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West Midlands Police Federation



June/July 2017

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Welcome

Welcome to the June/July 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.

Published by:
XPR (UK) Ltd

Editor:
Tom Cuddeford, interim chairman

Deputy editor:
Chris Cooper,
Communications/IT manager
ccooper@westmids.polfed.org

Design and sub-editing:
XPR (UK) Ltd

Conference photographs:
Anderson Photography

Contact us:

Guardians House,
2111 Coventry Road,
Sheldon, Birmingham,
B26 3EA

Telephone:
0121 700 1200

Email:
westmidlandspf@polfed.org

www.westmidspolfed.com

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Birmingham rises to the challenge... again!



Photo courtesy Express & Star

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

I am sure there were many people who had reservations about moving the Police Federation's annual national conference from its comfortable location on the south coast to the less-scenic centre of Birmingham.

The conference had been held in Bournemouth every year since 2008 and before that had alternated between the southern seaside resort and Blackpool. But, when the independent review of the Police Federation of England and Wales called for the annual event to be trimmed down both from three days to two and in terms of the

numbers attending, a move to a more central location seemed to make great sense.

Nevertheless, I am guessing many people didn't exactly get excited about ditching a coastal location for the centre of our second city. However, I am hoping that most people – despite the wet weather that greeted them pretty much throughout conference – could see that what we lack in sea views we make up for in so many other ways.

Birmingham has a lot to offer and the International Convention Centre (ICC) makes a great venue for a conference.

There must have been something about the 'home fixture' that also brought West Midlands officers to the fore at conference too.

From Chief Constable Dave Thompson taking part in the opening morning's political session (filling the shoes of Diane Abbott who was shifted to an afternoon slot to allow for the launch of the Labour Party's election manifesto) to our Fed rep Scott Davies asking Home Secretary Amber Rudd a question on matching resources with demand, our officers certainly played a full part in the conference.

We also saw Adam Koch honoured with an award (see right) and Mike Bruce's input in the Protect The Protectors debate was one of the highlights of conference showing that front-line officers' testimonies as to the issues they face are far more impactful than long speeches by politicians or other stakeholders.

This was also in evidence in the session on police pursuits which was led by our own deputy secretary Tim Rogers but also

featured Merseyside's James Ellerman giving an honest and sobering account of the devastating effect of facing criminal and misconduct proceedings simply for doing his job, protecting the public from harm.

I, for one, hope that those organising next year's conference take heed of the success of this approach and try to involve more front-line officers in next year's event.

While I am obviously proud that our officers played such a big part both on stage and on the floor during conference, I am also aware, of course, that many, many more were involved behind the scenes in terms of ensuring the venue was secure and that delegates, observers, exhibitors and guests were safe and secure. Thank you to everyone in Operations Support for their tireless efforts.

Moving away from our Force involvement in the conference, I think the event was a success. Along with a change of venue, the need to shrink the event down to two days meant that the format also had to be reviewed. Break-out sessions meant that it was a packed agenda, perhaps a little too packed but the Protecting The Protectors theme ran throughout the conference sessions and made it feel far less disjointed than in previous years.

The issue of officer welfare – mentally and physically – was a thread running through pretty much all the debates and that has to be a good thing.

Amber Rudd only took over as Home Secretary in July last year, with the timing of her appointment proving to be particularly useful since her first appointment in the role was to attend the national Police Bravery Awards. If that awards ceremony doesn't tell

Our first duty: Protecting the Protectors

a politician just how unique a role we play in society, then nothing will.

To be fair, she did acknowledge that and, since we have not had the easiest ride with Ms Rudd's predecessor at the Home Office, I would say that she got off to a reasonable start with us. Having said that, the performance of her Labour counterpart, Diane Abbott, the day before, made it easier for her to make an impression. The Shadow Home Secretary seemed to be ill-informed or badly briefed. Her answers on spit guards showed a complete lack of understanding and she left herself wide open for criticism there.

Immediately after conference, I was invited to take part in an interview about spit guards on Midlands Today so let's hope that the general public come to understand the need for officers to have this essential bit of kit a little better than Ms Abbott appears to. It really is quite simple – if a member of the public doesn't want us to put a spit guard on them, don't spit. Maybe anyone with reservations about them could listen to Mike Bruce's story and try to put themselves in his shoes?

So conference 2017 has come and gone. This edition of the magazine gives a rundown of all the key sessions, please take the time to read about conference and if you want to find out more or listen to the full debates, please visit polfed.org. There is a section dedicated to conference and you can watch videos of all the main sessions including some of the break-out presentations.

On the whole, it was a great success, some fine-tuning will no doubt be done for next year's event which will once again be hosted in our great city.

- As we were going to print, news came through of the terrorist attack in Manchester. As a Federation, we would like to extend our heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends who lost loved ones. Our thoughts are also with those injured and we wish them a speedy recovery while also thinking of our colleagues at GMP and the other emergency workers and volunteers who did their very best to help those caught up in this atrocity. We know that the security level for the UK has now been raised to 'critical', the highest level for 10 years. That will, of course, have an effect on the Force and we would like to express our thanks to all those officers in the West Midlands who are doing their utmost to protect the communities we serve at this time.

"Together we are stronger. Only together we are more influential, only together can we continue Protecting The Protectors." That was the opening message to the 2017 annual conference from Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) chair Steve White.

Reform to meet the changing needs of members is, he said, being driven not by Government but by members themselves. The Federation's first duty, he emphasised, was Protecting The Protectors and this theme would run throughout conference.

As it nears its centenary, PFEW is now, he said, 'more efficient, more open and transparent, more vocal, more influential and more responsive to our members than ever before.'

Although he warned that there is still some work to do, the Federation is well placed for the next 98 and more years: "Your National Council now truly influences and scrutinises, not paying lip service, not just once a year at conference, regularly meeting to drive the direction of the organisation whilst also holding the Board to account and, speaking from experience, holding principal officers and myself to account, and rightly so."

Change, he warned, is constant. The past is a place of reference, not residency, the chair pointed out, adding that the reform of PFEW following the independent review had given it strong foundations so that it best represents members.

During the past year, he has visited Police Federation members in forces up and down the country including Merseyside, the Met, Humberside, Cleveland, GMP, South Wales, North Wales, Cumbria, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Northumbria and Thames Valley and he will be visiting many more before this year is out.

While listening to the concerns raised by members on these visits, he says he has yet to find one who has not responded positively on the changes being made to ensure PFEW can respond strongly on their behalf. The Federation was putting members at the heart of all it does.

Adding that it was a 'monumental privilege' to chair the Federation, Steve warned: "What is certain is that the challenges ahead will be harder than we think, more surprising than we expect, but we will be better equipped to do what we are asked to do by our members."

Award first for Adam

Brave West Midlands PC Adam Koch has become the first UK officer to receive an award under a scheme that recognises those who during the line of duty have experienced a life-threatening incident in which their body armour contributed to saving their lives.

Adam and fellow West Midlands officer Jean Stevens were also the first joint winners of the national Police Bravery Awards in 2015 after responding to reports of a disturbance at a mosque, during which three worshippers had been stabbed.

Adam and Jean confronted the knifeman and attempted to subdue him with a Taser, which he 'shrugged off'.

But Adam managed to wrestle the suspect to the ground and disarm him with the help of Jean and worshippers before realising he had been stabbed and wounded in the chest and stomach in the incident in Birmingham in 2014.

He was presented with his award by Todd Mackler, the vice president of Armour Division, on the opening day of conference. Armour Division makes body armour and runs the Safariland SAVES Club, which supports officers whose stab vest has helped saved their lives.



Adam is convinced his stab vest prevented his injuries from being fatal and has been left with a lasting legacy beyond his physical injuries due to the mental trauma of receiving life-changing injuries.

After receiving his award Adam said: "The SAVES club offers a fantastic support network for those affected by incidents like mine. It has put me in touch with other officers that have suffered a similar trauma and I hope to help kick-start something similar for colleagues affected in the UK."

Adam and Jean have also received a commendation from their Chief Constable for preventing more worshippers being hurt and potentially killed.



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Standing ovation for MP who tried to save Keith Palmer

Delegates gave Tobias Ellwood, the MP who so memorably went to the aid of PC Keith Palmer after the Westminster terrorist attack in March, two standing ovations when he addressed conference.

Officers stood to applaud Mr Ellwood after he was welcomed on stage by national Federation chair Steve White who said officers were touched by the efforts he had made on 22 March.

Mr Ellwood was visibly moved after being presented with the Police Federation shield and coat of arms.

He said: "I was just sorry that I couldn't, and those others with me couldn't, do more to save Keith Palmer's life but we owe you such a debt of gratitude for what you do day in and day out and it's very humbling for me to receive this award."

He began by speaking briefly about how his work as a Foreign Office minister involves dealing with extremism, poisoned ideology and the hijacking of the religion of Islam mainly in the Middle East and Africa.

"I work very hard with our international allies on trying to understand this new threat, this asymmetric warfare, that we see - and that's all usually a long way away, so when this thing happened in Westminster it was just a reminder of how much work we have to do across the police in challenging this, what I believe is, the most serious threat in the 21st century, this unconditional challenge that we actually have," Mr Ellwood explained.

"And we all have to work harder, but sometimes we fail. Sometimes these people are committed to doing something absolutely appalling and we saw that on 22 March."

He went on to say that his own background was in the Army where there is a sense of fraternity, where people care for their colleagues as one of their own, and added: "I was one of many who stepped forward (that day) to do what we thought was right."

"What came home to me after the Westminster incident was just how closely knit your fraternity is and just how you don't know what is round the corner, you really don't, and yet every day you put your uniforms on and stand in harm's way so we can continue our work."

He added that Keith Palmer was also a part of the Parliamentary community as he worked there day in day out for many years and explained: "The day after this happened... there was a determination that we would not allow that event to affect our



Steve White joins the applause for Tobias Ellwood (left).

way of life and that famous phrase 'we'll keep calm and carry on' was used many, many times.

"I would add to that a step further. When these events occur - tragic and rare, thankfully that they are, we don't just carry on, it gives us even more determination to defeat this sort of extremism in the way that we know how, to defend our values and make sure we stand up to this so the

terrorist does not win and that is something that resonated right across Westminster."

Mr Ellwood said his thoughts continued to be with Keith Palmer's family, friends and colleagues and concluded by paying tribute to all police officers saying: "Thank you for the work you do day in, day out. It's not said enough but it is appreciated."

Delegates gave him another standing ovation as he left the conference.

'Make policing a priority'

Federation chairman Steve White has made a rallying call to whoever forms the new government to make 'policing a priority'.

