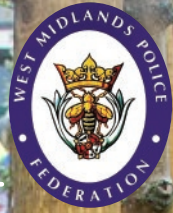


federation

West Midlands Police Federation



August/September 2018



Remembering our fallen officers – see Pages 20 to 23

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Welcome

Welcome to the August/September 2018 edition of *federation* - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

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

Just get in touch and let us know.

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

Cover photo: Chief Constable Dave Thompson lays a wreath at the West Midlands Police tree at The Beat, an avenue of memorial trees at the National Memorial Arboretum, following the COPS remembrance service. Photo courtesy of COPS.

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It's time for the Government to support policing

By **Rich Cooke**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

The last couple of months since I took over as chair have been interesting to say the least. We have encountered the challenges presented by skyrocketing demand from the public, with rising violent crime having a significant impact on our officers, some of whom have suffered nasty assaults. England's gallant foray into the World Cup semi-finals and President Trump's visit with the associated disruption added to the pressures we have faced and, to top it all, there was a misleading pay announcement from the Government which yet again ignored the recommendations of the independent pay review body.

I have called the violence we are seeing on our streets an epidemic. That language is stark and emotive, but when you are dealing with people's lives, I believe that's appropriate. We have seen well over 30 murders in the West Midlands so far this year, crimes of exceptional brutality and evil. This is close to being more killings in seven months than in the whole of 2017.

Such tragedies create massive ripple effects within the communities we serve, destroy families and ruin lives. They also lead to a heavy burden on our detectives who are working harder than ever under constant stress and trauma with little, or no, resilience cover. It's led to other detectives having to be seconded in to help investigate these most serious crimes, and that can mean inquiries into

other less serious crimes, such as burglary, suffer. But we all know these crimes can still have terrible consequences.

A local newspaper Freedom of Information request I was asked to comment on revealed less than four per cent of burglaries committed in the first six months of this year were solved. This is a source of major public concern, and I've no doubt it is of great concern to all cops too.

But the reality is the loss of 25 per cent of our officers since 2010 has clearly had a massive impact on the Force's ability to complete preventative patrols, to respond and to conduct the kind of thorough investigations we want to, before yet another 'urgent' call comes in. We now have similar levels of officers to those we had in 1974. It really is 'Life on Mars' all over again.

That's how far we've been cut back and when I speak to officers daily who have been beaten, spat on or at or racially or sexually abused trying to quell drunken idiots, drug-fuelled yobs, domestic abusers and gangs of armed thugs using knives and machetes with seeming impunity, I really do fear where this will end.

That's why I've said I support the overwhelming number of colleagues who, in a recent survey conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales, said they feel they should have use of Taser. In fact, many of us, including me, said we felt a sidearm was required. That's how regular and severe the threat is to individual front-line officers in our urban areas. Accordingly, I've called on the Chief

Constable to arm all our front-line officers with Taser as a minimum, as soon as possible. A proposed uplift of 850 is taking place by next summer, and we will be pushing hard for this to continue so all of us can have that protection.

Following up on this, we've been very vocal on local radio and in printed and social media highlighting the numerous incidents of assault, abuse and personal threat our officers are facing. I've spoken with many colleagues personally, offering my best wishes for their recovery, physically and mentally, but we also need to ensure that, as a Force, we always be seeking to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law criminals who offend in this way. This hasn't always happened, and the Federation is now at the forefront of highlighting such cases internally to make sure, with everything else going on, we are not letting ourselves down.

I was glad that Parliament sent a powerful signal to police decision-makers and the Crown Prosecution Service in July by passing the Assaults on Emergency Workers' (Offences) Bill through both Houses, and this now awaits the formality of Royal Assent. The act will increase the maximum sentence for assault PC to 12 months at Crown Court. There can now be no doubt in the minds of prosecutors that Parliament views such offences very seriously indeed, and I hope we will now act accordingly and ensure such criminals are routinely charged and placed before the courts.

The Government's misleading announcement of a two per cent pay rise

for all officers is an insult to all of us. In actual fact, it amounts to a measly 0.85 per cent in our pockets. The Federation has, year after year, gone to great lengths to provide detailed evidence to support our pay claim and submitted this to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) in good faith. However, repeatedly, the Government has chosen to ignore the PRRB recommendations or pay lip service to them.

At this year's Police Federation national conference in Birmingham, I asked Sajid Javid, who had become Home Secretary just weeks earlier, what was different about him, following the warm words in his speech. I said then the proof would be in the pudding. We now have our answer; they were only words. We have effectively been handed a real terms pay cut, yet again. I know how angry colleagues are, and they want action from the Federation.

A meeting of chairs from across the country will take place at Guardians House later this month to formulate our response. That meeting will be headed by the new national chair, John Apter. I have met John a couple of times and spoken with him at length on various matters including the Pension Challenge which I believe he is sympathetic towards. John seems genuinely committed to providing a more powerful voice for bobbies up and down the country and taking a more radical approach to fight for the pay and conditions we deserve, so watch this space.

For my part I believe that we are winning the political arguments already, the public are on our side. They see the pernicious effects of rampant violent crime on our city streets and the lack of cops available to pacify it. The fear of crime is back with a vengeance and, sadly, it was all avoidable. Politicians really start listening when they start losing votes., and sadly it's been too easy for them to 'cock a deaf un' while our world-renowned police service falls into disrepair.

It astonished me to find that we now spend more money as a country on International development (approximately £14 billion a year) than we do on our entire policing budget! The late Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, Mr Javid's hero, used to say 'support the police'; it's time he started doing just that. Now more than ever we need a Government committed to new and significant investment in policing and urgently restoring law and order to our cities.



Taking fund-raising to extreme levels

Rich Cooke (left) and Keith Fraser shake hands on their fund-raising pledge.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke is going to great heights – or perhaps it should be descending to great depths – to raise money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS), the charity that supports the families of fallen officers.

Rich is joining forces with Federation workplace reps Roy Teague and Sid James to take part in a charity abseil from the top of the 200 ft Holiday Inn Express in Snow Hill, Birmingham on 1 September. They will also be accompanied by Keith Fraser, the former deputy neighbourhood policing commander in Wolverhampton who retired in October last year after 32 years' police service and is the driving force behind the fund-raiser.

Further volunteers to take part in the challenge are still being sought, or you can get involved by simply sponsoring those taking part.

The Using Your Challenges To Achieve Event aims to raise £20,000 which will be split between COPS and M. A. D., a Birmingham Sport youth engagement programme that aims to turn around the lives of young people in some of the most deprived areas of the city using activities, such as sport, to tackle social issues.

Keith explains: "I am scared of heights. I have had an initial recce of the building and it scared me even more. But I felt that it would be great if we could overcome our challenges to support others who have some personal challenges of their own. I feel it would be great if, through this event, we can help make a positive difference to these people's lives.

"For me this challenge is about giving back to those around you and helping communities. As a police officer I was passionate about supporting communities and those around me. That passion still remains.

"Please support me and others who are taking part. As a retired police officer and a trustee of Sport Birmingham, I have an understanding of what these two charities are trying to achieve."

He adds: "I am aiming to get 112 people down the building which is a challenge in itself"

Keith was inspired to organise the event after talking to a COPS supporter.

"The awful terrorist incidents last year inflicted harm on police officers and the wider community so I thought it right to focus on that as COPS supports the families of police officers killed in service. Just before I retired from the police I became trustee of Sport Birmingham and I noticed this programme they were doing called Making A Difference or M.A.D. for short," he explained.

"I saw in the police force evidence of how sports can help some of the most challenging and how those with challenges rebuild their lives or improve their current situation. It has recently been announced that the Commonwealth Games will be held in Birmingham in 2022 and I felt that, with the spotlight on the city, it would be the ideal time to raise awareness of what we are doing here since it is really positive in terms of helping young people."

Email abseil4cops@gmail.com if you would like to join Rich and Keith to abseil for COPS.

Support the fund-raising by making a donation at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/richard-cooke11> or <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/keith-fraser3>

Keith would like to thank the Holiday Inn Express in Birmingham City and West Midlands Police Federation for supporting the event.

Fed secretary hits out over claims of two per cent pay rise

The Home Secretary's claims to value police officers when awarding them a pay rise that amounts to only one per cent are just hollow words, according to West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange.

Sajid Javid announced a two per cent pay rise for all officers that will come into effect in September.

"Even if this was a two per cent pay rise as he claims it would be an insult to police officers. But in reality this is a one per cent pay rise as the Government is giving two per cent with one hand – a consolidated rise – and then taking away one per cent with the other – the removal of the bonus it gave last year," Steve explains.

"It may have been sometime since Mr Javid worked in the Treasury but when I went to school two minus one was one."

Steve has also hit out at the Government for once again ignoring the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) which had proposed a three per cent pay uplift, just below the 3.4 per cent increase the Police Federation of England and Wales had sought.

"Police officers will, of course, be disappointed with this pay rise, given that to some officers this will mean that they receive as little as £2.50 a week extra," he says, "At a time when they are under huge pressure due to increased demand and reduced resources, this will feel like another



Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

smack in the face from a Government which while claiming to support officers just seems to be adding to the difficulties they are facing.

"At the Police Federation conference in Birmingham in May, police minister Nick Hurd said he would argue on our behalf and call on the Government to implement the PRRB recommendations in full unless they were 'bonkers'. Since I don't consider a three per cent increase bonkers, we can only assume that he either didn't argue for us or, if he did, he didn't have any success.

