

Federation Matters

The magazine of Hertfordshire Police Federation

Summer 2022



Police Federation's annual conference returns



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Cover photo: Steve Hartshorn, national chair, welcomes Home Secretary Priti Patel to the first in-person annual Federation conference since 2018. The event was held in Manchester.

Conference photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.

Remember, you can find news updates and more information on the work of the Federation on our website at

www.polfed.org/herts

Check regularly to keep fully up to date.

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Views from the chair

By **Luke Mitchell, chair of Hertfordshire Police Federation**

Conference week marked a significant date for Hertfordshire Police Federation.

Not only was it the first time Fed reps had been able to gather in person for the annual national conference but it was also the last week within the Force and the branch for Geoff Bardell, our chair for the last four years.

Geoff retired on Thursday 19 May, and now plans to spend more time with his children and grandchildren.

He said serving as branch chair, a position he held for four years, had been an honour and a privilege and thanked members for their support over the years.



“ I AM ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED TO KEEPING OFFICERS’ INTERESTS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE BRANCH’S WORK AND WILL LISTEN CLOSELY TO MEMBERS’ CONCERNS. ”

“I have enjoyed every minute as branch chair and I am sure I will miss the good people I have worked with over the years,” said Geoff.

“But I am sure the branch will continue to go from strength to strength and keep pressing for the best possible outcomes on the key issues that matter for the members such as pay and conditions, pensions and officer wellbeing.”

Branch secretary Al Wollaston also paid tribute to the outgoing chair: “Geoff has been

an excellent chair and I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside him over the last few years.

“He always went above and beyond and was always there to support me and be there for members. He will be missed by many of the officers he has supported over the years and is a real loss to the organisation.

“I think we made a good team and have hopefully taken the branch forward since taking over our respective roles.

“I wish Geoff all the very best in his retirement. He has worked very hard and it is now time for a well-earned rest. Not only has he been an excellent chair but he has been a well-liked and well thought of police officer and supervisor for the last 30 years, mainly based at Watford. He was well known within the town for his community policing and was a go to person for the various professionals that worked there.”

Geoff has now handed over the reins to me, and it’s a position I take on with pride, and maybe a little trepidation.

I am absolutely committed to keeping officers’ interests at the forefront of the branch’s work and will listen closely to members’ concerns.

Officer welfare will remain a firm focus but I also want to step up the campaign for better pay and conditions for officers as I fear there is a looming crisis within the police service.

We are losing people left, right and centre and I’ve got officers telling me they can’t even afford to drive into work. I honestly can’t see how it is financially viable for a 21-year-old to join the police service and unless that issue is sorted out then we are in serious trouble.

I want to encourage members to voice any concerns about the role of the Police Federation in their working lives. Our door is always open.

I am looking forward to working for you, and to representing your views.

National chair confronts Home Secretary on pay



Newly elected national Federation chair Steve Hartshorn.

“Home Secretary, what has gone wrong?” asked national Federation chair Steve Hartshorn as he scrutinised Priti Patel during his keynote address at this year’s annual Police Federation conference.

In keeping to his promise to continue the fight for better pay, Steve voiced his frustration at hearing his colleagues are struggling to feed their families and are going to food banks.

He said it angers him to hear of “good and experienced people talking about leaving the job, not because they want to, but because they can’t afford not to.”

He added: “Home Secretary, what has gone wrong? Why are my colleagues one of the only groups of frontline public sector workers being penalised in their pockets?”

“This cannot go on. It’s time for change.

“I don’t apologise for cutting to the chase, and I don’t apologise if I sound frustrated – I am, as are our members.”

He continued to reveal that recent statistics, following a poll of 2,000 members of the public, show that 75 per cent believe the police deserve a pay rise in line with inflation.

Furthermore, 79 per cent agree that dangerous jobs, like police work, deserve the pay to reflect the work.

“That’s not us saying it Home Secretary, these are the views of the public,” he said, “Your electorate.”

He said that officers are ‘told they are brave, they are told they do a unique job.’

He explained: “They were thanked for putting themselves and their families in danger as Covid gripped the country, and yet that acknowledgment amounted to nothing.

