



Laura in line for Police Bravery Award

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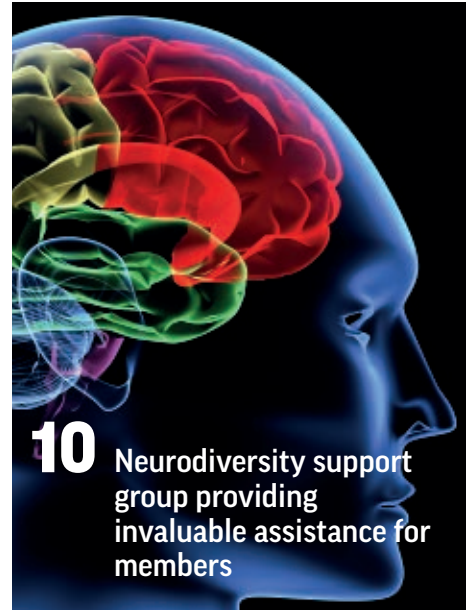
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BRAVERY AWARDS: AN AFFIRMATION OF ALL THAT'S GOOD IN POLICING



By Tony Wetton, chair of Derbyshire Police Federation

We're in the run-up to this year's national Police Bravery Awards which, for me, has to be the highlight of the policing calendar.

Our nominee this time round is PC Laura Nicholson who tackled a man as he tried to choke her colleague after they were called out to a domestic disturbance.

It was a terrifying and violent incident but Laura showed swift and decisive action and fully deserves the recognition of being shortlisted.

She, along with colleagues from across England and Wales, will be honoured at a special event in July.

The full story behind her nomination is covered in this magazine and is well worth a read.

The awards ceremony is a real affirmation about all that is good about policing, about what it takes to be a police officer and about what makes our police

service the best in the world.

In my experience, those nominated always insist they were just doing their job and that anyone would have acted the same had they found themselves in a similar situation.

They usually play down their bravery as 'all in a day's work' and expect nothing in return for their acts of courage other than, perhaps, a cup of tea and a biscuit back at the station.

But the fact is, the women and men who put on their police uniform each day will, without exception, run towards the danger while most people would run the other way.

They think nothing of putting themselves in harm's way to protect others and then do the same thing the next day.

These regular acts of courage are played out all over the country all the time and I often wonder if some of the attitudes we see towards the police would be a bit less negative if the media highlighted these stories with the same enthusiasm they show when they criticise us.

And it's worth remembering that our members continue to perform their duties with the utmost professionalism, determination and courage regardless of the sensationalist headlines in the newspapers, the criticism from certain politicians and the abuse from some members of the public.

They are proud to serve their communities and their dedication to their jobs is always brought into focus at the bravery awards where we are given the opportunity to honour and celebrate their achievements.

The ceremony never fails to be an emotional, truly humbling experience and being there and meeting the nominees always makes you proud to be a part of our close-knit policing family.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PENSIONS RULING

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has responded to the Pensions Challenge Employment Tribunal judgment announced on Wednesday (7 June).

Clearly, the ruling makes for a difficult read, for our members, as well as the elected officials now in role.

Our officers give their all to protect their communities in Derbyshire and we understand they feel let down. As your local branch, we would like to reassure members that we will continue to work tirelessly to protect you while representing your interests without fear or favour.

The ruling will be carefully considered and the organisation is committed to representing members and protecting their interests effectively.

As a branch, we would like to assure members that we are dedicated to doing all we can to ensure their views are both heard and acted upon locally and nationally.

COMMUTATION FACTORS

The Federation has welcomed the Government's response to the consultation on the Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience (SCAPE) discount rate, which has resulted in an update to the Police Pension Scheme 1987 commutation factors.

This will directly and positively [affect the pension benefits](#) of police officers at the time of retirement by increasing the rate at which pension is converted into a commutation lump sum at retirement.

INSPECTORS' REST DAYS

New guidance for the inspecting ranks on their rest days in lieu rights is available through the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

John Partington, National Board member, has published a blog defining what an interrupted rest day means, what inspectors and chief inspectors should do, and how to record what rest days are owed. [Read the blog.](#)