"But then we also find ourselves questioning whether the new Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, is really standing with us and gets the pressures we are under. Only two weeks before making this announcement, he was at the bravery awards to meet officers who had put their lives on the line in serving our communities. He says he is supporting us and values us but sadly they just feel like hollow words."

In deciding the award which will apply to officers of all ranks, the Government says it has strived to strike a balance between overall affordability to forces and fairness to the taxpayer, recognising the importance of continuing to reduce debt as a share of the economy while investing in vital public services.

The Home Secretary said: "Our police officers do an incredible job in the face of complex crime and rising demand, and I'm grateful for their continued dedication to keeping us safe. This award represents the highest consolidated pay award since 2010.

"I'll continue to fight on behalf of police to ensure they have the resources they need to do their jobs effectively."

The award comes after the Government removed a one per cent cap on increases to public sector pay in 2017.

The PRRB had recommended that the one per cent non-consolidated award received in 2017-18 be consolidated, and that a further two per cent consolidated award be given to all police officers.

The Federation has called the pay rise 'derisory' with national vice-chair Ché Donald claiming it was an insult to officers.

It also condemned the announcement in the pay award of a starting salary of as little as £18,000 a year for new police apprentices.

“It may have been sometime since Mr Javid worked in the Treasury but when I went to school two minus one was one.”

Home Secretary 'paying lip service' to officers

In real terms police officer pay has now decreased by around 18 per cent since 2009/10, according to the Police Federation of England and Wales.

National vice-chair Ché Donald said the Home Secretary's announcement on pay 'flies in the face of a lot of hot air spouted by the Home Office and Government' over the past few months.

"Less than two weeks ago the Home Secretary was proudly pleased to hand bravery awards to two officers who took on the London Bridge terrorists. At our conference in May, he said he would stick up for officers and fight for a better deal. We warned then he was on probation," said Che, on the day the pay award was revealed.

"But now this is looking more and more like paying lip service, when in reality this pay award is an insult to those who serve day in, day out. It means that an officer at the start of their service is going to be a miserly £2.50 better off each week.

"No wonder a growing number of officers are leaving the service. In the past two years there has been an increase of more than 30 per cent of voluntary resignations – nearly 2,000 last year alone - we are literally haemorrhaging officers and much of it has to do with the fact they simply can't afford to stay in the job."

Ché criticised the Government for ignoring the recommendations of the Police

Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for the second year running.

"The Government must honour the PRRB process which is based on evidence – we asked for 3.4 per cent so that officers could be paid fairly for the dangerous job they do after years of austerity. The PRRB recommended a total of three per cent.

"We have played ball – we submit evidence to the pay review body, yet Government dismisses its recommendation. In the coming weeks we will be consulting with our local Federation colleagues to determine the next steps to take."

He continued: "Police officers used to feel valued and appreciated, but when Government ignores the recommendation of its own independent pay review body, then police officers feel demoralised, fed up, unappreciated and undervalued. And

that is not a good place for policing. Fewer people dealing with more calls; yet in the Government's eyes they are only worth a real term pay cut. Police officers go above and beyond what is expected of them day in day out – and I know that today's news is making many officers ask themselves why."

- The Federation says the 'so-called' two per cent pay rise will actually leave officers financially worse off (when inflation is accounted for) and is worth only an 0.85 per cent increase in real terms. This figure is derived from the fact that of last year's two per cent only one per cent was consolidated. That one per cent has now been removed by the Government for this year's pay award so, taking into account pension contributions, the actual uplift is worth approximately 0.85 per cent to constables.

“ The Government must honour the PRRB process which is based on evidence – we asked for 3.4 per cent so that officers could be paid fairly for the dangerous job they do after years of austerity. The PRRB recommended a total of three per cent. ”



More officers want Taser access

More than 80 per cent of West Midlands Police Federation members who responded to a nationwide survey on routine arming have indicated they would like to carry Tasers at all times while on duty.

A total of 82 per cent of the Force's Federation members said they wanted to carry the device routinely when they took part in the survey conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

But only 15 per cent of them - for whom it is applicable to their role - actually had access to Taser at all times - compared with 22 per cent nationally.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke wants to see all front-line officers being trained and equipped with Taser.

"We want response, support/ops and neighbourhood to be given access to these devices if they wish," says Rich, "Several of the worst assaults and near miss incidents have involved officers on city centre neighbourhood teams including one in which a female officer was throttled and had her wrist broken and her male colleague suffered a broken nose."

Last year, the Force agreed to more than

double the number of officers armed with Taser following a security review. At the time - August 2017 - around 650 officers were Taser trained and the Force announced it wanted this to increase to 1,400 within 18 months so that 50 per cent of all response officers would be trained and equipped with them by the end of 2018.

Rich believes the Force will approve a further uplift but the Federation is awaiting further details.

The routine arming survey carried out nationally by the Federation also revealed that more than half (58 per cent) of West Midlands officers responding had felt their life was in serious danger at least once in the last two years as the result of a threat by

a member of the public while on duty. This compared to 54 per cent of respondents nationwide.

"This goes to show the level of threat being faced by our officers on a daily basis," says Rich, "They need to have access to Taser so they can protect both themselves and the public. Taser has proven to be a very effective tool for the modern-day police officer who is increasingly expected to deal with threats of violence from the public."

The survey also asked officers whether they were satisfied with the current levels of armed support available to them, with the results being split almost 50:50 between officers saying they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied that armed

“ They need to have access to Taser so they can protect both themselves and the public. Taser has proven to be a very effective tool for the modern-day police officer who is increasingly expected to deal with threats of violence from the public. ”





An overview

The survey

The Police Federation of England and Wales routine arming survey was open between 31 July and 1 September 2017.

The online survey asked respondents about:

- Their satisfaction with their current access to armed support
- Their views on routine arming
- Their views on other protective measures and equipment
- The number of times they had felt their life had been threatened at work in the last two years.

The respondents

2,140 responses were received from West Midlands Police Federation members, a response rate of 32 per cent (based on Home Office figures for 2017) which was above the national response rate of 27 per cent.

- 79 per cent were male
- 21 per cent were female
- 81 per cent were constables
- 15 per cent were sergeants
- 4 per cent were inspectors or chief inspectors
- 54 per cent said they were in a front-line role

support would be readily available if they needed it and not very satisfied or not at all satisfied.

But the survey showed 42 per cent of West Midlands respondents felt all police officers should receive appropriate training and be armed at all times compared with 34 per cent nationwide.

The survey also showed, for West Midlands members:

- 63 per cent would be prepared to carry a firearm at all times
- 19 per cent would be prepared to carry a firearm on duty if necessary
- 9 per cent would be prepared to if ordered to do so, and

- 8 per cent were not carry a firearm under any circumstances.

Only nine per cent of West Midlands officers (11 per cent nationally) taking part in the survey, for whom it is applicable to their role, had access to double crewing at all times while on duty with a staggering 76 per cent saying they wanted this.

Just over a third (36 per cent) of West Midlands respondents said they had access to body-worn video (BWV) at all times while on duty, compared with 55 per cent nationally, and 80 per cent of our officers filling out the survey said they wanted BWV.

BWV to be rolled out



All front-line uniformed officers are expected to have access to Body-Worn Video (BWV) by the end of the summer.

Sergeant Will Salt has said the roll-out is on course with Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, welcoming the news.

"I have used Body-Worn Video as a response officer for some time now. It's an added protection for our hard-pressed officers, gives members of the public extra confidence and offers excellent evidence which can be used to prosecute criminals more quickly, particularly when they attack or abuse our officers," he said.

"It has also been shown by academic studies to significantly reduce complaints against officers. I'm really pleased that all our front-line staff will soon have ready access to it."

PC Rich Chant, a neighbourhood policing officer based at Digbeth where BWV cameras have recently been issued to all officers, has also backed the move.


"BWV is a vital piece of kit, we feel long overdue, but all the officers here are really pleased and the feedback from colleagues so far is overwhelmingly positive," he explained.

The results of the latest survey on routine arming carried out by the Police Federation of England and Wales revealed that 80 per cent of respondents from the West Midlands wanted access to BWV at all times. Only 36 per cent had this access at the time of the survey last year.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied
How satisfied are you that armed support is readily available should you require it?	9%	40%	34%	18%

	None	One	Two	Three to four	Five to six	Seven or more
How many times have you felt your life has been in serious danger in the last two years?	43%	12%	16%	14%	8%	8%

	Double crewing	Body-worn video	Taser
Officers regularly have access to (for whom it is applicable to their role)			
Never	12%	2%	4%
When deemed necessary by an officer with appropriate authority	12%	2%	2%
Upon my request while I am on duty	4%	2%	2%
At all times while I am on duty	9%	36%	15%



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See what your colleagues say:

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

Wayne Bennett, serving police officer, 2018

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

Ian Skidmore, serving police officer, 2018

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

Simon Shippam, serving police officer, 2018

GeorgeBurrows 

We will get a change to law, says police drivers' campaigner



West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Tim Rogers.

There will be a change in the law to offer better protection for police drivers who are currently vulnerable to prosecution when simply doing their jobs, according to West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Tim Rogers.

Tim has spearheaded a campaign for improved legislation, highlighting a number of cases where officers have been pursued through the courts during drawn-out proceedings that have caused untold stress on them and their families.