“All we are asking from the Home Secretary, is for a similar pay process to the one that you and all 650 MPs have. We are not asking for special treatment. We are asking that you remember and recognise our special responsibilities and unique status with the restrictions on our private lives and the lives of our families.”

As well as pay, Steve addressed issues surrounding pensions, presence and pride.

“It’s not unreasonable to have long-term clarity over pensions so that people can plan for their futures with certainty,” he said.

“And pride, I want police officers to be able to have pride in what they do and be treated with the respect they deserve.”

In terms of presence, he explained: “Government, Police leaders and the media must listen to us and hear what we say, because we are the undisputed voice of policing.”

Steve, who became national chair on 1 April this year, spoke of representing 139,000 members across the nation, and made an impassioned plea for the Home Secretary to work towards creating a new medal for all emergency service workers killed on duty.

He also pointed out: “And Home Secretary, when we raise issues with you, we don’t do it to cause problems, we do it to make you aware of what police officers are telling us. We are their body, their voice – in statute, in law. This is what makes us different from other groups in policing.”

Steve ended by asking for change from the Home Secretary, after making no apologies for his list of demands given during the address.

“I make no apology for this being such a long list of asks. Some come at a cost, but others are free, and while they cannot happen overnight, next week is a great time to start,” he concluded.

“And this is all I will ask of you today, Home Secretary, so on behalf of my colleagues across England and Wales, it’s time for change.”

Home Secretary says she is proudly pro-police



Priti Patel giving her keynote speech to conference.

The Home Secretary says she's proud to see Harper's Law coming into force following a campaign backed by the Police Federation.

Priti Patel praised Lissie Harper for her campaign for mandatory life sentences to be given to the killers of emergency services workers following the death of her husband, PC Andrew Harper.

She said: "Harper's Law means mandatory life sentences for people who kill an emergency worker while committing a crime. There will also be an increase in the maximum penalty for assaults on police officers and other emergency workers - from 12 months to two years in prison for common assault or battery."

Ms Patel said Harper's Law was one of a number of measures in the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act requested by the Federation.

She said she had introduced a new test to assess the standard of officer driving.

"Should an officer be involved in a collision, the courts will now be able to judge their standard of driving against a competent and careful peer with the same prescribed training, rather than with a member of the public," she said.

"I want our highly trained officers to have the confidence they need to fight crime effectively."

Ms Patel said that the new act would "better balance the right to protest with the rights of everyone else".

Ms Patel told delegates in Manchester that she was "proudly pro-police".

She told the conference she was relaxing the five conditions on the use of stop and search powers under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in areas they anticipate serious violence.

The Home Secretary said: "I listened carefully, and you were very clear: stop and search is a vital tool in getting knives off our streets and saving lives."

She also announced that Special Constables could be given powers to carry and use Taser.

She added: "Your voices called for these changes, and having waited too long for a Home Secretary to be on your side and listen to your calls for change, I listened and have acted."

Ms Patel urged the Federation to engage with the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB).

The Federation withdrew from the pay review body last year, describing it as "not fit for purpose".

She said: "It is imperative that Steve (Hartshorn, the Federation chair) and I work together on pay and pensions. I promise you that I will continue to champion your cause in Whitehall."

Ms Patel said that the Government's Uplift programme to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers was "well on track".

OUR SECRETARY SAYS...

We do need to work with the Home Secretary on pay; Priti Patel is right. However, before the Federation can consider engaging with the PRRB process, we need a cast iron commitment from the Government that it won't interfere. It has to be a truly independent process. The Government cannot tell PRRB what it can recommend. It also cannot ignore its recommendations.

It seems to me that MPs have got a pay review process in which they can put their complete faith. Police officers just want that same provision. I don't think we are asking too much. We just want fair pay for police officers, and that means a fair – and independent – pay review process.

Al Wollaston

Welsh detective explains reality of pay freeze



NORTH WALES REP BRAVELY LAYS BARE HER FINANCIAL STRUGGLES AS SHE CHALLENGES HOME SECRETARY

A detective based in Wales challenged the Home Secretary over the impact of poor police pay and rising inflation.

Struggling single mum DC Vicky Knight said she had resorted to visiting food banks and asking her parents for money.

Vicky Knight, a North Wales Federation representative, asked Priti Patel: "Could you live on £1,200 a month? How about £1,400?"