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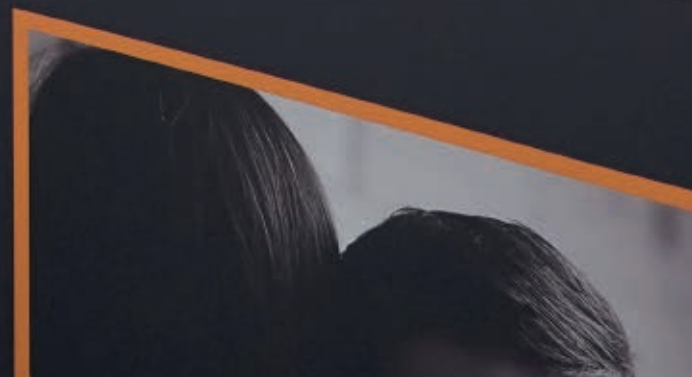
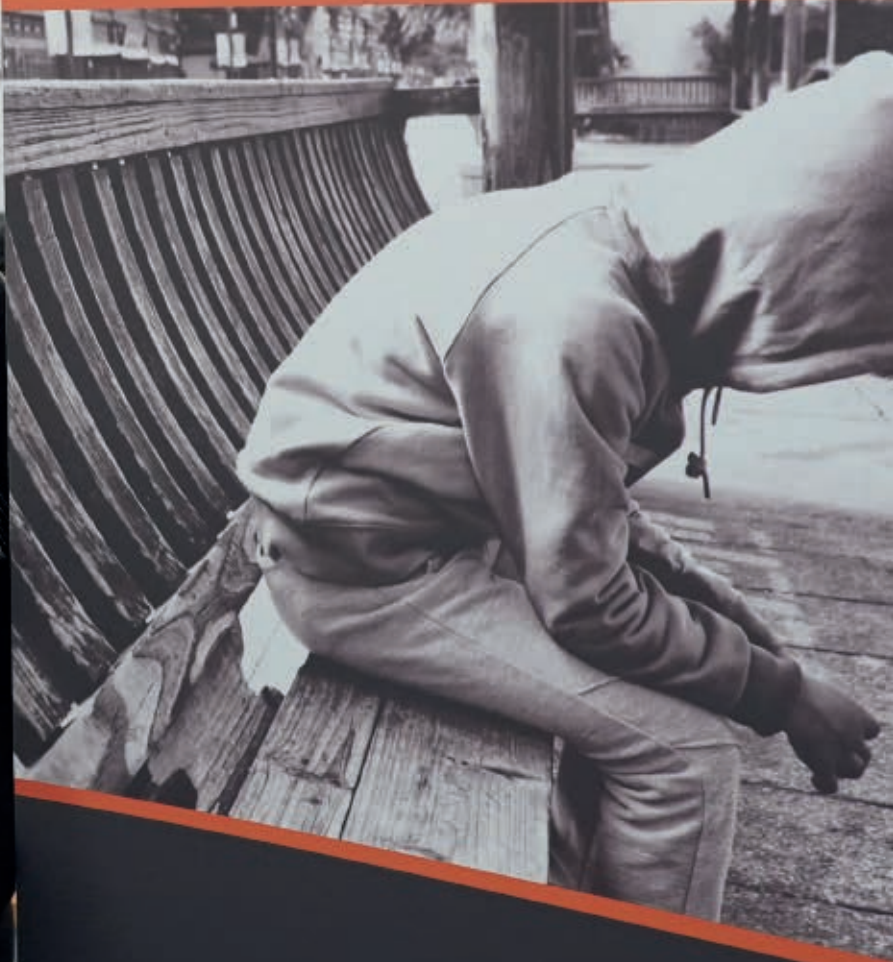
Details for the branch officials and workplace reps can be found on our [Meet the team page.](#)

Cover photo: Derbyshire's Police Bravery awards nominee Laura Nicholson.

Derbyshire's Police Bravery Awards nominee
Laura Nicholson.



TACKLING ORGANISED
EXPLOITAT
PROGRAMME



POLICE BRAVERY AWARDS: COURAGEOUS COP STOPPED ATTACKER FROM CHOKING COLLEAGUE

“I couldn’t fail. I needed to stop him, for my colleague’s sake and mine.”

A Derbyshire cop has been nominated for a national Police Bravery Award after tackling a man who was choking her colleague during a vicious assault.

The incident took place when police constables Laura Nicholson and a colleague were called to a report of a domestic property, and upon arrival faced a man and his son, who were immediately aggressive to them.

After being hit over the head by the son, the constable found himself in a headlock by the dad, who was strangling him. It was then that Laura quickly realised she needed

to do whatever she could to stop the attack.

“We walked into the property to find a woman looking distressed. The next thing I know, this man - who we now know is the son - come out of nowhere and hit my colleague over the head with a motorbike helmet. I was hit too,” said Laura, who then used her incapacitant spray to repel the son, before activating her emergency button to call for help.

“The son ran off, but the dad managed to get my colleague held by the throat, in a headlock. I could hear him gurgling, the dad was choking him.”

As well as trying to use her incapacitant spray on the offender, 40-year-old Laura also tried to detain him by hitting him with her baton.

