

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

December 2018/January 2019

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GeorgeBurrows 

Welcome

Welcome to the December 2018/January 2019 edition of *federation* - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

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

Just get in touch and let us know.

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

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Contents

- 04 Chair's introduction
- 05 Your magazine
- 05 Force will pick up the tab for winter flu jab
- 05 Stay safe
- 06 Federation takes on Government over pay rise
- 07 Pensions shortfall could spark new funding crisis
- 08 'We will get law changed to protect police drivers'
- 09 Protect the Protectors success as assaults act comes into effect
- 10 90 per cent of members feel there are not enough officers to cope with demand
- 11 Funding cuts are at the root of the problems we face
- 12 Cuts have consequences, new reports issue warnings to Government
- 13 'I want people's diversity to be accepted and embraced'
- 14 Work of detectives put in the spotlight
- 15 'We are not mental health experts'
- 16 Conduct reps express concern over new IOPC guidelines
- 17 'Draconian' system is blighting lives, says conduct lead
- 18 BAPA celebrates with awards evening
- 20 PIP seminar delivers important message
- 23 EveryonePause - Federation carries out forces-wide menopause survey
- 23 New campaign highlights officers' entitlements
- 24 Review of the year 2018
- 29 2019 roadshow kicks off in Bloxwich
- 29 Heading for retirement? Book your place on our retirement seminars
- 29 Cameron's Coasters still spreading the mental health message
- 31 Things to think about if you are considering a divorce in the New Year
- 33 Supporting you
- 34 Future police officers?
- 35 Divorce finances: a real life story

Advertisers

- 02 George Burrows, Federation insurance scheme
- 22 Slater & Gordon, police law
- 28 Police Credit Union
- 30 Slater & Gordon, family law
- 31 Warren & Co, independent mortgage advice
- 32 George Burrows, financial health check
- 33 Gorvins, police and family law
- 34 First Call Financial, independent mortgage advice
- 35 NARPO, member services
- 36 McAlister, family law

Funding, priorities and bureaucracy all need to be tackled



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

In the last few months, we have seen report after report highlighting the effects of the cuts to police budgets.

The National Audit Office, the Home Affairs Select Committee and its fellow Parliamentary body, the Public Accounts Committee, have all confirmed what the Police Federation has been saying for some time – cuts have consequences.

Just a week before I sat down to write this article, the latest report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, this time looking at mental health and policing, also provided evidence for something we all know is true – police officers are being asked to fill the gaps left in mental health support services.

In short, the report, aptly called 'Picking up the pieces', said police officers shouldn't be expected to be mental health experts – though it did acknowledge that they were

doing their best to help people in crisis.

But, in addition to raising concerns about the way in which police officers were being expected to step in where other agencies were failing, the report also served as another reminder of the need for us to have an honest conversation with the public about what they want from their police service.

In a recent article published in The Telegraph, I argued that policing, due to the cuts programme, has become reactive with only our specialist teams being able to be proactive. Sadly, over specialisation leads to the de-skilling of officers and, in turn, inflexibility within the police service.

So, this means we may have officers on duty but if they have only one skillset they are unable or ineffective if required in other areas when needed. Is this what the public want from their local force or would they prefer more multi-skilled officers with the time to carry out proactive as well as reactive work?

I think we can get a clue to the public's frustration with how things are currently through the establishment of the 'We stand determined' Facebook group in Birmingham. This has more than 2,000 members who are talking about patrolling the streets. These appear well-intentioned people who want to protect their communities.

Ordinary, good and decent people are seeing their police stations – the visible sign of a policing presence in their communities – closing; they are seeing that we are not able to patrol the streets and they want step in and protect the streets, their neighbours, their friends, the old, the vulnerable and local businesses.

Of course, police officers are gutted we can't provide the visible patrol members of the public crave, after all we all joined up to serve our communities and we all know the

value of having officers on the streets, fighting and preventing crime, providing reassurance, gathering intelligence, getting to know people and building those invaluable links with the public. The public are the police and the police are the public.

While funding and priorities are two areas that clearly need addressing, we also need to do more to tackle the bureaucracy and red tape that literally ties our officers' hands.

In order to make the most of what we have, we need to trust officers to use their common sense and skills to identify where risk lies instead of tying their hands with over-bureaucratic measures like mandatory domestic abuse risk assessments, non-crime recording.

The drive to target hate crime can mean officers are spending time investigating bad manners and impolite comments at the expense of investigating crimes such as burglary and violence. This means our over-stretched officers are being drawn into tackling social rather than criminal issues. While we all want to end genuine crimes motivated or aggravated by intolerance and prejudice. They should be investigated, and those who commit them – or incite them – should face the full weight of the law, but let's not encourage people to think we can also solve deep social problems such as misogyny, ageism and give impolite people manners.

Sara Thornton, chair of National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), attracted much media attention at her organisation's annual conference this autumn when she said that extending existing categories of hate crime risks distracting police from their core role.

"We do not have the resources to do everything that is desirable and deserving," she concluded.

Ms Thornton's comments were

welcomed by our national Federation chair, John Apter, who pointed out that officers were struggling to meet demand as they were expected to do more with less.

As the service of last resort, the police cannot say no, he said, arguing: "What we need is an honest conversation with the public about the police service they want, and immediate investment from the Government to ensure we can provide it."

I couldn't agree more. So, let's hope that is a New Year's Resolution on the Home Secretary's horizons as he enjoys his Christmas break.

Meanwhile, I would just like to thank you all for your efforts to protect our communities this year. I appreciate many of you will be working over the festive period but, all the same, I wish you all a happy Christmas and best wishes for 2019."

Your magazine

This will be the last printed edition of your magazine. From the February/March 2019 edition, it will only be produced in a digital format with copies being emailed directly to all members.

"This is something we have been considering for some time," says Chris Cooper, member services team leader at West Midlands Police Federation, "We feel that sending out the magazine electronically will ensure we reach more members and, of course, it is much more environmentally friendly in terms of saving paper and so on."

The magazine will be produced six times a year, alternating with the bi-monthly Federation ezine, so that members will receive updates at least once a month.

Members are also advised to log on to the new Federation website – polfed.org/westmids – where all latest news affecting officers will be posted along with the views of Federation officials locally and nationally.

The website also features an informative advice and regs section, information on the Group Insurance Scheme and Member Services – including offers and deals, retirement seminar dates and competitions – and a diary showing forthcoming events such as Federation roadshows and Branch Council meetings.

Please note our phone number is now
0121 752 4900

Force will pick up the tab for winter flu jab

Last year the Force lost almost 10,500 working days over the winter seasonal illness period due to flu, chest infections and colds.

This year, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is recommending the quadrivalent flu jab, effective against four strains of seasonal influenza.

And therefore, as part of the Force's commitment to the wellbeing of officers and staff, this year it is re-directing savings from its salary sacrifice schemes to fund a programme of vaccinations for anyone not eligible for a free NHS flu jab.

Tina Cook, head of wellbeing and part of People and Organisation Development, explained: "We are conscious that many of our officers and staff come into contact with frail, vulnerable and unwell members of society, who are themselves more likely to be at risk from infectious diseases due to poor nutrition, lifestyle or personal care.

"This means that the level of risk is increased. We also recognise that the more people we have in Force who have protection through the vaccination, the more contained and less likely to spread any virus is likely to be. We encourage everyone who is eligible for a free jab to access it through their GP, where possible, but other options are available through chemists.

"We would also like to dispel some common myths about the flu vaccine – it

does not give you flu! A few people have a slight adverse reaction to the vaccine which may result in a slight rise in temperature and a skin reaction at the site of the injection, but this is short lived and much less serious than having the flu itself"

To take advantage of this scheme, just visit your GP or nearest pharmacy, have your vaccine and then claim back the cost through submission of the receipt through the My Services Portal.

Please note – the cash back amount available from the Force is £7. The vaccination is available from ASDA pharmacy for £7 and therefore there would be no cost to the individual. You can use an alternative pharmacy if you wish but the refund is capped at £7.

Operating a cashback scheme means that you can get the vaccination at a location and time to suit you, and get the money back into your account within a few days of submitting your claim.

If you have already paid for the vaccination, you can still claim your cost back (£7) via the portal. The offer is available until 31 December to any officer or member of staff who would normally have to pay for their flu jab.

For more information about the vaccination, and the benefits, please take a look at the NHS seasonal flu vaccine website.

Stay safe

Officers have been issued with some seasonal advice from the West Midlands Police Federation conduct team.

In addition to wishing officers a happy and relaxing Christmas and New Year, members of the Conduct and Performance Committee have also advised them to keep themselves out of trouble.

"Every year we get asked why do we circulate something like this, and every year one or more officers get arrested over the festive period," they say in their annual Christmas message.

"So, again, a bit of advice to help keep your festive period festive and to avoid anyone meeting the on-call Fed rep and solicitor."

The circular gives the following advice:

- **Don't drink and drive**
- **Don't use your warrant card to travel on public transport unless it's to and from work - and not while you're under the influence of alcohol**

- **Don't consume excess alcohol on an evening when you're on earlies the next day - keep in view your fitness to drive and work the next morning**
- **Drink sensibly - if you're out in a group, look after each other**
- **Don't give your personal mobile out to any member of the public you've met via your day job/role as a police officer - on duty or off duty**
- **Don't go out socially with any member of the public you've met via your day job/role as a police officer**
- **If you find yourself in a difficult/challenging domestic/family situation - walk away and, finally**
- **Don't use social media while under the influence of alcohol - think before you hit 'post/send'.**

It also asks those who are working to stay safe but adds: "For those of you fortunate enough to have a few days off – enjoy."

Federation takes on Government over pay rise

Proceedings have begun which could lead to a judicial review on the Government's failure to honour this year's recommended pay rise for officers.

The independent Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) had recommended a three per cent rise for officers from September this year but the Government only awarded two per cent, though the Federation has argued this is only worth 0.85 per cent in real terms.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) had sought a 3.4 per cent increase in a joint submission to PRRB with the Superintendents' Association.

It is the second year in a row that the recommended rise has been ignored and a lower rated increase given. As such, the PFEW has started proceedings with the Home Office which could lead to a judicial review of the decision.