Vicky, an officer for 23 years, said she borrowed money from her 69-year-old mother to help pay for petrol.

"I work with the most vulnerable members of our community and I love my job, but if the rates of interest go up, and I can't pay for my mortgage and I can't pay for my fuel, I am not going to be able to continue to go to work," Vicky said.

"I went to see an accountant, and the advice was: leave the police, work for 22 hours a week, and claim benefits, and you will be better off.

"I tell this story not because I'm here for sympathy, I just want to be heard. I stand here to represent myself and many people in the Force that are like me.

"We are desperately struggling to do the job that we love and to make ends meet at home. So, I need you to be on our team and to help us, to represent us, to get us fair pay."

Ms Patel replied: "I think it just really illustrates so strongly and powerfully why we need to actually find solutions to pay issues and actually give you the support that you rightly deserve. We have to move this forward. You have that commitment from me, you absolutely do."

Afterwards, Vicky, who works in the child protection and vulnerable adults department, said: "I was reaching out to the Home Secretary, professional woman to professional woman. But she looked dumbfounded, I don't think she knew what to say.

"I've never struggled this much. The cost of living just seems to be going up, as the wages go down.

"It's embarrassing. I'm a professional woman and I'm begging my mum to let me have some of her pension pot, just to make ends meet."

If mortgage rates increase, Vicky says she will have no other option than to sell her home.

"When it comes close to pay day, I literally haven't got any money. I have to think about everything, including how much petrol I have and where that will allow me to go.

"How embarrassing, I'm 46-years-old and I might have to ask my parents if I can move back in with them."

Despite struggling financially, Vicky says her passion remains for the job.

She adds: "At the minute, I feel like we're on the Titanic, you know that bit at the end, when it's sinking and it's just about turned – I feel like the scales have tipped and we're now on a sinking ship."

Journalist George Pascoe-Watson (left) with Federation secretary Alex Duncan and deputy secretary John Partington.



Officers using food banks

WARNING ABOUT WORSENING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FOR OFFICERS

Police officers are struggling to make ends meet and some are turning to food banks to feed their families, the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

National deputy secretary John Partington told delegates that the cost of living crisis and hikes in National Insurance contributions had left some members in dire straits in the wake of last year's zero per cent pay offer.

And he warned of worsening financial problems for many officers unless they were offered a fair pay deal this time round.

Speaking during a session on pay and pensions on the opening day of the Manchester conference, John said: "It's not just food banks, it's going for pay day loans, it's going to family and friends to get extra money.

"We have evidence of police officers waiting outside the supermarket just before midnight before their pay goes into their bank account so they can do a shop."

“IT’S NOT JUST FOOD BANKS, IT’S GOING FOR PAY DAY LOANS, IT’S GOING TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO GET EXTRA MONEY.”

John said the pay rise given to officers earning less than £24,000 a year amounted to very little in real terms.

He told delegates: "If you look at the pay award last year - £250 for the lower paid officers - and then start taking the tax and National Insurance and pension off that you are actually talking about £12 or £13 a month.

"With all the increases in the cost of living and inflation, that is just eroded within a millisecond and it is not going to do anything for them.

"So, I think there are big problems ahead. We have relied on food banks for some time now and it is only going to get worse."

National secretary Alex Duncan told the pay and conditions session that police officers were being forced to quit the service for financial reasons.

He said: "I heard that a member of the Government has suggested one of the solutions for people struggling with the cost of living crisis was to go and find a better paid job.

"It would appear that with seven out of ten police officers already thinking about leaving, maybe that will be the outcome. But it doesn't sound great for the British public or the police service."

Olympian's praise for police



Kriss Akabusi delivering his highly animated, entertaining and inspirational session.

Former world athletics champion Kriss Akabusi MBE thanked officers for the “selfless work” they do as he helped open this year’s conference.

The athlete described the police as the “glue that holds this community together”, as he addressed the auditorium for the first session of the two-day event in Manchester.

The Olympian and five time gold medallist talked about fellow athlete Derek Redmond, who was hit by heartbreak when his hamstring tore while running the 400m during the 1992 Olympics. Determined not to give up, Derek was supported over the finish line by his father, Jim.

