

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

August/September 2017

Bravest of the brave

See Pages 7 - 9



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Welcome

Welcome to the August/September 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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Cover caption: Our brave officers PCs Ryan Patel (left) and James Neilson take the opportunity to have their photo taken outside No 10 ahead of a Downing Street reception hosted by Prime Minister Theresa May. Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.

Time to act on officer pay



By **Tom Cuddeford**, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation

In the run-up to the General Election, police funding became the subject of many debates sadly, in part at least, due to the terrorist attacks of the previous months.

There seemed to be a realisation that the budget cuts had led to a reduction in officer numbers that made it difficult – if not impossible – for the police service to cope with all the demands made on it.

This is, of course, something we, and everyone else actually working within policing, have been saying for some time so it was quite satisfying to finally hear what

the politicians had to say on the subject.

But one comment from Prime Minister Theresa May stood out for me. While it was not about policing, I think it was quite telling.

In a TV debate, Theresa May was challenged by a nurse who said that her pay slip from 2009 reflected exactly what she earns today and questioned how that could be fair.

Mrs May replied: "There isn't a magic money tree that we can shake that suddenly provides for everything that people want."

Before I give my own views on this comment, I would just like to point out that a report by Government pay advisers has revealed that police officers' average wages have fallen by £2 per hour as a result of the public sector salary freezes. The report, comparing pay in 2010 and then in 2015, showed that at the top end of the scale doctors' pay had fallen by £8 per hour, while teachers saw a £3 per hour drop, prison officers a £1 per hour fall and nurses had in fact stayed the same. The report was released amid growing calls for the Government to lift its one per cent cap on public sector pay rises.

It was commissioned by the Office of Manpower Economics which offers support to the various independent bodies making recommendations on public sector pay to the Government.

So back to that magic money tree...

In the political turmoil following the General Election, we saw a shocked and bruised Mrs May struggling to prop up her minority Government. Very early on, it became clear that the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) would be the key to the

Conservatives clinging to power.

But the negotiations were not, and were never going to be, just verbal. Money talks. And it would appear in the right amounts, it can talk very loudly indeed.

Mrs May found that there was a magic money tree; she gave it a good shake and out fell the £1 billion investment needed to secure the DUP's support for the Government.

So is there a magic money tree after all?

Well, it would appear that there is if it's something the Government wants or needs.

The first duty of any Government has to be the protection and security of its citizens so I believe Mrs May – and indeed the Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond – need to start looking at their priorities.

To be fair, some members of the Cabinet have called for the current one per cent cap on public sector pay rises to be lifted. Environment secretary Michael Gove, returned to the fold in the post-election re-shuffle, was just one minister to suggest the Government could make this move and his former ally Boris Johnson has said he 'strongly believed' the cap can now be lifted.

Unfortunately, for Mr Gove and Mr Johnson – and far more importantly for all public sector workers – it does not appear that the Chancellor agrees.

To compound our frustration, just days before MPs started their summer recess – which incidentally runs from 20 July to 5 September – the Government said it had decided to delay making an announcement on officers' pay award for the coming year until September.

This is just not acceptable and will cause

Photo courtesy Express & Star

months of uncertainty for officers at a time when they are already run ragged at work and, in some cases, struggling financially as a result of the cuts.

While any pay increase will be backdated from the time of the announcement to 1 September the date of our annual pay rise (if we get one), it could be months before we actually see any increase in our pay since it takes the Force some time to update all its systems.

Apart from anything else though, this delay does nothing to make officers feel valued and appreciated.

Maybe I am being unfair, maybe this delay is because the Chancellor needs more time to work out how the Government could afford pay awards of above one per cent.

We appreciate that in reality there is no magic money tree, but there are also no magic police officers who can keep making ends meet despite the increased cost of living and their decreased real term wages. Police officers seem to be expected to perform all sorts of tricks as they try to provide the same service with fewer resources but maybe it's time the Government conjured up some solutions too?

As part of the pay review process, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) submitted its rationale for a 2.8 per cent pay rise to the Police Remuneration Review Board (PRRB) ahead of its deadline. For its part, the PRRB also sent its recommendations to the Government on schedule.

For the review process now to be delayed by the Government shows disrespect to PFEW and the PRRB but also all police officers; police officers such as our own PCs Ryan Patel and James Neilson who put their lives on the line to protect their communities and have just won a regional Police Bravery Award.

With or without that magic money tree now is the time for the Government to show its support and respect for policing and police officers.

We have heard much praise for the brave actions of police officers during the recent atrocities but what we really need now is for the Government to listen to our reasoned, and evidenced, arguments for a better pay deal.

IN NUMBERS:

120,000

The number of members the Police Federation has written to as part of its campaign for better protection for police drivers

2,000

The number of police officers lost in the West Midlands since 2010

924

The number of officers in England and Wales lost in the last year

365

The number of days a year the Welfare Support Programme operates

71

The number of officers nominated for this year's national Police Bravery Awards

23

The percentage increase in gun crime, in the year to 31 March 2017

20

The percentage increase in possession of weapons, in the year to 31 March 2017

10

The percentage rise in recorded crime

1

The current percentage cap on public sector pay rises

'We can't cope'

Police officers are getting to the point where they cannot cope with what they are expected to deal with, according to an experienced West Midlands DI.

Warren Hines, who works on a Force murder team, says the cuts to policing budgets mean there are just not enough officers to go around. His own team is now half the size it was in 2012 and yet it was dealing with more murder cases.

Sickness is 'rife' around the Force and more and more officers are suffering mental health issues due to the stress they face.

"I think it is starting to dawn on people that we can't continue like this," said Warren, who has 20 years' service, "Everyone knows when they join the police that they are going to be tested; it's part and parcel of being a police officer but it's getting to the stage, with the pressures we are facing due to reduced numbers and increased demand, where people just can't cope."

In an interview with Sky News, he explained: "We've got examples of police officers who have been conveyed to hospital from work because they've had a meltdown."

"I'm aware of incidents where sergeants in our public protection units are allocating work on the basis of who is the least tearful that morning when they get to work."

He continued: "In the last 15 months alone, around 80 officers in the West Midlands Force have been referred to the Welfare Support Programme. Those are people who are undergoing a significant mental health crisis."

"They're experiencing suicidal thoughts and tendencies and they are at risk of doing something really serious to hurt themselves, and this is only as a result of the pressures that they are being put under."

But it's not just the falling number of

officers and increased pressure on officers that concerns him, he says the Force is starting to feel the effects of a dwindling neighbourhood policing presence, something that he blames for a lack of street level intelligence which, in turn, is having an effect on counter terrorism work.

Warren said: "I have noticed on my investigations that our intelligence starts to dry up towards the end of 2013; this is a direct consequence of the lack of proactive policing, not just by neighbourhood officers."

"Our response teams are overwhelmed and, as they are continually bounced from job to job, they don't have the time to turn people over, target the people we know are persistent criminals and generate the intelligence that is the lifeblood of policing."

"Criminals are committing offences with impunity and seriously damaging the very fabric of society by causing real and lasting harm in the communities we police."

He continued: "We need officers in our communities who know what's going on and can pass on intelligence but we also need officers in our communities to increase public confidence in the police," he explained.

Warren is also concerned that the pressure to match resource and demand is pulling officers away from youth diversion programmes.

"We are just not getting the time to help turn these young people around," he said, adding that this crime prevention work could be critical and has always been an absolutely vital part of what the Force does.

But ultimately, Warren feels that further denigration of the police service is going to have an impact on the general public as a whole.

"We are all that comes between the

public and everything that's wrong in society," he argued.

While broadly critical of police chiefs who don't want to rock the boat, he praises Chief Constable Dave Thompson for speaking out on his concerns about police funding.

"Mr Thompson has innovated and reorganised continually, I just do not know what else he can do with the current financing arrangements," said Warren.

But in some cases it's too little, too late. Two detectives on Force CID who he describes as among the best he has ever worked with, have already quit the service, in the last month.

"These are officers with between 15 and 20 years' service who are leaving; people with a future in policing, the sort of people we desperately need in WMP. A lot of what policing is can't be learned from a book, we need experienced committed people to deliver any kind of service to the public," Warren said.

Since speaking out, Warren says he has received many 'quite humbling' comments from colleagues.