Chair of West Midlands Police Federation Rich Cooke explains: "This is not just about the derisory pay rise given to officers but also about the whole independent pay review process.

"The PRRB is supposed to act as an independent organisation that considers the evidence submitted by various interested parties, including the Police Federation and Superintendents' Association, and then makes a recommendation to ministers in terms of what it considers a fair pay award.

"The Federation enters into this process in good faith, providing evidence to support its arguments but time and time again we are finding ourselves frustrated and increasingly angry that the Government is choosing to ignore PRRB, undermining the whole process.

"We cannot sit back and let this continue. We will stand up for our members and for what we believe is right."

PFEW has instructed solicitors to formally proceed with a judicial review against the Home Secretary.

John Apter, national Federation chair,

said the decision to take action was easy as the organisation was not prepared to sit back while members suffered: "We must have confidence in an independent pay review system and for that to be ignored by Government undermines the whole process. Our members do not have industrial rights so it's important they know we will stand up for them and fight their corner.

"It is a disgrace that for the second year running the Home Office has cheated police officers out of the pay increase they should receive; this year officers are being awarded a derisory two per cent increase, despite the recommendation of the PRRB - the independent body established by this Government to make evidence-based recommendations on police pay - that it should be three per cent."

He continues: "In response to this betrayal and based on legal advice, PFEW has instructed solicitors to formally proceed with a judicial review against the Home Secretary on the basis that he has stated that the pay decision was a Government decision and not his decision alone.

"Now, more than ever, it is imperative pay is adequate and fair acknowledging the incredibly demanding job officers do. It is unacceptable to see officers struggling to

make ends meet whilst working all the hours under the sun to keep the public safe because there simply aren't enough officers to meet the increasing demand.

"Police officers must be treated fairly and have confidence that any independent pay recommendations will be accepted in full by the Home Secretary.

"I know the deep sense of anger felt by many of our members about the way they have been treated. This is why we have taken this action and make no apology for doing so. Doing nothing was simply not an option and it is right and proper that we legally challenge this unfairness."

The Home Office said the pay rise would take the average pay for a police constable will now be more than £38,600 per year.

Home Secretary Savid Javid said the award represented the 'highest' consolidated pay award since 2010.

But the Federation states the pay award actually amounts to an increase of just 0.85 per cent as only one per cent of last year's two per cent rise 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.

“ I know the deep sense of anger felt by many of our members about the way they have been treated. This is why we have taken this action and make no apology for doing so. Doing nothing was simply not an option and it is right and proper that we legally challenge this unfairness. ”

Pensions shortfall could spark new funding crisis

West Midlands Police Federation and the Chief Constable have warned of a fresh crisis in policing in the face of another squeeze on budgets.

Forces across England and Wales have been told they must meet a £420 million shortfall following the Treasury's re-calculation of the money each force needed to pay into the police pension scheme.

West Midlands Police faces new pensions expenses of £8.6m next year and £13.9m the year after according to figures published in *The Guardian*.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said: "There is no question there will be more obvious rationing of services. The public can already see it is going on. We are already not pursuing crimes where we could find a suspect. We are doing things now that surprise me.

"We are struggling to deliver a service to the public. I think criminals are well aware now how stretched we are."

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has sent a formal letter to the Treasury saying it will seek a judicial review of the Government's proposals.

And Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, welcomed the joint stance

being made by the Federation and police chiefs.

"It is good to see police chiefs and the Federation speaking out against these proposals," he said. "It is a sorry state of affairs when we, as a Federation, and our chief constables feel there is no other option than to take legal action against Government.

"We fully support the chiefs' call for investment and we would hope there were alternative ways of managing this other than cutting police numbers, which are already at an all-time low.

"We wholeheartedly agree the pension deficit should not be funded out of existing force budgets. We have been saying for too long now that Government spending decisions are putting the safety of the public at risk, and these proposals only make that situation worse."

John Apter, national Federation chair, added: "Since 2010, we have lost more than 21,300 officers – that's a drop of 15 per cent and the lowest number of police officers since 1996. Policing is becoming purely reactive as it continues to be decimated by cuts.

"The Government needs to wake up and



West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

end the unprecedented cuts suffocating the police service because, at the end of the day, it's not just police officers suffering but the public too."



'We will get law changed to protect police drivers'



WMPF deputy secretary and national response driving lead Tim Rogers.

West Midlands Police (WMPF) deputy secretary Tim Rogers has expressed his 'bitter disappointment' that a Private Members' Bill proposing better protection in law for police drivers has been delayed once again.

Tim, the Federation's national response driving lead, has spearheaded the campaign for a change in legislation and has spoken out after the second reading of Sir Henry Bellingham's Emergency Response Drivers (Protections) Bill, put forward on behalf of the Police Federation, was put back from Friday 23 November to March 2019.

"While the lack of progress for Sir Henry's bill is, of course, a bitter

disappointment, we have to take stock of where we have come from and what has been achieved over the past two years. It's certainly not all bad," said Tim.

"Our focus was, and always will be, to get the current legislative flaw remedied to ensure that our stretched professionals can do simply what society expects without the reserved right to prosecute them.

"We train officers to do things that members of the public can't so they can serve their communities and protect people from harm. But currently by doing this very thing, using the tools policing has given them, they break the law – under current traffic law where they are judged against the standard of the careful and competent driver – officers can, if the will dictates, be charged with a criminal offence for using a trained tactic."

While frustrated at the delay with the bill, which would make legal exceptions for police pursuits and emergency response drivers to recognise their skills and training, Tim has also spoken out on the timing of a media event which took place on the same day as Sir Henry's bill was due to be heard in Parliament.

"The event run by a local policing commander for the Metropolitan Police reaffirmed a commitment to deal with two-wheeled enabled crime through the highly effective Operation Venice," Tim explained.

"I love what they've been doing here, the results have been great and done much to restore confidence to worried communities. The totally appropriate and brutally effective tactics that are trained

and actively encouraged are examples of how we train cops to then encourage them to deviate from the current legislation. If it's necessary to use these tactics then it's essential for the law to recognise this, currently it does not.

"I thought the timing for this media event was deliberate in coinciding with Sir Henry's bill. Alas, none of the staff on offer to the media knew that a few hundred yards down the road an MP was making attempts to legitimise their much lauded and essential methods. A missed opportunity and a great shame as on Friday the Government once more objected to the bill.

"That said, it is not the end of the commitment from the police minister to change the legislation in line with our submission."

He added: "They still assure us that this ridiculous aberration will be fixed and have asked to take control of the Private Members' Bill. This is in order to have it reflect the Federation's submission of 2016 and also the slight amendments as a result of the public consultation. So the direction is the same with the vehicle for change now being the Private Members' route.

"Officers have, in the main, full support from their senior officers. Some actively encourage the use of tactics that clearly are at odds with the law. This is nice but it's not them who will be charged or sent to jail or lose their job. The officer carries all the risk, the senior officers need them to take these risks. We will get this changed I'm certain."

But, in the meantime, Tim is urging officers to be mindful and safe within the confines of the current legislation.



Protect the Protectors success as assaults act comes into effect

Any assault on a police officer is an attack on society itself, says West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich made the comment as new legislation setting out tougher sentences for those who attack police and other emergency service workers came into effect.

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act creates a new aggravated offence of an assault against a member of the emergency services and doubles the maximum sentence for these attacks from six to 12 months.

The new law follows the Police Federation's nationwide Protect the Protectors campaign. West Midlands Police Federation was a key supporter of the campaign and took a number of its members to Parliament to talk to MPs about the effects of being assaulted while on duty.

"We are pleased to see this new legislation in place," says Rich, "It is a significant step forward and should make it clear that attacks against our members – and other emergency service workers – will not be tolerated.

"For far too long, officers have come to accept being kicked and punched is part of the job. But it should not be. Police officers are committed to serving their communities, fighting crime and protecting



West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

the vulnerable, in return they should not be seen as society's punchbags.

"This new law sends out a clear signal that those who attack blue light workers will face tougher sentences. But there is still work to do. We need to see the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts make full use of the powers they are being given under the act."

The Police Federation of England and



Wales has also welcomed the new act but acknowledges it did not get everything it wanted from the Protect the Protectors campaign. It wants even tougher sentences, as a stronger deterrent, as well as a wider roll-out of Taser, body-worn video and spit and bite guards, all of which it feels will offer better protection to officers. The Federation is also calling for appropriate levels of staffing.

National Federation chair John Apter says: "I hope that this legislation will also help to change a culture which has developed within society that it is acceptable to assault an emergency worker. Let me be clear, it is not.

"Nobody should be assaulted just because of the uniform they wear or the job they do, to assault an emergency worker is totally unacceptable and there must be consequences for those who commit such crimes."

Home Secretary Sajid Javid added: "At a time when our brave police officers and staff are working tirelessly to crack down on violence, I find it despicable that some people think it is acceptable to assault emergency service workers.

"This act ensures judges can come down hard on these cowardly individuals and makes clear that we are committed to protecting those who protect us."

The Federation's Protect the Protectors campaign was launched at Parliament in February 2017 in connection with a Ten Minute Rule Bill introduced by Halifax MP Holly Lynch. Having joined PC Craig Gallant on patrol in West Yorkshire in summer 2016, Ms Lynch dialled 999 after witnessing the single-crewed officer being surrounded by a hostile crowd.

“For far too long, officers have come to accept being kicked and punched is part of the job. But it should not be. Police officers are committed to serving their communities, fighting crime and protecting the vulnerable, in return they should not be seen as society's punchbags.”

90 per cent of members feel there are not enough officers to cope with demand

An 'overwhelming number' of Federation members feel their workload is too high and that there are not enough officers to cope with demand.

That is the finding of a stress survey conducted on behalf of the West Midlands Police Federation Health and Safety Committee.

A total of 612 officers responded to the survey during October, including CID and response constables and sergeants, and all inspectors.

It found that more than 80 per cent of those who responded said their workload was too high or much too high.

The survey also revealed:

- More than 90 per cent felt there were not enough officers to cope with demand
- More than 60 per cent spent more than half of their working week feeling stressed, and
- 30 per cent said they were stressed all of the time.