But he is confident that the issue will be resolved when Parliament reconvenes in the autumn.

"We are almost there," says Tim, who is driving training lead for the national Federation, "Later this year we will either

see the bill outlining the legislative change we require put forward by Norfolk MP Sir Henry Bellingham making its way to law or the Government will lay down its own plans to change the law.

"This will be a victory for this campaign, for police officers and other emergency service drivers but also for common sense. It cannot be right that police officers doing their jobs, protecting their communities, following their training and current guidance, acting proportionately and responsibly are prosecuted or put through conduct proceedings.

"The new legislation will apply to all police driving applications."

Police drivers are currently judged by the standards of a careful and competent driver with no account being taken of their training. Since many of the manoeuvres they undertake when responding to calls for assistance or in pursuing offenders would not be carried out by a careful and competent driver they can find themselves on the wrong side of the law.

Tim points out that issues can arise over who should assess the standards of an officer's driving.

"At present we have different driving polices in the 43 forces across England and Wales, then we have the Approved Professional Practice of the College of Policing which gives a set standard but if the Independent Office for Police Conduct gets involved it will often call on the head of a Force driving school to carry out an assessment of the driving of the officer in question," he explains.

"But that can be completely random. Some forces, for example, have a member of support staff as head of the driving school and they may never have even been involved in a police pursuit situation or, if they have, it may be some time ago."

Tim wants to see a Steering Group set up to look at cases where a police driver's driving needs to be assessed once the new legislation is in place. He believes that the group should consist of up to eight people, including police practitioners with relevant experience. It should be given set terms of reference, be completely independent

but work under the College of Policing, and its members should regularly be changed, perhaps annually, to ensure their experience is relevant.

"Common standards need to be applied, recognising the skills and experience of those involved in police pursuits and response drives and that's where the strength of the new legislation will be upheld," he explains.

The Home Office has been carrying out a consultation on proposed changes to the legislation on police pursuits and response driving. The consultation which closes in mid-August, is based around there being a separate test for police drivers that would require:

- An officer to drive to the standard of a careful and competent police driver of a similar level of training and skill; and
- That the driving tactics employed, including any exemptions from road traffic legislation, such as speed limits, or contact with a suspect vehicle, are authorised appropriately and are both necessary and proportionate.

In an introduction to the consultation paper, police minister Nick Hurd explains: "It is clearly vital that we protect public safety and, while police officers must be accountable for their actions, it is also important that skilled officers have the confidence to protect the public by pursuing offenders where it is safe to do so."

Tim concludes: "We do have concerns about setting a new higher standard, a new standard which could mean failure of the driver training course amounting to a criminal offence. We do not require a new standard, just recognition of skills and appropriate exemptions from the law as it stands.

"The Federation has been clear on the solution to this legislative flaw. The simple approach is, as per Sir Henry's bill, to allow a further exemption, an exemption to the current common standard with the safeguards as previously submitted. The Government's intentions are sound and I believe it is committed now in helping officers use their skills without fear of prosecution."

Assaults bill takes step closer to becoming law

New legislation giving better protection from assaults to police and other emergency service workers has sailed through its third reading in the House of Lords.

Labour MP Chris Bryant's Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Bill now just needs Royal Assent before being enacted.

"We are pleased to see this bill passing through this latest stage in its progress to becoming law," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"We have been very active supporters of the Protect the Protectors campaign launched by the Police Federation of England and Wales in response to the alarming number of assaults on police officers. We have lobbied MPs, taken assaulted officers down to Parliament to discuss the physical and mental impact of being attacked and promoted the campaign as much as we possibly could.

"Thankfully, MPs and members of the House of Lords, led by Halifax Labour Holly Lynch, who first championed the campaign, Mr Bryant and Baroness Donaghy who sponsored the bill in the Lords, have got behind us.

"No-one should come to work expecting to be assaulted but our members have almost come to accept that these attacks are just part of the job. That cannot be allowed to continue. We – and our emergency service colleagues - need better protection in law and this bill goes some way to providing that. The Federation's campaign will continue, however, as we want to see even tougher sentences introduced and clearer guidelines on spitting."

The bill proposes to make assault or sexual assault against emergency service workers an aggravating factor punishable by up to 12 months in prison. It also gives police added protection from sexual assault.

However, the Federation still does not feel the sentences it lays down are tough enough. It had been lobbying for an assault on an emergency worker to

carry a maximum sentence of 24 months in prison. This proposal was not accepted, with the Government maintaining its original proposal of a 12-month maximum sentence for this new offence.

As it stands, however, magistrates are unable to impose this increased tariff as their sentencing powers are limited to six months. To change that, the Government would need to enact a piece of legislation which has been sitting dormant on the statute books since 2003. If that does not happen, the 12-month maximum would only be available for those sentenced at a crown court.

Calum Macleod, Federation national chair at the time, said: "Now more than ever it is essential that magistrates take the issue of assaults more seriously and don't let the side down. All too often I speak with officers whose attackers have faced little or no consequences for their actions. This is totally unacceptable – the justice system needs to support those who risk their lives to enforce the law.

"Magistrates do not have 12 months sentencing powers, therefore six months is the maximum we can expect at the moment. We need to end the practice of offenders being under-charged and prosecuted for less serious offences.

"We will continue our campaign to better Protect the Protectors and pursue tougher sentences, improved welfare and support for those who risk so much every day.

Assurances have previously been given by the Government in the House of Commons that the degrading act of spitting, which is already considered a common assault, be made clearer to the authorities. Minister for justice Rory Stewart said this will be made more specific and that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is clearly instructed.

Mike brings home reality of officer assaults



Facilitator Ian Collins (left) interviews Mike Bruce.

A West Midlands officer who endured injections, medication and 'six months of worry' after being spat upon by an assailant was among those to highlight what officers are subjected to when they are assaulted on duty.

West Midlands Police Federation was a keen supporter of the Police Federation of England and Wales' nationwide Protect the Protectors campaign, which called for better protection for officers in terms of tougher sentencing and adequate protective equipment including spit guards, and arranged for PC Mike Bruce to address last year's annual Federation conference in Birmingham.

Mike joined facilitator Ian Collins and Holly Lynch, MP for Halifax and an early supporter of the assaults campaign, on a conference panel session and told delegates he had 'spit dripping off his face' after an incident outside a pub in Holbrook, Coventry in April 2016. 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 at the time, 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.

It was also one of a number of cases that led West Midlands Police Federation to campaign for spit guards to be issued to front-line officers, with the Force agreeing to issue them not long after the conference.

**PROTECT
THE PROTECTORS**

'Time for police to bite back'



John Apter, new national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

The time has come for police officers to bite back after years of being kicked by a Government that has its head firmly buried in the sand when it comes to the impact of cuts, according to the new national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

And John Apter has vowed to take a tough stance when negotiating on members' behalf after becoming the first national chair to be chosen through an election in which members across the country could all take part.

"For far too long police officers have been taken advantage of. Pay and conditions, 'reform' of the service, huge budget cuts, and outrageous slurs and media soundbites. The Government has been kicking us for years. There comes a point where we must bite back, that time has come," he said.

And he added: "Whilst we must have a relationship with the Home Office, chief officers and the College of Policing, I do not want to be their friend. I will hold them to account to make sure they act in my members best interests. That begins tomorrow when I start my role as national chair.

"I have a long list of priorities. At the top of the list will always be pay and conditions. Following the contemptible and disgraceful actions of the Government this year over our pay award – and let's be frank, over the past seven or eight years – we have some significant decisions to make. The disdain and contempt shown to police officers in England and Wales must end."

John, who has been chair of Hampshire Police Federation since 2010, says he is 'honoured and humbled' to have been elected to lead the Federation and proud to be a police officer, saying officers are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job.

"They are the bravest. They are the best," he explained.

John intends to push the Government to centrally fund Taser, wants to see better protection for police drivers and also wants to start a debate on employment rights for police officers.

"Other areas I want to focus on include Special Constables joining the Federation, the ongoing wellbeing of colleagues and reviewing the 'free half hour for the Queen'. I will be making myself as visible as possible, both to members across England and Wales and to local Federations," he said.

And he concluded: "So, it will be a busy few months and years ahead. Every day is important, and I am determined to make a difference. We have been shouting about the consequence of cuts to policing for years and have been labelled scaremongers for doing so. We need to be more passionate, persuasive and proactive, and we must take our message to the public who, in the main, support policing."

Two candidates put themselves forward for the role of chair with John standing against Phill Matthews, the national conduct lead.

Chair's election statement

John Apter says that being passionate about fairness was one of the reasons he joined Hampshire Constabulary in December 1992.

It was also behind his decision to become a Fed rep; he wanted to ensure colleagues were treated fairly and received the respect they deserved.

Before taking on the Hampshire Federation chair's role, he was a uniformed front-line officer working in response, roads policing and on a specialist team investigating road deaths. He also spent some time as a family liaison officer, a role he found incredibly rewarding.

In an election statement put out to members, he explains: "In my time as local chair, I have ensured the voice of our officers has been at the heart of everything we do. I worked tirelessly to create the Seven-Point Plan to ensure officers and staff assaulted at work are treated as victims and given the support they deserve. The plan has been adopted by almost every force across England and Wales and some forces overseas. The Metropolitan Police have adopted the plan and called it Operation Hampshire.

