to boost number of Taser officers

The Force is doubling the number of officers armed with Taser following a major security review.

It currently has 643 Taser trained officers, including emergency response officers and all firearms officers, and now that number is likely to double to around 1,440 over the next 18 months. As part of this roll-out, 50 per cent of all response officers will be approved to carry the device as well as some neighbourhood officers.

The Force has said the increase is part of its "round the clock efforts" to keep people safe and was recommended by security experts following a detailed analysis of local and national crime trends.

The uptake has been welcomed by Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation.

He said: "Our members are really clear, they want Taser. On their behalf, the Federation have lobbied long and hard on this matter both locally and nationally as part of our Protect The Protectors campaign.

"I welcome the Chief Constable's announcement and support his desire to see the use of force subject to regular public scrutiny.

"The use of force is always a last resort, however, Taser gives front-line officers more options to bring matters to a swift and safe conclusion. Experience shows us that in most

cases an officer merely drawing the device from its holster, activating its laser target or sounding the device's electrical charge is enough to resolve the situation.

"The alternative is the use of a baton which can cause catastrophic injuries or drafting in firearms officers who use lethal force."

The increase in the number of officers carrying Taser will coincide with the introduction of the latest double-shot weapons which are capable of firing twice before requiring a reload. The new system is designed to offer greater protection for officers using the device to keep people safe from harm.

The review also recommended changes to the deployment of Taser across the Force area and the new plans will see greater overall coverage and an enhanced capability around shopping centres and entertainment venues including sporting arenas, concert venues and nightspots popular with clubbers and diners.

The changes are preventative and are not based on specific threats to the West Midlands.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said: "We routinely review safety and security but the nature of the threat we all face has changed of late. We are seeing higher levels of violence and an increase in weapon use. Our officers need something more than their baton if

they're to protect people effectively.

"We're still a long way off routinely arming PCs with Tasers but we have to stay one step ahead of those who would seek to cause harm."

In 2016 WMP officers deployed Taser on 854 occasions but only fired them 162 times.

The full cost of the increase and introduction of the double-shot device is now being calculated along with the timetable for the changes and the training schedule.

Existing police budgets will pay for the uplift.

Speaking about the changes, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Dr Lynnette Kelly, said: "I fully back the decision to increase the number of officers at West Midlands Police who carry and are trained to use Tasers.

"Following the recent attacks in London and Manchester this move is both sensible and proportionate. Here in the West Midlands our police regularly confront danger with little more than a trusty baton. This increase in the number of officers carrying Tasers will help address the balance, while not undermining the long standing British tradition of unarmed policing.

"Scrutiny of Taser usage is vital. We will ensure the footage recorded by body-worn cameras during Taser incidents is monitored closely by panels made up of members of the public.

"We will maintain close oversight of Taser usage ensuring it is used proportionately and fairly."

Taser facts:

Taser was introduced to WMP in 2005 – one year after the Home Office authorised their use following a 12-month trial across five police forces (not including WMP).

130 firearms officers were initially trained to use the device.

WMP currently has 643 Taser trained officers including emergency response officers and all firearms officers. This number will increase to around 1,440.

Training takes 18 hours with a mandatory six-hour annual refresher.

Strict national rules regulate the use of Taser.

WMP uses X26 Tasers which are capable of firing a 50,000-volt shock to highly aggressive people who are considered to pose a high risk to themselves or other people including police officers.

The battery operated X26 uses cartridges of compressed nitrogen to fire two small charged probes from the Taser up to 15 feet away.

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Benevolent Fund offers fab footie prize to new joiners

As the football season kicks off, West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund is offering colleagues 'extra time' to join.

All new members joining the fund from now until 31 December will be entered into a prize draw to win a unique footie experience for two.

The fund has three pairs of VIP tickets offering a full hospitality pack for the BCFC vs Middlesbrough game on Tuesday 6 March 2018; these are worth £175 each.

The prize includes:

- **Champagne reception upon arrival to your suite with seats in the directors' box**
- **A tour of St Andrew's Stadium, followed by a delicious four course gourmet meal**
- **Complementary drinks throughout the day**
- **Refreshments at half time.**

You will also have the opportunity to take part in the Man of the Match presentation and one lucky member of the table will lead the teams out onto the pitch. Another lucky winner will receive a framed, signed shirt.

Photographs capturing your special day will be taken by the club photographer and will be given to you as a memento.

For just £2.00 per month the Benevolent Fund offers a range of support and member benefits for WMP officers and staff. Monthly subscriptions are deducted straight from your salary and so far this year the fund has given almost £50,000 to support members and their families.

The Benevolent Fund will be attending all WMP2020 Live events in October with more great prizes and give-aways on offer.

For further details about member benefits and how to join visit www.wmpben.co.uk

Join now for a chance to win a *VIP* hospitality day at Birmingham City Football Club worth £175!

All new members joining between 1st Sept to 31st Dec 2017 will be entered into our prize draw to win one of three pairs of tickets.