Steve Green, the Force CID Federation workplace representative and deputy chair of the Health and Safety Committee, said: "The findings of the survey are stark – an overwhelming majority of officers are concerned about their workload, their stress levels and their ability to cope with demand.

"This is unacceptable. Officers report feeling frustrated, fatigued and burnt out. They have no investigation time to deal with the highest risk matters, which come above anything else.

"It is a poor service to victims, who are left going for weeks without any action on their cases."

The report found that the causes of stress differed depending on the role. For example, the main stress causes for response constables was a lack of breaks and finishing late, for investigation sergeants it was not enough staff and too many investigations while for inspectors it was competing demands for resources and the management of risk within investigations.

Steve, who has been with the Force for more than 22 years, that last 12 of which as a

sergeant, said he hoped the survey could provide feedback to the Chief Constable on behalf of Federation members so that a risk assessment and suitable control measures could be implemented to reduce the risk of stress and burn-out.

He said: "This is in the process of being put to the Health and Safety Committee – after approval from the committee the findings will be sent to the Force health and safety officer who will in turn discuss the findings with Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

"We want what is best for our members, a safe and healthy working environment."

In previous meetings involving ACCs and the Federation's health and safety representatives, the Force has asked for evidence to show that any issues raised exist. So they are now hoping the survey results will lead to changes.

Steve explained: "We have approached the Force several times over the 'refreshment breaks' issue and, although there is an acknowledgement that there is a problem, the chief officers cannot act on anecdotal evidence and require actual issues that we can document. Refreshment breaks are being looked into as a separate work-stream led by the committee's deputy secretary, Archie Murphy.

"Several members raised workload and stress issues with me and Jason Durnall as we are two of the Force CID (FCID) Federation reps. The issues focused around lack of staff numbers and the increase in workload.

"Over the past two years, since the start of the 2020 Force restructure and change programme, Force CID has lost staff to other department or they have left the job, transferred forces or gone to ROCU or CTU."

Steve cites the example that at TS1, which went live in November 2016, he had a team of two sergeants and 21 officers including four police staff investigators (PSI). For various reasons, staff have been taken from or left the team leaving it with two sergeants and 10 constables (only one of whom is a qualified PIP2 detective) and one PSI. From those 10, one is long-term sick, two are restricted and three are flexi-workers.



He added: "Our minimum staffing is eight and we regularly parade six or below when the officers on free days are not in. Each has about 20-30 ongoing investigations with a further 30 new investigations landing each day. We are also responsible for any 'duty' jobs that come in, stabbings, shootings, robberies and so on - and all prisoners, excluding domestic violence - arrested by response and other front-line departments.

"The workload has increased substantially. I believe that crime has risen by about 20 per cent in some areas and the team has dropped by 50 per cent. It is unsustainable, officers report feeling frustrated, fatigued and burnt out. they have no investigation time and have to deal with the highest risk matters which trump anything else."

Steve highlights the provisions of health and safety legislation:

- It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees. s.2(1) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Welfare includes stress. (Hse.gov.uk, 2018)
- Employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it. (Hse.gov.uk, 2018).

He had originally produced a snapshot survey, designed to find out members' views on workload and stress. The original survey only went to FCID constables, sergeants and all inspectors. However, other departments asked to be included so it was extended to response constables and response sergeants.

"This was only ever designed to be a snapshot. It is not, and was never intended to be, an extensive investigation into causes and effects. Its sole purpose was to provide feedback to the chief officers on behalf of the members so that a risk assessment could be revised and suitable control measures implemented to reduce the risk of stress and burn-out on these officers," Steve concluded.

The Federation's Health and Safety Committee officials are:

Secretary - Deano Walker

Chair - Jason Durnall

Deputy chair - Steve Green

Deputy secretary - Archie Murphy.

Funding cuts are at the root of the problems we face

There was widespread condemnation when video emerged of a police officer being karate-kicked by thugs as someone filmed the attack and did nothing to help.

The sickening incident, in London and involving an officer from the Met, attracted blanket media coverage and opened up a debate about whether members of the public should intervene.

In the days after the attack, West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke was asked for his views and penned this article which looks at some of the wider issues.

I woke up yesterday to a message telling me that four colleagues had been assaulted, one sexually, overnight. This has become the sad reality of my daily duties as I contact officers assaulted or otherwise injured and offer support. But I am overwhelmed by sheer numbers.

In the last few days, we've had numerous other assaults; an officer knocked unconscious, another dragged along the road, one ran over. They are not alone. Home Office figures show nationwide there are 71 assaults on officers each day. In line with the Federation's Protect the Protectors campaign on officer assaults, we need to see more offenders charged for these attacks and tougher sentences handed down. But, of course, it's not just officers under attack, knife crime is rampant, with machetes increasingly appearing on our streets.

When I saw the video on social media of Met police officers being attacked and karate-kicked, I felt as angry as Ken Marsh, my London counterpart. We are seeing

more of these videos circulated by idiots unconcerned about officers and often mocking them. I think this is a symptom of the social media age we live in rather than a wider decay in moral values.

There have always been elements in society who hate the police and all we stand for. But I retain a strong faith that the vast majority of the public trust and respect us. As we saw in this video, a passing motorcyclist did help the officers and he deserves recognition for his actions.

But, as the backdrop to this, we need to accept front-line policing has become almost totally reactive and that has damaged our relationship with the communities we serve. Traditionally, we would complete foot patrols. We knew the local dynamics, where to look when a crime occurred, the places stolen goods might be stashed and would have a good idea of possible suspects.

Today, a report of a stolen car might elicit no response other than its number plate being placed on various systems for electronic recognition. Automation and the law of averages is seen as a more 'efficient' way of screening out crimes than the good old bobby with local knowledge and an ability to put two and two together. But the role of the local officer was not just about reacting to crime, it was about forging links with the public, encouraging them to be our eyes and ears so we could work together. The public are the police and the police are the public. We are at risk of losing that.

Funding cuts are a fundamental cause of the problems we now face. We've got 1970s levels of officers, as we have lost one in four of our number in just eight years. Police

stations - the symbolic presence of policing in local communities - are disappearing. The public are feeling the loss, a Facebook group in Birmingham called 'We stand determined' has more than 2,000 members who talk about patrolling the streets. These appear well-intentioned people who want to protect their communities. The public are desperate for visible, traditional policing; officers who know them and understand their area.

But my colleagues feel more exposed than ever before and are struggling to meet demand. While funding is a major issue, we also need to free them from the bureaucracy that quite often leads to skewed priorities. For example, domestic violence is one massive area of police demand, and it's absolutely vital we deal with this. But in our Force - and others - officers are obliged in all cases to complete a mandatory risk assessment, involving intimate questions, and record a "non-crime" number which has to be written up. The definition of domestic abuse is extremely wide, including current or former intimate partners and incidents, often of a very minor, low-risk nature, between wider family members. This all takes time in an officer's day.

What we've seen in recent years is the denigration of traditional policing, through funding and the deskilling of officers who are increasingly reactive, bound by mandatory 'catch-all' policies from using common sense, tied to 'specialist' units and unable to forge the links with their communities that everyone knows should be the bedrock of effective policing.



Cuts are having consequences, new reports issue warnings to Government

Two new Parliamentary reports have shown the damaging effect Government cuts have had on public safety and confidence.

The Policing for the Future report published by the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) concluded forces are struggling to cope in the face of changing and rising crimes, as a result of falling staff numbers, outdated technology, capabilities, structures, fragmentation and a failure of Home Office leadership.

And the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has also issued a report highlighting how public confidence in the police service has been 'severely dented' after cuts to force budgets.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke says these should be clear signs to the Government that it has got it wrong on policing.

"These reports don't tell officers up and down the country anything we didn't already know. Policing is on its knees," he says.

"We need a return to more visible policing, the type of policing that means officers are present on our streets, acting as a deterrent to those who are intent on committing crime but also catching criminals," says Rich.

"Instead, due to the Government's cuts programme, we just don't have enough officers to do that and we are being forced into offering a largely reactive service; that proactive and preventative side of front-line policing is pretty much dead.

"The public can see this happening, they are aware the police service is having to prioritise what it can respond to but what I just don't understand is why members of the Government are burying their heads in the sand.

"You simply cannot slash police budgets year on year and expect the police to maintain an effective service for their communities, particularly at a time when demand is increasing.

"Cuts do have consequences and have clearly had an impact on the public we serve but also on police officers whose wellbeing has been severely affected."

The HASC report contains 54 conclusions and recommendations. It states the service needs more money and needs to do more to protect and promote the welfare of its officers.

It recommends an overhaul in the way fraud cases are dealt with and calls on the Home Secretary to take urgent action to ensure that all forces have sufficient specialist child sexual abuse investigators.

It goes on to state: "In too many areas, the police are the only emergency service for those in crisis, and they are being used as a gateway to healthcare for those in desperate need of help."

It argues: "The Government must be clear and accurate about police funding, and the resource pressures facing forces."

And it concludes: "Policing urgently needs more money. We strongly recommend

that police funding is prioritised in both the upcoming budget and the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)."

The PAC report says the Home Office does not understand the demands being faced by the police service and calls for an overhaul of the funding formula, which calculates how much money forces receive from central Government.

In a summary, it says funding for police forces is down by nearly a fifth since 2010-11 and there are nearly a fifth fewer officers and staff. Inevitably, there are consequences and forces are under increasing strain.

It states: "Violent crime and sexual offences have increased and forces are dealing with more incidents which are not



crime related, at the same time as coping with fewer frontline staff. Forces are feeling the pressure of 'cost shunting' as cuts to other areas of public spending, such as health, are passed onto policing because it is so often the first line of response.

"Policing by consent relies on public confidence and this is being severely dented. Despite the pressures facing forces, it is disappointing that the budget did not address the financial sustainability of police forces, particularly in relation to neighbourhood policing which has borne the brunt of cuts."

It adds that forces cannot do everything and are prioritising their work by cutting back in some areas, such as neighbourhood policing, meaning fewer officers on the street but concludes public confidence in the police is declining and officers' personal resilience is under pressure with this reduction in visibility.