Giving his keynote speech at the Federation's annual conference, he also repeated calls for tougher sentencing for those convicted of assaulting police officers.

Steve addressed the audience, which included Home Secretary Amber Rudd, saying: "...politics and politicians will move on, but policing, its officers and people's safety will always be needed. No matter who is in government.

"Put policing before politics, put the people before politics, and put those who pledge to serve before politics. The service will respond to that and work together, with the Police Federation of England and Wales playing its full part."

Steve, who has chaired the Federation since 2014, said officer numbers have fallen by 3,000 in the past year, which was simply not sustainable in the long-term if the police are to continue to be 'the very best in the world, envied and emulated across the globe'.

He said: "But we are just that – a service. A police service. Not a business. Not an

organisation that you can cut back and then build up again overnight. Not a body that says we don't do that anymore.

"We are a service that wants to deliver what the public want, when they want it and how they want it. 24 hours a day: 365 days a year. But this is getting impossible."

He continued: "It is a crisis that we don't have enough police officers to deal with the demands placed upon the service – and that should be very worrying for government, whose primary responsibility is the safety and security of its citizens."

The chair then turned his attention to the Federation's Protect The Protectors campaign, which was put before Parliament earlier this year and received cross-party support. The campaign was launched in response to growing numbers of assaults on officers and concerns at lenient sentencing of offenders.

"Home Secretary, last year you and politicians from all parties expressed support of our Protect The Protectors campaign," he said.

"A campaign aimed not just at reducing the number of assaults on police officers, but also at giving officers the right protection, equipment and support.

Whatever duties officers are doing, they all need protecting.

"Many of your colleagues from all political parties were vocal and stated their support for a change in legislation. Many expressed support for a change to see harsher sentences for those convicted of assaulting officers.

"And so, today I ask you and every politician seeking to be elected – can we have a firm commitment to make this happen?"

"We want a commitment that you will give the police officers of England and Wales the support and protection needed to do their job. That is, support in numbers. Support in equipment. And support in law. For, without that support, without the numbers needed, we can't continue doing everything."

He continued: "When she was Home Secretary, the Prime Minister told us we should have a single mission – to fight crime.

"We said it then, and I say it again now, policing is so much more than just fighting crime.

"Tell the family of a suicidal man with mental health issues making threats to end his life that it's the NHS they need; it's not one for the police.

"Tell the elderly victim of a burglary seeking comfort and reassurance that time is money and the job of the police is to fight crime and capture an offender, rather than counsel them as a victim.

"Home Secretary, you cannot put a price on the value of policing. And no government can cut tens of thousands of police officers and expect us to pretend that it won't make a difference.

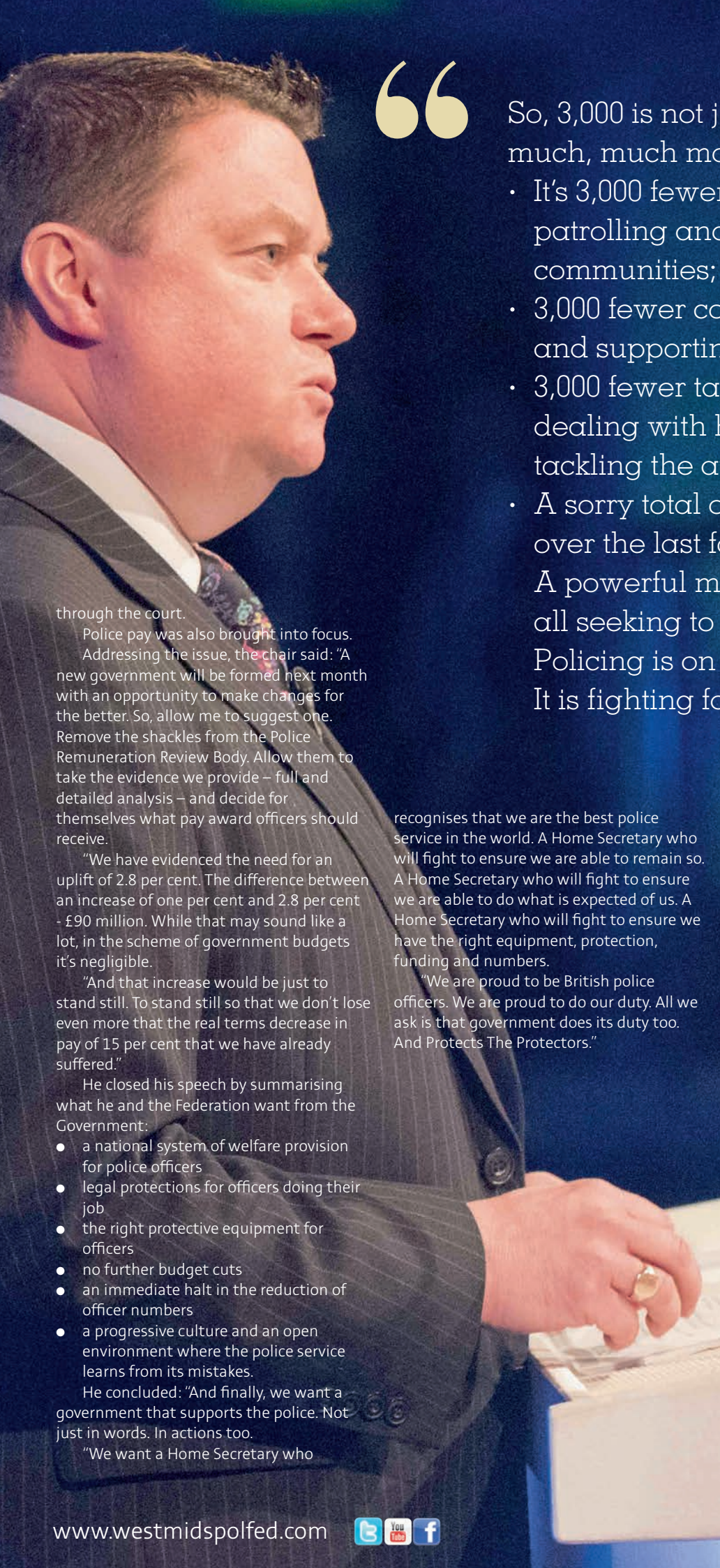
"For it does. It does make a difference. It makes a huge difference. A huge difference to victims of crime. A huge difference to police officers run ragged, hardly finishing one call before taking another. And a huge difference to criminals, who are the only winners in this perverse game of risk that government keeps playing with policing."

And while speaking about how the police could not 'do everything' he called on a newly elected government to ask the public what they wanted from the police.

He went on to mention provisions needed for officers to be able to effectively do their job – one of which is a wider roll-out of Taser. While approval has been granted for the new X2 Taser model, many forces are struggling to fund its introduction.

Steve also spoke about police pursuits and how the current test of dangerous driving is 'outdated, misinterpreted at best and downright ridiculous at worst in the way that it applies to police officers'.

He called for exemptions in law to be put in place to ensure that an officer, doing their duty, and engaging in a response or pursuit in a police vehicle, is not unfairly processed



“

So, 3,000 is not just a number. It is much, much more than that:

- It's 3,000 fewer police officers patrolling and protecting communities;
- 3,000 fewer cops investigating crimes and supporting vulnerable victims;
- 3,000 fewer tackling cyber-crime, dealing with historic offences and tackling the atrocities of terrorism.
- A sorry total of 20,000 police officers over the last four years.

A powerful message for you and for all seeking to be elected next month. Policing is on its knees.

It is fighting for its life.”

”

through the court.

Police pay was also brought into focus. Addressing the issue, the chair said: "A new government will be formed next month with an opportunity to make changes for the better. So, allow me to suggest one. Remove the shackles from the Police Remuneration Review Body. Allow them to take the evidence we provide – full and detailed analysis – and decide for themselves what pay award officers should receive.

"We have evidenced the need for an uplift of 2.8 per cent. The difference between an increase of one per cent and 2.8 per cent - £90 million. While that may sound like a lot, in the scheme of government budgets it's negligible.

"And that increase would be just to stand still. To stand still so that we don't lose even more that the real terms decrease in pay of 15 per cent that we have already suffered."

He closed his speech by summarising what he and the Federation want from the Government:

- a national system of welfare provision for police officers
- legal protections for officers doing their job
- the right protective equipment for officers
- no further budget cuts
- an immediate halt in the reduction of officer numbers
- a progressive culture and an open environment where the police service learns from its mistakes.

He concluded: "And finally, we want a government that supports the police. Not just in words. In actions too.

"We want a Home Secretary who

recognises that we are the best police service in the world. A Home Secretary who will fight to ensure we are able to remain so. A Home Secretary who will fight to ensure we are able to do what is expected of us. A Home Secretary who will fight to ensure we have the right equipment, protection, funding and numbers.

"We are proud to be British police officers. We are proud to do our duty. All we ask is that government does its duty too. And Protects The Protectors."

OUR REPS SAY:

"I thought his speech covered all of the main points that front-line officers find most concerning. It was similar in tone to previous years but there was a solemn tribute to Keith Palmer followed by a focus on officer safety and safety on all fronts that included, officer numbers, equipment and the law. He told the Home Secretary that we cannot continue to do everything and the public must be told that. He stated you can either 'put resources in or take demand out'. This is something that Sir Thomas Winsor even recognised in his speech and in his State Of Policing report as HMCIC."

Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation

"Same old, same old."

PC John Williams

'It's not for me to how to do their

A staggering 4.5 million hours of police time have been saved thanks to a cut in red-tape – according to Home Secretary Amber Rudd.

She made the claim during her speech to a packed hall on Day 2 of the annual conference in Birmingham.

And she said that if her party was re-elected on 8 June more top officer jobs will be opened up to those outside of policing.

"The public don't pay their taxes so that the police sit in their office filling out meaningless forms," she said.

"And you didn't come into policing to waste your time on paperwork when you could be out serving the communities you swore to protect. So we have cut pointless red tape. With 4.5 million hours of police time saved – that's the equivalent of 2,100 police officers no longer sitting in a back office and instead fighting crime in their community.

"And we've cut the target culture. No longer does the Home Office send dozens of 'policy' documents each year with thousands of central diktats. It's not for me to tell the police how to do their jobs."

She went on to pledge that as long as she was Home Secretary there would be no 'constant interfering from Westminster'.

"Without that constant interference, we've seen the proportion of police officers on the front-line rise," she said.

"With priorities now set by locally elected PCCs and delivered by you, ensuring once again that the 'police are the public and the public are the police.'"