"The work I started has been adopted by the Police Federation of England and Wales, becoming the Protect the Protectors campaign, of which I am incredibly proud."

He continues: "I will never shy away from fighting for what is right for those I represent. I have successfully campaigned for the full roll-out of Taser and spit guards for all officers across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

"As national chair I will give you your voice back. Employment rights for police officers is a contentious issue but over the years I have seen the gradual erosion of Police Regulations. I want an open and honest debate about what you want, your views matter and will be taken forward. I will work closely with local Federations and will be a very visible national chair, working alongside colleagues, across England and Wales, to make sure your voice is heard.

"The national Federation needs to stop focusing on itself and focus on what is important, which is YOU, the member. I do not just talk about issues, I have been active in my force and have a proven track record of putting my money where my mouth is, fighting for our officers to make sure the reality of policing is made public. I am passionate about policing and the welfare of our officers."

He tells officers: "This is the first time members have been able to vote for their national chair. This is your opportunity to make a difference. The PFEW must respond to what the members need. It is time for change. Please vote for me and help me to make that change happen."



Knife crime has increased by nearly 20 per cent in the West Midlands – with 2,850 offences in a 12-month period involving a knife.

Latest figures from the Office of National Statistics show that in the 12 months to the end of March 2018 there was a 19 per cent rise in knife offences. The Force recorded 1,591 robberies with knives, 1,124 assaults which involved a knife and 50 threats to kill.

In the same time period, the data shows that total recorded crime increased by 13 per cent in the West Midlands Force area and took the total number of offences to 233,393.

There was a 33 per cent rise in sexual offences bringing the total to 6,463 offences, a 28 per cent increase in robberies (a total of 7,462 offences) and an 18 per cent rise in violent crime (a total of 57,712 offences).

There were just two categories where the numbers came down - drug offences dropped by 13 per cent and bike theft fell by 11 per cent.

Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "It is starting to feel like Groundhog Day. Every time the statistics are published they show crime has risen. We predicted it would and were told we were scaremongering – but it has become a reality and the Government still doesn't seem to want to listen.

"At the recent Police Federation conference in Birmingham, Home Secretary Sajid Javid said he was listening to what we were telling him. But while we welcomed his words, we now need to see evidence of some action too. The people we serve deserve better, our officers deserve better and the Government has a duty to enable us to serve and protect."

Nationally, the latest figures show total recorded crime has risen by 13 per cent and knife crime rose by 16 per cent. There was:

- a 30 per cent increase in robberies
- a 16 per cent rise in knife crime
- a 12 per cent increase in murders, and
- a 2 per cent rise in firearms offences.

The figures were published at the same time as new workforce figures from the Home Office also revealed a further drop in police officer numbers with the total number

Increase in knife crime

in England and Wales falling by 738 to 122,404, the lowest since 1996.

Ché Donald, vice-chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: "Not only has knife crime gone through the roof, but murders are also escalating. Last year

there were 701 murders – that's more than the number of troops who have died in the entire Afghan conflict since 2001 (456.)

"These new figures are proof, as if we even needed it, that policing in the UK is on the critical list."

Officer numbers fall

The number of officers keeping the people of the West Midlands safe fell by 175 in a 12-month period.

In the year to the end of March 2018, the number of officers reduced by -2.6 per cent – leaving 6,581 serving with the Force.

The figures were released by the Office of National Statistics and show that officer numbers across England and Wales are continuing to dwindle, with just 122,404 warranted officers - a further loss of 738 officers, or 0.6 per cent, on the previous 12 months.

In the West Midlands, 4,544 of the officers are male and 2,037 are female. Of these, 6,259 are available for duty and not classed as being long-term absent.

Broken down further, there are 723 male sergeants and 25 female sergeants. There are a total of 5,189 serving at the rank of constable, equating to 179 per 100,000 of the population the Force serves.

Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "These figures are incredibly concerning as the reduction in officer numbers in our Force area is quite considerable.

"Year on year we are losing officers.

There are fewer and fewer officers to protect the public, at a time when the population is growing.

"It is no coincidence that at the same time officer numbers are falling the crime rate is rocketing. We have been warning the Government of this for ages - it begs the question why the Government can't see it, or maybe MPs just don't care."

National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald says: "Thanks to Government funding cuts, we now have the lowest number of police officers since 1996. The figures show we have lost more than 21,300 officers since 2010 – that's a drop of 15 per cent and the numbers keep going down every year."

He added: "We have a Government which recently launched its Serious Violence Strategy – yet failed to make one single mention of the falling numbers of officers, which it was rightly criticised for. You would think that every time we have the same conversations about rising crime, particularly violent crime, it would be a wake-up call for the Government. But instead it just feels like we are sleepwalking into a nightmare."

Inspector's pride at father's Gallantry Medal for bravery

A West Midlands Police officer has spoken of his pride that his father has been awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal, one of the highest civilian honours for bravery, after diving into the sea to rescue two teenage girls but losing his own life.

Now Inspector Gareth Guest will join his Mum and sister at Buckingham Palace to receive the medal on behalf of his much-missed father, Richard (Dick), who was 74 at the time of the incident in North Wales in July three years ago.

"It was just like him to get involved and try to help someone," says Gareth, who is based in the Offender Management Unit at Brierley Hill, "I know had he survived this rescue and the same set of circumstances arose the following day he would have done exactly the same thing.

"He was from a very public-spirited family; his sister was a staff nurse, his brother a police officer. He wouldn't have hesitated to go into the sea, he was a strong swimmer and always preferred to swim in the sea than in a swimming pool."

This year just six people have been honoured with the Queen's Gallantry Medal with one of those also being a posthumous honour and one being bestowed on another member of the public who joined Dick, a retired bank manager, in the sea rescue. They are given for 'acts of exemplary bravery' at a level below that of the George Cross.

PC Paul Davies of Sandwell Investigation Team was instrumental in Dick being put forward for the award, submitting a file to the Government Office and was fully supported by the Senior Leadership Team of the time. Gareth is also grateful to PC Howard Whitehouse (a now retired Fed rep) who secured the coroner's inquest for him and West Midlands Police Federation which paid for the report.

The award is given by the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and Gareth's Mum, Margaret, who had only lost her Mum weeks before her husband of 40 years' death, received official notification that Dick was to be honoured in mid-July ahead of an official announcement in the London Gazette the following week.

The citation states:
Stephen John Adams, Civilian, and Richard Arthur Guest, Civilian (posthumous), for saving a young girl from drowning

On Saturday 4 July 2015, Richard Guest and his wife were walking along the beach in Tywyn, North Wales, when they heard screams for help coming from the sea. Two



Inspector Gareth Guest at the start of his policing career with his father.

teenage girls had gone into the sea and had got into difficulty.

Richard Guest noticed that another man, Stephen Adams, was walking nearby and had also heard the screams. Without hesitation, both men quickly entered the sea to try and save the two teenage girls. The sea was extremely rough but the men persisted, and Richard Guest was the first of the two men to reach one of the girls. He held her out of the water until he was able to hand her to Stephen Adams. As they were about to return to shore, the rescued girl told the men that there was another girl in the water. While Stephen Adams helped the girl back to shore, Richard Guest decided to remain behind to search for the other girl who they believed was still in the water. Neither man was aware that the second girl has managed to make her own way safely back to shore.

Richard Guest spent some time in the very rough sea searching for the other girl and, having taken the girl to safety, Stephen Adams returned to where he had left Richard Guest. He discovered him face down in the water. He checked for a pulse but there was none and because of the rough conditions, he could not turn Richard Guest over. Realising his own life was in danger, he reluctantly returned to the shore. Richard Guest was later pulled

unconscious from the sea by the RNLI and taken to hospital, but he was pronounced dead.

Both men demonstrated unselfish courage. Neither man knew the two girls yet were willing to risk their own lives to ensure the safety of two strangers.

Dick has also been honoured with a certificate from The Carnegie Hero Fund Trust.

In its citation, the trust gives details of the incident and reports that the coroner recorded a verdict of misadventure noting that he had taken a conscious decision to enter the water in an effort to help the two girls.

It further states: "The heroism of Richard Guest has been recognised as falling within the scope of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust. His name will be inscribed in the Roll of Honour; his widow will receive a certificate and the Trustees will maintain a continuing interest in her welfare."

The trust, set up by American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, recognises civilian heroism and give financial help, where necessary, to people who have been injured or to the dependants of people who have been killed in attempting to save another life in peaceful pursuits. Each year, it considers around 12 cases.



Did you know the Federation Group Insurance scheme includes RAC breakdown cover?

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Federation launches new website

Hopefully, you will now have noticed that we have launched a new website – designed to make it even easier for us to give you easy access to all the information you may need.

But, if you have not visited our website for a while, perhaps now is the time to do so.

The new website is at polfed.org/westmids but you will also be re-directed if you type in the address of our former site.