Public Accounts Committee chair Meg Hillier MP says: "The 'thin blue line' is wearing thinner with potentially dire consequences for public safety. Public confidence and trust that the police will respond is breaking down.

"Funding reductions of nearly a fifth have placed severe strain on police forces, which have in turn been forced to cut back. The results are stark."

She continues: "This cannot continue. Government must show leadership and get on with fixing the flaws at the heart of its approach to policing.

"In particular, the Home Office must improve its understanding of the real-world demands on police, and use this information to inform its bid for funding from the Treasury. And when it secures that funding, it must distribute it effectively.

"It is wholly unacceptable that, more than three years after accepting the police funding formula needs to change, the Home Office has no firm plans to do it.

"If it is to convince police and the public that it is serious about addressing their concerns then it should set out a plan as swiftly as possible.

"The messages from communities and police forces across the UK are clear. The Government must act now."

Police Federation chair John Apter has labelled the Government's failings in relation to policing a 'national scandal'.

He said: "This report is the latest in a long series of huge red flags for the Government. This is now a critical situation and a national scandal. And they can't say they weren't warned.

"Dedicated police officers are at breaking point and are overwhelmed by the ever-increasing demands being heaped on them as a result of eight years of austerity."

'I want people's diversity to be accepted and embraced'

Peggy Lamont says she will draw on her own experiences as she works to make the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) more diverse and representative in her new position as the national equality lead.



Peggy, a West Midlands Police Federation representative, has pledged to focus on the people within the police 'rather than the percentages'.

And, writing in her first blog on the national Federation website, Peggy says she will be inspired by her own life experiences in driving changes for officers and accessing the support they need at work.

"I appreciate deeply that every officer brings with them all their life experience – good and bad," she said, "I have a disability – a mental health condition – which sometimes affects my ability to do my job.

"It doesn't mean I'm not a good police officer. It just means that every now and then I need some extra support. And luckily I have a boss and colleagues who understand that.

"I want this to be the norm for police officers, I want people's diversity to be acknowledged, accepted and embraced."

Peggy joined the Force in 2001 and started her career on the old response team at Chelmsley Wood. She moved to the rural section on a neighbourhood team and then, following the birth of her children, moved into the Contact Centre.

Eventually she became a workplace representative for the Federation to help colleagues and to get involved in wider policing decisions.

"When I became a Federation rep I expected to be dealing with conduct and performance but I ended up working more in health and safety and in dealing with equality issues," she said.

"That's what opened my eyes to the huge amount of great work that the Federation does in this area.

"Most of it goes on quietly and unsung but is nonetheless vital in ensuring that our members and the organisation are able to keep providing the great service to the

public we do. I was hooked.

"Sometimes when I say the words 'diversity and equality' I can see people's eyes glaze over. I want to change that.

"I am not about ranting and raving. I am about enabling positive change which will hopefully help in combatting and eradicating inequality where it exists within our organisation.

"And please don't think I am a 'suit' issuing decrees from a corner office in 'HQ Towers'. I am a police officer first and foremost. And I have experienced my fair share of inequality in my 17-year career. I know what it is like."

Peggy was the first female secretary of the former West Midlands Police Federation Constables' Branch Board, and was its last-ever secretary after the individual rank boards were abolished in the post-review restructure of the Federation.

She joins 23 other representatives from across England and Wales as part of the first Police Federation National Board, which is designed to lead and run the Federation and to make policy decisions.

And she said that she wanted to celebrate the diversity of every one of the 122,404 police officers in England and Wales.

"That's 122,404 individual people all of whom have their own hopes, fears, dreams and anxieties," she said. "Each one has people they love, and people who love them.

"They all occasionally worry they have left the iron on or that they didn't lock the front door. And they all happen to be police officers.

"In the past, one of the defining characteristics of policing has been uniformity – literally for those on the front-line. But although officers may look the same outside – inside they are unique human beings and that must never be forgotten.

"For me this is what equality is all about. It's not about targets or graphs or percentages. It's about making sure that everyone is afforded a fair chance and an equal opportunity."

Peggy added: "I try to lead by example and I hope others will follow. That is the main reason why I became equality lead for the Police Federation. To help lead and implement positive change throughout the Federation and the service as a whole.

"And to ensure that everyone remembers that, we may all be police officers but we are individuals first and foremost."

Work of detectives put in the spotlight



DC Nick McCulloch came third in the Trainee Investigator of the Year category.



DC Shane Saunders (left) is congratulated by national Federation chair John Apter after winning the regional 'players' player' award.



vacancy rate. There was quite a bit of murmuring in the room when this slide was presented as it does mean that officers are being paid different rates around the country as well as within their own force.

Personally, I don't think we have the issue around the vacancy rate that Surrey has due to the Detective Academy that we run within West Midlands. This ensures that there are always a large number of applicants for each programme that is run.

However, the high workload does resonate and it is something that each officer within investigations has to try to juggle on a daily basis.

At the awards evening, I was personally delighted that our very own DC Shane Saunders, who is based at Birmingham Central, won a regional award, a 'players' player' award nominated and decided on by detectives from within our region.

DC Nick McCulloch, of Birmingham South, was also in third place for the Trainee Investigator of the Year Award. It was good to be able to recognise their hard work and to thank them and celebrate with them and their wives.

It was the largest event we have had to date and there were more than 180 nominations for the awards in total. The evening is growing each year and it is good to come together to recognise detectives from across the country.

The following day saw an input from Gary Shaw MBE who is the national adviser for interviews and he brought some learning around interviews and interview styles and aids to interviewing.

The final session was around FGM and we heard from the national lead, Detective Superintendent Leanne Pook from Avon & Somerset who gave us a background to FGM offences and highlighted the difficulties in prosecuting this offence.

The Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum held its annual two-day seminar culminating in an evening awards ceremony at Hinckley, Leicestershire in October.

West Midlands workplace representative, Jon Nott, who works in investigations, FCID, attended and gives an overview of the event.

There were a number of different seminars across the two days.

Firstly, we heard from last year's Investigation of the Year award-winning team, about the Thames Valley fraud investigation.

Hearing about the size of that investigation and the number of documents and lines of investigation that they had to process was insightful and helpful especially with the investigation I am currently on.

There is always plenty to learn at the seminar and it was useful to hear what issues they had encountered during their investigation and trial and the solutions they came up with.

One of the most impactful presentations of the day was from Paula Craig MBE, a retired DI from the Met, who was paralysed after being hit by a car while on her bike training for a triathlon.

Only a DC at the time, she was welcomed back to the Met and didn't let the fact that she was in a wheelchair stop her from continuing her career working in some really busy and challenging areas of investigation.

What I took from the talk was the value of good leadership, with leaders who really know their staff and believe in them, enabling them to fulfill their potential as a detective regardless of any perceived blockages.

There was a topical session from Chief Constable Nick Ephgrave from Surrey Police. Surrey has suffered from a high vacancy rate in their detectives as they lose them to other forces and struggle to get people to apply to fill the gaps.

This was partly due to workload and also to the fact that officers in effect take a pay cut when coming away from 24/7 response work as they lose out on the unsocial hours pay.

To counter this, Surrey has started a programme where officers are paid a bonus for completing the ICIDP and then a yearly bonus for staying in the role, filling hard to fill roles and becoming a tutor DC.

This has enabled them to decrease their

'We are not mental health experts'

Expecting police to be mental health experts or social workers is unfair for officers and the public, according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich was commenting as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published a report on mental health and policing.

The report, which is entitled 'Picking Up The Pieces', concludes that police officers are increasingly being used as the service of default in responding to people with mental health problems.

"This report is yet more evidence to back up what the Police Federation has been saying for some time. We try our best to help people in crisis. We are supportive and compassionate but we are not mental health experts and should not be left to fill the gaps in provision by other cash-strapped organisations," says Rich.

"Police officers are trying their best to help the public and the report makes it clear that we are doing a good job in difficult circumstances. But it also raises concerns over whether the police should be involved in responding to people with mental health problems at the current level.

"On a daily basis, front-line officers spend increasing amounts of time helping and supporting people in crisis. This takes them away from other duties like preventing crime and catching criminals.

"We need to see an urgent re-think. It is often wrong for people with mental health problems to find themselves in the back of a police car or under police guard for long periods of time but there is frequently no other safe option.

“ We have grave concerns about whether the police should be involved in responding to mental health problems to the degree they are. Fundamental change is needed urgently in the way those with mental health problems are supported by the state. The police should be the last resort, not the first port of call. ”

"In the West Midlands, we have developed a mental health triage team staffed by a small number of officers and healthcare professionals. This works well but those officers are often overwhelmed with the demand."

HM Inspector of Constabulary Zoë Billingham has praised officers for their efforts to cope with the mental health crisis.

"Police officers naturally want to respond and do their best to support vulnerable people when they ask for help. And, we found that police officers respond to those with mental health problems with care and compassion," she said.

"But we cannot expect the police to pick up the pieces of a broken mental health system. Over-stretched and all too often overwhelmed police officers can't always respond appropriately, and people in mental health crisis don't always get the help they need."

She added: "All too often, the system is failing people when they most need help. This is not a problem that the police alone can solve. Other services need to stop relying on the 24/7 availability of the police.

"We have grave concerns about whether the police should be involved in responding to mental health problems to the degree they are. Fundamental change is needed urgently in the way those with mental health problems are supported by the state. The police should be the last resort, not the first port of call."

HMICFRS assessed how effectively police forces in England and Wales as well as the British Transport Police identified people with mental health problems and when they first contacted the force; identified and



HM Inspector of Constabulary Zoë Billingham.

recorded the number of cases involving people with mental health problems to provide the right support; and made sure expert help is available from other organisations, in particular health professionals.

The report, which includes five recommendations, identifies that police forces could improve training and building a clearer view of demand. But the report concludes that the longer-term solution must involve all public services if it is to provide people with mental health problems with the expert support they deserve.

National Federation chair John Apter has put the blame for the problems in meeting demand for mental health support services firmly at the Government's door.