Ms Rudd said her party had protected the protectors, saying: "You asked us to change the law so that anyone who kills a cop gets a mandatory life sentence. We listened, and now anyone convicted of murdering an officer faces a life sentence.

"You asked us to do more to stop police officers doing the work of a doctor or nurse, caring for mentally ill members of the

public. And we've taken steps to significantly restrict the circumstances in which a police station may be a 'place of safety' with £15 million invested into health-based alternatives."

She continued: "And if I'm re-appointed as your Home Secretary I will continue to work with the health secretary so that the police do not do the jobs of other public servants, so you are not the service of first resort.

"You asked me to bring in a new two shot Taser gun, and I've done that because you keep us safe and it's right we keep you safe too. You asked us to better fund mental health services for officers up and down the country. And if I'm returned to this post in 22 days, signing off that bid, Steve, will be one of the first things I do."

Her first ever engagement after becoming Home Secretary in July was the Police Bravery Awards – which is where she heard about the Nice terror attack.

She told the room: "That moment will stay for me for the rest of my life. As I watched our brave police officers being recognised for their extraordinary acts of courage, the horrible events on the streets of Nice were unfolding. The best of our values, embodied in the actions of our policemen and women, set in stark relief against the very worst of human behaviour.

"We owe you, the police, an incredible debt, for the courage and bravery you exhibit in the line of duty. For your

willingness to put yourself in harm's way, day after day, in order to protect the rest of us."

She went on to pay tribute to PC Keith Palmer and the other officers who have lost their lives in the past year, before pledging her commitment to support the new UK Police Memorial.

And she insisted the decisions her party had made which weren't well received by

to tell the police jobs'

officers had been in the best interests of the country.

"You haven't agreed with the changes we've made to pay and pensions, but they were right for the country and the public to tackle the huge deficit we inherited. You haven't agreed with the drive for greater efficiency in policy budgets, but it's been right for the country and the public," the Home Secretary told officers.

"You haven't agreed with the steps we've taken to

bring more people from outside policing into the force. But it's been right for the country and the public. And if the Conservatives are re-elected we will go further and open up the very top jobs in policing so that we get the broadest possible skills and talent at the very top of our police forces."

OUR REPS SAY:

"Amber Rudd started by paying tribute to Keith Palmer and all of the fallen officers during the previous 12 months as well as committing to support the building of the new police memorial, albeit there was no promise of any further funding for this. From this point on the remainder of the Home Secretary's speech seemed to be the same as delivered by Theresa May at her last conference 12 months ago. There was nothing new, the same rhetoric and platitudes receiving derision from the audience when she came out with the line, 'the Conservative Party will be the party of law and order'. She claimed to have cut red tape and a target driven culture, which is not something that is being witnessed by officers at the front-line. The remainder of the speech was blatant electioneering when she called the Labour hierarchy a 'group of Marxists'.

"One positive from the Q & A came when she confirmed her support for police forces to roll-out the use of spit guards to protect officers from the degrading and disgusting behaviour of some people that officers have to deal with."

Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation

"Just a party political speech."
PC John Williams

Home Secretary's Q and As



Amber Rudd was put under tough questioning from Federation reps when she took part in her first Q and A session.

Delegates wasted no time in raising their concerns on issues including pay, funding, mental health, spit guards and demand. Here is a selection of the questions and answers.

Steve White: "... Are we going to see investment in the police service? Because we either invest or divest and you can't keep fudging it and saying it's down to the chiefs when they don't have the money."

AR: "We have made a commitment to maintain the police budget from 2015-2019/20 and I expect that to continue... I believe it's right to say the police should be locally run and that chief constables working with PCCs is the right way forward."

Steve: I think you're saying 'no'.

On a pay rise, AR: It's not for me to offer the pay rise. It's important to have a remuneration committee. The public sector pay rise has been fixed at one per cent and I understand that's difficult and unwelcome but we need to have a stronger economy so there has to be public sector pay restraint. The pay restraint will remain until 2019/20.

SW: Does that include politicians?

AR: The expenses scandal meant MPs' pay was put into the hands of an independent regulator and ministers' salaries were cut.

Ian Collins: Give me a moment while I just weep quietly over that at the podium.

John Apter, Hampshire: "... the reality is that the Force Welfare Fund, a charity, is now

seeing officers come for food vouchers to put food on their table or fuel in their car to get to work. Is that right for the public and the country?

AR: "I'm sorry to hear that, I understand that must be difficult. An average officer's earnings is about £40,000 (there was lots of sniggering and scoffing at this point). Again, I don't want to make misleading commitments about pay but we have to make sure we get the borrowing numbers down and get back to a stronger economy. We have to... make sure we continue to limit expenditure to protect the economy which will be better for you and your families."

Nigel Mortimer, West Mercia: "What can you do to try to influence and cut down the length of time officers find themselves under investigation because the CPS can't be bothered to read some files or the IPCC can't do the investigation?"

AR: "I'd like to see IPCC acting more quickly. I think it's disgraceful that officers are kept on suspension for so long. We have set up a new board to replace the IPCC and it's not just a change to the name on the door, there are more funds, new staff and a new direction to make sure the processes are much swifter and I'll be keeping a close eye to make sure that happens."

Louise Bates, Bedfordshire: "Assaults while on duty result in mental health issues so officers are away from work, leaving fewer officers to deal with the workload. How will you support officers injured on duty?"

AR: "Mental health is incredibly important

Spit guards: 'Yes, yes, yes'

The Home Secretary's 'Yes, yes, yes' answer to questions about spit guards was met with rapturous applause from conference delegates.

Mike Stubbs from North Yorkshire Police told Amber Rudd that even though his force was small and rural, a number of officers had suffered the 'degrading and humiliating experience of being spat at in the face'.

He joked about the appearance at conference the previous day by shadow home secretary Diane Abbott, saying: "Your counterpart got about as lost on it as she did on the stage afterwards."

He then posed a question in three parts: "Do you understand what spit guards are? Do you understand why they are necessary? And will you support and back chief constables who choose to issue them?"

The Home Secretary simply gave her three word, three syllable answer and facilitator Ian Collins also joked: "So that's how you answer the spit guard question!"

and the Prime Minister has said there will be new legislation put in place for mental health issues at work. Steve has put a bid into the Police Transformation Fund and I hope to be able to support that if I'm re-elected."

SW: "The issue of welfare in the service is gaining traction at long last. But we need to make sure that officers, wherever they are, benefit from a level of care regardless of issues within their force. I think this will be truly transformational if it works and I'll hold the Home Secretary to what she's said in terms of supporting the bid if she's re-elected."

Paul Bennett, Northumbria: "Do you accept there is a direct link between officer workload, mental health and morale and what are you going to do to help us?"

AR: "I would acknowledge that link in any form of work, any walk of life and in policing on the front-line and with events we've seen recently, even more so, yes."

AJ Secker, Avon & Somerset: "We want you to tell the public that we don't have the capacity to deal with your incidents. Our Chief Constables have to tell the public but we want you to tell them, we want you to be honest with them and tell them we're 20,000 cops down so we can't go to some of their cries for help because of your policies."

AR: "The independent crime survey has stated very clearly that, until the recent rise

in violent crime over the last year, which is a different issue, crime has fallen by a third. Also, the PEEL reports show different areas having different successes so some areas are able to have strong responses and they are not the forces with the largest amounts of money but they have got excellent leadership. So I don't agree it's all about numbers and money, it's about great leadership being able to deliver with a tighter budget."

Nick Smart, West Yorkshire: "(Chief Constables) don't have the money to deal with demand. Will you give us more money for more cops? This is happening everywhere and if you're being told it's not happening, you need to change your advisors."

AR: "I'm sorry to hear the description of your force. I have visited forces over the past eight or nine months now and I haven't seen that

situation."

Nick: "Until you tell other agencies not to place the burden of first resort service on us, until you resolve that, we are always on the back foot."

AR: "We are trying to address the issue of making sure the police isn't the agency for every issue. I accept your invitation to come to West Yorks if I'm in position after 8 June."

Andy Symonds, Norfolk: "We're relying on officers' goodwill because HR cannot fill the gaps. We are firefighting and officers have had enough."

AR: "I don't have an answer to that but when I go on a tour around after 8 June, I'll come to see you..."

Andy: "But when you arrive at a force they've probably got officers on over-time they wouldn't normally have and jobs will be withheld while you're touring round so I

implore you to put a surprise visit in and see what is actually going on in forces."

AR: "Andy, you're going to be my first surprise visit."

Phill Matthews, Nottinghamshire: "Can I ask you to show your support for our members and police officers up and down the country to devote some Parliamentary time for looking at increasing sentences for those that assault our members, the police officers out there trying to keep you all safe?"

AR: "All assaults on public servants are treated as an aggravated crime so sentencing already reflects that and we have the legislation to do that. But I will keep it under review and keep looking at the numbers of crimes against police officers which are reported separately."

West Mids PC questions Home Secretary

A West Midlands officer asked Home Secretary Amber Rudd if there were any plans in place to divert non-police matters away from the police service to alleviate the burden on officers.

PC Scott Davies said: "Cutting crime, no more, no less, was a short-sighted view by the previous Home Secretary, but a step in the right direction, yet we seem to have gone to the other extreme. We get inundated with things that have nothing to do with the police, but as a service we still try to pick everything up and make it work for fear of criticism and accountability.

"It's time we started pushing back. It needs to be cut out before the police are even considered as a point of contact. In light of huge budget cuts to the police in recent years, what plans are in place to alleviate the burden placed upon officers, call handlers and the Force as a whole to divert non-police issues away from us?"

Ms Rudd responded: "It's not for Westminster or for me to tell you or your Chief Constable how to run and manage the police. We will always make sure the chief

constables have the right funds and tools to help them deliver on the ground and I would encourage them to bid into the Police Transformation Fund to help them to focus on areas they need to - visible policing and preventative work."

Talking about the other pressures on policing, she said: "I hope we're making good progress on mental health; there has been a £15 million investment in places of safety and there is a 50 per cent reduction in people with mental health issues using police cells. We have also set up hotlines to divert some issues such as fraud and maybe we could look at this again if we get re-elected on 8 June."

Scott has recently moved to Force Contact having worked Birmingham City Centre and says this influenced his question.

He explained: "I was surprised by the amount of logs we get that we try to resource when sometimes we should just say 'No'. We've had huge cuts over the years, crime isn't going down as the Home Secretary stated and demand just continues to rise. We simply do not have the capacity to deal with everything that comes our way like we did in

the past.