“Think how many times you get people across

the finish line,” Kriss said to conference. “When I think about British policing, I think about how many times do you get people across that finish line.

“Whether it’s road traffic collisions, reports of domestic violence, murders, robberies and rapes, you are there, getting people over that finish line.”

He continued to say that while newspapers are full of negative news, imagine if we could be talking about how the police get people across the finish line.

“You the British police, I believe you’re the very best at what you do,” he added. “But we need to remember, the past is always for reference, not for residence.”

Conference panel discusses issues around ill-health retirement

“There is a person at the end of the policy” agreed the panel as they discussed navigating ill-health retirement at this year’s Police Federation of England and Wales annual conference.

The session involved National Board member Gemma Fox, South Wales Police Federation secretary Leigh Godfrey, senior solicitor for Taylor Law Mark Lake, and ill-health adviser at the Metropolitan Police Paul Turpin, all highlighting the need for forces to be more compassionate during the ill-health process.

Gemma reminded the auditorium that these “are people, our colleagues” and that the current process “leads to them feeling more undervalued”.

“Currently the ill-health retirement process is adversarial, leaving officers feeling even more devalued and more unwell at the end of the process. As a Federation, we need to understand the value of ill-health retirement,” she said.

“Forces need to understand there are people at the end of the process, these are real people who are not going through this process by choice, they are going through it because they are unwell or injured.”

“ WE NEED TO HELP PEOPLE RETIRE WITH THE DIGNITY AND RESPECT THEY DESERVE.”

Gemma said the best thing that could impact the process is an added element of compassion and understanding that police officers need support.

She continued: “Forces need to step back and look at their own processes and really ask themselves, if they were going through that process, how would that make them feel?”

During the session, it was stressed that there is not simply one process that is followed by each branch but instead 43 different ways of approaching ill-health retirement, depending on the force.

Leigh, who is South Wales Police Federation ill-health retirement liaison officer, said: “The process has become really adversarial and the inconsistency across forces is just phenomenal.

“What I would ask forces and pension authorities to remember is that there’s a person at



National Board member Gemma Fox outlines the issues officers face.

end of this policy and it’s an arduous policy and it really does damage the people going through it.”

A video, which opened the session, showed Leigh urging those attending to remember the importance of ill-health retirement.

He said: “We need to help people retire with the dignity and respect they deserve.”

He cited a case he is working on, where the officer was left with significant mental health issues.

“This officer was so unwell he couldn’t put on police uniform, it made him physically unwell. They allowed him to come into work in plain clothes, but he was surrounded by uniformed officers, so it had a detrimental impact on his mental health.

“He is still too unwell to speak about his experience. Unfortunately, he has had to go through this really distressing process to get that assessment.”

Leigh said: “If we’re struggling now, how will we meet demands as the retirement age gets older? There’s a person at the end of the policy, so let’s start putting these people first.”

Calls for more cultural awareness



Paul Odle from the race, religion and belief group.

CONFERENCE LOOKS AT THE DISPROPORTIONALITY WITHIN THE CONDUCT PROCESS

Police forces will fail their communities if they do not understand or interact with them, a session on cultural awareness heard.

Tiff Lynch, Police Federation National Board member and conduct and performance committee secretary, introduced a break-out session discussing how a lack of cultural awareness impacts on the disciplinary process.

She said: "These officers are referred to

professional standards more often and more of them face management action as a result."

Paul Odle, chair of the Federation's race, religion and belief group, spoke about being a black officer of 31 years in service and said: "We were discussing these issues 30 years ago and I'm sick to death of talking about this agenda. If we can't treat protected characteristics correctly within the service, we can't treat the public correctly. We need to get actions so that we are not having these similar conversations ago in another 30 years."

"We can't keep playing the blame game and calling police officers racist," he said. "But we need to get better at understanding our communities. If not, we create problems. I think we need to have that bit of extra training."

T/DCC Tyron Joyce of West Yorkshire Police talked about a plan coming forward from the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing to address the negative experiences of black people and with the intention of creating an anti-racist police service.

He said: "If the vast majority of police officers and staff say they would not tolerate racism, how can we explain some of the disparities in the way we act? This plan is not saying police officers and staff are racist but some of our policies and practices appear to be disproportionate.