"The Government's austerity policies have led us to this dire state. I hope the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary read this report and hang their heads in shame at the situation they have not only created, but were warned about, on numerous occasions," he said.

"It is not right for anyone – officers or the public – that the police should be responsible for the safety and welfare of people that other professionals would be better placed to deal with."

Conduct reps express concern over new IOPC guidelines

West Midlands Police Federation conduct leads have voiced their concerns over the interpretation of new guidelines from the police watchdog.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) says the guidelines will apply across all fatalities or serious incidents arising from road traffic incidents, firearms operations, incidents in custody or other police contact.

It is currently a draft document, but if ratified by the Home Secretary, it will compel all 43 forces in England and Wales to follow the set procedures.

But the Federation is concerned about the way investigators might interpret some clauses, especially across three key areas, most notably:

- The ones covering separation of officers following incidents
- Anonymity of officers, and
- The ability to allow officers to review their own body-worn video (BWV) footage before providing detailed statements.

George McDonnell, discipline lead at West Midlands Police Federation, said: "Our representatives will continue to use and apply the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice when dealing with post-incident procedures (PIP) - as this is the only statutory, approved guidance to follow at this time.

"West Midlands Police Federation conduct and performance lead officers (CaPLO) regularly meet with the IOPC at its regional office at Quinton to discuss local



George McDonnell, West Midlands Police Federation discipline lead.

matters on relevance, including PIP, policy and recent incidents and we currently have a good, professional working relationship with the IOPC locally."

He continued: "In this latest draft, there has been some movement by the IOPC in relation to the statutory guidance and softening of the language used. However, there are still concerns about how it will be interpreted by its investigators.

"Some consensus appears to have been reached on the separation of officers, but the IOPC still maintain it is its 'preference to separate key policing witnesses'. This is an emotive issue for our members, who may have been through an extremely traumatic



event where a member of the public has died.

"It is an area that we will be watching closely to ensure that officers are treated fairly and not made to feel like suspects rather than the witnesses they invariably are."

The Federation also takes issue with aspects around officer anonymity, particularly if IOPC staff are in possession of personal details, as is suggested in the guidance.

Federation national chair John Apter said: "If this information were released, it would massively impact on officers and their families and wreck any trust in the IOPC from our members.

"There are still also unanswered questions on the ability of officers to view their body-worn video and the speed and extent of initial accounts expected from officers.

"However, the Federation is committed to working with the IOPC to ensure that any death or serious injury (DSI) investigation gets the level of co-operation and information needed to properly satisfy public scrutiny whilst affording the appropriate protections to all parties."

He said that the success of co-operative working would be largely dependent on the IOPC ensuring its investigators received the appropriate training, adding: "Any death following police contact is a tragic incident and it is only right that when these tragedies occur they are properly investigated.

"All we ask is for our members to be treated fairly during the process of any subsequent investigation, rather than our previous experience of investigators trying to find fault and someone to blame."

George concludes: "It's definitely a work in progress and something we will need to closely monitor in order to safeguard our members."

“All we ask is for our members to be treated fairly during the process of any subsequent investigation, rather than our previous experience of investigators trying to find fault and someone to blame.”

'Draconian' system is blighting lives, says conduct lead

The Federation's national conduct lead Phill Matthews has called for an overhaul of the "draconian" disciplinary system he says is blighting the lives of many officers.

Phill says some of the investigations carried out by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) take too long to reach a conclusion, causing 'unimaginable stress and trauma'.

"It is inhumane," he said.

Phill added: "Imagine being sent for medical tests and then waiting seven years to get the results. Yet, that's the type of wait causing unimaginable stress and trauma being put on our members when they are being investigated by the police watchdog, the IOPC.

"For investigations of six, seven, even 10 years are not uncommon. The list of investigations with excessive timescales is endless, which is why we are calling for a statutory time limit for bringing disciplinary procedures against police officers.

"While coroners' inquests can add some delay in cases involving deaths, in the majority of instances there is little or no acceptable explanation for why they have taken so long. And at present, there is no way of holding investigating authorities to account for how long they spend on the process."

Phill said that, according to a recent Freedom of Information request, 71 per cent of directions in the past five years ended without any type of finding against the officers concerned.

"This obviously highlights the waste of time, effort and money currently spent pursuing cases in an untimely fashion, all the time needlessly putting the officers concerned through a protracted hell," he said.

"In extreme cases, officers have been prevented from retiring and left unable to move on with their lives or a new career.

"The impact on these officers cannot be under-estimated; it has a profound effect: mentally, physically and often financially, not

just for themselves but also for the families they need to lean on."

Now Phill is calling for reform of the legislation to bring in a limit on the length of time the IOPC can investigate officers.

He argued 12 months was enough to conduct an investigation and to bring the police in line with other areas.

The Federation's discipline experts across the country will be debating the matter and calling on the Home Office and legislators to act, he added.

Phill said: "Drastic reform of legislation is what is needed to halt this drift and we would like to see timelines imposed in line with other statutory instruments; for example, summary-only cases like most traffic offences and common assaults have a six-month limit on proceedings being brought.

"It cannot be right that the police service is restricted to six months to bring the motoring case to court, yet that same motorist has no limit to complaining about the officer; it could be days, weeks, months or even years later.

"Similarly, in any workplace employees have only three months less a day to bring an employment tribunal against their employer for discrimination matters or dismissals; judicial reviews have to be lodged within three months; human rights claims must be made within a year; and even in civil claims for personal injury or death, court proceedings have to be started



Phill Matthews, national Federation conduct lead.

within three years.

"So we would argue that 12 months is a more than adequate length of time for any non-criminal investigation to be satisfactorily concluded, particularly as all the witnesses are usually already known. There is also often CCTV, body-worn video or other documentary evidence that is already in police possession.

"Of course, as police officers, none of us want to see the small number of bad apples escape justice. We genuinely do not want them in the service. But to uphold this draconian regime which is blighting so many lives is not only unacceptable, it is inhumane."

“It cannot be right that the police service is restricted to six months to bring the motoring case to court, yet that same motorist has no limit to complaining about the officer; it could be days, weeks, months or even years later.”

BAPA celebrates with awards evening



Federation representative Winston Christie and Kin Devi with Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

The winners of the Force's Black and Asian Police Association (BAPA) awards have been revealed.

Members of the community joined officers from across the Force for the annual awards evening which is organised by BAPA as part of Black History Month.

The event was held at West Bromwich Albion Football Club and celebrated achievements and gave recognition to the Force's black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) unsung heroes.

The winners were:

Community Champion Award 2018 – Mohammed Zafran

Police Staff of the Year 2018 – George Smalling

Unsung Hero 2018 – Lynne Baird

Officer of the Year 2018 – Inspector

Mohammed Yousaf

Police & Community Inspiration Award 2018 – Neesha Patel and Tariq Karim
Outstanding Police and Community Award 2018 – Mariam Khan
Inspirational Young Person's Award 2018 – Muskaan Javed
Life-time Achievement/Driving Diversity Award 2018 – DC Marcia Francis.

BAPA chair Chief Inspector Karen Geddes said: "Year on year, the awards evening is an event that celebrates the successes of the police officers and staff that serve the West Midlands' communities.

"The winners were all exceptionally deserving and their stories have been inspirational and left all of us who attended feeling proud of serving West Midlands Police.

"Each award-winner had gone beyond the call of duty and contributed selflessly in

support of organisational change, community engagement and other initiatives in support of BAME officers, staff and community members."



DC Marcia Francis – winner of the Lifetime Achievers Awards with assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Ashley Bertie.





Delegates view the VIPER firearms training simulator as one delegate tries it out.

PIP seminar delivers important message

Post-Incident Procedures (PIP) are not only for specialists – they can affect any officer any time.

This was the take-away message from the Police Federation of England and Wales' annual PIP seminar which was attended by 225 delegates from across the country at the end of October.

The Federation's vice-chair, Ché Donald, summed up the importance of PIP when he said: "Whether you are an officer involved in a serious incident or the family of someone who has lost their life, PIPs can deliver the

best possible outcome following a traumatic or life-changing event."

This year's event, held in Hinckley, Leicestershire, was the third seminar of its kind and covered a variety of topics including perception and distortion, anonymity, the physiology of restraint and a video and a presentation from Staffordshire Police about a pursuit incident which resulted in an accident involving members of the public.

Delegates were invited to take part in a VIPER firearms training simulator as part of a session entitled 'Shoot Don't Shoot'.

Scenarios including a hostage situation, a drugs den and an armed man threatening to shoot himself were shown on screen as volunteers armed with laser-enabled guns had a split second to decide whether to shoot.

The exercise also prompted a discussion around perception and distortion as tunnel vision comes into place in the moment an officer is faced with a life or death situation.

Two serving firearms officers tackled the simulations, allowing delegates to see the differences in their approach.

Body-worn video (BWV) was also discussed and it was agreed that it is vital tool in the aftermath of a death or serious injury involving police contact but the officers' 'honestly held belief' remains key to understanding the outcome and whether blame should be apportioned.

Lawyer Mark Wardley, a partner in Straw and Pearce, told the seminar that police dog bites should be considered under PIP, adding that it 'fits the definition of a serious injury and we need to be ready'.

A revolutionary 'Fit-bit'-style bracelet which could help prevent custody deaths was unveiled. The equipment, which delivers vital health data in real-time, was showcased in a live demonstration of a police restraint





A demonstration on restraint.

scenario. It is hoped it could eventually be rolled out nationwide to help diagnose a medical condition called Acute Behavioural Disturbance (ABD) by monitoring heart rates and oxygen saturation levels of detainees.

Staffordshire Police response officers Tony Collier and Rob Goodwin were involved in a pursuit which ended in a three-car collision with victims suffering life-changing injuries.

With the support of the local Federation, sympathetic bosses and occupational health, they were guided through the investigation procedures after a malfunctioning 'black box' system – Spirit - showed their car speeding at 100 mph.

The drama began after the officers had pulled over a suspicious vehicle. PC Goodwin was speaking to the male driver and had attempted to whip the car keys out of the car's ignition when the driver suddenly shot off leaving the officer clinging on for dear life.