“The spray did absolutely nothing, which was very unusual. It literally had no impact. This guy was a lot stronger than he looked - it was unreal,” continued mother-of-two Laura, who joined Derbyshire Police Force in 2018.

“We then all fell over and the offender was trying to get my baton off me. At this point, I could hear that my colleague was still choking, and the man was also threatening me. If he’d managed to get the baton off me, I think he would’ve killed me.

“I decided to try and negotiate with him. I just needed to stop him, not just for my colleague’s sake but mine. I remember thinking, this man might beat us both to death. I couldn’t fail. I suddenly felt very alone and vulnerable.

“Eventually he did let go.”

Having been released from the headlock, the officer eventually came around.

Laura recalled: “We all just stood there, it was the weirdest experience. I just needed everyone to remain still because I knew backup was on its way.

“Back-up eventually arrived - and a lot of them, so they managed to detain the offender properly.”

Laura said it is ‘really nice to be recognised’ at this year’s national Police Bravery Awards, which will take place on Thursday 13 July.



Host Mark Durden Smith addresses guests at last year's bravery awards.

PCs Damian Stanton and Tammy Careless outside Buckingham Palace.



HONoured OFFICERS SAY BEING PART OF KING'S CORONATION WAS A 'DAY TO REMEMBER'

Three police officers who were asked to represent Derbyshire Constabulary at the coronation of King Charles III have told of the honour they felt at being part of such an historic event.

PCs Tammy Careless, Paul Flint and Damian Stanton joined thousands of police officers from across the country, as they helped line the coronation procession route.

The trio, who were all picked at random to attend, have since reflected on their 'incredible experience', calling it a 'day to remember' and one they 'will never forget'.

"It really was massive, being part of such a historic occasion," said Tammy, who stood near The Queen Victoria Memorial, in front of Buckingham Palace.

"I don't think it's really sunk in that I was there yet. Even when we went downstairs for breakfast at the hotel, and saw a sea of officers all in their tunics - that in itself was a real 'wow' moment.

"And when King Charles and Camilla went past in the gold coach, we were so close - I couldn't wipe the smile off my face. It felt like they were literally a stone's

throw away.

"We were able to see their crowns, all the jewels and the kids - they all looked fantastic. Louis was breathing on the glass and writing, it was nice to see elements of them being just a family."

Tammy said it was 'crazy' to see members of the public, who had queued up for ages to be at the front of the crowds viewing the coronation.

"There were people screaming and crying - people dressed head-to-toe in Union Jack suits. It was crazy," she recalled.

Paul, who stood near Tammy added: "Getting dressed up in our tunics, we all felt like a million dollars.

"It will be a day that I'll always remember, not only for the rest of my career but for the rest of my days.

“ When King Charles and Camilla went past in the gold coach, we were so close - I couldn't wipe the smile off my face. It felt like they were literally a stone's throw away. ”



Proud police officers prepare for the coronation with Damien Stanton far right, middle row.



PC Tammy Careless.

“ We were able to see their crowns, all the jewels and the kids - they all looked fantastic. Louis was breathing on the glass and writing, it was nice to see elements of them being just a family.

“It was a real honour to be part of an occasion which will be etched in the country’s memory forever. It really was a momentous occasion.”

Damian, who was located in Whitehall, said the day was ‘quite surreal’.

“It was magical, all kinds of surreal. I felt so privileged to be there,” he added.

Damian explained how the day started early, at 4.30am, with all officers dressed and ready for duty by 5.30am.

“We were put on a coach and taken to a Government building, which looked like something out of James Bond,” he continued.

“We then marched out and stood lining the streets for three hours, before having a short break, ahead of three more hours. It was really well organised.

“Once the procession had finished, we marched through London for around a mile. It was a long day, but an amazing one, really special.”

CHAIR PRAISES WORK OF OP HAMPSHIRE

Derbyshire Police Federation chair Tony Wetton says members are “never on their own” as he welcomed the work of Operation Hampshire in tackling assaults on officers and staff.

Tony said that Derbyshire Police Federation was firmly behind the Op Hampshire campaign and its aim of improving outcomes for members who had been attacked.

He said: “Police officers deserve to be able to go to work without expecting to be attacked. It is no more a ‘part of the job’ for police officers than it is for any other walk of life - and it mustn’t be tolerated.

“There has almost been a culture of acceptance - that being pushed, shoved, spat on and abused was part of the role - and that can’t be right.

“Operation Hampshire is improving the way assaults are reported and understood. It’s changing that culture for the better and we’re right behind it.

“Our members need to know that if they’re the victim of an assault they’re never on their own.”

Derbyshire Police Federation’s most recent pay and morale survey showed that assaults on members have risen in the past two years.