"For instance, some missing person reports shouldn't even grace our door, certainly, where there is a carer, a guardian or someone else able to conduct reasonable enquiries before it becomes a police matter. For instance, only this morning we have a log asking for a safe and well check on someone from a support worker. If they are a support worker, what or who are they actually supporting?"

"In regard to how the Force could manage things better, we simply need to tell people 'thanks for your call, but this is not a police matter, we won't be dealing', but the only time I ever see this is if we get an alarm call. If their alarm code has expired or does not match, we don't send anyone, yet, to me, any alarm reported IS a police matter, whether it's a false activation or not."

Scott says the answer he received was a typical politician's response, translated into 'It's not my problem', passing the book to chief officers. "Steve White hit the nail on the head, when he said invest or divest, i.e. give us the money to manage with the demand, or rid us of the burden placed upon us," he explained.

Chief sets out Force's challenges



West Midlands Police Chief Constable David Thompson.

Protecting The Protectors needs to start with emotional wellbeing - West Midlands Police Chief Constable David Thompson told conference as he welcomed delegates to Birmingham.

He spoke at the beginning of the two-day conference, which for the first time was held on his patch, saying: "The mental challenges of policing have become a bigger issue for the service.

"Many in policing feel over-criticised and under-valued. A 24/7 global and social media ensures your actions can create an almost instantaneous impact thousands of miles away. A growing trend to examine actions of staff in the past creates pressures on the service of today.

"Restricted pay growth at a time where family spending is coming under pressure could well test our ability to attract, retain and reward fairly. The emotional strain of

the role is no longer the preserve of the street cop with a growing number of staff exposed to online imagery of sexual abuse and radicalisation.

"It is positive that these strains are no longer things solved in the pub but our staff are now far more open to seeking help or support."

He spoke of services that are available to his officers in the West Midlands which allow them to seek the relevant help and support before saying all forces are going to need to spend more to care, nurture and support their staff.

And he confirmed West Midlands Police is to begin community consultation on issuing spit guards.

He said: "Policing this region is challenging for West Midlands officers. We face a full range of policing challenges ranging from one of the busiest road

systems, highly diverse communities, organised crime, and international terrorism to everyday neighbourhood issues.

"We are also a force that, like your own, is much smaller than in the recent past and doing ever more. WMP2020, our change programme, has re-modelled our force, re-focussing and adapting to our budget challenge, but more importantly enabling us to face head on the envisaged changes in demand as we see a rise in crime against those who are the most vulnerable and world-wide phenomena such as terrorism and cyber-crime. This is tough work and our staff work harder than ever."

He continued by telling Federation representatives: "You are right to ensure we have a well-equipped service. However, whilst we rightly want to equip staff well it is vital at a time of serious threat we move with care."

Mr Thompson raised concerns he had about how the changing appearance of policing may be affecting the way officers are seen by those they serve.

He explained: "It is important the debate on equipment is not an insular one and continues to secure public consent. This is something ever more important in cities like this one here with highly diverse communities.

"The greater our ability to project force to protect ourselves the more care we need to take on trust. It is a simple fact that, for a great many reasons, powers are used more frequently on some communities and groups than others."

He added: "Put simply the overwhelming majority of the public know we are on their side; however that relationship cannot be taken for granted."

He went on to speak about the Force's five-year programme 'Fairness in Policing' which has been launched to ensure it is a force that lives by the principles of procedural justice when dealing with staff and public.

He said: "In this search of continued legitimacy through fairer policing, I hope we can work with Government to look again at the misconduct and complaints arrangements which continue to reinforce a culture of blame and fear in our service and fails to satisfy anyone.

"Too often it acts as a sea anchor on real change. Most cops are simply good people trying to do their best in a very complex and imperfect world. We should not make this any harder."

And he concluded by reminding the rank and file that they 'should never forget' they do the best job in the world.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I sense challenging times lie ahead but exciting ones too," he told delegates.

"As I look at our new recruits who burst with pride to join our ranks we should never forget this is a huge honour and the best job in the world."

Officers unimpressed at crime figures claim

Delegates seemed unconvinced when police minister Brandon Lewis claimed crime had fallen by a third since 2010.

Making his conference debut having taken over the post last summer, Mr Lewis took part in the conference's simply titled Political Session.

He acknowledged that there were now 20,000 fewer officers than there were in 2010 and said: "As these police officer numbers have changed we've actually seen crime fall by about a third since 2010."

While officers seemed to laugh at his claim, he did admit recorded crime had increased but said it was a good thing as it showed victims of crime had more confidence in coming forward in the first place.

He started his speech by saying he wanted to focus on three key areas – professionalisation, IT and Protect The Protectors but first paid tribute to PC Keith Palmer who he said had given his life in the line of duty and that he was owed a debt of gratitude before going on to praise all officers who he said risked their lives to 'enable us to be safe and feel safe'.

"We truly do have the best police service in the world," he told delegates, adding that the Government's reform programme had been about recognising the professionalism in evidence in policing every day.

Reform was being led by people in policing and the service's professional body, the College of Policing which he said was delivering progress.

"We want to ensure the police workforce is flexible, capable and professional," he explained, adding that it was not just about developing new entry methods to policing but also giving existing officers access to training and career development.

Policing, he said, was dealing with the increased challenges of dealing with cyber-crime, child sexual exploitation and modern slavery. Tackling these issues needed varied skills and the police service had to adapt to meet the challenges of the future and tackle the growingly complex nature of crime.

There was a need, Mr Lewis explained, to move into the modern world with inter-operable IT.

"Our IT must move rapidly and evolve



Police minister Brandon Lewis.

rapidly," he said, adding that it needed to do so to keep up with cyber-crime.

It was now a case of making sure the police service had the skills to rise to these challenges with collaboration, he claimed, offering huge opportunities for greater efficiencies. Common standards were also needed across the whole criminal justice system.

Turning to the Protect The Protectors campaign, he said those who attacked police officers should 'face the full weight of the law' and that justice should be seen to be done.

He said: "What I can promise you is that both the Home Secretary and myself know your true value and we know how you deserve to know that justice will be served."

Much work to be done as the country 'stands at a crucial moment for policing and security'

Yvette Cooper believes the country 'stands at a crucial moment for policing and security' ahead of the upcoming General Election.

The former shadow home secretary called for more immediate work to be done to help the police service deal with the new challenges it faces in tackling crime and protecting communities.

Ms Cooper was invited to speak at conference as the chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee working on the inquiry into the Future of Policing. That was, however, brought to an abrupt end by the announcement of a snap General Election.

Ms Cooper praised the work of officers across the country and paid tribute to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

She explained how the inquiry had been launched to recognise the needs of modern policing and the crucial work police did for defending public safety every day.

"We stand at a crucial moment for policing and security. For the safety of our communities and for the new challenges we face. There are many strengths of the police



Yvette Cooper.

that we should be proud of but we need a workforce that is supported and not overstretched," said Ms Cooper.

"Your work on the Protect The Protectors campaign is immensely important to make sure that the police are not stretched to the limits.

"But there is a serious shortage of detectives and a lack of investment in communications and IT for the police.

"We have important partnerships in our communities but they are at risk of being undermined by the way in which services are being pulled back. We also lead the world in counter-terror but careless handling of the Brexit process could put that at risk.

"We have seen crime changing and some of that is falling but other crimes are going up. We have seen a big change in the scale of online crime, now likely to be equivalent to all other crimes put together.

"We see growing non-crime demands and around 70 to 80 per cent of the pressure on forces is not crime, but the wider issue of public safety and protection.

"The past Home Secretary has said that the purpose of policing is crime. No more, no less. I just strongly disagree.

"The purpose of policing is never less and is always so much more about the security

and safety of our public and making sure we have strong and resilient communities and keeping people safe for now and in the future. Too often picking up the pieces where other services fail."

Ms Cooper challenged the Government to come up with more resources and a proper plan to help the police tackle their work after the General Election.

She also criticised Google and Twitter and said that social media companies needed to do more to help police deal with online crime.

"There is some fantastic work being done but we are simply not keeping up," she said. "The HMIC has raised the red flag recently and they were damning words which we must take seriously.

"The practical issue is that we simply need more police on our streets. Some 20,000 police officers have been lost over the last six or seven years. We were told that would have little effect on front-line policing - but it has. We still don't have the resources to make sure that the police can do their job. I want to see 10,000 more police officers on our streets across the country.

"We should all make sure that policing is central to the debate over the next few years. Police are the public and the public are the police."

Calls for officer protection to 'dominate Parliament's agenda' after election

Prospective parliamentary candidate for Halifax, Holly Lynch, has called for the issues surrounding the Protect The Protectors campaign to 'dominate the agenda in Parliament' after the General Election on 8 June.

She told the Federation's national conference that there should be increased police numbers and stiffer sentences for those who assault them.

With the help of the Federation, she has drafted new legislation which will lead to tougher sentences and better protection if adopted.

Also addressing the conference, the chair of West Yorkshire Police Federation, Nick Smart, agreed something needed to be done quickly as he believed that police officers had become 'society's punch bags' and that there was 'no deterrent' for those who assault them within current legislation.

Ms Lynch has been a strong advocate of stiffer sentences for those who assault police officers, staff and other emergency service workers since she went out on patrol with the West Yorkshire Police in her

constituency and saw exactly what officers have to deal with.

She told delegates she was so scared for an officer's safety at one stage during an altercation that she called 999 from the police car to request back-up.

"I saw for myself how quickly situations can escalate and how vulnerable officers are when they are out on their own," she said.

"To assault an officer shows complete disregard for law and order and our shared values. If officers are not safe, then our communities are not safe.

"If an officer is assaulted at any time, it must be recorded and must be subject to a robust investigation. Officers must have the confidence that those involved will be investigated and prosecuted accordingly.

"An assault on an officer is an assault on society. This severity of violence directed at police officers is just unacceptable.

"With the Federation, we have looked at drafting a new piece of legislation. My bill would open up much tougher sentences and the second part of that bill will deal with the hideous acts of spitting and biting.



Holly Lynch.

"These changes need to be on the agenda of every candidate seeking election so that this issue dominates the agenda in Parliament after 8 June," she added. "We need to restore and protect the brave men and women behind the uniforms.

Nick Smart said that everyone in the room needed to put pressure on those in power to make urgent changes after the election.

"At last year's conference Theresa May



PC Mike Bruce (second from left) is interviewed by facilitator Ian Collins (left) as West Yorkshire Federation chair Nick Smart and Holly Lynch look on.

said that some of the sentences (for assaulting officers) were too soft and that was wrong. But 12 months later, we are still fighting for officers' rights and stiffer deterrents, for spit guards, for increased roll-out of Taser, for protection for drivers – and it's quite a frustrating thing to constantly plead for something that should already be there," he said.