The officers immediately chased after the offender, who had a warrant for immediate recall to prison, but after several miles doing only moderate speeds, the errant driver crashed into two cars, seriously injuring three other people.

PC Goodwin said: "Over a 15-year career, it was probably the worst day of my policing career – and as it transpired, probably the very best."

With the casualties cut out of the cars and the air ambulance having left the scene, the officers and three other colleagues were ferried to Staffordshire Police HQ where the PIP process was started.

PC Collier said: "Unlike Rob, I had not had any previous PIP awareness training so I felt like the pressure was ramping up all the time because I had no idea what to expect."

But he felt grateful to post-incident manager (PIM) Pete Owen, 'the most important man in the room' because, he said: "There was a very calm approach, no bullying or finger pointing – these are the people looking after you. I was quite glad there was no separation and although I was very worried, I could feel that wraparound support."

PC Goodwin added: "The most important

thing was that we were given time, there was no pressure put on us. We had great support from the Federation and occupational health. In fact, if I hadn't had the support of occupational health, I don't know if I would still be in the job."

The investigation carried out by the police watchdog, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), was originally meant to last three months but ended up taking 10 because a member of the public - who was not even present at the scene of the accident - claimed officers were driving in an illegal manner.



DCC Simon Chesterman.

BWV was crucial in calibrating the actual speed of the officers' car, vital because the on-board Spirit computer gave false readings.

As a result of the investigation, Spirit was eventually removed from all Staffordshire vehicles. "Body-worn cameras will save you," said PC Goodwin.

But also key to both PCs was the support they received throughout, emerging afterwards with renewed vigour for the job. PC Collier said: "The whole process ultimately turned five cynical officers into massive fans and supporters of Staffordshire Police and the way that they do their business."

Delegates also heard from national firearms lead DCC Simon Chesterman who urged officers to follow Authorised Professional Practice (APP), saying it was a better bet and afforded more protection than the new draft statutory guidelines issued by

the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

He said: "The new statutory guidance does offer some wriggle room and is much better now than it was in its original form when it first came out in 2014. But the APP has been tested in court and if you stick to it, you can't go wrong."

Mr Chesterman also tackled issues around the separation of officers – this makes people who have just been through a life-changing incident feel like suspects rather than witnesses he said – and discussed the issue of anonymity in today's world of BWV.

The seminar also heard from the Federation's national custody forum chair, Chris Bentley, who said PIP was not always easy to accommodate in the custody arena.

"At 3am where are you going to find three custody sergeants and seven jailers needed for the 39 other detainees being held that night?" he asked.

Chris called for better PIP training for non-police custody staff such as detention officers and custody nurses.

In closing, it was noted that the benefits of good post-incident procedures can make all the difference between 'career death' or keeping the job officers love.

OUR REP SAYS:

I found the seminar very informative and useful, I believe that any PIP involving our members needs to be fully explained to all involved.

I thought this seminar had more involvement for those attending and demonstrations turned out to be very interesting.

We were shown how in the near future when officers make an arrest the PIC will be fitted with a Fit-bit style bracelet which could help prevent custody deaths.

One of the guest speakers was solicitor Kevin Donoghue, who specialises in civil actions against the police. One of his observations was that very often police officers get involved in incidents that perhaps other agencies should be taking the lead on.

Another speaker on that panel was Dr Meng Aw-Yong, a forensic medical examiner and president of the British Academy of Forensic Science. Without the PFEW putting on these seminars, the possibilities of meeting and listening to such speakers would be slim.

Whenever I attend these events, I always come away thinking how little training officers receive in PIP and if they were trained how much easier it would make the procedure for them.

John Williams, deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation

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EveryonePause – Federation carries out forces-wide menopause survey

The first police survey on the menopause has closed.

Federation members had six weeks to take part in the online survey – called EveryonePause – which was launched by the Police Federation of England and Wales to encourage men and women to speak about the menopause and improve understanding and support

“I hope many people took the time to complete the survey,” says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

“The menopause doesn’t just affect

women – the wider implications can also affect men. It will be interesting to see what the results show.”

It was the first survey of its kind to be carried out in the police service and is being supported by a number of stakeholders and working groups.

Hayley Aley, the national Federation’s women’s lead, said there was growing concern at the varying levels of support available to women going through the menopause.

The purpose of the survey is to provide evidence to give to leaders about what

EVERYONE  **PAUSE**

needs to change to ensure forces provide the right support and guidance, Hayley explained, adding: “This will ultimately give confidence to individuals that when it is their turn to face this transition, if needed, appropriate support and adjustments can be identified.”

New campaign highlights officers’ entitlements

Annual leave is the opening theme of a new national Federation campaign to raise awareness of officers’ entitlements.

The campaign – entitled Did You Know? – went live on 21 November and will focus on questions that the Federation receives from members. The aim is to highlight key issues and to make sure serving officers know exactly what they can claim as part of their role.

John Apter, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, says: “Every day officers across England and Wales go over and above the call of duty to protect the public. It’s essential that they claim their basic entitlements – especially at a time when their hard work and dedication is not being recognised in their pay packets.

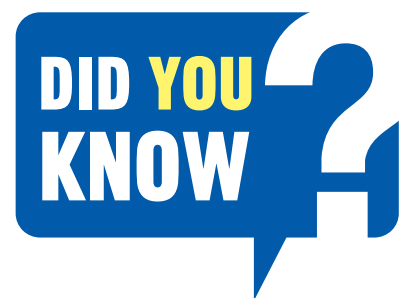
“We will continue to fight for members’ best interests, but also hope this campaign will help officers to be aware of – and claim – what is rightfully

theirs and help them to understand what support is out there.

“Officers work tirelessly to help the public: that is what they signed up to do and will continue to do, but it is important that if their much-needed day off is cancelled, or they miss an important family event because of work they get that time back or are compensated for it. Being a police officer means other parts of your life are simply put on hold and we need to ensure they are fully supported.”

On annual leave, the Did You Know? campaign raises the following questions:

- **How much annual leave am I entitled to?**
- **If I have to work on a day of annual leave what compensation am I entitled to?**
- **If I receive compensation for working a day of annual leave, what is ‘a day of annual leave’ and what is ‘a day’s pay’?**



- **How much annual leave can I carry over at the end of the year?**

Answers can be found in the updated Quick Reference Guide.

In the coming months, the campaign will also cover the topics of rest days, performance and pension buy-back. Information will be available and regularly updated at www.polfed.org/didyouknow.

Did You Know? is supported by the hashtags **#KnowYourRights** and **#DidYouKnow**.

West Midlands Police Federation

Review of the year



3 January

The new-look Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) replaces the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). National Federation conduct and performance lead Phill Matthews warns a radical overhaul is needed if it is to improve.

3 January

New evidence in a joint study by the Police Federation and University of Nottingham shows single crewing could be putting police officers at increased risk of verbal insults and threats, physical attacks and injuries requiring medical attention.

9 January

The West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) roadshow visits members at Stechford.

13 January

Four-year-old Millie Bea undergoes surgery which could transform her life – thanks to the generosity of those who donated to an appeal set up by her mother, former Wolverhampton DC Natalie Hughes. Millie Bea was born with spastic diplegia cerebral palsy and had never been able to walk. Follow her progress on Facebook at Millie Bea's Walking Wish.



25 January

"Smoke and mirrors" – Andy Fittes, the Federation's national general secretary, responds to The Office for National Statistics report Crime in England and Wales, which asked people about their experience of crime, and showed a decrease of 10 per cent from 2016. However, police recorded crime showed an increase of 14 per cent. The report also showed a significant rise in knife crime (up 21 per cent) and gun crime (up 20 per cent). The police recorded crime figures also showed a rise in all but four categories of crime.



Andy Fittes.

31 January

"Think of the lives we could save if we had more resources." So said the Federation's roads policing lead, Jayne Willetts, at the two-day Roads Policing Conference held in Hinckley, Leicestershire, warning that dwindling numbers of roads police officers are under increased pressure due to colleagues being deployed to other duties.

1 February

West Midlands Police Federation hosts its ever-popular retirement seminar at Guardians House.

15 February

A new roll of honour, part funded by WMPF, is unveiled with the names of 112 police officers and staff killed as a result of public service. A service of dedication was led by Force Chaplain Major Vic Kennedy of the Salvation Army.

20 February

West Midlands Police Federation moves to offices on the top floor of Guardians House and a new website is launched.

polfed.org/westmids

1 March

Voting opens in the new Police Federation of England and Wales elections with 76 West Midlands officers seeking election to 58 representative roles. For the first time voting is electronic. It is due to close on 21 March.

4 March

Wiltshire Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey is taken ill after responding to a suspected Russian nerve gas attack in Salisbury, Wiltshire.

13 March

West Midlands Police officers are urged to contact their MPs ahead of the second reading of a bill aiming to give police response drivers better protection in law. West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Tim Rogers, the Federation's national pursuits lead, is spearheading the campaign for legislative change.



1 March

A new national campaign warns of a crisis in detective policing.

1 March

The Home Office finally issues a pension calculator for members of the police pension schemes. The calculator allows members to get an idea of their projected pension at retirement and can be found on the Gov UK website. Its publication follows PFEW lobbying the police pension schemes' governance body, the Scheme Advisory Board.

22 March

WMPF acting chair John Williams says the PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services shows the police service was under considerable strain and that the Government needed to act now to prevent a major crisis. The report describes the Force as 'inadequate' at protecting vulnerable people but good in the three other areas.

29 March

The newly-elected West Midlands Police Federation workplace representatives are named.

19 April

Members attend the latest WMPF retirement seminar at Guardians House.

24 April

Two short previews are released of a harrowing new PFEW video sharing the experiences of police officers and other emergency workers assaulted on duty. The full-length version was screened at the Federation's annual conference on 22 - 23 May before being released online.

27 April

WMPF's Annual Review Here for You: Our Work in 2017 is published giving an overview of the way in which the Federation has supported members.

29 April

Amber Rudd resigns as Home Secretary in the wake of the Windrush scandal.



 Sajid Javid.