"If the only time a police officer sees the black community is when they are in crisis, or the only time they see us is in crisis, I understand how prejudice can occur on both sides."

Sal Naseem, regional director of the IOPC, added that officers from marginalised groups need to be welcomed into policing and their difference valued. If not, then all the work that has been done in recruitment to make the service better resemble the make-up of England and Wales would be for nothing, he said.

“ IF THE ONLY TIME A POLICE OFFICER SEES THE BLACK COMMUNITY IS WHEN THEY ARE IN CRISIS, OR THE ONLY TIME THEY SEE US IS IN A CRISIS, I UNDERSTAND HOW PREJUDICE CAN OCCUR ON BOTH SIDES. ”

Officer welfare focus needed on mutual aid operations

Officer welfare should always be at the front and centre of mutual aid operations, the Police Federation conference has heard.

A panel discussion heard there was a need for deeper understanding of the issues faced by planning teams behind major operations such as the G7 talks in Cornwall and the COP26 event in Glasgow, which between them saw more than 15,000 officers deployed.

The Federation has a key role in supporting officers on mutual aid deployments offering services from providing refreshments and helping with accommodation to representing members in disputes about over-time, rest days and leave.

“THERE NEEDS TO BE CLARITY FROM THE GET-GO FOR PEOPLE WHO WILL BE GOING ON DEPLOYMENTS. IF THE OFFICERS WHO ARE DEPLOYED ARE WELL TAKEN CARE OF, YOU WILL SEE THAT MORALE LIFT.”

Federation National Board member Steve Taylor said the police service had made improvements in the way it dealt with issues around accommodation, food and welfare at mutual aid operations but said there was lots of room for improvement.

He said: “With these planning operations, being involved from the early stages will allow lessons learned from previous deployments, around accommodation standards, food provision and the wellbeing of our officers, not to be repeated again.

“We need to understand that many, if not all of our members, are volunteers and the public won’t see that. So, we need to make sure that our volunteers are taken care of while they take care of us.”

Essex Police Chief Constable Ben-Julian Harrington acknowledged the need for a new



National Board member Steve Taylor.

framework covering mutual aid.

He said: “There needs to be clarity from the get-go for people who will be going on deployments. If the officers who are deployed are well taken care of, you will see that morale lift.”

National Federation treasurer Simon Kempton said mutual aid had become so prevalent it was important to get things right for members and also the public.

Owen Weatherill, Assistant Chief Constable of Hertfordshire and National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) strategic lead, told the audience: “We need to show the public a unified front, one that shows we work well together, and this is a testament of the professionalism for everyone that is deployed.”

The panel recommended a review of existing rules and regulations and called for work to be done on areas not fit for purpose.

Was policing prepared for influx of new recruits?

PANEL SESSION PUTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE POLICE UPLIFT PROGRAMME

Is the Police Uplift Programme more than a numbers game? This was the question put to a panel of experts on the opening day of conference.

The session was opened by Dave Bamber, National Board member, who said it was “impossible to argue” that the Government’s promise of a 20,000-officer uplift was not welcome, adding “the service needs more staff”.

However, Dave questioned whether policing was prepared for the influx.

“Having hollowed out the training departments and reduced tutoring to a minimum, were we ready take these officers in? Have they developed into an efficient and effective workforce, or have we just been playing a numbers game where we now have 20,000 more people but not necessarily 20,000 more police officers who are capable of doing the role?” he asked.

The question was picked up by the panel, which comprised of Mark Jones, secretary of North Wales Police Federation, Kurtis Christoforides from Police Now, Jo Noakes representing the College of Policing, Dr Sarah Charman a professor of criminology, and Sarah Davenport speaking for the National Police Chiefs’ Council.

Mark painted a picture of trainees who were stressed and struggling to cope with the pressures of a demanding full-time job, with full-time studying, plus poor pay and cancelled rest days. He said this reality contrasted with the Home Secretary visiting forces and being told “what she wanted to hear” – that everything was well.

And he compared the uplift programme to the misselling of PPI: “We’re not being honest with people about the trauma they are going to see. We’re not telling them that they are going to have to work night shifts, that they will have to work Christmas. In this drive to get people through the door, we’ve let slip the reality of what policing is.”