"There is stuff going on to cops on a daily basis and it is stuff that the public don't see. It's a sacrifice that they are making and a lot of the time, the sentences do not reflect the physical and mental injuries sustained.

"Less than 10 per cent of offenders get a custodial sentence. That is not justice. Our cops don't think it is and that is why they don't bother recording it because they have no faith in the criminal justice system.

"The vast majority of MPs agree with us – so that begs the question: why is it so damn hard to change legislation to bring in stiffer sentences? It is our responsibility to continue the debate.

"We are calling for stiffer sentences. If there is no deterrent, how are people going to change their behaviour? Assaults are going up and more violent assaults are going up. Something needs to change.

"We have drafted legislation for the Home Office. It's there to go. It's there to go for aggravated assault on a police officer. We are in a position where MPs will listen to us and listen to what we are doing. My plea to you is help us campaign for this for the right reasons. We all need to put pressure on those in power."

Speaking at the end of the discussion on the Protect The Protectors campaign, a West Midlands officer, who endured injections, medication and 'six months of worry' after being spat upon by an assailant, has also called for politicians to help change legislation to give police more protection.

PC recalls spit dripping off his face

A West Midlands officer, who endured injections, medication and 'six months of worry' after being spat upon by an assailant, has called for politicians to help change legislation to give police more protection.

PC Mike Bruce told the Federation's national conference in Birmingham that he had 'spit dripping off his face' after an incident outside a pub in Holbrook, Coventry in April last year. His colleague, PC Alan O'Shea, had blood spat in his face when he came to help.

It was the start of a long process of tests to make sure that neither officer had contracted HIV or Hepatitis B or C and also led to PC Bruce's two children, aged one and nine, requiring blood tests too.

None of that worry would have had to have been endured had legislation been in place to make the arrested man take a blood test to see if he had any of the diseases that could be contracted.

And PC O'Shea's ordeal would not have happened either had PC Bruce had a spit guard at his disposal. West Midlands Police are currently discussing that possibility.

"Myself and Alan were just about to go off duty when we heard an almighty scream of a back-up call over the radio from a response officer," said PC Bruce. "When we arrived, I saw a colleague struggling with two men, a father and son.

"I pulled the father away and he started throwing punches and kicking me. We went on the floor and I was trying to restrain him but he turned round, looked me in the eye and spat in my face. It went in my left eye and down my mouth. I had

spit dripping off my face. It was disgusting. I would rather have been punched in the face.

"PC O'Shea came over and was acting as a peace-maker. The guy had a bit of blood in his mouth and spat that blood in Al's face. If we had the spit guards, I would have pulled it out after I had been spat on and that would have protected Al.

"We were carted off to hospital because it went in our mouths and eyes and was treated as a needle injury. We had injections and medications to stop the onset of possible HIV and Hepatitis B and C.

"There was six months of worry. Within my first month of medication, the GP told me I tested positive for Hepatitis B, which later proved to be a false reading. At the time, my whole world caved in. My wife and I were thinking about having a third child and I thought we were never going to be able to do that because of a positive test. My one and nine-year-olds had to have blood tests and Al and I went back every two weeks for more blood tests.

"If there was legislation in place for the prisoner to have a blood test, it would have stopped all of that worry but he is under no obligation. He was charged with assault on me and Al. He got a suspended sentence and had to pay me £250 and Al £500.

"These spit guards are solely there so that if someone is spitting or trying to bite, there is something there to protect us. I would invite politicians to come out with us and see what goes on. It's about getting out there and educating them."

Modern slavery: 'the greatest human rights issue of our time'

Modern slavery is the 'greatest human rights issue of our time', the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner told conference during a Tuesday afternoon break-out session.

Kevin Hyland, a former head of the Met's anti-trafficking unit, also admitted that it was a sad reflection on today's world that his post - established under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 - was even needed, given that slavery was abolished 180 years ago.

He said this 'hidden crime' affects 45.8 million people today, equivalent to the population of Spain, compared to around 11 million people before it was abolished.

Many of the victims of modern slavery can be found working in factories, fields, in the fishing industry, and car wash outlets. They were, the commissioner explained, often housed in squalid conditions.

"There has been a huge growth in the problem. Our approach has changed significantly for the better. It has been a steep learning

process but the expertise to deal with vulnerable victims and serious organised crime already exists within policing," Mr Hyland told delegates.

He said there had been 3,805 allegations of modern slavery recorded by the national referral mechanism but only 117 prosecutions and just 31 convictions. The attitude in the past had been to pass on the problem rather than tackle it and he had been shocked to find incidents catalogued on spreadsheets and not being tackled.

The commissioner went on to call for improved training for officers through the College of Policing to enable police to detect slavery and recognise the victims, rather than charging them for being complicit in cannabis farms, prostitution or other criminal activity. He also said there needed to be greater commitment by forces to record allegations and investigate incidents, backed with the necessary financial investment.

New joint approach to better protect police drivers

Dogged determination seems to have paid off for West Midlands Police Federation's deputy secretary Tim Rogers who, as the national Federation's response driving lead, has been spearheading a campaign for a change in the law to give better protection to police drivers.

West Mercia's Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, roads policing lead at the National Police Chiefs' Council, signalled at conference that he would work closely with the Federation on the issue.

Tim was making a reluctant return to the conference stage, having outlined the Federation's campaign at conference last year he had been hoping for more progress in the intervening year – given that the Federation has been calling for a change in the law for seven years.

Instead he had found more officers were being prosecuted for simply doing their job.

Heading a panel made up of Mr Bangham and Mark Aldred, a barrister and former police officer involved in the campaign, Tim introduced the session explaining the lack of legal protection for officers in pursuit or response drives.

The current legislation means that regardless of their training and experience, they 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.

The current guidelines, Tim said, were unsatisfactory and unworkable leaving officers risking their liberty and livelihood.

"We are not asking for you to be able to drive carelessly and dangerously," he told

OUR REP SAYS:

"Steve White requested that the Home Secretary support a change in the law to protect officers who are being prosecuted because their training is not recognised when they use those skills responding to incidents and protecting the public. He warned her that even though we don't want to we may have to warn officers not to exceed speed limits when responding to incidents."

Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation



West Midlands Police Federation's deputy secretary Tim Rogers.

delegates, "But the training you get has to be reflected in roads policing legislation."

The Federation is planning to write to all police drivers to warn them of all the risks they face. The Federation's suggested amendment to wording was, Tim said, seen as 'a sensible starting point' by many people.

CC Bangham gave a commitment to working with the Federation to ensure that police drivers get the best training and agreed that pursuit drivers needed better protection.

He said: "There's a possibility of a law change, but it will take a long time. The DPP

guidance needs to be changed to better reflect the realities of police driving so we can work towards the very best protection for officers."

But Mr Aldred pointed out that the DPP guidance had already been changed to reflect the need for protection, in conjunction with the Federation a few years ago.

"It's not about the guidance. Officers don't get charged with running a red light - if something happens, it gets dressed up as dangerous or careless driving, and that's the problem. The issue with guidance is it's just that, guidance," he told conference.

A life on hold...

Merseyside police officer James Ellerman also gave a presentation at conference, talking about his own experiences of being prosecuted for dangerous driving after preventing a man who had been riding a motorcycle recklessly in Liverpool returning to the city centre by knocking him from the vehicle using his police van.

He talked about the stress he went through during the investigation, the sleepless nights, shaking with fear at the thought of being sent to prison and the fact that the up and coming trial had overshadowed the birth of his second daughter. His life, he said, was put on hold.

He explained that he felt he had no alternative but, using his knowledge, training and experience to cause the collision. He feared someone would be injured or killed if the motorcyclist was not stopped.

"I had to stop him returning to the city, I couldn't do nothing," said James, explaining that he felt he had to fulfil his duties of protecting the public, protecting property and that the motorcyclist posed a risk to the public.

On arresting the motorcyclist, he



found he was riding a stolen bike and was disqualified from driving.

He thought that would be the end of it but it was just the beginning. He was served with gross misconduct papers and prosecuted.

The judge finally cleared him, saying of James' intervention 'he was damned if he did and damned if he didn't'.

Diane Abbott under fire for spit guard scepticism

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott came under fire from delegates for her sceptical views on spit guards during her conference session.

Ms Abbott delivered a speech in which she praised police for their work in a difficult climate and reaffirmed the Labour Party's commitment to introduce an extra 10,000 officers if they win the upcoming General Election.

But at the end of her address, she was put on the spot during a question and answers session, having been cautious towards the use of spit guards in the past.

She explained that she needed to see more evidence on the health implications of using them before she was prepared to back a nationwide introduction.

"I have been looking at the evidence in relation to spit guards and I continue to look at that evidence," she said. "I have never said I am against them in principle but like any fresh equipment or power, I want to see the evidence of what they would do, particularly in relation to the health risk.

"Among the groups that I have consulted with are groups who represent those with Hepatitis C and those with HIV, and they argue that you don't catch Hepatitis C or HIV from being spat at. It's about looking at the research and coming to a view."

Officers advocating the introduction of spit guards argue that the very act of being spat upon should be enough to warrant protection for police, whatever the risk of infection may be.

Ms Abbott then claimed that the Metropolitan Police could be the first force to use them – clearly unaware that around half of the forces in England and Wales already do.

Che Donald, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) lead on firearms said he was astonished by her comments.

"Not only was she ill-informed, she was ill-advised and for some of those comments, I stood with my mouth open because I could not believe what I was hearing from the shadow home secretary," he said.

"I would rather be punched in the face than spat at. It's unacceptable, it's a blight on society and it needs to be eradicated. If it takes education to stop people doing this then so be it. Anyone who comes to work and puts their life on the line like our officers do on a daily basis deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

"And if we're going to be spat at, and our assault figures shows that it happens on a



regular basis, then we need to have the appropriate protections there to protect it from happening further."

Earlier in her address, Ms Abbott had criticised the Conservative Party's cuts to policing.

"Tory speeches say one thing but their cuts to policing say another," she said, "Tory cuts may prove even more damaging to the public than the cuts to the NHS and education are proving now."

Facilitator Ian Collins was applauded by delegates when he offered some clarity on the use of spit guards.

The shadow home secretary, in answer to a question on the issue, said she wanted to see evidence as to what they would do, particularly in relation to health risks.