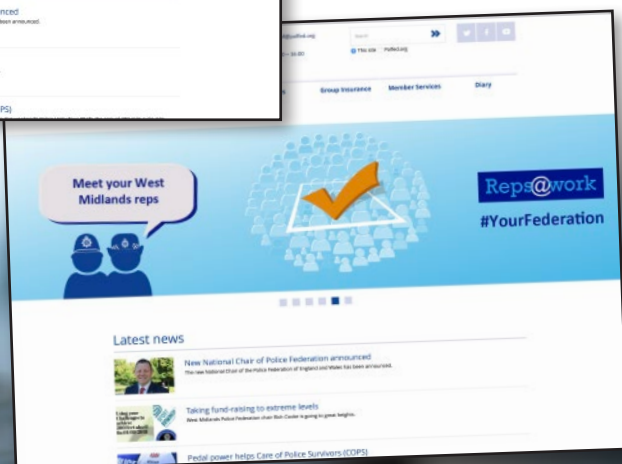
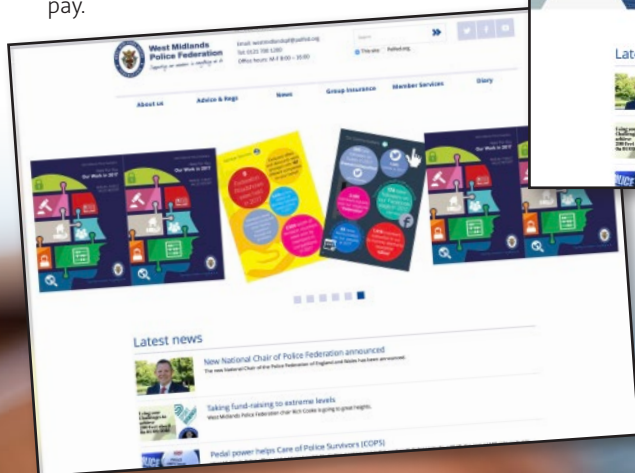
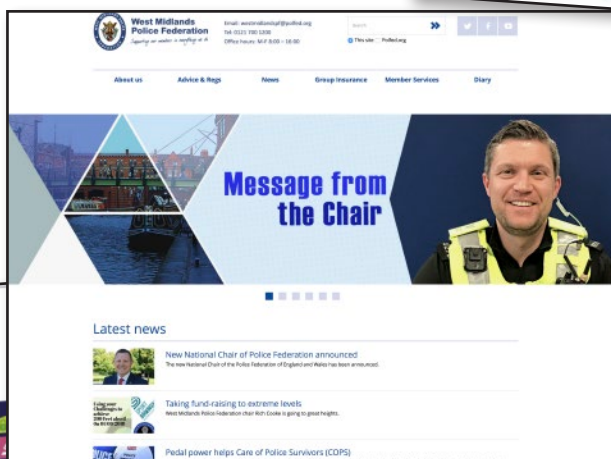
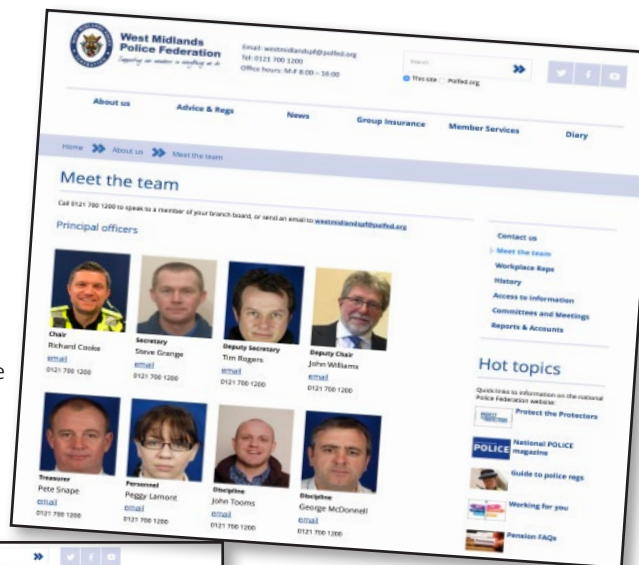
The site boasts all members' favourite features – news, advice and regs, contact details, a list of reps and officials, information about Member Services and full details of our Group Insurance Scheme.

There is a page covering the history of the Police Federation of England and Wales, links to reports, accounts, members' eZines and magazines while the advice pages cover everything from allowances and discipline to equality, health and safety, misconduct and pay.

There is also a useful Frequently Asked Questions tab giving members easy access to information on a list of common queries.

A diary section enables officers to keep up with meeting, seminar and Federation roadshow dates.

So, please take the time to visit the site to see what it has to offer and let us know if there's anything else you would like us to add to the new website.



polfed.org/westmids

Brave duo honoured at

Two West Midlands officers who were threatened with a gun were honoured at this year's Police Bravery Awards.

PC Lee Jones and PC Richard Meede, who are both based at Coventry Central, attended a reception at 10 Downing Street hosted by police minister Nick Hurd with nominees from forces across England and Wales.

They were also among the guests of honour at a gala dinner and awards ceremony attended by Home Secretary Sajid Javid and Mr Hurd.

The pair were on duty during the late evening of Saturday 29 April 2017 when a call came in from a woman who was concerned about the welfare of a man living in Beacon Road, Coventry.

The caller stated the man had recently suffered a bereavement and she was concerned as he had been drinking and was a shotgun licence holder. She believed he may have taken his gun out of the cabinet.

The caller confirmed to call handling staff that no threats had been made to any party and that the man had not been aggressive or given any indication of being suicidal or having self-harm tendencies.

Police checks showed the man had no previous police history for firearms and was not known to mental health services.

Therefore, the log was assessed and deemed suitable for Force response officers to attend to conduct a safe and well check.

At 11.40pm, PC Meede and PC Jones attended the address and the man opened the front door to the officers to allow them in to his property. He then walked into his living room, picked up a double-barrelled shotgun and turned towards the officers with the gun in his hand pointing at them.

Acting swiftly and bravely, PC Meede grabbed hold of the shotgun barrel and pulled the gun away from the man, while PC Jones grabbed him round the neck to subdue him and prevent him doing anything further.

He was arrested, handcuffed and taken into custody. On later examination, the shotgun was found to be loaded with cartridges. The defendant was found not guilty at trial.

Inspector Lucy Bird said: "This was an extremely serious incident, which could have resulted in devastating consequences. The officers showed extraordinary bravery, quick thinking and fortitude in dealing with this.

"Both officers demonstrated courage and professionalism and the incident clearly involved a significant risk to their personal safety. Their actions went far beyond the call of duty and demonstrate the very best of response policing."

After trial, the judge commented that the officer's swift actions made it very difficult to establish intent and it was this swift action that undoubtedly saved his life. He stated the verdict took nothing away from the bravery of the officers and commented that he was impressed by the quality of evidence offered.

• This year was the 23rd Bravery Awards. Two officers from the Metropolitan Police were named as joint overall winners of this year's national Police Bravery Award. PC Keith Palmer GM, who died in the terror attack in Westminster last year, and PC Charlie Guenigault, who when off-duty fought the terrorists at London Bridge and was critically injured while protecting the public, were honoured at the ceremony.

“Both officers demonstrated courage and professionalism and the incident clearly involved a significant risk to their personal safety. Their actions went far beyond the call of duty and demonstrate the very best of response policing.”



Outside 10 Downing Street are PC Richard Meede (left)

Police Bravery Awards



Photographs courtesy of Anderson Photography

ft) and PC Lee Jones.

COPS service honours fallen officers

Police officers from across the UK joined the families of those who have lost loved ones in the police service to attend an annual service of remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke and Chief Constable Dave Thompson were among those at the service organised by the charity Care of Police Survivors (COPS).

The service was opened by Jan Berry, former Federation national chair and COPS chair of trustees, and included moving inputs from four people with personal

experience of having lost a family member who was a police officer. They included Heather Dallow, the wife of West Midlands PC Robert Dallow who died in 1995.

Margaret Logan talked about losing her husband, Reserve Constable Clifford Evans of the former Royal Ulster Constabulary, who died in 1976; Caroline Speakman recounted her struggles to come to terms with the loss of her brother, PC Jonathan Speakman of Cheshire Police who died in 2005 while rescuing children from a rip-tide on an Australian beach and John Fordham gave an uplifting speech about moving on after the death of his father, DC John Fordham of the Met who died in 1985.

There was praise for the way in which COPS had helped them stay connected to the police family and offered them and their families support.

During the service, this year's roll of honour was read by COPS national president Denis Gunn with the congregation observing

a minute's silence for:

PC Steve Jenkins,
Gwent Police – 6 October 2017

PC John Alcock,
rampian Police – 7 October 2017

PC James Dixon,
Thames Valley Police – 5 December 2017

PC David Fields,
South Yorkshire Police – 25 December 2017
Senior Forensic Practitioner Jacob Maselino,
Met Police – 28 January 2018.

After the service and despite heavy rain, families and other guests made their way to The Beat, the avenue of trees dedicated to each force, where roses and wreaths were laid in memory of fallen officers.

Before the service, officers who took part in the Police Unity Tour (PUT), which involved more than 350 riders cycling the length and breadth of the UK, rode into the arboretum. Each cyclist wore a wristband dedicated to the memory of an officer who lost their life on duty, as well as raising funds for COPS.

Caroline Speakman talks about the loss of her brother.



The congregation shelters from the rain for the service.

The Blue Knights, a motorcycle club for police officers, also paid tribute to the fallen by riding into arboretum as part of the Blue Knights Law Ride.

The event was the conclusion of the charity's annual Survivor Weekend, a two-day event bringing together the families of officers who have died on duty, 'survivors', to form friendships and lasting bonds to help them through the good and bad times. The weekend included an outing to a theme park for younger survivors, as well as relaxation sessions and a craft workshop.