Prize includes:

- Full *VIP hospitality pack for two for the BCFC vs Middlesbrough game on Tuesday 6th March 2018
- Champagne reception upon arrival to your suite
- Seats in the Director's box
- Tour of St Andrew's Stadium
- Four course gourmet meal
- Complimentary drinks
- Refreshments at half time
- Being part of the Man of the Match presentation
- Lucky member of the table will lead the teams out onto the pitch
- Another lucky winner will receive a framed, signed shirt
- Photographs capturing your special day will be taken by the club photographer and given to you all as a memento

* Details of times and dress code will be provided closer to the day

To join simply complete the 'Join Today' form on the reverse or visit www.wmpben.co.uk

West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund

Here to help you 0121 700 1212

Are your details up to date?

It is members' responsibility to ensure that all the details we have for your Group Insurance Scheme policies are up to date.

So, please can you check this is the case – since, in the event of a claim, we can only act on the information we have recorded.

This is particularly relevant to members whose named beneficiary may have changed – for instance, on re-marriage or divorce.

You can download a serving officer beneficiary form in the Documents section of the Group Insurance Scheme page on the West Midlands Police Federation website westmidspolfed.com. Simply complete the form, print it off, sign and send back via email to westmidlandspf@polfed.org or post it back to us at Guardians House.



Remembering fallen colleagues

St David's Hall in Cardiff hosted this year's National Police Memorial Day service.

The service, on Sunday 24 September, was attended by chief officers, Federation representatives from across England and Wales and Home Secretary Amber Rudd. But the most important guests of all were the families of fallen officers. West Midlands

Police Federation was represented at the service by secretary Steve Grange, deputy chair John Williams and George McDonnell, full-time misconduct rep. The Federation also provided a free coach which took officers and their families to the service.

"The service provides an opportunity to remember our fallen colleagues and join their families to show them that their sacrifice has not been forgotten," says Steve.

The names of the six officers who have lost their lives since the last memorial day service, held at St Paul's Cathedral in London last year, were read out by national Police Federation chair Steve White:

DC Joe Mabuto (42) of Thames Valley Police who died on 27 September 2016.

Inspector Mark Estall (45) of Essex Police who died on 5 January 2017.

PC Paul Briggs (43) of Merseyside Police who died on 21 January 2017.

PC Austin Jackson (38) of Leicestershire Police who died on 16 March 2017.

PC Keith Palmer QGM (48) of the Metropolitan Police who died on 22 March 2017, and

PC Gareth Browning (36) of Thames Valley Police who died on 1 April 2017.

The service began with processional music led by the band of the South Wales Police and Corps Drums and a welcome from the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Councillor Bob Derbyshire, before a new book of remembrance, provided by The Police Roll of Honour Trust, was dedicated with prayers led by Canon Adrian Gatrill of Police Chaplaincy UK and the swearing of an oath of allegiance by all serving officers led by Chief Constable



Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography

PC Lowri Davies, daughter of PC Terence Davies of Gwent Constabulary who died in August 1990, lights a candle in memory of Welsh officers.



A moment's silence for fallen colleagues.



Sara Thornton, chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council.

Along with hymns and prayers, which included participation from the family members of four fallen officers, the Cor Meibion Llanelli Male Choir performed two songs and the Home Secretary gave a reading from the gospel of St John.

During the act of remembrance four candles were lit, one for each of the four nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with family members again taking part in this part of the service.

PC Lowri Davies, daughter of PC Terence John Davies of Gwent Constabulary who died on 23 August 1990, aged 34, lit the candle for Wales.

Thelma Corkey, widow of Reserve Constable Samuel Snowdon Corkey, who died on 16 November 1982, aged 41, lit the candle for Northern Ireland.

Laura Wiggins, daughter of PC Douglas Wiggins, Police Scotland, who died on 3 May 2016, aged 55, lit the candle for Scotland.

Pamela Knee, sister of PC John Egerton, Greater Manchester Police, who was murdered on 11 March 1982, aged 20, lit the candle for England.

As the National Police Memorial Day Orchestra played Abide With Me and the Last Post was sounded, petals of remembrance, representing all who have lost their lives, fluttered down from the gallery in a very moving feature of the service. After a moment of silence, Reveille was sounded.

The service ended with an act of dedication, led by South Wales Chief Constable Peter Vaughan, a blessing led by the Archbishop of Cardiff George Stack and Archbishop of Wales John Davies, and the national anthems Land Of My Fathers and God Save The Queen.

National Police Memorial Day was founded by Joe Holness, following the brutal killing of his fellow Kent Police officer Jon Odell, at Margate, in December 2000.

The inaugural service was held at St Paul's Cathedral in 2004.

HRH The Prince of Wales is patron of the National Memorial Day charity.

Amy Mawson, daughter of Sergeant Nigel Mawson of West Midlands Police, was one of four family members to lead the prayers. Sgt Mawson died on 8 June 2012, aged 44.



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COPS service honours fallen officers

Chief Constable Dave Thompson addresses the families after the service.



The National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire was the setting for the annual service of remembrance organised by the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) charity.