Ian said: "Let me help you out, I am not an expert on this but I think the theory is if someone spits in your face you use the spit guard to stop them doing that."

“Not only was she ill-informed, she was ill-advised and for some of those comments, I stood with my mouth open because I could not believe what I was hearing from the shadow home secretary.”

Che Donald, PFEW lead on firearms.

More support needed for officers with mental health issues

There is robust evidence police officers' mental health and welfare is being put at risk by high workloads and falling numbers - and it would be 'nothing short of negligence' if chief constables fail to act on it, conference was told.

Che Donald, the Federation's national lead on mental health and welfare, warned: "The real threat facing policing now and in the future is the lack of care, compassion and welfare provision for our members."

He said a nine-point plan for police forces to help tackle identified issues in these areas is soon to go out to consultation. It has been created using the 16,000 responses to the Federation's welfare survey.

Che hopes a final version of the plan will be adopted with the same support as the seven-point action plan on assaults.

He received reassurance from Chief Constable Sara Thornton, chair of the NPCC, that chief constables would be fully involved in the consultation and in improving mental health and welfare for police officers.

They were both speaking in the first debate of the conference - PFEW Welfare Survey - What Does It Mean To You? - alongside Sir Thomas Winsor, chief inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Matthew Scott, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, Association for Police and Crime Commissioners' lead for performance and deputy lead for mental health.

Since 2016, he said, further analysis of the Federation's welfare survey responses had revealed robust evidence that demand, capacity and officer wellbeing are linked.

In the survey, 66 per cent of respondents

said their workloads are too high (greater than in the Armed Forces); the majority said they did not have the time to do any proactive policing nor did they have the time to do the job to a standard of which they could be proud. Only nine per cent felt they had enough officers to meet all the demands made on their team.

A third of respondents said their jobs are 'very' or 'extremely' stressful; police officers' psychological wellbeing is poorer than that of the general public with 80 per cent saying they had experienced feelings of anxiety, stress or other mental health wellbeing difficulties - and in 92 per cent of these cases work was cited as a factor.

One police officer was quoted as saying: "I just feel despair at the amount of change, the volume of change, a general lack of morale in the workplace. It makes coming into work at the moment a pretty miserable experience."

Che said the survey results revealed: "Increased demand and decreased capacity is taking its toll on our members, it is affecting their mental health and it is impacting on the service we provide to the public we swore to keep safe."

There is, he said, a duty of care to officers but pointed to insufficient appropriate support for those who need it most; 40 per cent of police officers were unaware of support services offered by their force to support mental health and wellbeing.

Many officers (45 per cent) felt they are not encouraged to talk about mental health and welfare issues. One third of respondents who had previously sought help with mental health difficulties said they did not disclose this to their line manager.

Officers were repeatedly being placed in the 'fiery kiln on the front-line' and were 'bending over backwards' to meet demands.

There is still, Che says, a stigma around mental health and for many police officers it is a dilemma whether or not to disclose.

He also pointed out the Welfare Support Programme set up by PFEW to support officers had peaked recently with 600 officers being supported.

He added: "This is a programme which was set up to assist officers to work in conjunction with their force's occupational health or welfare programmes. Yet what we are finding more and more is forces have cut these invaluable services or farmed them out to third party employee assistance programmes."

Support services, he said, have not always proved adequate. He described the case of one officer who had bravely asked for help after dealing with a number of horrific and traumatic incidents in a short space of time. She accessed one of the third party services expecting to see a trauma counsellor and found herself talking to a marriage guidance counsellor.

He also highlighted a need to focus on the availability and quality of training to help support officers experiencing mental health difficulties. Only 21 per cent of line managers said they had had specific training.

Sara Thornton acknowledged a demand/capacity imbalance, pointing out that those crimes that are rising in numbers - such as sexual and violent crime - are often the most complex and complicated.

She added: "Honour-based violence, child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, all again

Sir Thomas Winsor, chief inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

take more skill, more knowledge and more time. So, I think, it is probably uncontested that there is more work, fewer people and the work has got more complicated."

Crime she said only accounts for around 20 per cent of police time so there is also the time demands of all the other work to consider.

She also acknowledged the nature of police work means officers put themselves in harm's way and that the work can be harrowing, draining and demanding. Figures published last year show sickness for psychological reasons is up a third in the past five years and the figures for long-term sickness published last summer up by 11.5 per cent in a year.

Last November, the Policing 2015 Vision, prioritising wellbeing, was agreed and all forces have signed a Public Health Charter which prioritises workplace wellbeing.

She added: "I think we are beginning to address that stigma around mental health issues. In particular in policing I think we have a 'be strong culture' - that it is weak to show frailty, it is weak to explain and share your concerns and we need to tackle that. It is not weak, it is the way for us to be a healthy organisation."

Sir Thomas Winsor described the welfare of police officers as a 'matter of first importance' to officers, to staff, to the leaders of forces and to the public who rely heavily on the police to keep them safe, maintain order and arrest offenders.

He spoke of the 'harrowing' things that police officers must face in their daily lives and said it was little wonder they could have 'profound and life-long effects' which officers take home.

"We must ask: do forces properly assess and deal with the effects of these things on their officers, on their own mental health and welfare? Let us also acknowledge to understand the knock-on effects on officers' families and those close to them ... When officers lie awake, unable to dispel what it is they have seen and they may withdraw into depression and worse. Then their families suffer too as they try to support and cope with the effects on their own loved ones."

He added: "Do forces have adequate systems for assessing these things and providing the necessary support? I think the survey we have just heard about gives a lot of answers."

Not only does it matter in compassionate terms for the individual but, he said: "If a police force's primary assets - its people - are under undue strain whether in terms of workload or the nature of the work they do and the effects of that work on them, then the force's ability to serve the public is itself compromised and that places not only the officers concerned and their families at even greater risk, it also places the welfare of others in the force at risk because an officer is impaired and therefore it places the public at risk."

He said policing can and should be made

more efficient but warned the ability for more effective policing with the resources in question is jeopardised and impaired if the officers themselves are impaired physically or mentally or both.

He praised the 'can do, will do' attitude of the police but said it was not an excuse for failures higher up in planning, demand management, resource deployment, equipment provision and personal support for individual officers.

Mandatory annual Force Management Statements are being introduced by HMIC this year and will include a statement by chief constables to identify projected demand of their force, the state of the workforce and kit and the financial resources for the next four years. Those statements will, he said include a focus on the mental health and welfare of officers as well as their physical condition and a statement on how they are supported.

Matthew Scott praised the PFEW for all the work it is doing around the topic of mental health and said campaigns such as #truepicture mean more and more people are understanding what life on the front-line is really like for police officers.

However, he said, there are demands on police time which should not be there and which are contributing to stresses - the time taken to deal, for instance, with individuals suffering from mental health illness when other agencies such as the NHS are not available.

An honest debate

It's time for an 'honest debate with the public about some of the things we cherish but which are no longer affordable', Sara Thornton said in response to a question from Andy Symonds from Norfolk on workloads.

Andy said that those who went sick as they were unable to cope, returned to work from sickness to find themselves facing the same high workloads which had contributed to their sickness in the first place.

In her response, the chief constable said while there were still things that could be done to reduce workloads and improve efficiencies - better collaboration on specialist resources, joint procurement and new technologies - money plays a part in what any force can deliver.

Che Donald responded saying problems arise from trying to split finite resources. He said the only way around was to either reduce the amount of crime we investigate or find additional funding to allow greater recruitment.

Another questioner asked whether Sir Thomas Winsor's view of the police force had changed since he had become chief inspector at HMIC.

Sir Thomas replied his 'admiration for the police has increased exponentially because of the arduous work that is done' but insisted that in his review he had been guided by expert advice.

However, he too called for an honest debate with the public. "The police cannot meet all demand - we do not even know

what all demand is but you have to have the best assessment of what that demand is, crime and non-crime which is a huge proportion of the demand on the police, latent and patent demand. Until those things are assessed, the condition of the assets are properly understood, you cannot have the honest debate with the public because you know what, I think that if you have a proper assessment of the demand, the assets to meet that demand and the money you have got you are going to find it does not add up."

From the floor, Richard Eccles from North Wales asked why there was not more first aid training for officers to help them recognise and support colleagues experiencing mental health difficulties and to assist them in the short-term. He said it seemed something that would be 'really, really simple' to set up, but that appeared to be lacking.

Matthew Scott said mental health first aid training was recognised as part of the solution. Che Donald referred him to a scheme in South Wales being rolled out giving training to Fed reps and said the nine-point plan going out to consultation included specific reference to training that was bottom up as well as top down.

Sir Thomas confirmed the new Force Management Statements would identify the need for training so officers can recognise the signs in their own colleagues.

In a straw poll on the conference App asking: "Is your force doing enough to provide access to the necessary assistance for officers and staff who need help for mental help?" 86 per cent said 'No.'

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Call for mental health to be made a priority

Chief constables' number one priority should be the mental health and wellbeing of officers and staff, according to a former officer who gave an account of harrowing incidents he dealt with during his time with North Yorkshire Police.

In a conference break-out session, entitled Mental Health – It's Time We Talked, medically retired sergeant Ed Simpson told delegates about the turmoil he went through before his depression was identified. For several years he had not realised he was ill but felt he was bad at his job and that others around him were feeling the same but just coping better.

Mr Simpson traced the start of his illness back to his work as a family liaison officer and one particular incident where the 'shield' protecting him fell apart.

"The more I did it, the stronger the invisible shield became. I dealt with the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl, bashed over the head with a rock. I stood over her body for 10 hours, water off a duck's back – because that's what officers do," he recalled.

"The job that did it was a 17-year-old lad that had been killed in a car accident. I went to the mortuary with his parents and there wasn't a mark on his body. When we walked in, the mother screamed, a scream like I'd never heard before. It was like an opera singer hitting that high note and shattering the glass. I felt grief, horror, and that changed me forever.

"I didn't understand how I could be depressed because I wasn't sad. I felt like the service I'd always wanted to be in had abandoned me. Individuals didn't, but the



Ed Simpson brought home the realities of officers suffering mental health issues.

police service did."

After six months off sick, he was put on half pay.

"I found out on the way to the hospital for my son to be born - and in the nappy aisle of Tesco I fell out of love with the police. I felt rubbish and weak – I didn't even know which nappies I could afford for my newborn son," he told the meeting.

He remembers a brief mental health session where he was given a stress ball, but said much more needs to be done, and equal measure should be given to both mental health support and protective equipment.

Mr Simpson encouraged police leaders to spend more money on protecting the wellbeing of their officers.