Survivor Glenda Benner, who lost her son Greg in 2015, said: "The first time we went to Survivor Weekend it was only three months after we lost Greg, and I was in a bit of a daze. When we got there though it just felt right. For the first time I felt that there were people that understood what I was feeling."

"This year was our fourth Survivor Weekend and it now feels like having an extension of your family. There are lots of people I keep in touch with throughout the year, and people are there for you when you need it."

COPS chief executive Tim Buckley, who closed the memorial service, said: "This is the biggest event of our year and is a chance for us to get as many survivors together as possible to support each other in rebuilding their lives."

"We are grateful to all our supporters

across the wide police family and beyond. We would like to thank all our fund-raisers, in particular the Police Unity Tour and all their sponsors, who have raised a substantial amount of money over the years for COPS."

This year marks the 15th anniversary of COPS, and since its foundation the charity has helped hundreds of families devastated by the loss of a loved one in the police service.

COPS is a peer support charity, enabling survivors from around the UK to support

other survivors in practical ways. In addition to Survivor Weekend, the charity arranges numerous local and national events to offer opportunities for survivors to build a strong support network.

Working with its partner organisations Winston's Wish and Red Arc, COPS also provides specialist counselling support to bereaved families.

If you'd like to be kept informed about the work of COPS, you can sign up for a free quarterly newsletter by visiting <http://ukcops.org/newsletter-consent.php>



Photographs courtesy of COPS

The West Midlands Police Band played before and during the service.



A personal view

By *Stu Collins*

The venue, the sights, the experience and the people make the arrival of the Police Unity Tour and the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) memorial service an incredibly moving morning for me.

It's that point when we ride into the arboretum that it hit me last year, and it was the same again this year. What resonates with me is that the Unity Tour is very much about selflessness from a rider's point of view, and that selflessness is such huge aspect in the sport of road cycling itself.

By riding together, shielding each other from the wind, sharing the effort, working at the front of the group, pushing and supporting each other physically and mentally, sharing the mutual suffering, using all your strength and effort to help someone else succeed, the peloton achieves greater things. You give your effort for the sake of others and the greater good. That mutual suffering and sacrifice, and the camaraderie and closeness that comes from it, is something I love about the sport. It struck me how that ties in with riding the Unity Tour.

We each ride the tour bearing the name of a fallen officer, and on riding into the arboretum, you look into the faces of some of the loved ones of these people, see the memorials to them - some of them known personally to us, some of them killed during our own service and some whose names we've seen on rolls of honour before.

We see these people and we see and hear about what Care of Police Survivors does for them, how their memory is kept up and how the people left behind are affected. I think it must be impossible for any of us as serving officers to not then imagine if that was us and our loved ones. It's that which sticks with me and it works in two ways.

We spend three days riding together, putting our efforts in to see us through the tour as a group and get everyone to the finish at the arboretum; but more importantly, we're not riding for ourselves in any way at all. We're each riding for that officer whose name we carry round for those three days, for their families.

As for the actual ride and the three days itself, it kind of had everything. I'd been very grateful to be asked to plan the route this year, and it took in every kind of scene, road and area that we could have ridden in. We

West Midlands Police officer and avid road cyclist Stu Collins took part in the Police Unity Tour (PUT), the annual 180-mile cycle ride completed by policing teams around the country to raise funds for Care of Police Survivors (COPS).

Stu is part of the West Midlands Chapter of the tour and, along with all the PUT cyclists, wore a wristband honouring a fallen police officer in his case PC James Davies of Worcestershire Constabulary who was killed arresting a theft suspect in 1885.

Stu explains: "Representing him has personal meaning as I previously policed the same beat he did 130 years before me and I grew up, lived and still ride in the same area."

The Force was also represented by recently retired Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman who rode for his father, PC Kerim Blakeman, and Sean Walker, a police staff member, riding for his father, PC Mac Walker. Gill Wall, a member of police staff from Lloyd House, formed part of the seven-strong support team.

In addition, officers from other forces in the chapter, which is made up of 29 riders, rode for fallen West Midlands Police PCs Michael Chapman, Anthony Salt and Deborah Harman-Burton.



Stu Collins on Day 3, riding to the arboretum.

just about managed to visit all four force areas that the chapter represents and then I think we managed to get nearly every kind of weather over the three days to top it off.

Day 1 was a 168km/104-mile route around from Worcester to Telford. After a short send-off service at Hindlip and a steady roll-out through Worcester city centre, we were quickly into the rolling lanes heading out through the orchards and hopyards of Herefordshire. It's fair to say that some of those lanes are more 'rolling' than others and a couple of short, steep ramps got the legs warmed up and the blood pumping to say the least. The first feed stop at Leominster 'nick' was welcomed by everyone.

After a quick coffee (almost as essential

to cycling as tyres and pedals themselves) and taking on water, we were back out and heading north which put the wind behind us. The little bit of easing out, the combination of coffee-stop-legs and those early climbs was soon forgotten as we passed through easy B roads and we swung off up a narrow lane to hit the bottom of the first real climb of the day, The Goggin.

I'd ridden the harsher of the two roads up it on the recce out there so had chose this one to keep things a little kinder. It's still a tough but manageable climb - narrow, a bit of gravel and a few potholes, but the gradient stays steady and you can work your way up it. Until the last 200 metres. The last 200 metres is steep. Steep and narrow and gravel and pot-holed.

It was here we heard how one of the team had a little get-down on the climb, but having known it was coming, had the presence of mind to choose his landing and went for the softer option of falling into the hedge rather than hitting the gravel and taking a bit of road rash. Fortunately, both he and his bike came off unscathed and we were able to crack on and make it through to our second feed stop at Bishops Castle, where it was probably a good thing that we let everyone take a little longer to get some food in and get the legs back together as the narrow road back out of the town centre all of a sudden rears up.

We were past that and on our way quickly enough, into the beautiful Shropshire



The Ricky Gray Memorial.



Top of bridges – Pulverbatch Climb.



Members of the team.

lanes around the Long Mynd. This brought the really testing part of the day now though, and one which I probably shouldn't have made so much mention of in the pre-ride briefing. A solid eight-kilometre climb which would test any good cyclist was made all the more testing as the heat was now at its peak.

This brought our first obligation of the weekend and the first big reminder of why we do the tour. We were swept into Shrewsbury with some blinding support from the local roads policing and firearms officers, to ride into Quarry Park. In the centre of the park is a beautifully quiet garden where a memorial to PC Ricky Gray stands. Ricky was a West Mercia firearms officer, killed in 2007 going to the aid of two officers taken hostage by an armed man. We were honoured to stand with Ricky's wife, Jenny, and lay a wreath in a short service to remember him.

With that reminder echoing in everyone's thoughts, we made the short ride over to Telford where the local Harvester almost found itself emptied of food and some tired legs were pleased to crash out at our hotel for the night. It was a sterling effort from everyone in the heat (I particularly enjoyed it though as I constantly remembered bits of the recce rides out there in the Baltic early spring). The most impressive was that it was the first time many of the team had completed a 100-mile ride, a huge milestone for a cyclist.

There were a few creaking legs as we rolled away from the hotel and south out of Telford to start Day 2, a 121km/71-mile route via Kidderminster and Wolverhampton to Tamworth. It's fair to say that the weather had a bit of a turn overnight. The first sight of wet roads for weeks was one thing but the headwind down to Kidderminster was a bit cheeky and made the coffee stop there more than welcome after grinding it out over

Kinver Edge to get there.

With everyone refreshed, it was good to head north again with the wind behind us this time and make our way through the pretty little villages of south Staffordshire and the outer reaches of Wolverhampton. This brought us to our next feed stop, at Watling St 'nick', where once again, our support team did a cracking job and a feast of sandwiches, flapjacks, bananas and Haribo were laid out waiting for us.

These seven guys and girls were amazing all weekend, putting in some serious graft and making our lives that bit easier. Nothing was ever too much, they were always ahead of the game. Every one of us was hugely appreciative of everything they did.

From there, the route across through the old Staffordshire mining towns was done with and we happily rolled into the Snowdome to meet the other chapters for the short ride to Drayton Manor.

I think a few of the team felt a good level of relief on riding into Drayton Manor, knowing the weekend's riding was cracked then and they enjoyed the big fanfare welcome there, as well as hitting the coffee and ice cream on offer! That said, once off the bike and after a couple of celebratory team photos, the first meeting with the survivors brings the weekend into stark perspective.

In the short awards ceremony there, our award was given to Sean Walker. Sean isn't employed by the police in any way but is a survivor and part of the West Midlands Police family, having lost his father, PC Mac Walker, when he was just 15. Sean had barely ridden a bike six months ago and had completed a longest ride of 53 miles just a week before the tour. He was still riding up with the front of the group on Day 2, was as strong as many of the more experienced riders and it was an honour and a pleasure to have him riding for his dad with us. Chapeau Sean.

From Drayton Manor, it was a short 15km ride to our hotel for the night. A couple of us tried to lift the pace, as we watched moody dark clouds dumping heavy rain over Birmingham, knowing the wind was bringing them our way. It didn't quite work. Another five minutes was all I needed. We got wet; very wet.

So, Day 3, this was wetsuit and snorkel conditions for a short 18km ride to meet the other riders as I led the group across Lichfield.