The service featured readings from the families of fallen officers – a daughter, a mother, two sons and a wife – and was attended by West Midlands Police Federation chair and secretary, Tom Cuddeford and Steve Grange, along with Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

Ahead of the service, members of the Police Unity Tour including the newly formed West Midlands Chapter cycled into the arboretum to be greeted by rounds of applause. Once the 200 or so riders had arrived at the arboretum, a cavalcade of motorcyclists from the Blue Knights were also welcomed by the crowds.

The service itself, held in an open-sided marquee on a bright and sunny day, was attended by hundreds of people; so many, in fact, that some had to stand outside.

The congregation included Chief Constables, PCCs, local MP Michael Fabricant, Councillor Michael Greateox, chairman of Staffordshire County Council, and Andy Alexander, head of complementary policing at the Home Office. The focus of the day, however, was not on those special guests but, quite rightly, on the families.

Continued overleaf

Family members gather at the West Midlands Police tree on The Beat, an avenue of trees dedicated to individual officers and all forces.





PC Malc Walker's family at his commemorative tree on The Beat.



The dedication to PC Malc Walker.



West Midlands Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman addresses the congregation.

Jan Berry, former national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales and now chair of the COPS trustees, welcomed everyone to the service saying it was a day when everyone came together to remember those who did not make it home.

"Their sacrifice will never be forgotten," she said.

Other family members to talk about their experiences during the service included West Midlands Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman, son of PC Kerim 'Kerry' Blakeman, who had also taken part in the Police Unity Tour.

In the middle of the service, there was a wreath-laying ceremony led by the Staffordshire Police Cadets with background music played by the West Midlands Police Band.

The roll of honour was led by Denis Gunn, the COPS national president, with the following officers, who died in the year since

- the last COPS service, being remembered:
- DC Joe Mabuto** of Thames Valley Police, 27 September 2016
- Inspector Mark Estall**, Essex Police, 5 January 2017
- PC Paul Briggs**, Merseyside Police, 21 January 2017
- DC Ben Devonshire**, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 9 March 2017
- PC Austin Jackson**, Leicestershire Constabulary, 16 March 2017
- PC Keith Palmer**, Metropolitan Police Service, 22 March 2017
- PC Gareth Browning**, Thames Valley Police, 1 April 2017.

Kerry speaks from first-hand experience

Kerry Blakeman was not even born when his father, a Birmingham City Police officer, died.

PC Kerim Blakeman – who Kerry is named after – died on duty on 27 June 1966. He was posted to M28 from Duke Street and was sent to Minstead Road, Gravelly Hill at 0657 hours where a Commer van had rolled into the main road and was obstructing traffic. PC Blakeman pushed the van out of the way and collapsed having suffered a massive heart attack. He was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital, he was just 35.

Kerry's Mum was pregnant with him at the time and had two other sons, who were 13 and nine.

Fifty-one years later, Kerry - now Chief Inspector Blakeman of West Midlands Police – talked about the effect his father's death had on his life when he was one of five people to address the congregation at the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) memorial service as a member of the family of a fallen officer.

Kerry was, however, the only one of those five to have also taken part in the Police Unity Tour, explaining that having watched the cyclists arrive at the service in 2016 he had decided it was something he must do in his final year of police service to remember the father he had never known.

Still wearing his cycling gear, Kerry told those gathered for the service: "It's only right that we as a police service recognise and remember those that have paid the ultimate price in public service. COPS is the UK charity dedicated to helping the families of police officers who have lost their lives in relation to their duty to rebuild their lives."

Outlining the circumstances of his father's death, he recalled: "Growing up not knowing my Dad was difficult but with the help and support of my brothers, Stephen and John, who are both here today, you learn to cope.

Over the years I've come to realise the importance of the police family and making sure treasured memories are never forgotten.

"Growing up as a young boy I have fond memories of PC Harry Bennett coming to see my Mum and I. Harry visited not only as a family friend but also on behalf of the Police Benevolent Fund. Harry would turn up on his police motorcycle and come and see how we were. I owe a lot to Harry and the Benevolent Fund, I have fond memories of attending many a Christmas party at Tally Ho! Police Training Centre in Birmingham. And, of course, back in the 1970s, there was no Care of Police Survivors."

Kerry explained that when John joined the Cadets and then became a regular officer with the newly-formed West Midlands Police in 1975, it was "inevitable" he would join the police service and he did in 1988, 29 years ago.

Having personal experience of the importance of keeping memories alive, Kerry supported the family of the late PC Gavin Carlton who was shot in Coventry in the year he joined. He helped instigate the conference

room at Coventry Central Police Station as a lasting memory to Gavin and he has been actively involved in organising the PC Joe O'Brien 5k fun run in Coventry.

"Joe was run over and killed while directing traffic at a road race duty in 1982," said Kerry, "I draw comfort from supporting families of those that have passed away because I know what it feels like – hence for me the importance of the police family and the lasting memory that the National Memorial Arboretum brings to families and colleagues of those officers that have made the ultimate sacrifice.

"Knowing the invaluable work COPS does in supporting families of police officers who have lost their lives, I have taken every opportunity I can to fund raise for them. Some of you will be aware that I have an interest in social media, I have used this fantastic medium to raise awareness of COPS both in the United Kingdom and the United States."