30 April

WMPF acting chair John Williams warns the newly-appointed Home Secretary Sajid Javid needs to review policing policy as well as considering the Home Office stance on immigration in the wake of the Windrush scandal.

14 May

The Force supports Mental Health Awareness Week.



22 May

Day 1 of the Police Federation's annual national conference Protecting the Protectors in Birmingham discusses officer assaults, fatigue, long, drawn-out investigations by the IOPC and the demand and capacity imbalance: "It was clear throughout the first day that policing is in crisis with the consequences of cuts meaning that our communities and our officers are suffering," says John Williams, WMPF acting chair, adding "While the Federation has been warning of this for some time, it was interesting to hear the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Thomas Winsor, and even police minister Nick Hurd, acknowledging the difficulties and challenges the police service is facing..."



23 May

Day 2 of the conference. Home Secretary Sajid Javid tells delegates he wants to 're-set the relationship between the Government and the police'. WMPF acting chair John Williams comments: "The issues we are currently facing in the police service are well documented and time is running out in our bid to fix them before it is too late. The last thing we need is for a new Home Secretary to come in and make a load of false promises just to appease conference. His predecessors have been guilty of that in the past."

23 May

Research conducted by PFEW finds the majority of new recruits join the service with the intention of staying for life, but after five years only a third still see it that way.

24 May

The latest group of members attend the WMPF retirement seminar at Guardians House.

4 June

The Federation warns of a 'gaping hole' in new counter-terror plan. Calum Macleod, national chair, comments: "Yes, there will be 2,000 more security and intelligence officers, greater information-sharing among agencies, earlier interventions, new counter-terrorism legislation and a raft of other measures. But nowhere is there any mention of extra money for the police to put extra boots on the ground, when we already know that neighbourhood policing is key in combatting terrorism."

4 June

Sergeant Richard Cooke is elected WMPF chair. He takes up the post from Force response where he had seen daily the demand placed upon already over-stretched resources as officers struggle to cope with everything from vulnerability to terrorism.



6 June

West Midlands Police Sergeant Will Salt confirms the plan for all West Midlands front-line uniformed officers to have access to body-worn video (BWV) by the end of summer 2018 is on course.

8 June

West Midlands Police officer DC Gillian Squires and PC Hubert Treasure are among those who receive an OBE (Order of the British Empire) in the Queen's Birthday honours.

28 June

The results of a nationwide Federation survey on routine arming reveal overwhelming support for more officers to be issued with Taser.

4 July

Calum Macleod announces he will not seek re-election as national Federation chair.

5 July

Another group of members take advantage of the West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) retirement seminar at Guardians House.

Continued on Page 26

9 July

The West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) roadshow visits members at Coventry.



12 July

West Midlands PCs Lee Jones and PC Richard Meede are among those honoured at a Downing Street reception hosted by the police minister after being nominated for the 23rd Police Bravery Awards. They had responded to a call about concerns for the safety of a man who lived on his own. He was recently bereaved, had a shotgun licence and had been drinking. PCs Meede and Jones went to the house, where the man allowed them to come inside before pointing a shotgun at them. The PCs were able to disarm and arrest the man. The shotgun was later found to be loaded with cartridges. They also attended the gala awards presentation evening.

13 July

Around 500 West Midlands police officers supported colleagues during President Trump's visit to the UK. There was dismay over the very basic accommodation provided for some on the first night of the operation but welcome news that overnight allowance was to be paid to all those eligible officers working away from home for the operation.

25 July

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, says West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange. Speaking after Sajid Javid announced a two per cent pay rise for all officers that will come into effect in September he added: "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."



27 July

West Midlands Police Officer Stu Collins takes part in the Police Unity Tour (PUT) annual 180-mile cycle ride to raise funds for Care of Police Survivors (COPS). He wore a wristband honouring PC James Davies of Worcestershire Constabulary who was killed arresting a theft suspect in 1885. The Force is also represented by recently retired Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman who rode for his father, PC Kerim Blakeman, and Sean Walker, a police staff member, who rode 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. The ride ended at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on Sunday 29 July where a service was attended by WMPF chair Rich Cooke and Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

1 August

The new national chair of PFEW, John Apter, who was formerly chair of Hampshire Police Federation, takes over from Calum Macleod. The 2018 elections were the first to take place under the new process recommended by the Federation's 2014 Independent Review.



7 August

A PFEW survey discovers that more police officers than ever (7.8 per cent) have taken second jobs, up from 6.3 per cent of respondents in 2017. A staggering 44.8 per cent said they worry about the state of their personal finances either every day or almost every day and more than one in nine (11.8 per cent) said they never or almost never have enough money to cover all of their essentials.

11 August

The Government should be investing the millions of pounds being spent on police over-time in England and Wales employing more officers. That was the Federation response to figures which revealed more than £1.7 billion has been spent on police over-time in the whole of the UK since 2013.

15 August

Nearly 2,000 police officers voluntarily quit the service over the past 12 months – an increase of 31 per cent over the past four years according to a PFEW leavers' survey. More than half (52.5 per cent) cited morale as their reason for leaving.

16 August

Officers approaching retirement attend a retirement seminar at West Midlands Police Federation's offices at Guardians House.

23 August

WMPF's deputy secretary Tim Rogers welcomed a statement from the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) in support of better legal protection for police response drivers.

28 August

Twenty-two representatives from across England and Wales were elected to the new Police Federation National Board and will take up their roles from 1 September. They include West Midlands' Peggy Lamont who is then appointed Federation equality lead to help make the Federation more diverse and representative.

1 September

WMPF chair Rich Cooke joins forces with Federation workplace reps Roy Teague and Sid James to abseil from the top of the 200 foot Holiday Inn Express in Snow Hill, Birmingham, to raise money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS), the charity that supports the families of fallen officers.

3 September

New rules designed to detect if firearms officers have colour vision problems could be discriminatory and seriously reduce the number of armed police officers in the country, the Federation warns. The new rules have been introduced by the College of Policing.



7 September

A national Federation survey reveals custody roles are becoming increasingly unpopular with nearly one in four (22.5 per cent) of custody officers wanting to be redeployed away from detention duties as soon as possible - up from 18.9 per cent last year. By comparison, only 2.5 per cent of firearms officers wanted to switch jobs and less than eight per cent of detectives.

11 - 12 September

The national Federation custody seminar is attended by officers from across the country.

13 September

The West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) roadshow visits members at Wolverhampton.

30 September

The chair and secretary, Rich Cooke and Steve Grange, represent West Midlands Police Federation and are among a congregation of around 2,000 people at the National Police Memorial Day service in Belfast to honour police officers who have died or been killed in the line of duty. This year, to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, a wreath is laid in remembrance of police officers who died while serving in the armed forces during the 1914 - 1918 conflict.



1 October

The new national secretary Alex Duncan, a National Board member from Avon & Somerset, takes over from Andy Fittes who retired after 31 years' service as a police officer, 19 of those as a Federation rep and over four years as national secretary.

4 October

Members attend the West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminar at Guardians House.

11 October

The Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum holds its annual awards night as part of a two-day seminar in Manchester.



14 October

West Midlands Police officers and their families and supporters take part in the Great Birmingham run to raise funds for the WM Benevolent Fund.

15 - 16 October

The Federation stages a two-day Post-Incident Procedures seminar in Hinckley, Leicestershire.

18 October

The Federation launches its EveryonePause survey, the first menopause survey in the police service.

23 October

Formal legal proceedings are started by PFEW after the Government failed to act on police pay recommendations. Rich Cooke, chair of WMPF welcomed the move.

25 October

Home Affairs Select Committee publishes a damning report into the state of policing and criticises the Home Office management of the police service.

29 October

The contempt the Government has for police officers is clear as the Chancellor prioritises potholes over police officers. That was the response from national Federation chair John Apter to Philip Hammond's budget which gives no new money for front-line policing. The only reference to the service was a £160m investment to maintain specialist counter-terrorism provision - less than half of the £420m the Government has allocated to deal with potholes.

1 November

A new strategy to tackle Serious and Organised Crime goes only a small way in addressing the issues facing crime and criminal activity and in protecting the public, says the Federation, adding that while the strategy 'appeared to have good intentions' it showed again that a key element of policing was being ignored.

2 November

As part of its Front-line review of policing, the Home Office is seeking the views of officers and police staff. It will be hosting a series of regional workshops over the following three months.

7 November

A new Parliamentary report by the Public Accounts Committee highlights how public confidence in the police service has been 'severely dented' after cuts to force budgets should be another sign to the Government that it has got it wrong on policing, say WMPF chair Rich Cooke.

7 November

650 West Midlands police officers who served in WW1 were remembered in roll of honour commissioned by WMPF and the Benevolent fund to mark 100 years since end of the war. It was unveiled at a special remembrance service and displayed in the Force's police museum.

13 November

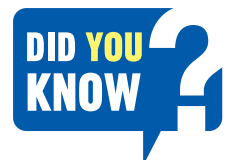
Those who attack police, paramedics, nurses and other blue light workers face tougher sentences as The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act comes into law. It creates a new aggravated offence of an assault against a member of the emergency services and doubles the maximum sentence for these cowardly and despicable acts from six to 12 months.

21 November

The Police Federation launches its Did You Know? campaign to encourage officers to claim their entitlements.

22 November

The last WMPF retirement seminar of 2018 is held at Guardians House.



27 November

A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) says the police should not be expected to pick up the pieces of a broken mental health system and says other services need to stop relying on the 24/7 availability of the police service.

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2019 roadshow programme kicks off in Bloxwich

The first West Midlands Police Federation Roadshow of 2019 is taking place in Bloxwich on Tuesday 15 January.

It follows on from the success of the 2018 roadshows, which culminated with dozens of members attending the final event of the year on 20 November in Stechford.

The Bloxwich event will take place between 10am and 3pm at the town's police station.

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

Officers will also be able to discuss any concerns they have with Federation representatives who will be attending.

Free Federation merchandise will also be on hand and there is no need to book just come along on the day!

You can also enter a prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher.

Cameron's Coasters still spreading the mental health support message

A mental health initiative which was backed by West Midlands Police Federation has now distributed more than half a million coasters supportive messages around mental health.