All of that was completely forgotten very quickly as we met the rest of the cyclists and rode 350-strong into the arboretum together. The place can't fail to have an effect on anyone but to ride in to the reception there and look into the faces of the families clapping us in and then hear their experiences in the service there is as moving and humbling as it gets.

It's a deep reminder of what this job is about, the risk it comes with and why we ride. It makes any amount of suffering on the bike well worth it. It's an honour to stand in that place, among the families of our fallen colleagues and friends, hearing and reading their names, and knowing every pedal stroke is worth it for them.

So, Unity Tour 2018 done. The chapter rode well over 300km in every kind of weather, conquered some big climbs, covered greater distances than many had ever ridden before and most importantly, raised £10,000 for COPS. It was a particular honour for me to have delivered the route and led the team.

Knowing how some of them had found it tough at times, it was heartening to see how the team got each other through and we finished together as a team, every rider having put in huge effort, and I was especially grateful to then be thanked and hear how much they had enjoyed the route over the three days. So, guess we'll all be back for more next year.

Force supported mutual aid operation for Trump visit

Around 500 West Midlands Police officers supported colleagues in Thames Valley, Essex and Scotland during the visit to the UK by the American President.

Donald Trump landed at Stansted Airport on Thursday 12 July ahead of a black-tie dinner at Blenheim Palace that night and, after a day of engagements on the Friday including a meeting with the Queen at Windsor Castle, travelled to Scotland for the weekend.

"This was a massive mutual aid operation," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, "As such, officers were pulled from across the country to support those forces most affected.

The Federation successfully argued that overnight allowance should be paid to all eligible officers involved in the policing operation.



'We were looked after very well'

Steven Gwynne was supporting Thames Valley Police and stationed in street uniform within the inner zone at Chequers during the President's visit.

He was allocated a bedroom with an en suite at Brunel University in Uxbridge and said everything was very well planned by Thames Valley.

"Officers were looked after very well considering the numbers deployed to the event," he said, "There was sufficient for a month of refreshments for officers during their day time deployment."

Accommodation debacle

West Midlands Police Federation welcomed the fact that officers from the Force providing support for those forces most affected by President Donald Trump's visit to the UK were moved out of the unsatisfactory accommodation after the first night.

The Federation had expressed its disgust that officers stationed in Essex overnight on the Wednesday before the president's arrival were on camp beds, tightly packed into sports halls with limited access to hot showers and hot food.

"For the first time I can remember, many of our officers involved in this deployment had not volunteered to support this mutual aid operation so a good number of our 450 plus officers sent to Thames Valley and Essex for this visit were compelled to undertake this role," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"The very least they could expect before embarking on 12-hour shifts in considerable heat was a decent night's sleep in reasonable accommodation. Instead, I am told, due to the staggered start times of their shifts and the conditions in which they found themselves, some only managed a few hours' broken sleep. This is unacceptable."

Essex Police apologised to those officers affected and found alternative accommodation with ACC Pippa Mills from Essex Police saying: "Security, welfare and wellbeing of those officers has been paramount at all times. As soon as we became aware of issues surrounding some of the accommodation provided actions were taken to rectify these. I would like to apologise to the officers affected. The conditions which I have been made aware of are not acceptable."

But Steve, while welcoming the Force addressing the issues raised, still expressed his disappointment.

"Of course, we appreciate the apology and the acknowledgement that they got this wrong but I still question how anyone could really have looked at the set-up of the sports halls and thought that it was suitable accommodation for police officers?" he said.

"President Trump's visit had been planned for weeks and surely someone should have paid more attention to how the police officers inevitably needed to support host forces could be provided with somewhere reasonable to rest, eat and shower?"

"Our officers are already under enormous strain trying to meet increased demand with reduced resources and this just added to the pressures they faced."



'Alarm bells should have been ringing'

With 21 years' service under his belt, West Midlands Police Federation health and safety representative Jase Sayers says he was astounded at the disregard for officers' welfare during the mutual aid operation.

"I find it quite hard to understand how the arrangements were ever agreed, even with a basic health and safety knowledge, alarm bells should have been ringing. I can only think that health and safety was not considered at all. I have been involved in many mutual aid deployments of varying sizes and have never experienced anything like this," he explained, listing everything from the bag meals to the sleeping accommodation, the fire risk, slip, trip and fall hazards and inadequate washing and toilet facilities.

On arrival in Essex on 11 July, Jase was part of a group of officers briefed by a superintendent and given bag meals, containing a sandwich, sausage roll and crisps with free-flowing coffee.

The sandwiches were given out from unrefrigerated vans while the sausage rolls were still frozen which they were later told was deliberate as it would keep the rest of the bag cold.

On arrival at their accommodation, they were greeted by a member of the Army who set out the camp rules.

Jase explains: "Our accommodation was basically a large sports hall full of brand new camp beds, approximately 400, about 2ft apart, males and females were separated, females were housed in squash courts with around eight to each glass-fronted court. At first, they had no beds so some were taken out of our hall.

"One officer explained he had no bedding and was told to go and find a GoOutdoors to purchase a sleeping bag, as far as I aware there was one shower block (communal), with eight to 10 shower heads."

'Officer welfare not a priority'

West Midlands Police officer Simon Wheeler has questioned how those planning such an important operation seemed to put officers' welfare at the bottom of their priorities.

"I appreciate it was a huge operation to organise, however, isn't it astonishing that once images of living arrangements reached the media hundreds of officers were relocated within hours. Therefore, I do not accept that finding adequate accommodation in this area was as difficult as it was made out," he said.

"Officers were aware that such an operation is an extensive and complex nightmare. Bu all officers require is adequate accommodation to enable you the necessary rest and food provisions to perform their duties."

Simon had volunteered for the mutual aid operation and was deployed to Operation Backspin in Essex, securing the perimeter of Stansted Airport. He stayed the first night in the Merville Army Barracks for the first night and then being relocated to The Manor of Groves Hotel.

The barracks, he explained, were very clean and tidy, since they were a new-build. The Army staff were accommodating and the evening meals were fresh, nice and filling. But at breakfast there was an inadequate amount provided for the tour of duty ahead of officers and there was also a distinct lack of toilets and hand washing facilities.

The sleeping arrangements were the biggest issue.

"Given the number of officers accommodating the gym must surely have been a breach of Health and safety. The amount of space between each bed was approximately a foot either side which meant there was hardly any room to manoeuvre never mind storing the amount of equipment required for the operation," said Simon.

"On the evening, I did not get any sleep due to the constant noise which is unsurprising when there were hundreds of officers arriving at different times and preparing their kit for an early start. Visibility was also an issue. Lights were out when I returned at 22:30. Officers were forced to get ready in the dark and try to manoeuvre between the limited amount of space personal kit and officers attempting to get to sleep. Officers were using mobile phones for some light which led to a gym being lit up like a disco!

"Due to this most officers had little or no sleep and were then expecting a 12-hour TOD. As it happens the following TOD ended up being 17 hours before we could obtain any rest period."

Simon also pointed out that female officers were accommodated in squash courts with camp beds to each court. By 1600 hours all of the courts were full which meant other officers arriving after this time were forced to sleep on the spectators' stairs with their sleeping bags and kit next to them.

He concluded: "I believe it was put together well from a security and policing stance, however, I believe officer welfare was last on the agenda for the operation. I would go to say, little or no thought was considered into the welfare of officers. This was from the accommodation to the meals and breaks officers were provided with. I understand that feeding this number of officers was a challenge, however, the provisions provided were not adequate given the amount of time between meals given the long TOD ahead."



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New chapter begins for WMP Benevolent Fund

A new and exciting chapter is about to unfold for the West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund as staff, committee members and fund directors welcome Steve Newbury to the team.

Steve took over as new committee secretary and general manager in July as the fund bids a fond and final farewell to its previous secretary, Roz Payne.

Roz, who has worked tirelessly for the fund for the past 13 years, has finally decided to step down from her duties and enjoy her retirement. Formal recognition of Roz's contribution to the Benevolent Fund was given at our AGM on 29 June by ACC Gary Cann.

She will be sorely missed by all of us here and we wish her a very happy and healthy retirement.

Although Roz will be a tough act to follow, Steve's enthusiasm is infectious and we know he will be the perfect successor.

"Roz has done an amazing job of transforming the Benevolent Fund in recent years, along with the help and tireless

efforts of rest of the team at Guardians House," explains Steve.

"It's my job, going forwards, to reach out to more serving West Midlands Police officers and staff and encourage them to join this fantastic fund.

"With so many member benefits - for such a minimal cost, it's the natural choice for WMP colleagues to opt in to during their police service. I've already come to appreciate the fund's important work in providing welfare support, not only during a member's service but well into their retirement too."

Steve is already familiar with the work of the Benevolent Fund. He joined West Midlands Police in 1989 and, during his policing career, he made time to support the fund's work by becoming one of its committee members.

"I look forward to the challenge of continuing where Roz has left off in promoting the fund as a vital and intrinsic part of the West Midlands Police family," Steve added.

For just £2.00 per month, Benevolent Fund members' benefits include:

Sickness vouchers

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- An extra £30 if you are off work for more than four months.

Help with convalescence

- Short convalescence and rehab breaks for members recovering from injury or illness. Members can benefit from a five-day stay at the multi-million pound wellbeing centre St Michael's Lodge in Lancashire.

Financial help

- Access to interest free loans or grants in times of hardship or distress.