In 2015, Kerry took part in the Ride and Run to Remember in Washington DC to honour and remember fallen officers in the United States and recently through his work with the Police Twitter Awards - with the assistance of friends Mike Kenworthy, Mike Pannett and Dennis Murray – he has obtained sponsorship for the individual awards resulting in a donation of £600 to COPS.



Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman arrives at the arboretum after the Police Unity Tour.



Kerry with the West Midlands officers who made up the guard of honour.

New Chapter

Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman completed the Police Unity Tour with the newly formed West Midlands Chapter which is led by DCC Amanda Blakeman of West Mercia Police.

The only other West Midlands member of the chapter was Gill Wall who is in Force intelligence.

"The ride set off from West Mercia HQ and circled the Midlands, on Day 2 we met the East Midlands Chapter and rode with them. The highlights for me were cycling into Drayton Manor and meeting the survivors' families on the Saturday and also the ceremony on the Sunday. For me, as a 'survivor', I was honoured to cycle in at the front of the cycling cavalcade! It's a tough challenge cycling 192 miles over three days but so very worth it," says Kerry.

The West Midlands PUT Chapter raised £7,500 for COPS.

Kerry will be the point of contact for West Midlands Police officers and staff who wish to take part in the 2018 Police Unity Tour (27 - 29 July) as part of the West Midlands Chapter which is again being organised by DCC Blakeman. So, if anyone wishes to register an expression of interest, they should drop Kerry an e-mail.

Invaluable advice at Family Matters

The next Family Matters event is being held in the Lord Knight's Suite at Tally Ho on Tuesday 10 October 2017.

The joint PPU and FCID event, which runs from 10.30am until 1.30pm, is for officers and staff who are either pregnant or on maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

It will be hosted by PPU Commander DCSU Claire Bell and DCI Sarah Burton from FCID who will answer questions about issues of concern or refer them to the relevant department heads, many of whom will also be represented at the event.

"This is an informal support group to make sure that staff feel valued, empowered, knowledgeable and not forgotten while they are pregnant or on a form of parental leave. We appreciate that people can feel isolated while away from work so we hope these events help alleviate those feelings," says DCSU Claire Bell, PPU Commander.

"We also aim to ease any anxieties they have about other issues such as how pensions are calculated, the availability of childcare vouchers, Federation subscriptions, flexible working and annual leave entitlements. In short, we want to make this time as stress-free as possible!"

Partners, babies and toddlers are also welcome at the event.

The last Family Matters event was attended by around 30 police officers and staff.

Attendance at the next session will form part of four hours (including travel time) of a KIT day for those currently on leave. Supervisors should make staff on relevant leave aware of the date and time and advise

DS Trudy Gittins who will be attending.

In order to encourage contact with employees who are on leave, Digital Services have created a form to record contact from notification of pregnancy right through to returning to work. This is available at

http://intranet2/hq_departments or from Customer Services.

If you would like to attend or you would like more information, please email Trudy Gittins, PPU at t.gittins@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Feedback on the last event

"The Family Matters event is a great opportunity for new parents to get together and discuss their challenges and offer advice and support to colleagues."

"There are key departments represented at each forum from Shared Services, the Police Federation, UNISON and Police Mutual and there are opportunities to discuss key milestones from arranging childcare (Sodexo), KIT days, flexible working plans to making the return to work process as seamless as possible (passwords/training) and the right people are in the room to answer your questions."

"There is a great atmosphere at the forums and all are welcome. From what started as a local support group (I have attended the last two forums), the growth has been exponential highlighting the need for support at what can be a challenging time for new parents. The team should be proud of the amazing work that has had a positive impact on the lives of our employees and their families. As a UNISON representative we are on hand to answer any queries staff may have in relation to maternity rights and related matters, we also usually have a supply of goodies to distract little ones for a short period!"

Liz Curnew

After a meeting with Caroline Harris, financial welfare specialist:

"We found the meeting really helpful and managed to save some money. Caroline who works with the Federation explained what we were getting through the Group Insurance Scheme and made me realise I

was paying my bank £10 for the same insurances. Therefore I have now reviewed my bank account and saved £120 a year!

"She also explained our pension and how things work should the worst happen to one of us. We have taken on board that information and are now looking into a will and protecting our mortgage in case of illness or death. We cannot recommend Caroline enough and the information that she can give."

PC Victoria Betts

"The meeting with Caroline was really informative, putting our financial matters into perspective especially now we have two young children. She contacted the tax office on noticing our tax codes didn't look right. We are now awaiting tax refunds and the codes have been adjusted."

"It's really good to know that this kind of networking exists for women on maternity leave, and that people are so willing to put themselves out to offer support and information."

DC Grace Longden

"I found it to be informative and relaxed. It was a comfortable environment which meant people were happy to speak out and ask questions and give advice."

The topics covered were very good and answered a lot of questions I had. Covering the computer shares scheme was very handy and it was relayed simply. Being able to take children was a great help and great to meet the other mums and those expecting."

Emma Jones





Paul's pedal power pays off

PC Paul Ray joined 15,000 cyclists taking part in the Birmingham Velo, a 100-mile tour taking in the city and two surrounding counties.