The number of officers who experienced verbal insults at least once a week went up from 30 per cent in 2020 to 39 per cent in 2022. Physical attacks rose from one per cent to 13 per cent in the same period while threats went up from 23 per cent to 24 per cent.

Tony said: “Assaults on our members is clearly a big issue and there’s still much work to be done. We need officers to record EVERY assault on them so that we have accurate information about what’s actually happening on the streets and in people’s homes, and to ensure that every assaulted officer gets the support they need and deserve. We then need those assaults investigating in line with the Op Hampshire Seven Point Plan and it’s crucial that CPS and the courts properly hold offenders to account.

“But through Operation Hampshire we’re trying to get the message to members that the support and advice they need is there and that those who attack officers will be brought to justice.”

His comments have been echoed by Steve Hartshorn, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, who described Operation Hampshire as a “legacy project in policing”.

Op Hampshire aims to provide a consistent approach to wellbeing support



Dave Brewster, national Op Hampshire coordinator.

and victim care following an assault, consider the potential impact of every attack, increase criminal justice outcomes and improve overall understanding of assaults on officers.

Nearly three years after its launch, Op Hampshire has a network of project leads across each force. It’s now a priority workstream for the National Police Wellbeing Service, Oscar Kilo and the Police Covenant. It has been adopted by UNISON and the strategy has also been backed by Chris Philp, the Crime and Policing Minister.

Steve said: “While Op Hampshire is primarily still focussing on officer assaults, it’s giving our members so much more than that - you have to look at the bigger picture.

“The data we collect will educate us, which in turn will help us provide better

training and communications.

“I genuinely believe we can get the public’s confidence in the police back and it will be through projects like Op Hampshire,” he added.

Dave Brewster, the national Op Hampshire coordinator, has built a network of leads to represent every force and share knowledge and experiences.

He said: “My goal is that every assault on a police officer or member of staff is recorded, investigated and then those involved are given the correct support they need.

“Even if they don’t think that they need support, I believe everyone should at least be offered it.”

Dave said that many offenders believe they can attack officers with impunity.



FORCE EXCEEDS UPLIFT TARGET BUT IS IT ENOUGH?

Derbyshire Police has surpassed its target for recruiting new officers under the Government's Police Uplift Programme.

The Force was allocated an extra 283 officers when the scheme launched in 2019 but has actually recruited 351 and now employs 2,178 officers compared to 1,827 when the uplift campaign began.

There are now more officers than in 2010 when the Conservative Government took office and began to cut police numbers as part of its austerity measures.

Derbyshire Police Federation chair Tony Wetton welcomed the increase while pointing out that the damage caused by years of underfunding would still take time to heal.

He said: "The figures show we have more officers than we did when the funding cuts began so that is positive news but in real terms we are still behind where we need to be. Let's not be fooled into ignoring the

damage of the austerity years. They created unsustainable pressure on officers, in terms of huge workloads and the many extra hours and days that they had to work to keep policing running.

"The challenge now is to retain the new recruits, and indeed their more experienced colleagues, so we will be looking at pay and conditions, training, equipment and resources and making sure that police officer wellbeing is at the heart of the service."

Tony added that officers "need to feel valued, respected and well-supported" which will require a genuine commitment to long-term investment in the police service,

and address the real terms pay cut that officers have endured in the last decade.

Nationwide, a total of 20,951 extra recruits have joined the service under the Police Uplift Programme. Home Secretary Suella Braverman hailed the uplift as an "historic moment" and a success for policing and the government.

However, Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn said the figures do not stand up to scrutiny. "The reality is, considering population growth of more than four million since 2010, even with an uplift of 20,000 officers, we will have fewer officers on the streets than we had a decade ago," he commented.



The challenge now is to retain the new recruits, and indeed their more experienced colleagues, so we will be looking at pay and conditions, training, equipment and resources and making sure that police officer wellbeing is at the heart of the service.

'DON'T USE POLICE AS A POLITICAL FOOTBALL'

Changes to regulations covering police conduct and dismissal could hand "undemocratic powers to chief officers under the guise of police reforms", local chair Tony Wetton warned.

Labour MP Harriet Harman and London Mayor Sadiq Khan have called for sweeping reforms of policing, including automatic suspensions for officers charged with a serious offence and giving chief constables the power to reopen misconduct investigations.

Ms Harman described the current procedures for disciplining and dismissing police officers as "not fit for purpose".