"I have been congratulated for speaking out but I really should not have had to. Policing needs the right leaders, the right funding and the right people on the ground but currently the service is being destroyed and I am concerned that we have already passed the point of no return," he concluded.

"I hoped I would eventually leave policing in a better shape than I found it, instead I believe I am presiding over the death throes of what was once great, the envy of the world, which is something politicians and senior leaders in policing who have kept quiet should hang their heads in shame over."

The Welfare Support Programme (WSP) has been operating for almost two years and has assisted more than 500 officers. It offers round the clock support to officers and their families when they need it most.

It is able to access the right kind of help for officers who are considered vulnerable for any reason, which could include involvement in death or serious injury incidents, suspension from duty or potentially as a result of medical or personal reasons.

Richie Jones, one of the Federation's leads on the WSP scheme, said: "There has been recognition that there are gaps in areas of support that some forces are able to offer police officers and their families in their times of need."

"This programme is a means to filling the gaps and most importantly to offer a 24-hour service for those officers on the programme to access suitably trained staff 365 days a year."

Officers access the scheme via a referral from their local Federation.



Officers can access WSP when they are:

- Involved in death or serious injury investigation
- Served gross misconduct papers
- Suspended from duty, or
- When the Federation believes officer would benefit from having access to the programme.

In addition, the WSP is also available for family members of officers entered onto the programme and including immediate family members, partners, any dependants of the officer and any person living in the same household with the officer.

The programme is a joint initiative of the Police Firearms Officers' Association (PFOA) and the Police Federation of England and Wales.

The PFOA was launched in 2009 and since then more than 7,000 firearms officers from all over the UK and Channel Islands have joined. Membership costs just £4 a month

For more information call **01354 697890**, email **info@pfoa.co.uk** or go to **www.pfoa.co.uk**



Brave officers win regional award



Top picture:

Pictured with the award are (left to right) Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, Chief Constable Dave Thompson, PCs James Neilson and Ryan Patel and Ryan's parents Asha and Kante.

Bottom picture:

Home Secretary Amber Rudd talks to nominees as Steve White, chair of the Police Federation, looks on.

National Police Bravery Awards



Ryan and James with Police Federation of England and Wales vice chair Calum Macleod in the garden at Downing Street.

Drinking Pimm's in the Prime Minister's back garden was not the only thing a West Midlands PC took in his stride as he became a regional winner at the annual national Police Bravery Awards.

PC Ryan Patel and PC James Neilson won one of eight regional awards during the ceremony at London's Dorchester Hotel.

The officers thwarted an armed robbery and PC Patel chased one of the men into a housing estate, where he gathered intelligence which led to the recovery of vital evidence.

Their nomination and eventual win in the Federation's Region 3 – which also includes the Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia forces - led to a memorable day in London for the officers and Ryan's proud parents.

"The whole day was great. Standing outside and then going into No 10 Downing Street was something I will always remember," said Ryan.

"My Dad loves politics so he wanted to go to No 10 and couldn't pass up the opportunity to go to Downing Street and meet the Prime Minister who said 'hello' and shook hands with him and my Mum.

"Mingling with all of the nominees and hearing their stories while enjoying a glass of Pimm's in the PM's back garden was great."

But despite relaxing in one of the world's most famous residencies, PC Patel said the emotions of the evening ceremony that followed was something that will stay with him for a long time.

"The highlight of the day was definitely winning the regional award. It was a special moment to receive the award on stage in front of everyone, including my parents and alongside James, who is a good friend of mine," he said, "Although my Walsall accent wasn't made for speaking on stage!

"It was a fantastic night, the venue was amazing and the tributes to PC Keith Palmer were very touching.

"Congratulations too to the Northumbria officers for winning the national award. It was amazing to be in the company of so many officers who have done such outstanding things in the line of duty.

"James and myself were just doing our job on the day it happened and it all happened too quickly to think of being brave. But it was one of those situations where you just do whatever comes to you at the time and then think about it later. I'd definitely do the same if it happened again."



Kante and Ashe Patel enjoying the Downing Street reception.



Prime Minister Theresa May talks to nominees.

'I feel honoured and humbled'

A West Midlands officer who admitted he could have been 'shot and killed' after tackling a gunman said he was 'honoured and humbled' to be a regional winner at the annual Police Bravery Awards.

PC James Neilson was with PC Ryan Patel when they thwarted an armed robbery in Birmingham on night-time patrol on 20 August 2016.

During their attempted escape, one of the men struggled with PC Neilson and, at one point during their scuffle, a gun was pointed barrel-first into the officer's chest before the assailant eventually ran away.

PC Neilson said he was shocked to be both nominated and win at the awards ceremony in London which was attended by HRH The Countess of Wessex, the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary.

"I don't feel like I deserve it at all as I was just doing my job. I do feel very honoured and humbled," he said, "I was just doing what any other officer would have done.

"Hindsight is a wonderful thing and I have thought about the incident many times since. You never know if that gun will be fake or real.

"We didn't have time to be scared. It was just a question of dealing with stuff. But afterwards I thought that we could have been shot and killed – but, at the time, you just have to get on with it."

PC Neilson received his regional award on stage with his colleague PC Patel after an earlier reception at 10 Downing Street. It was there he spoke with the Prime Minister, Theresa May, though not in the manner he might have been hoping for!

"I never thought I would ever go into 10 Downing Street in my life so that was very surreal and exciting," he said.

"I did talk to the PM, however. In the group picture, I had to crouch down as there weren't enough chairs for us all. As I knelt down, I made an audible pain noise because I have a bad back.

"The PM laughed and said: 'That's not a good noise from a serving police officer'. I turned and just said: 'Bad back, ma'am' and she just laughed.

"The evening ceremony was brilliant and I had a lot of fun talking to the Chief and other nominees. It was a very humbling experience.

"Winning the award was the highlight of the day and it was also great to meet MP Tobias Ellwood after he had done so much to try to help PC Keith Palmer after the Westminster attacks."

Federation issues reminder to police drivers

Police officers responding to emergency calls or engaging in pursuits are being warned they could be prosecuted for driving offences just like any other motorist.

The Police Federation of England and Wales has written to all of its members to remind them that "there are no legal exemptions from the offences of careless or dangerous driving" for officers responding to calls for help from the public.

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, West Midlands Police Federation's deputy secretary Tim Rogers, who is also the national Federation's response driving lead, said the current law was unsatisfactory and unworkable leaving officers risking their liberty and livelihood.

The letter, which has been sent to more than 120,000 Federation members across

England and Wales, and is published on Page 11, is intended to correct the assumption, also held by many members of the public, that police officers can break traffic rules.

The letter states: "Legal advice has recently highlighted that police response and pursuit drives are, in most circumstances, highly likely to fall within the definitions of careless and or dangerous driving.

"There are no exemptions to the offences of careless or dangerous driving to permit emergency driving."

It continues: "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."

Officers are being advised that they should:

- Drive in a way which is lawful and does not contravene the laws of dangerous or careless driving
- Not undertake any manoeuvre which may well fall outside the standard of the careful and competent non-police driver.



Tim Rogers.

The Federation has been campaigning for a change in the law for the past seven years. West Mercia's Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, who is roads policing lead at the National Police Chiefs' Council, signalled at conference, in May, that he would work closely with the Federation on the issue.



To whom it may concern

Police officers have a sworn duty to uphold the law and they must comply with that duty.

They must also act in a way which is lawful.

Legal advice has recently highlighted that police response and pursuit drives are, in most circumstances, highly likely to fall within the definitions of careless and or dangerous driving.

There are no exemptions to the offences of careless or dangerous driving to permit emergency driving.

This matter has been considered by Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, NPCC lead for Roads Policing. He accepts that – at least as far as pursuits are concerned, drives are highly likely to fall outside the law as it is currently drafted.

The IPCC has recently directed a force to bring proceedings against an officer for Gross Misconduct for careless driving. Gross Misconduct is conduct that would justify dismissal.

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. Officers are required by law to drive to the standard of the careful and competent driver. Not the careful and competent police driver, the careful and competent (non-police) driver. This is the standard police drivers will be held to. There are no legal exemptions from the offences of careless or dangerous driving. Any such drives are therefore likely to be unlawful, placing the driver at risk of prosecution and proceedings for gross misconduct.