Paul (39), who works in motorway policing and is based at Force Traffic in Chelmsley Wood, took on the Birmingham Velo, to raise money for Cure Leukemia in memory of a close family friend who died of the disease almost two years ago.

The event takes place on completely closed roads and rides through Worcestershire and Staffordshire, before returning to Birmingham.

Ahead of the sportive ride, Paul, who has 15 years' service with the Force, trained for around six months with two friends who also took part and the trio completed 40 to 60 mile rides most Sunday mornings, topped up with shorter rides during the week.

"I started off doing 30 to 40 miles per week but more recently I've been doing around 80 miles," says Paul, "Aside from dragging myself out after nights, I didn't really struggle with the training. I love cycling anyway and, with this ride being the longest I had ever done, I made sure I prepared well for it.

"Thankfully, having training partners, we've always made sure we're always going out and plan it in advance."

The training paid off with Paul describing it as a fantastic day and completing the tour in seven hours and 20 minutes.

"It was tiring but the atmosphere was brilliant all the way round; it was an amazing

experience. There was a real buzz around the start point and plenty of encouragement from riders along the way. There were loads of people lining the streets - offering water and snacks and playing music."

The three members of Paul's team had friends and family supporting them in Stourbridge, in Ombersley and at the finish line. Nevertheless, the ride was not without its hitches.

At the 30-mile mark, Paul's bike developed a problem which meant he could not change front gears leaving him stuck in a higher gear for nearly 25 miles as he tried to reach the next pit stop.

He recalls: "That took a lot of energy out of my legs when going up hills. So, at the end, my legs felt heavier - but the will of the crowds pushed me on, especially through Harborne."

Paul originally aimed to raise £375 for Cure Leukaemia, a charity that helps fund the world class Centre for Clinical Haematology in Birmingham, as well as a network of specialist research nurses in the UK. But he has so far raised £640 with sponsorship still coming in.

He clearly enjoyed the experience too as he has already pre-registered for next year's Birmingham Velo and will be looking at some more (perhaps shorter distance!) events in the build-up to it next year.

It's not too late to boost Paul's fund-raising. Simply visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paulray78>

PC to pound city streets to raise cash for police charity

Kiran Patel will be pounding the streets of Birmingham to raise money for a charity every officer hopes their loved ones will never have to use.

Kiran, who is in Force Response based at Stechford Police Station, is taking part in the Great Birmingham Run half marathon on Sunday 15 October 2017 and is raising money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS).

The charity is dedicated to helping the families of police officers who have lost their lives on duty. It ensures families have the support they need and remain a part of the police family as they rebuild their broken lives.

It will be the first time that Kiran has taken part in a race and he has not had the smoothest of preparations for the event.

"In April, I was hospitalised and I was diagnosed with a neurological condition in May. I've always been fit and healthy - in fact, haven't been to my GP for over 15 years until recently. Coming back to normality was a bit of a challenge with the shock of the diagnosis and this made me want to challenge myself even more because I felt with something like this I would have to beat it or it would end up beating me," says Kiran who has worked for the Force for nine years as a Special Constable, Force contact officer and now as a PC.

"I really got into running in June and for the first time started running distances of 10 miles.

I ran 13.2 miles in August with a time of 1 hr 55 mins; I wasn't actually training at this point as I had not got the place for the marathon at this stage."

Having always wanted to run a marathon, Kiran regularly takes parts in a local "parkrun" which is a 5k event that takes place in local parks every Saturday at 9am nationally and in some other countries.

But he sustained an achilles tendinitis injury at the start of August and at the same time saw an ad about eight free places being available for the Great Birmingham Run through Simplyhealth (the sponsor for the Great Runs).

"I applied and was fortunate to get a place which I was informed about mid-August," he explains, "I thought this would be a great opportunity to make a difference to the lives of others through fund-raising.

"I chose COPS as the charity as earlier this year I attended the funeral of PC Keith Palmer GM in London. It really showed how the police family come together in such fragile circumstances and how we can stand side-by-side. The stories which were shared made me realise the struggle which PC Palmer's family would be going through, and having known what COPS does I thought this would be fitting considering I work for the police.

"I have only just got back into running so I

am actually training for the run now as I had been injured before I even got the place. Knowing the difference that COPS make to the lives of our extended police family motivates me to get up and run whether it be rain or shine and I don't want to let down those who have sponsored me."

To add to the fun of the day, Kiran is wearing fancy dress for the run and will be dressing up as a bull, having been inspired by a friend who said he would double his donation if he dressed up for the event.

Kiran says he is not aiming for a specific finishing time but would be happy with two hours. He has also set up a fund-raising target of £700. He had originally aimed for £300 but surpassed this within a week of setting up a fund-raising page so extended this to £500 which he has also exceeded.

Kiran concludes: "I have always done a lot of community work and fund-raising from my teenage years, including events to bridge the gap with the police and the community since I joined the police - for which I won an award for two years ago - so I think this has been a real benefit with friends, family and those who have donated knowing what challenges the police face."

You can support Kiran's fund-raising at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/patel16>



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Menopause matters: Keeley spreads the word

At the age of just 38 Nottinghamshire DC Keeley Mansell found she had early onset menopause.