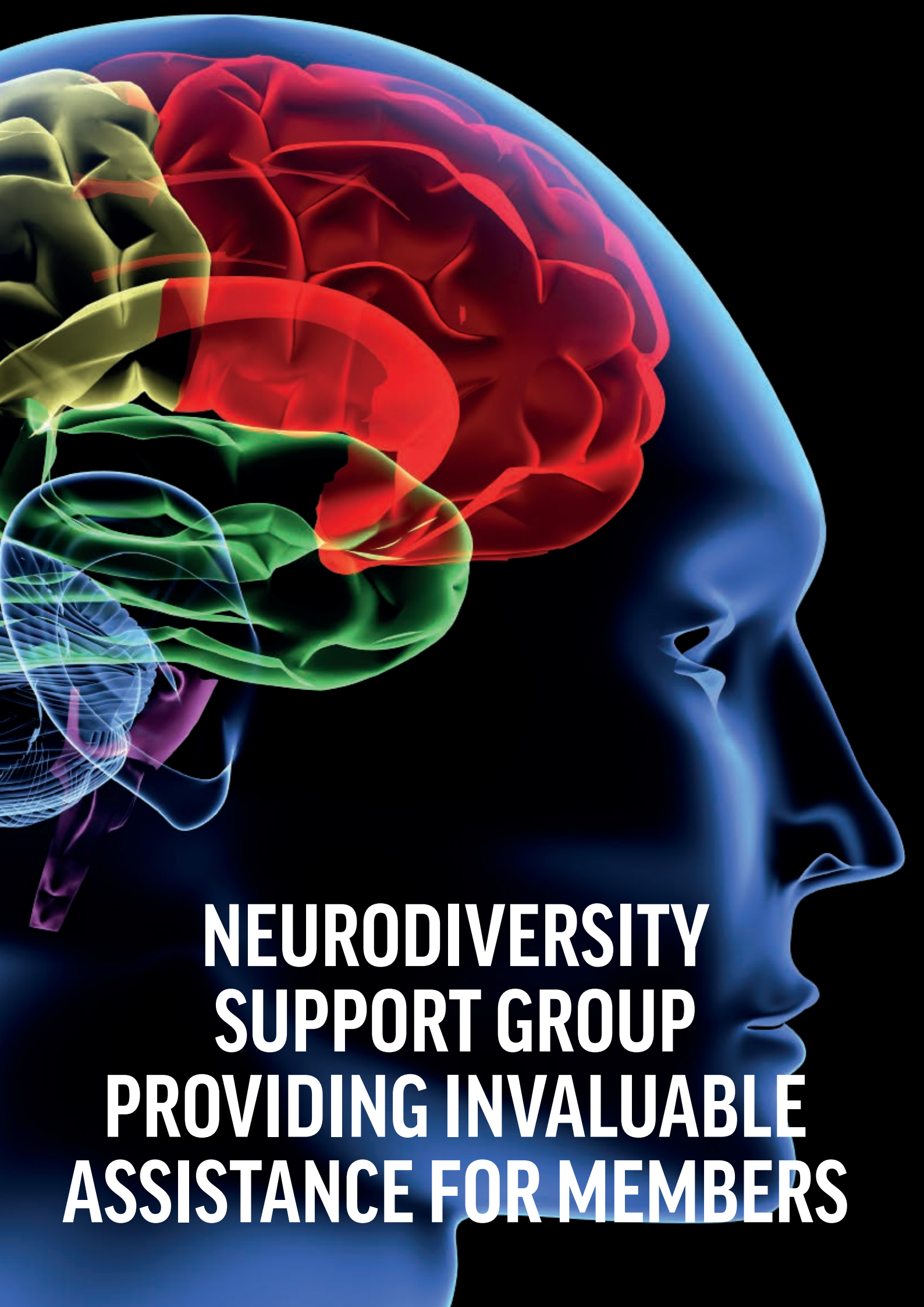
The Federation is concerned that such reforms would put police officers "at the mercy of a politically motivated mechanism".

Tony said: "We need to see leaders engage positively in supporting a fair legal process instead of promoting piecemeal priorities and knee-jerk reactions intended to grab the political limelight and newspaper headlines."

The Federation is engaged with a Home Office review into the process of police officer dismissals, and has been calling for a Royal Commission to evaluate and define the role, purpose and responsibility of the police.



Labour MP Harriet Harman.



**NEURODIVERSITY
SUPPORT GROUP
PROVIDING INVALUABLE
ASSISTANCE FOR MEMBERS**

A Derbyshire Police Federation member who helped launch the Force's Neurodiversity Support Group says she genuinely thinks Derbyshire Constabulary is making great strides when it comes to supporting officers and staff living with neurodivergent conditions.

Temporary Chief Inspector Clare Preston-Davies co-founded the group 18 months ago with the aim of raising awareness of neurodiversity, removing the stigma surrounding neurodiversity and helping to create a working environment that allows everyone to flourish.