PFEW have raised this matter with MPs Brandon Lewis, Jeremy Wright, Jake Berry, Jack Dromey, Daniel Zeichner, Mike Penning, Amber Rudd, Dianne Abbot, NPCC leads and most recently Nick Hurd new minister for Policing.

To date the difficulties remain with our proposed draft for legislative change not yet having been progressed to a point where officers are appropriately protected.

In light of this, the advice of the PFEW is as follows:

- Officers have a sworn duty and must uphold that duty.
- Officers should drive in a way which is lawful and does not contravene the laws of dangerous or careless driving.
- Officers are advised not to undertake any manoeuvre which may well fall outside the standard of the careful and competent non police driver

It is hoped that this correspondence will reduce police related accidents and significantly reduce proceeding against officers for motoring offences and or Gross Misconduct hearings.

Tim Rogers
PFEW Pursuits Lead
Interim National Board
Police Federation of England and Wales

“ Officers are required by law to drive to the standard of the careful and competent driver. Not the careful and competent police driver, the careful and competent (non-police) driver. This is the standard police drivers will be held to. There are no legal exemptions from the offences of careless or dangerous driving. Any such drives are therefore likely to be unlawful, placing the driver at risk of prosecution and proceedings for gross misconduct. ”

Cuts Have Consequences

A video which highlights the consequences of cuts to policing will be launched by West Midlands Police Federation in September when Parliament returns from the summer recess.

It will highlight the stark reality the Force has faced since austerity took a grip in 2010 and will be unveiled in front of West Midlands MPs at an event to be arranged in the coming weeks.

The short Cuts Have Consequences video will deliver hard facts – such as how the Force has lost more than 2,000 officers due to the cuts – leaving it with fewer officers than in 1974 when it was first established.

Shots of closed police stations and custody suites will be shown alongside a bustling city centre with no officers in sight, a far cry from life before the cuts.

And startling statistics bring home just how stretched the Force is. Last year, more than 170,000 calls to West Midlands Police, via 101, went unanswered and 9,000 of its 999 calls were abandoned after 10 seconds.

And the Force has had more cash cut than anywhere else - with £130 million taken from the policing budget, the highest proportion in the country.

The Cuts Have Consequences campaign aims to highlight the impact of cuts being imposed on West Midlands Police and, in turn, how this will affect the communities it serves.

The number of police officers in the West Midlands has been cut by 1,471 since 2010 -
As the Government cut Force budgets by £146 million.

“Things aren't right! The public pay for policing - but they are being short changed.”
Ian Edwards, chairman,
West Midlands Police Federation

Some of the consequences for West Midlands Police:

- 17% reduction in police officer posts - compared with national average of 11%
- The Force plans to cut officer numbers by a further 546 by 2016-17
- 27 of 41 West Midlands Police front desks will have closed by the end of the year

Find out more
<http://westmidspolfed.com/cuts-have-consequences>

A poster from the Federation's first Cuts Have Consequences campaign in 2015.

'Protect The Protectors' Bill wins MPs' support



Holly Lynch.

A bill calling for tougher sentences for those who assault police officers and other emergency service workers won cross-party support in the House of Commons just days before Parliament began its summer recess in mid-July.

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Private Members' Bill, presented by Chris Bryant, the MP for Rhonda, will now go forward for a second reading on 20 October.

"This is welcome news," says Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, "We are all too aware that assaults on police officers and other emergency staff are becoming more and more commonplace with the sentences handed down to offenders sometimes not seeming to fit the crime.

"This bill, should it finally make it through to law, will ensure that the police and other emergency personnel have better protection. Tougher sentences should suitably punish those responsible for these attacks and act as a deterrent.

"It also calls for compulsory health testing of suspects who may present a health risk which will be a great step forward

since as the law currently stands we have officers who, along with their families, face months of anguish as they wait to find out if they have contracted a disease after being assaulted or spat at."

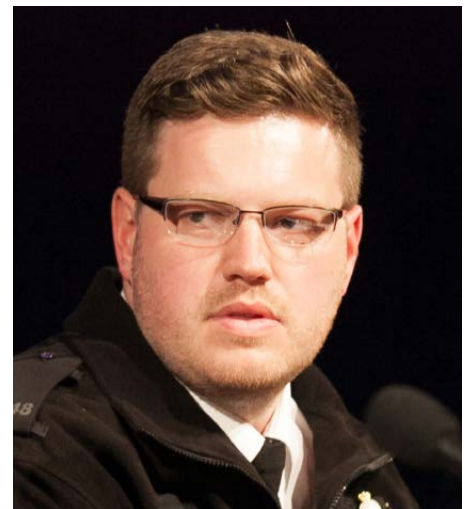
The bill incorporates many of the provisions that the Police Federation and partner organisations have been calling for as part of its Protect The Protectors campaign.

It will:

- Introduce new offences including wounding or assault when perpetrated against an emergency worker in the performance of their duties
- Compel those suspected of assault – including spitting - who may pose a health risk to undergo blood tests
- Make it an offence to refuse to undergo such tests, and
- Lay down tough sentences for those convicted of these new offences.

Mr Bryant explained: "It is so important that we protect the protectors. One of the really shocking injustices is that we have is so many assaults on police officers, and for that matter other emergency workers, in the last few years, and sentences that have been handed down have been wholly inadequate to deal with the problem."

Holly Lynch, the Halifax MP who previously introduced a 10 Minute Rule Bill calling for stronger deterrents for those who



West Midlands PC Mike Bruce, who was spat at while on duty, and talked about the effect it had on him and his family at the Police Federation conference earlier this year.

assault emergency services, said she was delighted that the issue is going forward as a Private Members' Bill.

She said: "The work of our emergency services has never been on the agenda quite so much as at the moment. Everybody really sees, really appreciates, the work they do that's so important to keeping [the public] safe. It's our job as legislators to make sure that we are keeping them safe. I've been so concerned that's not the case as it stands in law."

“ This bill, should it finally make it through to law, will ensure that the police and other emergency personnel have better protection. Tougher sentences should suitably punish those responsible for these attacks and act as a deterrent. ”

Officer numbers fall to lowest level for 32 years

Police forces in England and Wales lost a further 924 officers in the last 12 months.

Officer numbers fell from 124,066 at the end of March 2016 to 123,142 at the end of March 2017, a decrease of 0.7 per cent and the lowest figure since 1985, according to the Home Office Police Workforce, England and Wales 31 March 2017 statistic bulletin published on 20 July 2017.

In the same period, the West Midlands saw its numbers reduce by 188 officers (2.7 per cent) to a total of 6,756. This represented the highest percentage decrease in the West Midlands region which also includes Warwickshire, which maintained its numbers, West Mercia (down 1.1 per cent) and Staffordshire (down 2.1 per cent).

"Each officer we lose is one less person we have to serve and protect the people of the West Midlands," says Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, "It is quite shocking to think that we have in fact lost almost 200 officers in the last year.

"Sadly, in that time we have seen no corresponding decline in demand and I would say the reverse is true. As we try to respond to the increased threat of terrorism, emerging crimes such as cyber-crime, increased violent crime and no let-up with so called 'traditional crimes' such as burglary, we are finding our officers are stretched to the limit.

"This has an impact on the service we can provide to our communities but also has an effect on officers' mental wellbeing and

we are seeing more and more of our colleagues suffering mental health issues due to the stresses and strains of their role.

"It is time the Government started to re-invest in policing so that forces can restore officer numbers and fulfil their duty to protect communities by fighting and preventing crime, keeping order and protecting the vulnerable."

Across the country, the Force losing the highest percentage of officers was

Nottinghamshire where there was a reduction of 136 officers equating to a drop of 6.9 per cent.

But there were some forces that saw a small increase in numbers. The highest increase was seen in West Yorkshire (up by 219 or 4.9 per cent from 4,501 to 4,720). Gwent was closely behind with an increase of 4.5 per cent (up by 51 officers from 1,127 to 1,178).

“It is time the Government started to re-invest in policing so that forces can restore officer numbers and fulfil their duty to protect communities by fighting and preventing crime, keeping order and protecting the vulnerable.”