At first, she did not know what she was experiencing, having gone to work feeling dreadful, not being able to do her job and walking into a room and immediately forgetting why she was there.

It reached a point where she was signed off on sick leave but, having tried different treatments, she found one that suited her and was able to return to duty.

She also found an inner resolve to meet the challenges she faced head-on and, in doing so, help other women trying to hold down a career in policing while also facing the menopause, at whatever age they were.

This determination has led her to spearheading a national drive towards all forces adopting policy and best practice guidelines she has produced, and also earned her the national Women in Policing Award at this year's national Police Federation of England and Wales conference.

"Hopefully, long-term, all 43 forces will adopt these guidelines or at least adopt their own guidelines on how they are going to deal with the menopause in the workforce. That's what I am trying to push anyway," says Keeley, who has been a police officer for 15 years, four years at Nottinghamshire and before that in Leicestershire.

"Since the conference I have been invited to speak at a number of key menopause events and am still continuing to get invites to talk about it in other forces. I will continue to attend as many of these events as I can, spreading the word around the importance of supporting women in the workplace around the menopause.

"I have found from speaking to many that the menopause has always been on people's agendas over the years, however, it isn't long before it's forgotten again. While I appreciate that there are lots of pressing issues, the menopause cannot keep being ignored or forgotten about hence why we need to push for forces to adopt a policy or best practice guidelines so that it's here to stay and women will continue to be supported long after we have all retired."

Keeley is still busy with meeting and supporting women in her own Force around menopause issues. Some of these women have agreed to become in-Force points of contact and support other officers having similar issues in the workplace.

She explains: "This will hopefully keep growing so that women have their own



Keeley Mansell is presented with her Women in Policing Award by Dame Vera Baird, chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, at the Federation's national conference in Birmingham in May this year.

support networks. I have found through my journey sometimes you just need to talk. And having someone sharing the same experience feels quite reassuring. This I hope will continue and grow."

The Managers' Guide and Policy Keeley helped establish has now been adopted by Nottinghamshire Police and it is this document that she hopes will be rolled out nationally.

Menopause support

The National Menopause Awareness Group is holding its first conference at Tally Ho! on Tuesday 17 October.

The group is chaired by Chief Constable Dee Collins. More details about the event will appear in the December/January edition of Federation magazine.

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Supporting you

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

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

Hopefully, you will now have seen the news that the Chief has authorised the use and issue of spit guards. I have to say that I am delighted that the Chief has taken this decision, and this is down in no small part to the lobbying of your Federation and Tom Cuddeford, chairman, in particular who has been in the national vanguard of this issue. It is also worth commenting on the work that CI Kerry Blakeman in Operations (whom I know many of you will know from his covering of the FIM role and from Coventry) has done in progressing this matter.

**Chief Supt Steve Graham
Head of Force Response**

I have recently required legal assistance through the scheme for my wife. I was disappointed to find as it was an employment rights issue they would only get involved at tribunal stage and would not assist with a grievance letter.

I called the Fed, as my wife was in pieces and devastated (so was I), a short time later I got a call.

The Federation contact has restored my faith and has been of great assistance throughout the process my wife has been through. He told us to call any time of the day and text, he always answers whatever the time.

He has been absolutely golden and words cannot describe how much he has helped us both, I don't know his exact role, but I just wanted you to know how fantastic he has been and how grateful we are for his friendly supportive help.

I told him how grateful we are, I would appreciate if you could also thank him on our behalf.

Details withheld

Please can you pass our thanks on to Tom (Cuddeford) and the Federation for all your hospitality and support at the Police Bravery Awards last week. We had an amazing time and it was a privilege to be part of such a humbling and proud occasion.

We appreciate all your efforts in organising and just being there for us and Ryan.

Thank you!
Kind regards

**Asha Patel
(Mother of Ryan Patel)**



I am currently a serving police inspector in Avon and Somerset who has been subject to a lengthy criminal investigation for seven years resulting in a gross misconduct hearing last week whereby I was completely exonerated. I can honestly say George has been pivotal in that process with the support he has given me. As a Fed rep he has always been available, asked the questions I have feared to ask and never judged me. I can honestly say he is a shining example of how the Federation should represent colleagues who face uncertainty and I would like to formally highlight the fantastic service I have received from your branch. George is still assisting me next week at a misconduct meeting but I cannot put into words how he has supported me over the last few months.

Details withheld

I recently made contact with yourselves regarding a claim for a cancelled booked holiday due to my mother being ill in hospital. My claim was successfully completed and payment made back into my bank account so thank you for choosing a very professional company to assist with this type of claim. Mom is still in hospital but hopefully I may be able to book a last minute deal soon.

Details withheld

Don't miss out on your Federation diary

Once again members will receive their West Midlands Police Federation diary in December.

The 2018 diaries will be mailed to members' home addresses so please make sure your details are correct. All information needs to be updated by 24 November at the very latest to ensure you receive a diary so drop us a line if you have moved house in the last year or if you didn't get your diary last year which would suggest we didn't have the right address for you.

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Musical commitment strikes a chord with Chief

Three integral members of the West Midlands Police Brass Band have received recognition for their commitment and dedication.