The session heard that the current 139,000 police officers in England and Wales includes 31,000 new recruits. This represents an uplift of 13,576 officers once those leaving or retiring are factored in.

Dr Charman, a professor at Portsmouth University, spoke about a four-year study she has carried out into police officer retention. The number of officers resigning had risen by 104 per cent at the end of 2020 compared to 2012, she said.

Reasons for this vary but include poor leadership, excessive workloads and a mismatch between expectations of the job and the reality. There were personal reasons for leaving relating to mental and physical health and stress, as well as a “sense of organisational injustice – officers feeling a lack of voice, autonomy, lack of progression and also bullying and harassment,” she added.

Kurtis, a director at Police Now, said the recruitment market is changing and the idea of a life-long career was increasingly a thing of the past.

“People want a portfolio career these days,” he said, “That goes hand in glove with a more flexible entry and exit into the service.” wellbeing of our officers, not to be repeated again.

“We need to understand that many, if not all of our members, are volunteers and the public won’t see that. So, we need to make sure that our volunteers are taken care of while they take care of us.”

“ WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT MANY, IF NOT ALL OF OUR MEMBERS, ARE VOLUNTEERS AND THE PUBLIC WON’T SEE THAT. SO, WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE TAKEN CARE OF WHILE THEY TAKE CARE OF US. ”

Pensions focus



**National Federation
vice-chair Ché
Donald.**

Police pension arrangements have failed to put all officers on the same platform and have caused widespread confusion and misinformation about how they are calculated, the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

Day one of the 2022 conference closed with a panel discussion on what has become one of the most contentious issues for police officers across England and Wales.

Simon Horgan, field officer for Metfriendly, which offers financial services and products to police officers and their families, said individual officers should establish an exit point to help them with their payment calculation.

He told delegates: "Being aware of your exit point is very important as we are dealing with lots of myths around pension calculations.

"Find out your exit points. Some are affected more than others. That is why it is important to know what is a good exit point for you."

National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald said there was a disparity in pension benefits to police officers because of the changes to the pension scheme.

And national secretary Alex Duncan told the conference: "We have raised with the Government issues with the scheme advisory board. We think the Government can fix it in a number of ways."

Speaking at an earlier session on pay and conditions, national deputy secretary John Partington said the police pensions system was not working.

He told delegates: "I think it is important to point out that the Police Federation position on this is very clear: that officers should have stayed on the pensions they joined because people plan financially and plan for the future and when things change it is not great.

**“ WE HAVE RAISED WITH THE GOVERNMENT
ISSUES WITH THE SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD.
WE THINK THE GOVERNMENT CAN FIX IT IN A
NUMBER OF WAYS.”**

"The Government then lost the court cases, as Federation reps know very well, but what they have been slow to do is actually put the proper mechanisms and legislation in place to enact it.

"They did the first bit of legislation to ensure all serving officers know if they are paying into a pension scheme or paying into the 2015 care scheme but what they have not done is put the mechanisms in place to address the more detailed problems of moving people across pension schemes

"So essentially the first legislation is a bit of paper saying as of this day you stop accruing in the scheme and move to this scheme and we'll deal with the harder stuff sometime later on.

"All officers should have stayed in the original schemes and I think the Government is in danger of spending a lot of money to fix a problem which it created itself."

Conduct system 'could collapse' over indemnity row

PANEL DISCUSSES MODERNISING HEARINGS AND ASKS IF CHANGE IS NEEDED

The misconduct process "could collapse" due to a legal ruling which means that panellists could be sued for their decisions, the Police Federation conference heard on the Wednesday morning of the two-day event.

In a session entitled 'Modernising Hearings', John Bassett of the National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs (NALQC) set out the view of his organisation that the Eckland case established that LQCs (and any other panellist) can be held liable and, so far, the Home Office has refused to indemnify them or provide immunity.

As a result, the NALQC has advised its members not to accept new appointments, which is contributing to a backlog in misconduct cases being resolved.

John said: "The advice we've given to our members is not something we took lightly. We have put forward a perfectly straightforward one-clause bill to the Home Office and they are prevaricating. Meanwhile, claims continue to be made.