Police force area, English regions and Wales	As at: Mar-16	Sep-16	Mar-17	Change in Mar-16 - Mar-17 Number
West Midlands	11,518	11,437	11,272	-246
Staffordshire	1,660	1,611	1,626	-34
Warwickshire	836	853	835	0
West Mercia	2,079	2,093	2,055	-24
West Midlands	6,944	6,880	6,756	-188

Headline figures:

Total officers down by 924 (124,066 to 123,142, -0.7 per cent)

Biggest proportion of these are front-line officers (106,411 to 105,571, -1 per cent, 840)

Neighbourhood police officers fell by 1.7 per cent to 56,430

A 9 per cent rise in murders (excluding the victims of the Hillsborough tragedy)

Total workforce including police staff and PCSOs fell from 200,921 to 198,684 (-1 per cent, 2,237)

Chief calls for re-investment in policing



Police workforce, as at 31 March 2017, England and Wales

Worker type	2016	2017	Percentage change (%)
Police officers	124,066	123,142	-0.7
Police staff	61,668	61,063	-1.0
PCSOs	11,043	10,213	-7.5
Designated officers	4,13	4,255	3.0
Special Constables	15,996	13,503	-15.6

12 months Mar-17	%	Change in 6 months Sep-16 - Mar-17	Number	%
-2.1		-165		-1.4
-2.1		14		0.9
0.0		-18		-2.1
-1.1		-38		-1.8
-2.7		-124		-1.8



The Chief Constable is calling for a re-investment in policing, admitting that protecting the region's communities from terrorism was putting officers – and their families – under a huge strain.

Dave Thompson also welcomed the fact that after the terrorist atrocities in London and Manchester policing became a serious political issue.

"However a wider issue, which seems obvious to us all in policing, is that people grasped the vital role of policing in national security and are gravely concerned about cuts to policing in a way we have not seen so far," Mr Thompson wrote in a blog.

"In my view Government has not accepted this and continues to see policing as an area where selected funding for activities like counter terrorism policing will be enough.

"Policing has been funded less favourably than the security and intelligence services and this does not match the new threats we face. The public now feel this is not sensible or defensible in our new reality.

"It is time for the Government to address this and both as your Chief and the national lead for finance (for the National Police Chiefs' Council) I shall be pushing for action."

The Chief Constable praised officers for the way in which they had responded to the increased terror threat.

He wrote: "Once again you have all stepped up to offer the protection the public have needed and been embraced by the public. You have also kept normal business going. This is a huge strain and do not think that I am not aware of the impact on you and your families. This is also a sustained and determined threat that is not going away anytime soon. We are and must remain in a heightened state of readiness."

But he admits that reduced numbers were having an effect on policing capability. Mr Thompson points out that the Force has fewer officers than it did in 1974 and that only by calling on £18 million in reserves can it sustain current numbers. He also admits the Force would struggle to deal with an event such as the 2011 riots again.

He has written an article for the National Police Chiefs' Council which explains what



Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

Chief constables need to tackle the threats they face.

He writes: "If we are to sustain the protection citizens want and need, police leaders need to continue to reform, look hard at what needs to be done differently, and be bold and innovative in rising to the challenge. But we also need to work constructively with the new Government on what is needed from police funding to tackle the threats we face."

He sets out three key areas for consideration:

- The funding forces receive needs to be stabilised with real terms protection for policing as a whole
- The money forces have can be spent more effectively with chiefs and PCCs working together to change the way forces deliver forensics, armed policing, surveillance and major investigations.
- Targeted increases in Government spending to help forces tackle the threats faced – cyber-crime, counter terrorism and enhanced protection for officers.

He concludes: "The attacks in London and Manchester show we have a police service whose officers have shown incredible bravery defending the public.

"In the past few weeks, people have demonstrated a huge affection for the work of policing, recognising our officers are unquestionably the front-line of our nation's security.

"It is time for police leaders to work with our new Government and make the case for realistic investments in our service at this critical time."

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Record annual rise in crime

Recorded crime has increased by 10 per cent in the last year, the record largest annual increase.

And alarmingly recorded knife crime is up 20 per cent, the highest number in seven years, alongside a 23 per cent increase in gun crime and an 18 per cent rise in violent crime – and these figures do not include the recent terror attacks.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) released its statistical bulletin on crime in England and Wales for the year ending 31 March 2017 on 20 July, and highlighted in the introduction to the report that the increase was likely to reflect a range of factors, which vary by crime type, including continuing improvements to recording processes and practices, expanded offence coverage and also genuine increases in some crime types.

But Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, believes it's impossible not to link this increase with the drop in officer numbers.

"On the same day that new Home Office figures show that we have the lowest officer numbers since 1985, the Office for National Statistics released its latest statistics bulletin on workforce statistics," says Tom.

"While it may just be a coincidence that these two reports landed on the same day, I don't think anyone could fail to link these two sets of figures.

"With fewer and fewer officers to go

around, we have fewer officers working in our communities, building intelligence, providing reassurance, helping prevent and fight crime, supporting the vulnerable and helping keep the peace.

"The Government may say that police forces can do more with less but the stark reality is that the only thing you get for less is less – reduced investment in policing brings a reduced level of policing activity."

Tom's views have been supported by David Wilson, professor of criminology at the Birmingham City University, who was quoted in The Times as saying: "We know police numbers are at their lowest for decades. The idea that there might not be consequences of falling police numbers was magical thinking by people in Government. We are now seeing the consequences in rising crime."

Steve White, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, has also pointed to a link between falling numbers and increased crime

He said: "What more of a wake-up call does the Government need? Officer numbers are dropping consistently every year yet our members are having to deal with not only more crimes, but the most unimaginable atrocities such as those in Westminster and Manchester and at London Bridge.

"Particularly worrying is the drop in front-line and neighbourhood officers when we all know that community policing is

Headline figures:

Nearly **5 million** offences

A **7 per cent increase** in theft (up 118,774 offences)

A **16 per cent increase** in robberies

An **18 per cent increase** in violence against the person (up 175,060 offences)

A **20 per cent increase** in knife crime (up 34,703 offences) - the highest number in seven years

A **23 per cent increase** in gun crime (up 6,375 offences)

Rises in 'traditional' crimes such as burglary (3 per cent), robbery (16 per cent) and criminal damage and arson (5 per cent)

A **14 per cent increase** in sexual offences crimes (up 14,982 offences) including a 15 per cent increase in rape

A **20 per cent increase** in possession of weapons

A **39 per cent increase** in public order offences (up 78,697 offences)

A **26 per cent increase** in murders (when you strip out 96 Hillsborough victims it is up nine per cent)

Fraud (3.4m) and computer misuse (1.8m) incidents also accounted for a **further 5.2 million incidents** – these are experimental statistics.

fundamental in tackling both traditional crimes like burglary (up by three per cent) and the terror threat."

Steve added: "Government needs to start to invest now in backing the police service so that it can carry out its primary responsibility, which is the safety and security of citizens. These figures demonstrate that this has not happened."

'I don't do this for praise or recognition'

A Birmingham bobby honoured in the Queen's Honours list says he is finding the personal attention he is getting since his award was announced quite 'uncomfortable' but is pleased that it has enabled him to raise the profile of the work he is doing for people within the LGBT+ community both inside and outside the police service.

PC Gary Stack (38) works in the Pan-Birmingham Partnerships Team based at Force Headquarters and has been awarded a British Empire Medal for services to policing and the community.

He has worked for West Midlands Police for 13 years, chairs the Force's LGBT Network and is also the Force lead for sexual orientation hate crime.



Gary explains: "It was a huge shock when I received the letter to say I had been honoured. It's lovely to be recognised in such a formal and high profile way but I don't do this stuff for praise and recognition.

"I do it because I am passionate about it and I see myself as being in a highly privileged position in society, holding the office of constable – and I really just want to use that as a platform to influence change and help others who maybe don't have much of a voice.

"From a policing perspective it is so important that the LGBT+ community trust that they can report crime to us and it will be taken seriously. A large part of my role lies in building that trust and in my time here I have seen things improve enormously both in terms of equality and legislatively.

"I am very proud to have received the medal but I know we can never be complacent and both my work and that of the Force will continue."

Gary contributed to the Force's former Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Forum and now sits at a Force level in an advisory capacity to the Force POD (People and Organisation Directorate) as well as providing community based personal safety training in his own time.

When he joined the Force he was a Special Constable for two years before becoming a regular officer, spending three years on 24/7

response policing and two years as a neighbourhood beat officer in Newtown before becoming a partnerships officer.

Gary has served on the LGBT Network committee for nine years and took over as vice-chair in September 2012. He was nominated for a National Diversity Award in 2012 and has been shortlisted for a West Midlands Police Diamond Award in the Driving Diversity category. Gary became the network chair in September 2014.