Cameron's Coasters were first distributed across West Midlands Police in September 2017 thanks to Cameron's aunt Frances George, a now retired West Midlands Police officer.

Since then, Federations across the country have also been distributing them and now 500,000 have been produced.

They have gone to Federations up and down the country as well as more than 80 colleges and sporting arenas such as Wasps Rugby at Ricoh Arena in Coventry.

The beer mat style coasters bear the message "Feeling low? Don't bottle it up, there is always someone you can talk to" and urge people to ask for support and provide contact details for organisations that may be able to help.

The coasters were designed by the family of 21-year-old Cameron Grant, who took his own life in November 2014 having suffered in silence from depression for seven years.

Cameron's parents, Carol and Evan Grant, set up the Cameron Grant Memorial Trust to raise awareness of suicide and mental health issues, particularly in young people, by sending out Cameron's Coasters to existing communities. Its aim was to

encourage people to ask for help rather than to suffer in silence as Cameron did.

Following his death, Cameron's family looked into statistics surrounding suicide and what they found was 'frightening'.

Figures show that around 75 per cent of suicides are male and it is the biggest cause of death in the UK for boys and men under 50. One in 10 young people, or about three in every school classroom, are experiencing mental health problems, just like Cameron was. And many people suffer in silence, as he did.

If you know of a community that might benefit from Cameron's coasters, then get in touch at info@camgrant.org.uk



Heading for retirement? Book your place on our retirement seminars

Spaces on the Federation's popular retirement seminars are booking up fast – with the first two events in 2019 already full.

The next available dates for officers to attend are **11 April** and **23 May 2019**.

The one-day seminars are held at Guardians House and can be attended with partners if members wish.

Among the topics covered by the facilitators will be:

- Managing change and uncertainty
- CV writing and interview techniques
- Transferrable skills
- Pensions and the state pension
- How do I manage money and these financial changes?
- Budgeting
- Starting your own business
- Taxation
- New horizons (what's next?)
- Savings
- Investments and finances
- Protecting your wealth.

The day starts at 9am and finishes at 4pm and includes a buffet lunch.

Further dates in 2019 are: **18 July, 15 August, 12 September, 17 October, 21 November** and **19 December**.

To book email westmidlandsp@polfed.org with 'Retirement seminar' and the date you wish to attend in the subject title.

Include your name, work and personal email address, phone number, proposed retirement date, number of places required and dietary requirements in the email.

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

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

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

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



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Things to think about if you are considering a divorce in the New Year

By **Lorraine Harvey**,
principal lawyer in family
law at Slater and Gordon



January is a time for making resolutions. It might be deciding it's time to kick a bad habit or get fit. But sometimes the beginning of a new year will be a point when you consider a change that will have a big impact on your life. What if that change is ending your marriage? Here are a few things to think about if divorce is on your mind in the New Year.

Is it really over?

If you decide to go ahead with a divorce, you need to be sure that there is definitely no chance that the marriage can be saved.

The Christmas period can be both a joyful and difficult time of year. It may have been challenging for you if you have been on duty and this has caused a strain between you and your spouse.

A tough Christmas does not have to spell the end of a marriage and you and your spouse may be able to work through this together, or with the support of family and friends, or counselling services, such as Relate.

When can I get a divorce?

Some people assume that they will not be able to divorce immediately, as there has been no particular reason for the breakdown of the marriage. Some people think that there has to have been an affair, or particular incident, to be able to start a divorce straight away, but this isn't the case.

If you have felt unsupported by your spouse, or feel that the two of you no longer make the effort to spend time together around your shifts etc, you could rely on this to prove to a court that the marriage is over.

When should I make the decision?

If you have decided that you do want to go ahead with a divorce, we generally advise that you speak to a family lawyer sooner rather than later to ensure you are as informed as possible. Often the first question we are asked is how an officer can try to protect their police pension and taking action at the earliest opportunity can be very important.

A spouse has a claim to an ex-partner's income, capital and pensions on divorce and these will be based on their financial situation at the time of divorce and not necessarily at the time of separation. Your spouse is likely to be successful in

claiming against the value of your pension at the time of divorce, rather than its value at the time of your separation, i.e. a claim to more of your pension. For example, we acted for an officer who separated from his wife, but waited 13 years before dealing with his finances on separation. His wife might have achieved a 14 per cent share of his pension 13 years ago, but had an argument for an increased share of some 32 per cent, 13 years later.

What about the children?

If you have children, you will need to try to agree an arrangement for them with your spouse, if you separate. The court is concerned with the welfare of the child in respect of any arrangements made. Parents are encouraged to agree a routine of care which is in a child's best interests.

You may find it difficult to reach an agreement with your spouse, or perhaps your complicated shift pattern is making it difficult to set out a regular routine. If this is the case, then you should seek legal advice and a referral to mediation can be considered.

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

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Your meeting could help you manage the financial issues that may arise throughout your police career and into retirement.

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

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

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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 

Supporting you

Thank you
THANK
thank YOU
Thank YOU
THANK you
Thank you
thank
YOU

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

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

I would just like to take a minute to offer my official thanks to Cliff Tomkinson and draw your attention to what I believe was exceptional support and service.

I won't go into too many details about the actual incident but Cliff represented me recently and I want to say how impressed I was with everything that he did for me and how the Federation

conducted itself in general.

He really is a credit to the Federation, nothing was too much trouble for him and he was approachable even when not on duty. He always had time for me over the course of the investigation and took the time to explain things in detail

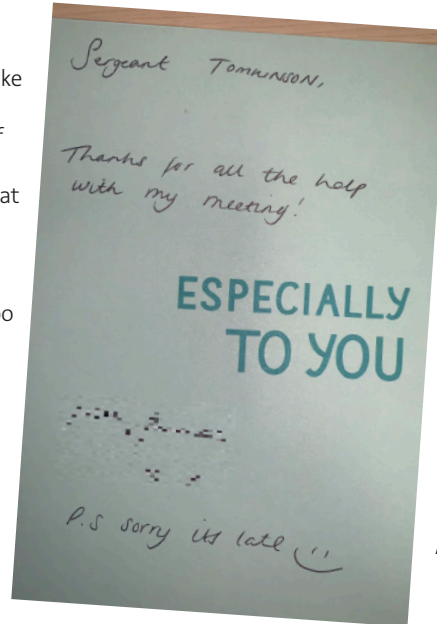
and make sure I understood them.

For this I am eternally grateful to all involved so please accept my sincerest thanks.

Member details withheld

Please accept my warmest thanks for all your help re this matter. Your guidance and advice has helped me through some difficult and stressful times over the last few months, and I wanted to take the time to thank you directly.

Member details withheld



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Get in Touch...

Contact your federation representative Nicola McInnes on

0161 820 3847

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or visit www.gorvins.com/specialist-sector-services/police-law/west-midlands/

*Discount applies to standard legal fee

Future police officers?



Left holding the babies are Cliff Tomkinson, the West Midlands Police Federation equality lead, and office manager Janet Lea.

Our equality lead Cliff Tomkinson and office manager Janet Lea took advantage of a recent Family Matters event at Tally Ho to have a quick cuddle with two 'new recruits'.

It wasn't too long before they were handed back to their parents.

Cliff, who took over the equality role earlier this year, has been looking at some of the supportive and informative measures in place within the Force, one of which is the Family Matters events which are open to expectant parents, those on family leave and babies and toddlers.

Having attending the latest Family Matters gathering, Cliff said: "I see this as an ideal opportunity to reach out to all departments and expectant parents or new parents. The information and support on offer is excellent and I foresee the opportunity for the Force to support more staff in the future.

"From a Federation stance, I hope to become further involved and assist wherever possible with such an excellent initiative."

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Divorce finances: a real life story

By Chris Fairhurst from
McAlister Family Law

Often one of the first questions from new clients, faced with how to sort out arrangements after separation from their spouse, is a straightforward: "What will a financial settlement look like for me?"

The law relating to how a court decides that question is highly discretionary, to take account of the fact that no two families' circumstances are the same. You cannot look at a chart to get an answer.

Explaining to a client that the court uses several different factors set out in Section 25 Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 including, but not limited to, the ages of the parties, the length of the marriage, earning capacity and obligations in respect of children or other family members, all of which depend on your particular circumstances, doesn't help in advising with any certainty of outcome.

What does matter is the experience of the lawyer who is dealing with your case. There is nothing like having someone who has represented people in a similar position. It doesn't guarantee getting exactly what you seek but it certainly helps, especially where a police officer is concerned, because of the nature of the police pension, of which officers are naturally protective.

It's easier to point to a real example of

what can be achieved. Here is a true example of a case settled very recently. The client, an officer, had tried to represent themselves for nearly two years. The other party was represented and had applied for several different applications in relation to children and the home.

The client had managed to obtain an order to spend time with the children but the former spouse insisted they were the 'main carer' and thought that entitled them to a greater share of all the modest assets, consisting of equity in the family home, some savings and the pension.

The court tries to achieve 'equality' if 'needs' such as providing a family home are met. This doesn't necessarily mean equal because that is hard to achieve when there are different assets and, in a case where there is limited capital, it is difficult to buy two properties when previously there was only one.

In our case, the officer was faced with a former spouse seeking all the cash in the home and savings, because they said their needs required it, as well as a share in the pension fund.

We were able to argue successfully that such an order would not be fair because our client also had care of their children and could not borrow enough on a mortgage to buy a new home without having some interest in the cash assets.

Our client had offered early on to 'offset' the former spouse's potential interest in the police pension and accept less than otherwise entitled to in respect of the family home but this was rejected. The matter had to be dealt with at a final hearing when the judge agreed with our 'open proposal' - that the house be sold and the cash be divided equally, in addition to a more limited pension share than had been sought due to our successful argument that the pre-relationship pension accrual should be excluded.

Our client was very happy at this positive outcome and realised that their position was much better than they had hoped for when representing themselves.

Don't be tempted to deal with matters without obtaining expert and experienced legal advice. You may find that you are settling your financial case for more than might be required.

Chris Fairhurst has more than 20 years' experience in the matter of complex divorce cases and is regarded as one of the UK's leading police divorce experts.

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