The group, which is a virtual support and advice network for those living with, or know somebody living with a neurodiverse condition, already has more than 120 members.

"I think the fact that we already have 120 members in just 18 months demonstrates just how diverse the Force is," said Clare.

"It's a safe space, a place where no one will judge, a network which eliminates that feeling of being alone. And people can get involved as much or as little as they want to - if they want to join in with conversations or just read the online chat that's absolutely fine."

During the online chat, members are given the opportunity to share their experiences, ask questions and engage with other like-minded people.

"I'm so proud of how far the group has come already and I'm so proud of the support each member has given to one another. And I honestly believe Derbyshire, as a Force, is making great strides when it comes to supporting officers and staff with neurodivergent conditions," Clare added.

"We've come a long way since we launched. We have some great relationships with stakeholders, including the Federation, who have been extremely supportive. We're also looking at introducing 'Neurodiversity Champions' who will be able to provide one-to-one peer-to-peer support to officers and staff when they need it.

"We recently sent out a survey to the group to find out the impact it was having on our members and some of the responses we got were amazing. One member said the group gave them the 'freedom to ask questions without being made to feel judged or ridiculed' and another expressed their relief at finding 'support like this group'.

"The survey revealed that we had members who had only recently been

95 per cent of those who responded said the group was 'valuable' and 50 per cent had either started a diagnosis pathway or decided to disclose their condition with the organisation as a result of the group

diagnosed and were admittedly 'struggling' with processing the news. According to their feedback, having the group there made a huge difference. In fact, 95 per cent of those who responded said the group was 'valuable' and 50 per cent had either started a diagnosis pathway or decided to disclose their condition with the organisation as a result of the group."

Clare also regularly arranges guest speakers to share their experiences with the group, all of whom are police officers - from all different forces - who are living with a neurodivergent condition or who have a loved one who is.

"As well as providing tips and advice for members, we're also creating information shaped around specific wording and references associated with neurodiversity," explained Clare.

"For example, people innocently make throw away comments like 'oh that's my OCD' - we've all done it, I used to do it - but OCD [obsessive-compulsive disorder] is a really serious condition which severely impacts the everyday life of those living with it, and innocently made comments can trivialise this.

"It's raising awareness of vocabulary like this and working with line managers to help them better understand neurodiverse conditions, in the same way we have for other under-represented groups, that helps us to become more inclusive."

Clare launched the group after joining the Force two years ago. She had co-created a similar network in her previous role at Nottinghamshire Constabulary.

Her drive to raise awareness of neurodiverse conditions was triggered by a conversation she had with a colleague at Nottinghamshire, who was dyslexic and challenged her around certain processes.

"Recently I've been diagnosed with

ADHD [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder] myself," revealed Clare.

"And what's interesting for me is whether my diagnosis changes everything or nothing? I mean, nobody has fallen off their chair when I've told them about my diagnosis but I have to admit, a lot of things now make sense - like the fact that I'm always tired, is that because my brain doesn't stop?"

"If we're able to raise awareness and educate people around neurodiversity then it will make a huge difference for our officers when they approach members of the public living with such conditions," she added.

"We often deal with neurodivergent



Most of us, especially in policing, are at the start of the journey in terms of awareness and understanding of neurodiversity. We are all neurodiverse - we are not all neurodivergent.

people when they are at a point of crisis - so if we don't properly understand, then we won't necessarily be able to handle the situation effectively and efficiently and could unknowingly make it worse. Little things can make all the difference, and so learning more about neurodiversity within the workplace is really advantageous."

Clare's comments come after the chair of Derbyshire Police Federation Tony Wetton voiced his concern that there seems to be a 'postcode lottery' across policing in the way forces support neurodivergent officers.

Tony called for set standards to support neurodiversity in the police service to prevent disparities in how forces provided assessments and made adjustments for colleagues.

Last year, a Neurodiversity Peer Review was launched in Derbyshire Constabulary, carried out by Creased Puddle, specialists in neurodiversity in the workplace. They made recommendations which have been built into a plan which is being worked through.

Tony said: "Most of us, especially in policing, are at the start of the journey in terms of awareness and understanding of neurodiversity. We are all neurodiverse - we are not all neurodivergent.

"The Neurodiversity Working Group within Derbyshire Police goes from strength to strength and I would recommend that anyone who feels they need support should get in touch with them in the first instance."

If you would like more information on the Neurodiversity Working Group then visit the Force's intranet.



I'm so proud of how far the group has come already and I'm so proud of the support each member has given to one another. And I honestly believe Derbyshire, as a Force, is making great strides when it comes to supporting officers and staff with neurodivergent conditions.