The network is currently re-branding to become the gender identity and sexual orientation group, in a bid to create a more universal appeal to its aims.

"Everyone has a gender identity and a sexual orientation so I'm hopeful that this will open us up a bit more to those colleagues who feel there's nothing for them. My team and I will support any police officer or member of police staff who needs it, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity," Gary says.

Much of Gary's work is undertaken in his own time as he tries to build trust in the police among LGBT+ communities.

"Every officer will have an acute awareness of the trust and confidence issues in policing among the black community, but many might be surprised to learn that the LGBT+ community also has a chequered past with policing," he explains.

"This year marks 50 years since homosexuality was decriminalised in the UK but gay men were being sent to prison still up

until the late '80s for what would now amount to consenting sex between two adults. However, the age of consent remained at 21 until 1994, where it went down to 18, eventually becoming equal to the heterosexual age of consent (16) in 2000.

"While enforcement relaxed a little in that respect when Tony Blair came to power, the LGBT+ community has, I believe, long been seen as a soft target for police especially during a time where forces were heavily targeted on arrests and detections.

"Sting operations in cruising grounds and public toilets were common place 12 to 15 years ago and many men who may otherwise never have committed a criminal act in their lives suddenly found themselves labelled as sex offenders because it was easy to arrest and detect."

Gary continues: "We've never gone out and purposefully targeted heterosexual people doing the same – we'd even refer to places well known as being frequented by straight couples getting frisky as 'lovers lanes'.

"Similarly, we've never gone out and targeted under age straight people for breaking age of consent laws... only the gay ones. So to say there is a lack of trust and an almost instinctive dislike of the police among certain elements of the LGBT+ community is an understatement."

Gary believes LGBT+ people are less likely to report crimes against them than their heterosexual counterparts because of a fear that they will receive less favourable

“From a policing perspective it is so important that the LGBT+ community trust that they can report crime to us and it will be taken seriously. A large part of my role lies in building that trust and in my time here I have seen things improve enormously both in terms of equality and legislatively.”

treatment from the police. He says there is also still a perception among many older LGBT+ people that the police service is institutionally homophobic and transphobic.

Outside the Force, part of his work is about educating the LGBT+ community that culturally the Force has changed as an organisation.

"I am putting myself out there as a visible example of how LGBT+ people make positive contributions to policing every day," Gary says.

Another element is focussed on educating LGBT+ people about taking responsibility for themselves, providing advice and guidance on how to avoid becoming a crime statistic, and how to stay within the law when using dating and lifestyle apps or making use of public sex environments.

For example, he has delivered a tailored input to an older LGBT+ people's community group – tailored because older LGBT+ people are less likely to have children and more likely to experience isolation and loneliness than their heterosexual counterparts, and are more likely to become victims of hate crime or experience vulnerable adult abuse.

But it's not just about educating the LGBT+ communities, Gary is also breaking down barriers within the Force.

Gary highlights the fact that there are still a few Force policies that indirectly discriminate against transgender colleagues. However, he is keen to point out that the Force is keen to improve.

"There is such a strong desire at the top of the organisation to get better, and I'm only the current guardian of this work – the legacy of which must be credited to earlier pioneers like retired PC Jim Field-Evans who chaired the rainbow network for 10 years," Gary explains.

"Since taking over, I've taken the group in a different direction, more outward facing and more engaged with the community but modern policing is experiencing so much competing demand from different priorities that it's not possible to do much of this stuff during duty time. Hence why the vast majority of the work I do is done outside of working hours.

"My work is about influencing and effecting change internally – working with colleagues to educate and inform about the unique challenges LGBT+ people face in their everyday lives – like coming out every time you meet someone new and the importance of being able to bring your whole self to work."

A cornerstone of this work has been the introduction of LGBT Allies, a scheme Gary decided to implement across the Force as chair of the LGBT Network. The scheme has seen a huge number of the Force's workforce sign up and wear a rainbow lanyard in place of their ordinary one. The objective is to

create safe and inclusive workplaces across the organisation.

As the Force does not officially have gay and lesbian liaison officers, Gary introduced this role under the staff network.

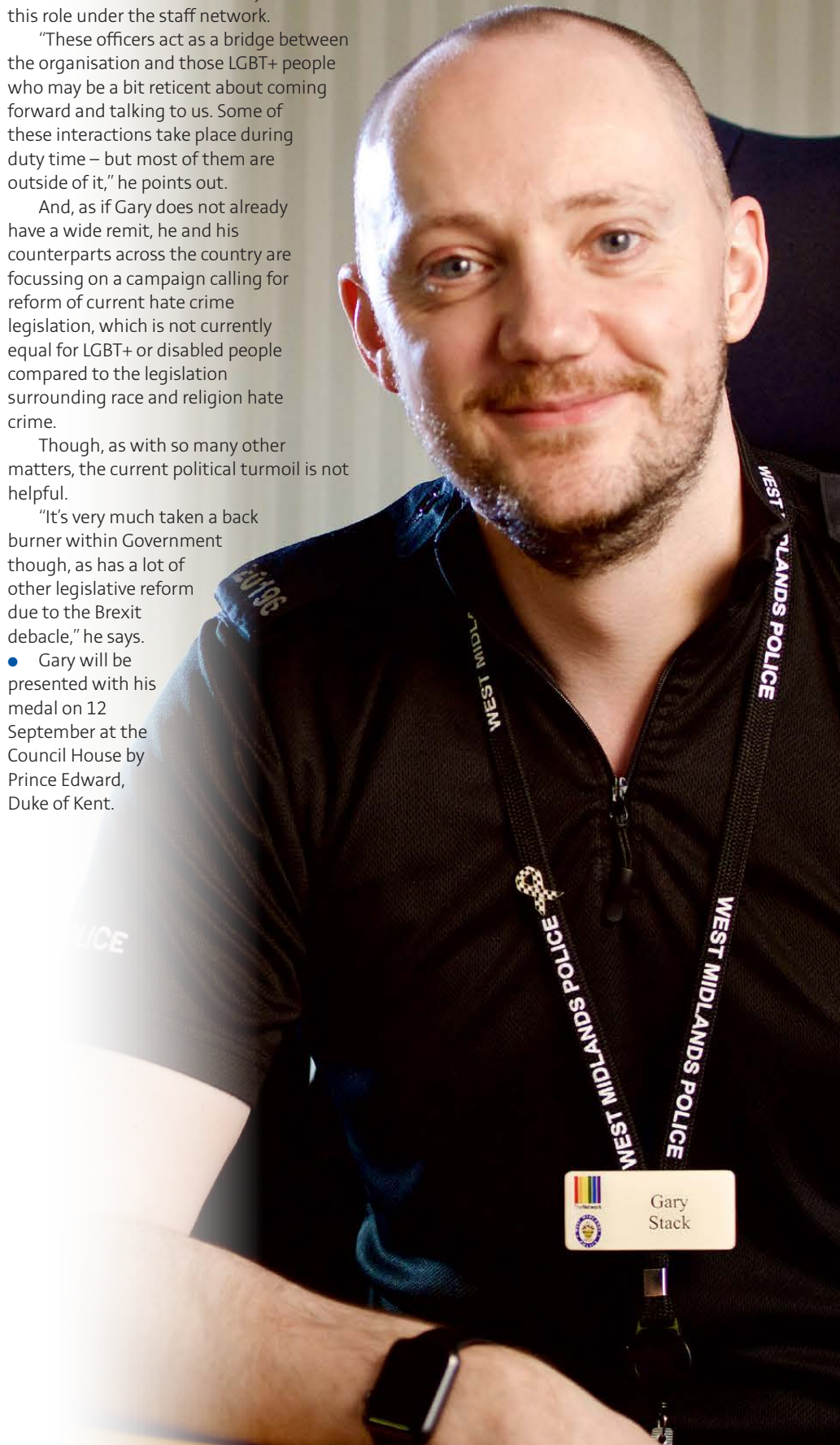
"These officers act as a bridge between the organisation and those LGBT+ people who may be a bit reticent about coming forward and talking to us. Some of these interactions take place during duty time – but most of them are outside of it," he points out.