"If the situation is not sorted out the present system is going to collapse because LQCs will not be prepared to put their livelihoods, their homes and their families at risk of financial ruin. If that is the situation then almost by default the position will return to what the National Police Chiefs' Council appears to be seeking which is a return to misconduct hearings being presided over by chief officers."

Chief Constable Craig Guildford of Nottinghamshire Police, who joined the session via video link, said efforts to improve the timeliness of misconduct hearings – which is best for complainants, officers and families – was not helped by Covid or the NALQC stance, which he took issue with.

Mr Guildford insisted: "For avoidance of doubt, the officers on those panels are covered by chief constables. The delays caused by some LQCs not sitting are not helping officers or public confidence. I don't know of cases other than

Eckland where these [legal issues] are being raised. I think we need to get moving."

But John doubted whether police forces would be legally able to indemnify their representatives on a panel. He said this was because of doubts about whether Section 88 of the Police Act applied to officers serving on a panel – and if not the reassurances from chiefs would count for nothing.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) director of strategy and impact, Kathie Cashell, talked about the efforts the organisation has made to speed up the timeliness of its investigations.

She said: "We're really proud of the improvements we've made. Our concerns now are less about the investigation timeliness and more about the proceedings that happen after the investigations. The IOPC improvements have not been replicated in those areas."

Phill Matthews from the Police Federation National Board and the national conduct and performance lead has spearheaded campaigns to highlight the mental health effects and unfairness on officers (and families) due to long delays in completing investigations. He welcomed the involvement of LQCs as a way of "improving public confidence, trust and transparency", and reiterated that the Federation supports their concerns around indemnity.

Phill raised concerns about a return to chief officer led misconduct panels – particularly fast-tracked cases – which run the risk of prioritising dismissals rather than fairness to the officer involved.

He added: "The Federation's main thrust is timeliness. The IOPC has improved dramatically but there are still over 300 of their cases that exceed 12 months and are paused waiting for other processes to happen. That's why we need letters to come into PCCs [which 2020 regulations now allow] so we can put the spotlight on where those delays are happening. Professional Standards Departments in a fifth of all cases that go beyond 12 months haven't written the letter as they are meant to and there is absolutely no comeback."

The panel (left to right): Manjit Atwal QPM from the College of Policing, Zoe Wakefield and Sam Hawkins from the Women's Group and DCC Maggie Blyth.



'Misogyny must be challenged'

The Police Federation is taking steps towards introducing strategies to help tackle misogyny within the service, the 2022 annual conference has heard.

Sam Hawkins, secretary of the Federation's National Women's Group, acknowledged new measures were needed to bring an end to inappropriate and sexist behaviour within policing and said important work on developing new policies was already being undertaken.

She said: "We are waiting for some more up-to-date information from the HMIC but Durham University did a survey for the NPCC in 2019 on diversity and equality and that found 27.8 per cent of female officers reported experiencing derogatory remarks about their gender and 34.5 per cent reported experiencing sexist comments from someone in the force."

She continued: "This is something we are quite passionate about as a women's group and we want any of our colleagues and anyone involved in the National Women's Group to be involved in that so we can get some policies, some toolkits, whatever we need out there.

"We also need to make sure there is a reporting process as well so that people who do want to report or talk to someone about their experiences have more than the PSD or the confidential reporting line and can talk about those small things. If a female officer is made to feel uncomfortable they should be able to talk to somebody about it.

"Despite the horrific, awful things that have been in the media, we understand that not all of our colleagues are predators and behave in that way but we do need men and women to speak out and just challenge that behaviour.

"It takes an awfully long time to change a culture but if we all play a part in it and all do our bit we can try and affect that change much quicker and make the world a better place and policing a better place for our daughters, granddaughters and any women coming into the organisation in future years."

Opening the panel discussion National Women's Group chair Sue Honeywill explained: "With half of the population being female, it is increasingly important that we understand how the issue impacts, not only within policing but in society as a whole."

She continued: "In simple terms, misogyny is a behaviour towards women which shows either a dislike, hatred or contempt towards women."

Sue told delegates she accepted discussing misogyny within policing was emotive and often divisive as it challenged both men and women to reflect on past and present behaviours and consider their own unconscious biases.