'POSTCODE LOTTERY FOR NEURODIVERGENT OFFICERS'

Derbyshire Police Federation chair Tony Wetton says there's "a postcode lottery" across policing in the way forces support neurodivergent officers.

He called for set standards to support neurodiversity in the police service to prevent disparities in how forces provide assessments and adjustments for colleagues.

Tony said: "There's a postcode lottery in policing when it comes to assessments of neurodiversity and supporting neurodivergent colleagues.

"There are some forces that understand the benefit to individual officers and to the force of an assessment and supporting an officer through that. But there are others that tell officers to fund their own assessments or join an NHS waiting list, and that disparity seems unfair.

The more that officers thrive the more likely we are to be able to provide a good police service to neurodivergent people they meet."

In Derbyshire, there was a Neurodiversity Peer Review last year, carried out by Creased Puddle – specialists in Neurodiversity in the workplace. They made recommendations which have been built into a plan which is being worked through.

Read national board member [Paul Matthews' blog](#) about neurodiverse representation in policing.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Federation members and their families are now able to access free bereavement support following the death of an officer, killed in the line of duty or by suicide.

A counselling service can be provided through the Federation by support organisation Just 'B'. A counsellor is allocated to each person, providing either group or one-to-one support, to help manage their grief.

DIGITAL MEMORIAL

The UK Police Memorial has gathered the views of 200,000 people to help shape the world's first digital memorial to the 4,500 police officers and staff who have given their lives to policing across the UK.

Branch chair Tony Wetton said: "I am thrilled that this project is going ahead. Whenever we lose a colleague in the line of duty it is a tragic occasion for the officer's loved ones and for the whole police family."



NEW PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY POLICE COVENANT OVERSIGHT BOARD

The Police Covenant Oversight Board (PCOB) has announced it is tackling three new areas of work as it attempts to keep up with the changing face of policing.

The primary focus of the Covenant has always been ensuring the health and wellbeing of serving and former police officers, their physical protection and the support required by their families.

The PCOB initially agreed on 11 key priorities within the parameters set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

But as a reflection of the rapidly changing nature of police work, three extra priorities have been added to the original list. They are:

- **To identify and implement a package of measures for individuals who have left the police workforce.**
- **To scope the current support in place in relation to healthcare pathways for the police workforce through further NHS engagement**
- **To consider wider issues around police officer and staff safety at the roadside and propose non legislative options to improve safety.**

A spokesman said: "The Oversight Board will continue to review all priorities throughout the year to consider any further points to add, or the potential combining of

priorities."

Derbyshire Police Federation chair Tony Wetton said he was pleased to see progress being made.

"The Police Federation put a lot of effort into developing the new Police Covenant so I am delighted at the latest update," he said.

"Our members and their families make a lot of sacrifices and it is only right that they are treated well and given the protections outlined in the Covenant."

Of the original eleven priorities, three have now been completed and signed off by the PCOB.

The work under the Covenant to consider the issues raised in the Officer and Staff Safety Review have been met through the changes to legislation around assaults on emergency workers brought in by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The workstream to support forces to put in place Operation Hampshire relating to assaults against officers and staff has also been implemented, with data collection on these assaults now a key part of recording practices.

And the third and final completed area of work is the inclusion of mental health training for new officers in initial training, as part of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) developed by the College of Policing.



Derbyshire Police Federation wellbeing lead Helen Gallear marked Mental Health Awareness Week in May with a call for members to think about their wellbeing.

The theme of this year's event was anxiety. This is the UK's most common mental health issue, with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy confirming that 49 per cent of UK people have experienced symptoms in the past five years.

Derbyshire Police's Pay and Morale Survey found that 86 per cent of respondents experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing in the past 12 months. This was up from 79 per cent in 2020 and was higher than the national figure of 82 per cent.

Helen said: "We all feel anxious from time to time. It's a normal reaction to uncertainty, or difficult and testing situations. However, it's important we recognise these feelings and

take steps to respond to them so that it doesn't become overwhelming.

"It is important to take a breath and think about our own wellbeing, and that of our colleagues as well."

Anxiety is a feeling of stress, panic, worry or fear, which can be mild or severe. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life, you may feel worried and anxious about having a medical test or moving house. During times like these, feeling anxious is perfectly normal.

But if feelings of anxiety are affecting your daily life you might want to speak to your GP or a qualified and registered counsellor who can provide a safe and confidential space, and help you understand what's causing your anxiety.

Police Mutual, which provides financial services and welfare support to the police service, has produced a free fact sheet for Mental Health Awareness Week which offers tips on coping with anxiety. It also includes signposts to support.



Derbyshire Police Federation wellbeing lead Helen Gallear.