And, as if Gary does not already have a wide remit, he and his counterparts across the country are focussing on a campaign calling for reform of current hate crime legislation, which is not currently equal for LGBT+ or disabled people compared to the legislation surrounding race and religion hate crime.

Though, as with so many other matters, the current political turmoil is not helpful.

"It's very much taken a back burner within Government though, as has a lot of other legislative reform due to the Brexit debacle," he says.

● Gary will be presented with his medal on 12 September at the Council House by Prince Edward, Duke of Kent.





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Federation urges MPs to speak out in support of police

The region's newly elected MPs are being urged to call on the Government to invest in policing so the Force can deliver what is expected of it.

Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, has written to all local MPs urging them to support their police officers by speaking up on their behalf in Parliament and asking them to campaign for increased funding for the service.

"We need a commitment to make changes for the better. We appreciate there is no quick fix but after years of budget cuts it is time for a re-investment in policing, for the good of the police service, our local communities and the public we serve," says Tom.

"As the Force has adapted to reductions in funding, it has struggled to deal with traditional offences while also rising to the challenges of new and emerging crimes such as cyber-crime, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking and the growing threat of terrorism.

"It is becoming more and more difficult for us to provide an effective service for victims of crime and walk the beats in our communities to offer a reassuring visible policing presence and fight crime and terrorism through effective neighbourhood policing."

The Federation leader also pointed out the effect the cuts were having on officers' welfare and efficiency, highlighting growing levels of sickness and stress-related illnesses

among members as officers struggle to match dwindling resources with ever-increasing demands.

The letter to MPs comes after West Midlands DI Warren Hines revealed, in an interview with Sky News, that an increasing number of police officers are considering suicide because of the strains they are facing.

And, Chief Constable Dave Thompson has also set out his own concerns, calling for funding to be stabilised with real term protection for policing, more effective spending within forces and targeted Government spending to help the service tackle threats such as terrorism.

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange has also highlighted the huge importance the public in West Midlands placed on policing and the fact that officer numbers, resourcing and the welfare of officers rightly came under the media spotlight before the General Election.

"During the election campaigning all political parties pledged to work to keep the nation safe and secure, particularly in the light of the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London," Steve explains.

"The message we heard was loud and clear and supported what we have been saying for some time: police numbers do matter. The loss across England and Wales of 21,500 police officers since 2009, including 1,260 firearms officers and more than 3,250 neighbourhood officers in a

one-year period, really does matter and impacts on policing.

"Here in the West Midlands, we have lost 2,000 officers since 2010. Not only does this impact on the service the public receive here but it also impacts on the welfare and efficiency of police officers.

"The threats and dangers officers face continue to increase, while the protective equipment supplied and sentencing deterrent for those convicted of assault on an officer remains largely unchanged."

The Federation's letter to MPs also mentioned the Police Federation's national Protect The Protectors campaign, which aims to highlight the dangers front-line public servants face and calls for an increase in the tariff for those convicted of assault on all emergency service workers.

West Midlands Police Federation is hoping to meet local MPs so it can explain the issues affecting its members and the police service as a whole.

Steve concludes: "The men and women of West Midlands Police who run towards danger to protect their communities seek their MPs' support. This support would help ensure their welfare needs are met and that their pay and conditions of service reflect the difficult and dangerous job they undertake on behalf of the public.

"It could also help ensure the police service is properly resourced so that the public can be properly protected."

Firearms survey - do you want to be routinely armed?

All Federation members across the country are going to be asked if they would like to be routinely armed in a survey being conducted throughout August.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) survey will be sent directly to officers via the member database.

"There has been much debate about routine arming of police officers lately so the Federation has decided it's time to ask officers themselves for their views," says Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West

Midlands Police Federation, "Members were last surveyed on this issue in 2006 when the vast majority said they did not want to carry firearms. Of course, we have seen considerable changes in the last 11 years so it will be interesting to see if officers' views have changed too."

The survey will take around 10 minutes to complete and will close on 1 September. Results are expected towards the end of September.

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Policing with Pride

Thousands of revellers took to the streets of the city centre at the end of May for the two-day Birmingham Pride event, and hundreds of officers and support staff were drafted in to ensure the safety of those attending.

On hand to keep them fed and watered was the Police Federation's Teapot 1 and 2 – offering tea, coffee and other refreshments.

The Force was praised for its policing of the event, with the Birmingham Mail saying: "The bobbies on the beat got it spot on. You could see them on every street corner, on buses and in doorways but they had fun with the crowds, some even wearing leis around their necks. And the emergency vehicles sounded their sirens as part of the procession fun."

Chris Love tweeted: "@WMPolice at #birminghampride I thought it was nice to see genuine and relaxed officers :) - no intimidation, no aggression seriously 10/10."



Reps handed out WMPF 'goodie bags' to officers.



Federation reps with the Teapot 1 and 2 vans containing refreshments.



Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, with on duty officers.



Officers mixing with revellers.

Sarah's leading the way with the Force's mental health



Sarah Cavendish is the Force's mental health lead and took up the post in November 2016. She is based at Tally Ho and works full-time across the Force area.

She agreed to take part in a Q and A feature to give Federation members an insight into her work.

Can you give us a brief career history?

I qualified as an occupational therapist in 1999 and commenced my first post in a medium secure hospital. I remained working in secure care, both in the NHS and for a charitable organisation, until spring 2007 during which time I worked with people suffering with a range of mental disorders, in addition to their offending behaviour. In summer 2007, I joined Coventry University as a senior lecturer and have been educating future health and social care professionals for the last nine years.

During my career I have been interested in organisational health and completed my MSc research on the work-life balance of British police officers, which then led to a wider interest in the wellbeing of police officers and staff and a desire to work with them in some capacity.

What attracted you to your current role?

I was keen to explore a new area of practice and seeing this post advertised piqued my interest! I liked the idea of returning to public sector working and to a role in which my skills

could be used to their potential.

Having had a family member work in the police, I was aware of many of the challenges faced by today's police officers and staff and as a result the significant impact seen on health and wellbeing.

I believed I had a lot to offer WMP and its workforce to address the mental health and wellbeing agenda in a positive and proactive manner, with long lasting benefits.

I particularly liked the variety of the work which the role offered, from line managing the Employee Support team to writing organisational strategy, and that no two days are the same.

What was your first impression of the Force?

My first impressions of the Force were that it was a proactive organisation regarding workplace wellbeing evidenced through the Chief Constable's vision, The People Deal and commitment to providing support resources for staff, whether through occupational health or an Employee Assistance Programme.

However, due to austerity, I also observed that the organisation was facing a challenging period in relation to staff morale, sickness absence and, in particular, the mental health and wellbeing of its workforce. Having said that, there was a tangible 'thirst' to address these challenges from all areas of the organisation and across all ranks/roles, which was demonstrated by enthusiastic employees presenting themselves to me as soon as I took up post to offer their support and skills to assist me in whatever way they could. An amazing offering which highlighted to me the 'community' and 'family' spirit of the organisation which I was now part of and excited to work with to achieve organisational wellbeing.

Why do you feel it was necessary for this new role to be created?

I am the first dedicated mental health lead for internal mental health and wellbeing (the workforce). On taking up post, I understood that mental health and wellbeing issues had been on the increase within WMP, particularly in relation to sickness absence. It was felt that while officers and staff may have some

operational training with regards to dealing with people suffering from mental health issues, training and support resources for officers and staff was limited and needed addressing.

I feel it was absolutely the right thing to do in creating the post, not only to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of its employees, but to provide some expertise to guide the development of services, strategy and direction.

And were you surprised by what you found in terms of the general mental health of officers and staff?

I was not surprised at what I observed coming in to the organisation, rather my concerns and suspicions were confirmed; that there was a high rate of sickness absence relating to mental health issues, the experience of trauma and its impact on health and wellbeing is an 'occupational hazard' and one which is under reported or recognised by employees and that employees don't always feel supported by the organisation when suffering with mental health and wellbeing issues.

As a society we have become more aware of mental health issues within the workplace, although there are still many who believe that voicing their issues will be interpreted as 'weakness', inability to do their job and 'problematic', in addition to which avenues of support can be hard to identify.

As life has become more complex, so too has work-life; the challenges of modern day policing, austerity and terrorist threats. However, the commitment from officers and staff to serve and protect the public is stronger than ever and provides an intrinsic stressor regardless of rank, role or level of experience.

And what about the support they were offered?