Barney Barnes and Audrey and John Bassinder have all received a Chief Constable award for their work with the band, which performs both locally and nationally.

Musical director Barney has led the band for the past 18 years. He retired from the Force last year at the age of 66 – when he was the oldest bobby in the country.

The citation for the award reads: "Through work with national police charities, Barney has created long lasting partnerships with Care of Police Survivors (COPS) and the Police Memorial Trust.

"John and Audrey Bassinder are both former police officers and have given 36 and 47 years respectively to the WMP Brass Band with John serving in the role of assistant chair and Audrey playing the trombone and also serving in the roles of librarian and secretary.

"All three have shown dedication and commitment to the band representing WMP in a professional manner both locally and on a national level."

The band was formed in Coventry in 1928, and at the time it was known as the Coventry City Police Band.

In 1992 the band became known as West Midlands Police Brass Band and plays at social events around the city and in the West Midlands and at charity events.



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New plan to tackle stress

A national template for a new nine-point stress plan which aims to help forces better prioritise officer wellbeing has been launched by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

Health and safety representatives from all 43 branches of the Police Federation have been presented with the template and it has also been shared with the Scottish Police Federation, the Police Federation of Northern Ireland, the British Transport Police, the Civic Nuclear Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence.

Jason Kwee, national health and safety lead for the Federation, has been instrumental in pulling together the plan, which was presented at the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) health and safety working group and accepted in principle.

Jason said: "As a forum, we looked at what was in place to tackle stress in the workplace. We were only able to identify one risk-based process to identify and reduce stress which was the HSE management standards (SMS).

"Through consultations and surveys that were undertaken, we quickly identified that there were different levels of implementations across forces, some had real successes and other force policies hadn't been updated for years.

"With the additional evidence from the national PFEW demand, capacity and welfare survey, we were able to back up what we already knew - there was not enough being done to support the welfare and mental health of our officers."

He added: "We are asking all our health



Jason Kwee, national health and safety lead.

and safety leaders to have discussions with their respective chairs and secretaries, and of course chief officers, as to how this may support their local wellbeing programme."

With stress being one of the biggest reasons for absence, there is growing momentum to tackle the issue with initiatives from many stakeholders, including the NPCC, the College of Policing (Oscar Kilo project), and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

“ We are asking all our health and safety leaders to have discussions with their respective chairs and secretaries, and of course chief officers, as to how this may support their local wellbeing programme. ”

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Appearance standards: College issues national guidance

New national guidance on appearance standards have been put in place prompted by forces having differing stances on officers with tattoos.

The new guidance was prompted after the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) called for national standardisation of appearance standards, rather than local interpretation, which meant some forces had automatic bans on tattoos while others had different policies.

The new guidance has been developed by the College of Policing and accepted as best practice and provides both police officers and staff with clear direction on their appearance, so they present a professional image while also being allowed some self-expression.

It states: "Independent research conducted by Ipsos Mori on behalf of the Police Federation of England and Wales in 2016 found that members of the public are largely accepting of police officers and staff with visible tattoos. Visible tattoos are unacceptable if they could reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory or offensive and/or indicate attitudes or views inconsistent with the College of Policing's Code of Ethics and the Standards of Professional Behaviour.

"Careful consideration will be given by the organisation to any tattoo on the neck, face or hands in deciding if it is acceptable. This includes considering the size, nature and prominence of the tattoo. Keep this guidance in mind when deciding whether to have such a tattoo."

The new guidance also covers sunglasses, telling officers and staff to "Remove your sunglasses when talking to a member of the public and inside a building unless it is necessary to continue wearing

them for medical reasons or because they are prescription sunglasses."

It also covers hair, glasses, make-up and jewellery.

Last year, hundreds of officers took part in a PFEW survey about the inconsistent approach to tattoos across all forces. The wider issue of variable dress codes was then taken up by Leicestershire Chief Constable Simon Cole through the College's Professional Committee, in partnership with police staff associations and UNISON.

Former PFEW interim national board member, Chief Inspector Victoria Martin, who led on the work, said: "We need to reflect the communities we serve and the fact that we are a modern police service. We had a lot of passionate feedback from our members on this issue, demonstrating that some force dress policies are very out-dated, so we set about gathering the evidence we needed to push for a new national standard.

"One of the biggest issues we faced is the way some forces view officers and potential new recruits with tattoos - some forces will not accept a person with a tattoo that cannot be covered by uniform.

"This approach is significantly restricting the pool of potential talent, as one in five 18 to 29-year-olds has a tattoo. In 30 to 39-year-olds it's one in four, while according to our survey 48 per cent of officers have a tattoo. Just as important is the fact that it shouldn't be mandatory for officers with tattoos to wear long-sleeved tops, particularly during the summer when they have to wear a lot of kit. It is a health and safety issue."

She added: "All force policy should be based on national guidance - to step away from that guidance, there must be more justification than simple intolerance."

National chair announces plans to resign

Steve White.



National Police Federation chair Steve White has announced his intention to resign at the end of this year.

The announcement came as it appeared a vote of no confidence in his leadership was about to be tabled.