Death grant of £3,500

- Pay out of £3,500 to your chosen beneficiary(ies) in the event of your death. If you have children, we will also pay them £25 per week until their 18th birthday.

Week's stay at our holiday home in Weymouth Dorset

- Members can enjoy a week's stay at 'Peels Retreat', the Ben Fund's holiday home, just steps away from the sea in Weymouth Dorset at hugely reduced rates.

For more information about WMP

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“With so many member benefits - for such a minimal cost, it's the natural choice for WMP colleagues to opt in to during their police service.”

”

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

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

Can I just place on record the wonderful job George McDonnell has done on my behalf before, during and after my gross misconduct hearing appearance? He is a real credit to WMP Federation. I have had good representatives, very poor representatives and the very best in George. He not only provided a listening ear at all times but was a great reassurance for my family and friends/colleagues during this turbulent time.

I will always be indebted for his tenacious manner and generosity.
Name withheld

I was recently subject of a criminal complaint.

The experience was made easier by the support of the Federation and, in particular, Dave Hadley who was my Fed rep. I am extremely grateful to the Federation and Dave for supporting me. Dave was amazing throughout this period. He showed a considerable amount of empathy, friendship and warmth. In my darkest days, he was there for me and provided perspective and clarity. He provided support and reassurance 24 hours a day and at short notice.

He demonstrated a great degree of knowledge, understanding and flexibility in his approach. Not only did he provide

this support to me but my family also who are extremely grateful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dave formally and if it is possible to record this on any official documentation I would be grateful.

He is a great ambassador for the Federation and I would recommend him without hesitation to any officer in need of Federation support. Dave epitomises everything that is good in humanity and the police service.

Name withheld

Message of thanks to rep Paul Ford:

I actually though do want to say a really big thank you for all your hard work and kind understanding, I know I am not through the mill physically but for the time being at least work are off my back.

Name withheld

I'd like to express my gratitude to George McDonnell during a recent process during which I was the subject of an ongoing PSD investigation. George was in contact with me extremely quickly and immediately addressed any issues or concerns I had. Throughout the investigation, George was in constant contact with updates or able to address any concerns myself or my partner had during what was a very stressful time.

I'm aware George was managing several cases at the same time but still managed to provide me with a lot of time, patience and support. I would have been lost without George's guidance through what seemed a minefield. George was brilliant throughout and I'd recommend him and the West Midlands Police Federation to anyone.

Name withheld

Review of front-line policing: **make sure you have your say**

Officers are being encouraged to have their say on what could be improved in a review of front-line policing announced by police minister Nick Hurd.

The Front-line Policing Review is seeking the views of officers from the rank of constable through to chief superintendent on their operational experience of leadership, professional development and wellbeing.

Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, is urging members to get involved in the consultation and have their say.

"We hope that everyone takes advantage of this opportunity for their voice to be heard, and I encourage everyone who can to share their views with the review team. No-one knows the realities of policing better than our members so it is vital that they share any concerns they have, put forward ideas for where improvements can be made and help shape the police service of the future."

From September this year, officers and staff will be able to

contribute their ideas using a range of electronic methods. This will then be followed by a series of regional face-to-face engagement sessions where they will be able to discuss ideas and solutions for improving support and development in policing nationally.

Speaking at the College of Policing's health and wellbeing event in July, Mr Hurd, who is personally sponsoring the review, shared his aspirations to collect front-line feedback and ideas, with a view to ensuring operational experience continues to inform national policing strategy.

The review will publish its recommendations early next year following advice from the minister's steering group which will include experts from within policing, such as the Police Federation, and also external parties.

More details of the how to submit your views will be announced soon but, in the meantime, if you would like to engage with the review, email FLR@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk for more information.

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Roadshow parks at Coventry

Members were able to meet Federation representatives and member service providers at the latest West Midlands Police Federation roadshow.

The roadshow at Coventry Police Station on 9 July allowed members to drop in to the Gavin Carlton Room to speak to people between 10am and 3pm.

They could raise concerns with Fed reps or discuss the services offered by partner organisations.

Free merchandise was on offer and members could also enter a prize draw with a £50 Amazon voucher up for grabs.

"We had a steady flow of visitors during the day with members taking advantage of the opportunity to meet Federation representatives and our Member Service providers," says Chris Cooper, member services team leader.

The next stop for the Federation roadshow is 13 September when it will be at The Old Bar at Wolverhampton Police Station.

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Retirement seminars

Is retirement just around the corner? And are you wondering what your options are?

West Midlands Police Federation is hosting a number of seminars for people in their last three years of service. The sessions will cover a number of topics and can be attended by an officer's husband, wife or partner.

Topics covered include managing change and uncertainty, CV writing and interview techniques, police and state pensions and taxation, savings and investments.

The next available sessions are in 2019 on the following dates **7 February, 14 March, 11 April, 23 May, 18 July, 15 August, 12 September, 17 October, 21 November and 19 December.**

To book your place, please email westmidlandspf@polfed.org with your name, collar number, work and personal email addresses, personal phone number, dietary requirements, proposed retirement date and the number of places required since you are welcome to attend with your partner. Please put 'retirement seminar' and the date you wish to attend in the subject line.

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What constitutes work-related stress?

By David Miers,
senior associate in
personal injury at
Slater and Gordon



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

One of the first questions we would ask a member is whether they have been diagnosed with a recognised psychiatric disorder. A claim for damages cannot be made if someone is suffering from 'stress' alone. Common psychiatric disorders include depression, PTSD or generalised anxiety disorder.

A member may have been to see their GP because of work-related stress but were unaware they have been diagnosed with a psychiatric condition. We can assist by

requesting copies of their GP records but a good indicator is that the member has been to see their GP because of occupational stress.

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

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

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

Thirdly, it is necessary to show there has been a breach of duty and that it was in fact something which the force did (or failed to do) contrary to law, which has

caused the illness. We often ask members what their force could have done to prevent the harm they have suffered. Examples may include:

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

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

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

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS



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

NARPO has Branches across West Midlands:-

Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.

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

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

ARE YOU RETIRING SOON?

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

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

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

New member service – McAlister Family Law Family law, divorce and children law specialists

McAlister Family Law is a specialist family and children law practice based in Manchester, Cheshire and London. The team, formerly from Slater and Gordon Lawyers, has unrivalled experience in representing officers within the Police Federation, including those in the West Midlands. Managing partner Amanda McAlister was responsible for setting up of the very first family law team dedicated to the needs of police officers and their families, and has since then gone on to be the lead expert in Police Federation divorce and children law cases. Amanda and her team represent officers within the UK and across the globe.

They have an unrivalled depth and breadth of knowledge in all areas of police divorce and children cases with individuals having experience of representing Police Federation members for more than 20 years and having expertise in all areas of family law, from cohabitation disputes to pre-nuptial agreements, from a multitude of children's matters to Child Maintenance Service (CMS) claims, and from child abduction to national and international relocation cases.

Although no two cases are the same, and every family has unique circumstances, they are fully aware and appreciative of the important issues which tend to feature in officers' cases, whether that be financial arrangements following separation and divorce, occupation of the family home, pensions and other investments, or trying to sort out child arrangements to fit around work and shift patterns.

The McAlister Family Law team also have specific expertise in:

- **Advising as to the options in relation to pensions and divorce.** How your pension is to be treated following a separation or divorce will depend on the value of the other assets that you own and the

length of the marriage. While this can be a highly complicated area of the law, our team are the most experienced lawyers in the UK and will provide the best in class advice as to the right strategy required to deliver the result that you are seeking.

- **Advising how pre- and post-pension accrual will be considered following a divorce.**

If you were paying into your pension before marriage or following separation then it may be possible for us to argue that this pension accrual should be kept out of the financial settlement.

- **Advising on all children disputes including whether a child should be permitted to leave the jurisdiction if consent is being withheld by the other parent.** Also, negotiating the division of school holiday contact and special days such as Easter and Christmas.

Our dedicated team offers West Midlands Police Federation members:

First free consultation

Appointments can take place face to face at one of **our regular surgeries at Guardians House, Birmingham** or alternatively by Skype, FaceTime or video conference. To arrange an appointment, contact our new client services team on **0333 202 6433** or **hello@mcalisterfamilylaw.co.uk**

Fixed fees and discounted rates

We have put together several highly discounted fixed fee packages which enable West Midlands Police Federation members to budget for their legal fees. We offer a **fixed fee divorce** for £350 + VAT and court fees and up to 30 per cent discount on all our hourly rates when a fixed fee is not being charged. We also offer a 'pay as you go' option which enables members who are on a tight budget to still seek advice at key stages of their case.

McALISTER

FAMILY LAW

McALISTER

FAMILY LAW

Fixed Fee Divorce

West Midlands Police
Divorce and Children Law Specialists

£350+ VAT*
FREE first appointment

McAlister Family Law is the country's leading provider of police divorce and family services. Whether you are facing divorce and are worried about the impact on your pension or are seeking contact with your children or any other family law dispute, we are here to help.

- **Leaders in police divorce and children cases.**
- **Over 20 years' experience in representing police officers facing divorce and children disputes.**
- **Experts in police pensions and divorce.**
- **Fixed fees and discounted rates for police officers and personnel.**

*Conditions apply. See website for details.

McAlister Family Law.

3rd Floor, Castlefield House, Liverpool Road, Manchester M3 4SB



Chris Fairhurst
Partner

www.mcalisterfamilylaw.co.uk

0333 202 6433