Support for individuals varied, but started with the line manager, who was able to advise and offer practical support to help people deal with their mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. If the line manager felt they needed support to support a member of staff, they could make contact with the line manager advisor or occupational health department, depending on what the issue was.

If a referral was made into occupational health, the individual could be seen by a team of qualified clinical professionals to help determine the most appropriate ways to support them in and keep them in work. The team comprises; nurses, physiotherapists, counsellors and a doctor.

In addition to these more formal support

mechanisms, many staff talked about great support coming from other resources such as the Police Federation, the Force chaplaincy team and the staff association groups to name a few.

How long did it take you to work out what was needed and what goals did you set yourself? How is that progressing?

Within the first three months I was able to identify the main areas of need in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce. The priority goals that were set included:

- The development of a mental health and wellbeing strategy. The strategy has been written and is informing the development of a wider wellbeing strategy led by Tina Cook, head of wellbeing.
- An audit of the resources and support available to staff. A basic audit of resources and support has been carried out through visits around the Force, focus groups and a review of the intranet, and
- The restructure of the Employee Support service. Occupational health as a department is currently undergoing investment and restructure to better accommodate the organisational needs, this has included the provision from Employee Support. We are aiming to re-launch our updated services in August.

Some of the work remains ongoing and will be reviewed regularly.

What do you consider your biggest success so far?

I believe there have been two 'BIG' success stories for me so far and they are:

- The Mental Health & Wellbeing event in February 2017 held at Tally Ho, and
- The way in which people have embraced my role and contribution with openness and enthusiasm.

The Mental Health & Wellbeing event was a resounding success with nearly 200 officers and staff in attendance. The day was filled with enigmatic speakers, workshops and stands for everyone to engage with. Evaluation of the event confirmed the need for events such as this and showed that 'It's OK to talk!'

Our aim is for this to be an annual event, supported by smaller events throughout the year. One of the requests from the day was to establish a support/staff group for people with or caring for people with a mental health issue. This is currently being developed – so watch this space!

I have been completely bowled over by the welcome I have received and enthusiasm from employees to engage with the mental health and wellbeing agenda. While my role is specific to developing this agenda within

the organisation I can only do this with the help, support and commitment of the organisation, its employees and its supporting agencies. To date the support and skills that I have been offered, will, I believe, help us to meet and even surpass our goals to enable WMP to be a 'leading light' in addressing mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

How are things improving?

It is too early to have any meaningful data on improvements in this area, however, I would expect there to be some within the next three to six months. Anecdotally though, we are hearing that employees are starting to see changes that have been implemented and are able to identify a core group of people dedicated to this agenda; Tina Cook, Amanda Young (employee engagement manager), myself, the occupational health team and the chaplaincy team. We hope that this core group of people will continue to grow and develop.

What support is now available to officers and staff through the Force?

The biggest change or addition for employees has been the introduction of an Employee Assistance programme called BWell, delivered through an external provider to offer 24/7 access to a variety of support and resources, inclusive of counselling, financial advice, line manager support, an online CBT programme and a lifestyle app.

The service was launched in June and the uptake has been amazing, anecdotal feedback has also been extremely positive. We will continue to engage with the provider to ensure the offering is a responsive to the needs of our organisation as possible.

As I mentioned earlier, we are also investing in the occupational health department and will see the number of staff increase over coming months, as well as positive changes to the delivery of the service which will be implemented in August. These will be communicated fully across the Force and training provided as and when necessary.

Occupational health and BWell are the two main avenues of support that I would recommend people explore, however, we know that support is personal to the individual and it may be that officers and staff need to 'try out' different options before they find what works for them. This may include support from the chaplaincy, the Police Federation, the staff association groups, the Benevolent Fund or Police Mutual and so on.

For anyone who is feeling stressed or anxious or dealing with mental health issues I would always advise to seek support internally, in the first instance from your line manager and externally, from your GP. They

will be best placed to signpost to other forms of support and resources and will have a personal relationship with you. Other avenues like BWell or occupational health can then be considered.

What are your goals for the rest of this year?

They are to:

- Plan the next Mental Health & Wellbeing event for 2018
- Review the use of the MIND Bluelight champion initiative
- Develop a staff association group for people with mental health issues, those who have suffered these issues in the past and also for those caring for someone with mental health issues
- Deliver a professional Employee Support service based on organisational need.

And for 2018?

I am aiming to:

- Inform the L & D strategy for delivering employee wellbeing training programmes, to cover education around mental health and wellbeing, resilience, individual responsibility and coping mechanisms
- Have spent time in all areas of the organisation to best understand the needs of the organisation.

Other goals and aims I'm sure will develop as we progress the agenda.

Thought for the day...

As a Force, we have a large staff population which can make training and educating people about health and wellbeing a challenge and causes you to think 'outside the box' and seek a multi-layered approach to answering those needs.

Influencing a change in culture to one that encourages people to take care of themselves and not be afraid to discuss their mental health issues is key and so I would encourage everyone to take five minutes of their day (in or out of work) and consider the following questions:

- Do I have wellbeing when I am at work?
- What can I do to develop my own wellbeing at work? And,
- What can I do to enable work to support me in the workplace?

I would be happy to hear of thoughts and ideas and can be contacted on the following;

Sarah Cavendish (58434)

Mental health lead

Shared Services

West Midlands Police

Tally Ho, Pershore Road, Birmingham B5 7RN.

Internal Tel: 802 3036

Mobile: 07787 934830

Email: s.cavendish@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk




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'Don't bottle it up' – Cameron's coasters spread the word

Cameron Grant was just 21 when he took his own life in November 2014.

Intelligent and caring, he had suffered from depression for seven years but managed to hide it from his family and everyone who knew him.



His parents, Carol and Evan, found little comfort in the statistics surrounding suicide. About threequarters of suicides are male and it's the biggest cause of death for boys and men aged between 15 and 45.

Underpinning these figures, one in 10 young people – or around three in every classroom - are experiencing mental health problems at any given time with many, just like Cameron, suffering in silence.

Carol and Evan, still reeling from their own loss, decided they had to at least try to do something to try to tackle this issue.

The Cameron Grant Memorial Trust was born and aims to raise awareness of suicide and the difficulties caused by poor mental health, especially in young people, by communicating as widely as possible.

It mainly concentrates on doing this by working with existing communities such as villages, schools, universities, sports clubs and other charities and has found a very simple way of reaching its target audiences.

It produces a 'beer mat' style coaster, urging people to speak up if they feel they need support and offering a list of contact details for organisations that may be able to help.

All of Cameron's Coasters carry the same "Feeling low? Don't bottle it up. There is

always someone you can talk to" message on one side, while the other has contact details and help resources relevant to the community where the coaster is used.

These have now been tailored to the individual needs of more than 80 colleges and universities with 250,000 coasters having been sent out. They are already being used by Wasps RFC at the Ricoh Arena and IBM Warwick, and there are plans to get them out to schools, local sports clubs and doctors' surgeries.

In a joint initiative with West Midlands Police Federation, they are also being distributed within the Force since Cameron's aunt is serving West Midlands Police officer Fran George.

"Cameron's death came as such a shock. He was doing well at Royal Holloway, University of London where he was studying geology and wanted to go on to do a Master's degree," says Fran.

"None of us had any idea that Cameron was feeling so low and the main aim of the charity is to encourage people, and young men in particular, to speak up because there is always someone they can talk to."

Funding for the coasters has come from the Aviva Community Fund, the St James' Place Foundation and Police Mutual 'Force for Good' but family and friends have also been heavily involved in fund-raising.

Fran was one of 14 members of Cameron's family and friends to climb Mount Kilimanjaro last year to raise money for the charity but also to honour Cameron's memory since it was a must-do on his bucket list.

The £15,500 raised by the family will be

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used to continue to produce the coasters and also to produce credit cards listing contact details for organisations offering help and support to young people.

- This project was launched to encourage people to ask for help rather than to suffer in silence as Cameron did. If you know of a community that might benefit from Cameron's coasters, then please get in touch on info@camgrant.org.uk.
- If you want to support the charity, you can take part in Cameron's 3rd Night Walk – a 4.5 mile walk on Friday 6 October 2017. Visit <http://www.camgrant.org.uk/events/camersons-3rd-night-walk/> to find out more and to register.