He said: "I have been proud to lead the organisation during a period of significant change but feel it is time for the next stage of our continuing reform to progress under new leadership.

"I am proud of what we have been able to achieve for the benefit of those that are at the heart of everything we do, our members. This includes new financial governance, improved engagement with Government and the strengthening of relationships with stakeholders including the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), College of Policing and HMIC who now use our evidence base to help guide national policies and processes."

The chair has led the Police Federation since May 2014 when he and fellow candidate Will Riches received an equal number of votes and the ultimate decision was made on the toss of a coin. He will step down before the end of the year with members of the Interim National Board (INB) electing a successor from their midst in November.

This will mean that one of the favourites to take over as chair will not be allowed to be considered. John Apter, currently chair at Hampshire Police Federation and widely respected for his work on officer assaults, is not a member of the INB and therefore cannot stand for election.

Updated Police Federation regulations, which will allow the final stages of the Federation's reform agenda to go ahead and change election procedures, will be laid before Parliament on 31 December.

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Which comes first a divorce or a financial settlement?

By Nicola McInnes, head of family law, Gorvins Solicitors



A question which often arises in divorce cases is whether a divorce can be finalised by pronouncement of decree absolute before a financial settlement has been reached?

Once the decree nisi in the divorce has been pronounced by the court, the Petitioner can apply for the decree absolute any time after six weeks have elapsed. The Petitioner is the party who brought the divorce proceedings. Once the decree absolute is pronounced, the marriage is dissolved. Frequently, the Petitioner will be advised to defer applying for decree absolute until a financial settlement has been reached because certain rights are lost on divorce. However, if the Petitioner wants to apply for decree absolute at the earliest opportunity notwithstanding this, they can do so

regardless of whether a financial settlement has been reached. This is done by the simple process of sending an application in writing to the court. No court attendance is required.

However, if the other party to the divorce (the Respondent) wishes to apply for the decree absolute because the Petitioner has not done so, they can do so after three months from the date when the Petitioner could first have applied. However, by contrast, such application is not a simple paper exercise and, if opposed, will involve a contested court hearing.

The general rule is the Court will grant the decree absolute on the Respondent's application unless the Petitioner can show 'special circumstances' not to do so yet. While this is down to the discretion of the Judge, generally this will be weighted in favour of pronouncing the absolute. But this is not so in every case, and in a recent reported case, the Court ruled against pronouncing the decree absolute on the Respondent's application because of the

Petitioner's allegations of serious financial non-disclosure which would need to be considered by the Court in due course. In those circumstances, the decree absolute was refused and the Respondent had to pay the Petitioner's legal costs.

Therefore while a decree absolute can be pronounced before a financial settlement is reached, there may be reasons why this is not advisable depending on the circumstances of the case, and in those cases where there is a contested hearing about the timing of the decree absolute the Court has the ultimate discretion to grant or refuse this.

These are matters, which Nicola McInnes of Gorvins can advise on. If you need advice in relation to divorce or relationship breakdown, please contact Nicola McInnes at Gorvins solicitors. Clinics are held twice a month at Guardians House to provide initial free advice on family law. If more convenient she can be contacted by phone on **0161 930 5278** or by email to **police-divorce@gorvins.com**



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Police pensions on divorce or dissolution

By **Chris Fairhurst**,
principal lawyer in family
law at Slater and Gordon



Police pensions are often the most valuable asset on divorce and yet, due to their complexity, a great deal of confusion surrounds them. Officers who do not seek guidance from an expert often find themselves provided with incorrect and often misleading advice from well-meaning others.

Following a separation it is important to get advice about the financial arrangements surrounding your pension including how the courts are likely to deal with the pension as part of any overall financial settlement, as there are various options available including Pension Sharing Orders or offsetting against other assets, such as savings or equity in a family property.

In complicated divorce cases, particularly those where the pension is already in payment due to retirement or ill

health, it is not uncommon for it to be necessary to seek advice from a pension actuary who provides a report about the different pension needs and options within the court process.

The conclusions reached in such reports may prove critical in informing the court about how issues in relation to pensions held by both parties should be resolved. It is very important you have a lawyer who is confident from the outset, ensuring the correct questions are asked and to vigorously challenge any conclusion, making certain your interests are properly protected.

Because of the various options available for the division of pension assets upon divorce or dissolution, there are many myths surrounding them. For example, the recipient of a Pension Sharing Order in relation to a police pension does not receive an immediate lump sum equivalent to the "share" and will have to wait until their 60th birthday to realise any benefits.

Further, if the person having their pension deducted has already retired, they will experience an immediate deduction in

any income they are already receiving, even if the recipient might not receive theirs for a number of years because they are not yet 60.

When deciding how to deal with your pension, and other matrimonial assets, the Family Court will consider a number of different criteria and it may be that a Pension Sharing Order may not be the best outcome based on the length of your marriage, the value of your pension, your length of service and the value of the other matrimonial assets.

For example, if a marriage is short, a court might prefer to "offset" any interest in pension funds generated during the marriage by way of a smaller lump sum. No two situations are the same and you should have a lawyer who understands these complexities and how the different circumstances might affect the outcome.

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

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