He explained: "Investment is needed in

policing because you can't have single crewing, not just for safety but for being able to talk to colleagues properly. The number one priority for chiefs should be the mental health and wellbeing of officers and staff.

"To think you want to kill yourself is the worst feeling. You're not thinking rationally, a horrible low point to be at. Too many cops end up as a statistic. It's too many. We're not talking about it. You need to make sure it's on the agenda."

He highlighted an alarming statistic - in 2013, 29 police officers committed suicide – and suggested that if 29 officers were killed on duty in one year, more would be done.

'We need to support each other'

Police officers need to look after themselves and not be afraid to speak up about mental health, around 100 delegates were told at a break-out session during the second day of conference.

The session was led by Graham Richens from the learning and development team at the national Federation HQ.

A former Met officer, Graham suffered mental illness himself and explained how many factors contributed to his ill-health, including seeing 'too many' colleagues injured and even killed in the line of duty.

During the session, delegates were invited to share their experiences of mental health.

"Around 80 per cent of officers have suffered mental ill-health," Graham explained, "One in four experience it every year.

"We see things that the public are ordinarily protected from. We experience extremes. But police officers feel isolated and

alone. We need to protect ourselves – we need to talk about it and be able to identify both in ourselves and our colleagues when things aren't right."

The wide-ranging levels of trauma support were explained along with the need for Federation reps to undertake a course on mental health first aid.

Graham added: "We need to be there for each other, listen to each other, talk to each other - accept responses unconditionally, give care and support and be compassionate. We need to understand stressors and signs of mental illness, help and support each other and give and receive care to each other."

Officers' mental health was a recurrent theme in conference with several speakers linking a rise in reports of officers suffering mental health problems to the cuts to police budgets and falling officer numbers.



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calm and organisation. ”**

Helen Walker, police widow

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Watchdog attacked for making firearms officers feel like suspects

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has come under a withering attack for making firearms officers involved in a serious incident 'feel like suspects rather than witnesses'.

Che Donald, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) lead on firearms, was hugely critical of the IPCC, who he accused of showing a 'lack of trust' in firearms officers.

Later in the Firearms Officers – Witnesses or Suspects session, Sarah Green, the deputy chair of the IPCC, gave her response and outlined the processes they had to go through.

He said that incidents where firearms have been discharged are very low in the UK. From April 2015 to March 2016, there were 14,753 firearms operations but they were only discharged on seven occasions.

As a result, he praised officers in England

and Wales who volunteer to carry firearms for being the best trained and most restrained in the world.

But he said those officers face a testing time if they discharge their weapon with the current Post-Incident Procedures (PIP) that are in place which say that officers should be separated from their colleagues.

"Once a firearms officer discharges a weapon on behalf of the state and in order to protect themselves or the public, they are meant to be treated as professional witnesses. However, if you speak to many firearms officers about this point, they will tell you a different story," he explained.

"An overwhelming majority will say the way they are currently dealt with makes them feel more like a suspect. There is only one reason for this, the IPCC. Many officers believe that IPCC investigations start to establish blame not fact.

He claimed that the issue of separation was the main cause of concern in PIPs. He said there were grave concerns about the IPCC's insistence that officers should be separated at the post-incident suite to avoid 'collusion'.

"They stress that separation is not segregation but there is a perception of a lack of trust by the IPCC. It infers that officers will collude. I believe the issue of separation is flawed and unnecessary.

"The IPCC are there to ensure that the incident is investigated. The problem I have is that we are currently in a position where the police force is struggling with trust, faith and confidence in the IPCC and this is not a healthy place to be."

Ms Green said that out of 25

investigations into firearms incidents since 2010, there had only been three cases where officers were served with notices of investigation.

The IPCC had only used its powers of arrest once and she added that a member of the public involved in a death would not be given 24 hours to compose themselves before questioning, so there was a case for equal treatment towards officers.

"We believe that having clear procedures will protect officers and ensure consistency in approach," she said.

Former Met firearms officer Tony Long also told conference about his 25 years as a specialist firearms officer and trainer covering incidents in which he had fired a weapon. Investigators looking at the incidents later had the benefit of hindsight, freeze-framed videos and took months, and sometimes years, to review those decisions officers made in a split second when facing a life-threatening situation.

Investigators, Tony said, need to know there is a difference between human recall and the product of a video and explained that video footage and separating officers would not produce best evidence.

He outlined how an investigation launched after he shot Azelle Rodney in 2005 had hung over him 'like a cloud', cost him work and therefore caused financial hardship until finally he was cleared.

He called on the IPCC to show the same duty of care, empathy and sympathy to firearms officers involved in shootings as they showed to victims' families saying their own families were equally victims in these incidents.



Former Met firearms officer Tony Long.



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IPCC comes under scrutiny

The chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) found herself under scrutiny when she faced frustrated officers during a Tuesday afternoon conference session called Moving From Discipline To Performance.

Dame Anne Owers outlined plans for structural changes at the police watchdog in her address but was on the receiving end of most of the questions from delegates afterwards with officers raising concerns about the length of inquiries.

The session began with Phill Matthews, the Federation's lead in this area, stating that police conduct should move away from blame and punishment and towards learning and development and that the system needed to be fairer, quicker and more effective.

The re-writing of police discipline regulations through the Police and Crime Bill provided an opportunity for this to happen.

Phill said: "We want to encourage forces, the IPCC and PCCs that a more proportionate way of dealing with complaints is to look at everything through the spectrum of performance from the very start."

Currently the system seemed to encourage investigations to start as gross misconduct/criminal proceedings and work backwards towards performance. Lengthy investigations, measured in years rather than months, were in no-one's interest, he pointed out.

Reluctance to use the Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) was also causing issues with discipline reps across the country dealing with conduct cases where UPP could have been used instead.

He explained: "There are very few officers who start their day deliberately intending to breach the standards of professional behaviour; that is not why any of us come to work."

And he recognised the need for an independent organisation to look at complaints about the police service but it needed to be proportionate and pragmatic and not adversarial, concentrating on the aim of improving future service to the public. It also needed to command the trust and confidence of the police service itself.

There needed to be speedy assessments of cases in the first instance with only those where there appeared to be a reckless, deliberate or conscious decision to breach the standards of professional behaviour progressing to misconduct or gross misconduct proceedings.

Vic Marshall, professional standards lead at the Superintendents' Association and a Police Federation advisor, echoed Phill's views, explaining that the 2008 conduct regulations were brought in on the

back of the Taylor report which aimed to move away from blame and sanction to development and improvement.

He said a scale needed to be considered whereby at one end were the vast majority of officers who did a very good job and at the other were the very few corrupt and dishonest officers, in the middle would be a small section made up of human frailty where ill-health could perhaps play out in the behaviour of an individual.

"Yes there will be times when cops fall short but that does not make it bad and naughty behaviour; it is not all about misconduct," he told the conference.

Where officers did not get it right, he explained, forces needed to be brave enough to say sorry, explain what went wrong and learn from that experience so it could get better.

"What I really hope is that the police service grasps this second opportunity to re-think how it approaches these things," he said, adding: "It didn't land when we first brought this in. We've got to achieve it this time around."

The next speaker in this session was Chief Constable Craig Guildford, NPCC lead for conduct and performance, who began by saying that the vast majority of officers did get it right and that the organisation was good at identifying bad apples.

Dame Anne then told delegates that investigations – they were now carrying out around 600 a year - were often hampered by a lack of co-operation from witnesses but also acknowledged blame and accountability needed to be separated.

The IPCC reform would lead to a new director general heading the organisation with a team of regional directors allowing for a single point of contact for forces.

The watchdog chair said moving forward she would like to see joint investigations that took into account not just what was going on in policing but what was going on in health care too because too often there was focus on the incident the police were involved in rather than how did it get that way.

She said everyone involved in the current process needed to improve their game and the culture, which she argued had led to the failure for the previous conduct reforms to stick, and explained: "We all have to work together to get a system which does work in the way that it should, and be able to properly deal with people who have done things that police officers shouldn't be doing or those whose incompetence is too great for the job they are doing."



Dame Anne Owers.



Vic Marshall.



Phill Matthews.

Pay reforms on their way, says NPCC lead



Chief Constable Francis Habgood.

Plans for officer pay including the introduction of the controversial Licence to Practise for high risk roles, a possible Registration to Practise to reinforce core skills, Advanced Practitioners and the new apprenticeship scheme were outlined by the NPCC lead for pay and conditions during a Wednesday break-out session.

The plans align closely with a review of rank structure, which Chief Constable Francis Habgood also discussed during his presentation.

He told delegates that while there was good and bad in the current pay structure he felt it was better to introduce a whole new structure rather than adapt the existing provisions.

"In my view, increments based on time served don't have a role to play in the future. I don't think regional pay works. But as an example, I could imagine top level constables earning more than entry level sergeants."

Delegates expressed concerns that

apprenticeships, expected to start next year, could bring a starting salary drop of 20 per cent from the current entry level.

Officers said a low salary could exclude older entrants and those with families, as the average start age for new police officers is currently 28. A potential starting salary for apprentices of £19,773 would leave an individual with just £35 of disposable income after living costs.

The Thames Valley Chief Constable set out the principles for pay – a basic national pay structure, local flexibility (linked to the cost of living), a link between pay and contribution, recognising competence and skills, a review of increments based on time served, the consolidation of appropriate allowances, a link between risk, responsibility and scale of role and the fact that the total reward package must be fair.

CC Habgood said: "Ultimately police pay has to be fair for people who work for forces and also for taxpayers."

A black and white photograph of a woman with short, curly hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark jacket and a patterned scarf. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.

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UK Police Memorial: 'important to every single one of us'

Help raise £10 a head for each Federation member by July and a new UK Police Memorial could be dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum next year - that was the appeal made by Lord Stevens of Kirkwhelpington, patron of the Police Arboretum Memorial Trust, at conference.

Lord Stevens, who had himself been a Federation rep 50 years ago, was speaking as part of the launch of a public appeal for the memorial which will bear the names of 1,400 fallen officers and staff.

The police, Lord Stevens said, are a family that comes together as a sign of unity and support when one of their own dies. The new memorial, he told delegates, was 'absolutely essential' and 'important to every single one of us'.

He explained: "PC Palmer's death has put greater emphasis on the need to create a place where the nation can honour and commemorate our police service and where family, friends and colleagues of those killed on duty can go to carry out personal acts of remembrance.

"We need to establish a fitting memorial that recognises the vital contribution that policing makes to our society and acknowledges the courage and sacrifice made by police officers and police staff who have paid the ultimate price. That tribute

must become part of the fabric of our national life."