“ We all feel anxious from time to time. It's a normal reaction to uncertainty, or difficult and testing situations. However, it's important we recognise these feelings and take steps to respond to them so that it doesn't become overwhelming. ”

Helen said: "This free booklet is full of information and advice on how to do that so that we can recognise feelings of anxiety and take steps to address them."

Download the free Mental Health Awareness Week booklet [here](#).

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS?

Noise-induced hearing loss can drastically affect those who work in law enforcement

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is a term used to describe hearing loss, deafness or tinnitus caused by exposure to excessive noise at work where insufficient or no training or ear protection has been provided. NIHL can have a significant impact on those who work in law enforcement, particularly those who use firearms, due to frequent exposure to extremely high levels of noise in their line of work.

Though hearing loss is a common symptom of age, it's important to note the distinct signs that indicate noise-induced hearing loss. Some signs to look out for include:

- **Difficulty hearing or understanding speech, particularly in environments with background noise.**
- **Tinnitus, which is a ringing, buzzing, hissing, or other sounds in one ear or both ears.**
- **Some people become more sensitive to loud noises. Everyday sounds that were previously tolerable may become uncomfortable or even painful.**
- **Difficulty accurately determining the direction a sound is coming from.**
- **Constantly increasing the volume of the television or radio.**
- **Asking others to speak louder or repeat themselves frequently.**

- **Fatigue or strain from listening for extended periods of time.**

All these signs and symptoms can vary in severity and differ from person to person. As police officers often deal with exposure to loud sounds such as gunshots, sirens, explosions and high-decibel events, this can and often does lead to damage being sustained to the sensitive structures of the inner ear, which can turn into noise-induced hearing loss.

Though symptoms differ, this could cause a permanent decrease in hearing sensitivity, making it more difficult for police officers to hear important sounds, such as verbal commands from colleagues or approaching emergency vehicles.

Hearing loss may also compromise an officer's situational awareness, making them less able to identify any potential threats or hazards. This can impact the ability to respond quickly and appropriately to dangerous situations, potentially jeopardising their safety and the safety of others. Hearing loss could even affect an officer's job performance, especially in tasks that require good hearing abilities, such as gathering witness statements, conducting interviews or participating in surveillance operations.

To minimise the risk of police officers developing noise-induced hearing loss, it's

important for police forces to implement hearing conservation programmes. These could include training in and the provision of hearing protection devices, regular hearing screenings, education on the risks of noise exposure and strategies to minimise exposure to loud sounds whenever possible. The law says that every employer has a duty of care to protect employees from suffering harm in the workplace, including noise induced injuries.

Police officers, like other employees, are protected by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. These regulations set out the standards and requirements for employers to manage and control noise in the workplace to prevent occupational hearing loss.

If a police officer believes that their hearing loss was caused or significantly worsened by their work environment, they may be eligible to make a claim for compensation.

Expert noise-induced hearing loss claims lawyers at Slater and Gordon will arrange for you to be examined by a medical professional to determine what proportion of your hearing loss is due to workplace exposures to noise, and on the basis of that independent medical opinion, you will be advised on whether you have a claim that can be pursued.



“Now the pressure's gone, I can get back to my police work.”

You never know when you're going to need legal advice. Slater and Gordon have been advising and supporting Police Federation members for more than 60 years, taking the legal stress away and leaving you to focus on keeping people safe.

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MORTGAGE SURGERIES: TWO DATES AVAILABLE

Derbyshire Police Federation members looking to get on the property ladder, remortgage their home or invest in a buy-to-let can get free advice at a mortgage surgery.

Police Mortgages, which offers expert mortgage advice, is running a series of online clinics for members to discuss their mortgage circumstances.

It offers fee-free advice for serving and retired officers, exclusive deals for police, and access to more than 90 UK lenders.

The first clinic took place on 21 June, with the following two being held on **12 September and 18 October**.

You can book your place by [emailing Police Mortgages founder Chris Schutrups](mailto:Chris.Schutrups@police-mortgages.co.uk)

or [booking online through the Police Mortgages website](https://www.police-mortgages.co.uk).

Kirsty Bunn, Derbyshire Police Federation secretary and treasurer, said: "We know that police officers work incredibly hard, which can leave little time to do the leg work to research the mortgage market.

"Police Mortgage's team of experienced advisers can do this research for you to identify the best products to suit your needs."

Police Mortgages is also supporting the Force's celebrations of the work of officers on response for National Police Chiefs' Council's Response Policing Week of Action, which starts on 26 June, by providing every



frontline response officer with a free insulated bottle in an initiative the company is jointly funding with the Force and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Visit the Police Mortgages website at [police-mortgages.co.uk](https://www.police-mortgages.co.uk) for more information and to use a mortgage calculator which will indicate how much you can borrow.

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