Please also see the Welfare Support Programme article on Page 6 and the feature with the Force's mental health lead on Pages 24 and 25.

Considering 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 seminar on 7 September is fully booked but there are spaces available on:

19 October 2017

14 December 2017

1 February 2018

12 April 2018

24 May 2018

5 July 2018

To book a place 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.

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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.

Thank you for arranging the below support for the officer concerned. He texted me after he was called and was most appreciative.

Member details supplied

I wanted to bring to your attention the excellent customer service and support I received from travel insurance firm Ageas Insurance which I am a member of due to my membership in the Group Insurance Scheme.

I contacted Ageas and gave them the circumstances and they were incredibly helpful, both on the phone and by email. They showed great empathy for my situation and explained that, on the face of it, there would be no problem in my claim; this was a massive help as it was very reassuring bearing in mind everything else that was happening.

Once I sent all the documents to them they considered my travel insurance claim and came back to me within two days confirming they would be able to honour the claim. This was not only a huge relief, but some of the best customer service I have ever experienced.

If you are in a position to do so please pass on my gratitude to them.

Member details supplied

I just wanted to say thank you for my lovely hamper. The police family have been absolutely brilliant since my diagnosis and I'm genuinely touched by all the kind and thoughtful gestures I have received.

Thank you so much.

Member details supplied

I saw the officer today and passed on your personal regards as well as furnishing her with the Group Insurance Scheme info re critical care claims and half pay. She has also got the Welfare Support Programme details now.

She was overwhelmed with the hamper that arrived yesterday and wanted me to take a photo of it to show you all the goodies inside. She really has appreciated the thoughts from the Federation so thank you!

Member details supplied

I never got round to emailing back, thank you so much for the hamper; it was a lovely surprise and very much unexpected.

Glad I could help out. I'm always keen to assist the Federation and fellow colleagues in making WMP a better place to work.

Member details supplied



Many thanks for reading my email and for replying so fast.

I hope you're enjoying it at the Federation and thank you to you and your colleagues there for everything that you do, and try to do, for us all.

**PC 6462 Leigh A. Ellitts
Investigation Team 1, Wolverhampton
Central Police Station**

While on my advanced driving course in January, an allegation of 'bad driving' was made by a member of the public. This resulted in West Mercia Police serving an NIP for dangerous/careless driving.

The driver development unit began making initial enquiries to see whether a standard exemption form would suffice and attempted to find out what the complaint actually was. I was unsure at this point whether I needed to speak to the Federation, so decided to wait a few days to see if the matter would be negated. However, in the meantime, PS Tim Rogers (West Midlands Police Federation's deputy secretary) contacted me as he had been made aware of the allegation.

I found Tim to be understanding and reassuring. Although an experienced officer, it was daunting to be the subject of a complaint such as this. After several phone calls, he arranged for me to seek legal advice. The legal advice I was given was quickly arranged and helpful.

The matter has now been sorted/filed with no further action. I have 16 years' service and have never had cause to speak to or use the Federation. However, I was impressed with the service from start to finish.

I am really grateful for the advice and support I have been given from Tim, a couple of calls I received were of an evening outside of his working hours.

Member details supplied

Ben Fund members give 'Peel's Retreat' the thumbs up!



Peel's Retreat is the new holiday of WMP Benevolent Fund. Just steps away from the sea, it offers members and their families (including dogs) a great base to explore the beautiful Jurassic coastline. Weeks have been snapped up by members, enjoying an attractive discounted rate.

There are still a few weeks available for the end of the year and early 2018. To book simply visit www.wmpben.co.uk

The fund is now looking to buy its second holiday property, so if you're currently not a member now is a great time to join!

For a little as £2.00 per month you can join WMP Benevolent Fund and have the peace of mind that we are there for you and your family should the unforeseen happen.

Already a member?

Don't forget to tell us if your personal details have changed. If you have changed your e-mail address or moved house or want to nominate a new beneficiary, please get in touch via our website www.wmpben.co.uk

Take a break in Peel's Retreat, our *new holiday home* by the sea!

We are offering our members discounted weekly rates. Book your week's stay via www.wmpben.co.uk

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What constitutes work-related stress?

By David Miers
Associate in personal
injury at Slater and
Gordon



Stress in its simplest form can actually be a good thing. Many of us actually need stress to perform at

our best. However, it can be dangerous and it is when stress becomes too much and manifests into something more serious such as a recognised psychiatric condition that it can give rise to a potential personal injury claim.

One of the first questions we would ask a member is whether they have been diagnosed with a recognised psychiatric disorder. A claim for damages cannot be made if someone is suffering from "stress" alone.

Common psychiatric disorders include depression, PTSD or generalised anxiety disorder. A member may have been to see their GP because of work-related stress but can be unaware they have been diagnosed with a

psychiatric condition. We can assist by requesting copies of their GP records but a good indicator is that the member has been to see their GP because of occupational stress.

The second issue is a threshold question: was the psychiatric injury reasonably foreseeable? The key consideration for the courts is deciding whether the member's force knew, or ought to have reasonably known, about how work was affecting their health. This unfortunately is the bar to so many claims. Good examples of where the force may have had foresight include:

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

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

Thirdly, it is necessary to show there has been a breach of duty and that it was in fact

something which the Force did (or failed to do) contrary to law, which has caused the illness. We often ask members what their force could have done to prevent the harm they have suffered. Examples may include:

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

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

If you feel that the above applies to you then we encourage you to speak with your work-based representative or Federation about your concerns.

If you or a family member wishes to bring a claim please contact the PF Claimline on **Freephone 0800 917 1999** or visit pfclaimline.com where you will get advice free of charge. We hope you don't need us, but if you do, we are here to support you.

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

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

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See what your colleagues say:

Not only did she help me to understand how the new pension will affect me but she also helped me save money!

Wayne Bennett, serving police officer

“ Visiting Caroline Harris was well worth the time. She helped put my mind at rest with informed information rather than guess work. ”

Ian Skidmore, serving police officer

“ Caroline came into my life with an air of calm and organisation. ”

Helen Walker, police widow

GeorgeBurrows



Temporary ACC receives OBE

Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Alex Murray has received an OBE for his work in evidence-based policing.

The 41-year-old said: "Evidence-based policing is not about the type of evidence we use in court, but about the evidence around what really works in fighting crime.

"How do we understand what the actual effect of our action is? How do we link cause with effect? It allows police to be innovative because we can get a genuine understanding of the impact we are making.

"In the West Midlands this has allowed us to change the way we manage offenders, police hot-spots, road safety and even counter-terrorism."

Roll up for the Federation Roadshow

The latest West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) Roadshow was held at Solihull Police Station.

It was aimed at all members based in the Solihull area and was held in the Vanessa Carroll Room at Solihull Police Station on Monday 17 July between 10am and 3pm.

Member services providers were on hand to talk about the services they can provide.

Providers attending the event included Turtle Homes, the WMP Benevolent Fund, Police Credit Union, George Burrows, BHSF, Police Insure and Police Mutual.

Officers were able to discuss any

concerns they had with Federation representatives and members of the WMPF executive who also attended.

The next stop on the WMPF roadshow tour is Brierley Hill on 6 September – more details will be available nearer the time so look out for posters and also check westmidspolfed.com



Service of remembrance

An annual service of remembrance held to commemorate police officers who have died while on duty was held on Sunday 30 July.

The service is held by Care of Police Survivors (COPS), a charity that supports the surviving families of fallen colleagues.

It was held at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Before the service, hundreds of cyclists arrived at the site, having cycled as part of the Police Unity Tour – a charity cycle ride which raises cash for COPS.

The service started at 11am and was attended by fallen officers' families, friends and colleagues as well as chief officers and Federation representatives from across England and Wales.

Among those to address the congregation was West Midlands Police Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman.

- A full report on the COPS service will appear in the next magazine.

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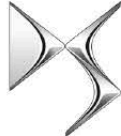
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Every little helps...

Hope to see you again soon



West Midlands Police Federation and the Police Credit Union jointly donated £1,000 to Tesco's chosen charity - Diabetes UK - as a thank you for allowing visiting members, staff and volunteers to use the supermarket's nearby car park when visiting Guardians House.

Pictured (left to right) are Tesco people manager Yvonne Reilly, Police Credit Union support manager Carole Way, Tesco community champion More Blessings Stephano and West Midlands Police Federation chairman Tom Cuddeford.

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