And he added: "Policing is our country's gift to the world... but to have no fitting memorial at the national place of remembrance, the National Memorial Arboretum, that honours our men and women who have lost their lives fulfilling their duty just cannot be right."

He stressed: "Families struck by the loss of a loved one on duty need to be able to remember and reflect on their death in a peaceful and tranquil environment. The service really needs a place where large acts of commemoration can take place, and society needs a place that inspires a deep understanding and appreciation of policing on the part of every one of its citizens."

He also revealed the memorial had the support of HRH Duke of Cambridge. In a message, Lord Stevens read out at conference the Duke wrote: "The UK is recognised around the world as the home of modern policing although, as recent events have reminded us, that rich heritage is interwoven with sacrifice... It is high time a police memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum existed to act as a focal point for remembrance and gratitude."

So far £2.5 million has been raised of the £4m needed to complete the memorial at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire and

a corresponding digital presence which will tell the story of policing and those who have fallen, including the ability to search by names and dates, leave messages, record visits and provide an educational resource.

A Living Memorial Trust will also be established to both maintain the memorial and provide support for families of the fallen when they need it most.

The money raised so far includes many generous donations. The Government has given £1m from the Libor Fund, with Lord Stevens saying: "This is money taken from those who exhibited the worst in human behaviour but we are giving it to those who demonstrate the best."

He also explained: "A new UK Police Memorial will not replace local and regional memorials but will complement them, just as the Cenotaph complements the Armed Forces memorial at the Memorial Arboretum and the thousands of other military memorials throughout every village, town and city in our country."

Lord Stevens said that if sufficient funds are pledged by July when the Police Bravery Awards ceremony takes place it would be feasible to dedicate a new memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum next year.

To find out more about the memorial, its design and the digital projects around it go to www.ukpolicememorial.org

Lord Stevens addresses conference.



Fed at the ready

If you have ever wondered what your Fed is up to both on the front-line and behind the scenes - it is a lot!

From North Wales workplace rep Mark Jones to the Federation's head of research and policy support, Dr Joan Donnelly, there were tales of change, progress and support helping members now and in the future in an Annual Public Value Report in the final session of conference.

Dr Donnelly described some of the issues still being fought over pay and conditions, such as building the case for change for the one per cent cap on uplift.

There have, she said, been some successes with the Police Remuneration Review Body and the Police Advisory Board but battles continue on matters such as limited duties.

In the last three years, she said the operating environment has changed: "Evidence is becoming much more important, data is becoming necessary and for that reason we have been building research capability behind the scenes as well."

She added: "Modern policy making requires credible facts and figures and not just rhetoric."

For instance, the Federation's Pay and Morale Survey is now the largest workforce

survey in the UK and the data it produces is valuable for pay review bodies, for publicity and for other issues.

"It's helping to get the message out that morale is low and that significant numbers of officer are leaving... It is getting the message out that we are not crying wolf but presenting credible data."

Catherine Feast, the Federation's communications manager, described the importance of media relations, internal and external communications, digital and campaign work.

And she said: "If you think there are things we should be talking about and we are not talking about, please get in touch and we will help you locally and potentially nationally."

Barry Fletcher who sits on the Change Board described improvements made on transparency, professionalism and governance in line with the recommendations of the independent review.

He said: "To be the best police service in the world we must have the best in staff association in the world."

North Wales Police Federation's Mark Jones said the work of the workplace rep should not be underestimated, and described his

extensive caseload - a caseload replicated by hundreds of Fed reps around the country.

He says: "It's now been recognised by chief officers that the Federation is a pivotal part, an integral part in Force decision-making. That has not happened overnight, but is the result of continuous and persistent efforts by our team."

Bedfordshire Federation secretary and treasurer Emma Carter revealed her 'rollercoaster of learning' since taking on the role. She talked of her 'culture shock' when, on appointment, she suddenly found her views being sought around the strategic top table from senior staff who would never otherwise have listened to her.

She concluded: "As a rep, and more specifically as a secretary, I have been shouted at, ignored, hugged, bled on and cried on - tears of sadness and of joy. I know we do not always get things right and sometimes it will not always go the way the officers hope that it will... but I am hopeful we are on the right path. We need to do this together."

OUR REP SAYS:

"At one point there were seven speakers on stage to tell us what brilliant work the Federation does, yet because of that there wasn't any time for questions."

PC John Williams

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DC Keeley Mansell (right) being presented with the award by Dame Vera Baird.

Pioneer Keeley takes award

Nottingham DC Keeley Mansell has been awarded the Women in Policing Award 2017 after bringing the 'taboo' topic of the impact of the menopause in the police workforce into the open.

Keeley, who suffered from early onset menopause, found her own force was ill-equipped to support her at work through the debilitating effects - and nor were any other forces.

So she went to work to research the issue. She held focus meetings, working groups, established a Management Guide and Policy for police forces and worked online to highlight the issues.

Presenting her with the award at conference, Dame Vera Baird, chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, praised the many excellent nominees for the award but said Keeley had been a 'pioneer' in the police service and wider afield.

Accepting the award, Keeley said: "When I started on this journey I wanted to get people to talk about this taboo subject and to recognise the implications it can have. I hope many women and men feel supported in the workforce because of the work I have done."

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Officers pound the streets of London in marathon effort for charities

Hundreds of hours of training all boiled down to just a few hours for three West Midlands officers who took on this year's London Marathon.

Each of them had different goals and different reasons for running, but when they joined the tens of thousands of others to plod the 26.2 miles around the streets of London they raised thousands of pounds for charity along the way.

PC Scott Davies has been in the Force 14 years and clocked a time of 5hrs 30mins.

"I had no time in mind as I just wanted to enjoy the day. I stopped to do an interview with the BBC on Tower Bridge for my charity, Police Charity Call4BackUp, as well as stopping and making live Facebook videos also for my charity. It was tough as it was really hot but I absolutely loved the day, the atmosphere was amazing," he explained.

"I ran the 2014 London Marathon in 4hrs 30mins, but as I had set myself a time to achieve, I didn't enjoy it as much as this one. However, as much as I did enjoy this one, I won't be doing another, my knees can't take it anymore."

Debut marathoner PC Helen Harris clocked a time of 4hrs 12mins – which she was over the moon with.

She has raised more than £2,000 for the Mary Ann Evans Hospice, based at the George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton.

Remembering the day, she said: "Looking back on it now it all seems to have gone past in a bit of a blur. I can remember going across Tower Bridge and going past the Cutty Sark but not a lot else as I had my head down most of the way, focusing on getting round!"

"The support along the whole route was incredible and definitely helped. My training went well and I stayed injury free and on the day everything went to plan. It was only at about mile 23 that my legs started to feel really tired but I knew I was almost there, so I persevered.

"I have already entered the ballot again for next year as I would love to run it again. I've definitely caught the running bug!"

Chief Superintendent Rich Baker knew what to expect having taken part several times before and run a sub four-hour time.

But this year he was 'taking it slowly' to enjoy the atmosphere – still stopping the clock at 4hrs 1min and doing some Royal spotting along the way.

He explains: "This was my third London Marathon in succession and in total I have raised £10,000 for Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF).

"My eldest daughter was diagnosed with



PC Scott Davies.

Type 1 diabetes four years ago which inspired me to raise money for this charity. It is an auto-immune disease with no cure or known cause and it is increasing in young people at an average increase of five per cent a year. Once you are diagnosed you have it for life and are dependent on insulin, without which it would be fatal.

"At mile 22 as I approached the water station I saw a load of men in dark suits. I thought it was a group running as the Blues Brothers until I went to take my water, when I noticed it was Prince William handing it to me! Kate was behind him and Prince Harry was talking to the spectators."



PC Helen Harris.



Chief Superintendent Rich Baker.

SUPPORTING OFFICERS

Call for Backup is a police charity which provides support services to serving officers in the UK.

It is run by current and former officers who volunteer their time to give a strictly confidential support network on all manner of issues affecting the day to day lives of employees of the police.

The charity can be contacted by phone, text or email and can offer advice and a listening ear on a range of matters.

They will guide you to the best people to talk to about wellbeing issues and help you get back on track.

They can direct you to the best places to get professional legal advice, assist in finding the right help for difficult domestic situations and assist with information on financial difficulties.

You can contact the charity for help by ringing **0300 121 0999**, emailing **support@call4backup.org** or sending a text starting 'Backup' followed by your message to **07786 202250**. The service is not yet 24/7 but you can check current opening times and find out more information at **www.call4backup.org/get-support**

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Weeks still available to stay at Benevolent Fund's new holiday home

There are limited weeks still available for members of WMP Benevolent Fund to stay at their new holiday home in Weymouth. Just steps away from the picturesque Newton's Cove and close to all the main attractions, it's the perfect place to enjoy a short break.

The property sleeps up to six people and dogs are welcome. Members can click on the online calendar and request any weeks that have not already been taken. Booked weeks will be shown in red. <https://www.wmpben.co.uk/our-benefits/weymouth-holiday-home/>

For further enquiries please contact the fund on **0121 700 1212**.

Police daughter's bequest gives cash boost to Benevolent Fund

A recent bequest totalling more than £96,700 will give West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund a vital cash boost to help others.

Joan Byng (85), the daughter of a police constable, passed away in April last year. Outliving her only sister, Margaret and with no children of her own, Joan wanted to donate half of her estate to the West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund.

It was her wish to leave money, knowing it would help police families in the future. Benevolent Fund chairman John Williams met Kay Withers, Joan's first cousin, to receive the cheque on behalf of the Fund.

Kay, now in her 80s, recalls with fond memories time spent with Joan.

Executors Bob Withers (a cousin of Kay's late husband, a retired West Midlands Police officer, serving on the old 'J' Division) and Andrew Darby (a family friend) joined Kay for the photograph.

Have your say about how the funds will be spent

The directors and Management Committee are keen to give members the opportunity to put forward their suggestions on how the recent bequest of £96,722 can be used to improve member benefits.

You can voice your ideas at WMP Benevolent Fund's general meeting on Friday 23 June at Guardians House, Sheldon or you can email your ideas to info@wmpben.co.uk



Annually, the Benevolent Fund writes to all its members by sending out a newsletter, additionally members can keep updated on how this donation and others will be used by visiting the Fund's website www.wmpben.co.uk

The Fund would like to start emailing its members, at least twice a year, to share good news, members' stories and increased

members' benefits. If you would like to receive these emails please ensure the Benevolent Fund has your current e-mail address, by emailing our office info@wmpben.co.uk

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