But she added: "We seek to raise the profile of the issues and consider how we can improve understanding and involve culture norms to build an environment where both sexes feel equal and individuals feel empowered and safe to speak up and challenge."

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Tackling the stigma of suicide

'We need to fight the taboo and that stigma around suicide needs to go if we want to save lives.'

That was the clear message from the Fighting for your Lives session at this year's annual conference.

The session examined the reality of officers taking their own lives, with Federation representatives urged to talk more openly about suicide to make it more visible.

Former officer Ed Simpson shared his experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which resulted in him spiralling and ultimately considering taking his own life.

"I remember driving to work and thinking I wanted to kill myself. That should've been an irrational thought, but it was completely rational," said Ed, who worked for South and North Yorkshire Police. "I actually hated myself because I was still alive."

One week later, physically and mentally burnt out, Ed was diagnosed with shingles, which led to him visiting the doctor and being officially told he had PTSD, sparked by witnessing trauma after trauma during his career.

Having been signed off work for a year, Ed received the devastating news his salary would be docked to half-pay, leading to him feeling "totally worthless".

"That same day, I fell out of love with policing," said Ed, who returned back to work after 12 months, before medically retiring three years later.

"The journey to get there ruined me. I will never be the same again."

Ed was joined by CEO Oscar Kilo Andy Rhodes QPM, Greater Manchester suicide prevention programme manager at the NHS Adele Owen QPM, and facilitator of families against corporate killers at Greater Manchester Hazards Centre Hilda Palmer.

Hilda, who has conducted research on work-related suicide, explained her findings revealed 10 per cent of all suicides have a work-related component.

Adele, a former officer with Greater Manchester Police, said supervisors and managers need to be given suicide-prevention training.

Andy explained how Oscar Kilo is spending time working with national charity The Samaritans researching specific factors that are driving mental health issues, as well as how the force can better support loved ones who are bereaved following a suicide.

"Eight or nine years ago, people wouldn't have had the courage to stand up and talk about mental health. What we are seeing, people are more willing to speak out, especially young recruits," he continued.

"We're a long way off but we will get to a point where psychological risk and harm are treated the same as physical risk.

"Ultimately though, it's the employer's responsibility – the force's responsibility – to support these people."

Federation stalwart retiring

Police Federation stalwart Alex Duncan has attended his last annual conference as national secretary ahead of his imminent retirement.

Alex, who became a Fed rep in 1999 and has been national secretary since 2018, said serving the organisation had been a "real honour" and praised the work of colleagues across the 43 forces.

He told delegates: "Policing has been great for me and I have done a wide variety of different things and the Federation to me is the best of policing because it is people from within the service looking after their colleagues."

Alex joined Avon and Somerset Police in 1990 and before becoming a Federation rep had roles

in response, community policing and the District Crime Unit. He was Avon and Somerset secretary from 2007 to 2014.

Alex then became a National Board member and held the position of chair of the conduct and performance sub-committee for more than two years.

Before becoming national secretary in 2018, he was chair of the legislation sub-committee and head of civil claims, responsible for the hundreds of claims submitted by members every year, including employment tribunals and discrimination cases.

Reflecting on his two 23-year involvement with the Police Federation, Alex said: "It's been great, it's been an absolute joy and a real honour."

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Police drivers gain better protection in law



Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation (left) and Simon Hill from the Metropolitan Police Federation.

All police drivers must be 'in ticket' with their training if they are to benefit from the new protections they will receive under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, conference was told.

Tim Rogers, national Federation lead on pursuits driving and driver training, has led a long campaign to bring about the change in law introduced by the act.

Police officers' driving will no longer be assessed by the standards of the careful and competent member of the public but by those of their skilled and trained colleagues.

He said: "We've had this catalogue of shame where officers were on the wrong side of the law, embroiled in lengthy criminal and misconduct investigations which have caused untold stress.

"We are in a better position because we campaigned for eight years. It's a major achievement."

Tim stressed it was critically important for officers to demonstrate they were up to date with training so they benefited from the new protection and was supported by DCC Terry Woods, National Police Chiefs' Council driving lead, and driver training expert Roger Gardner.

DCC Woods said: "If they can't, and if some people in your forces have slipped out of date, or forces are behind, I would argue this needs

to be put on the top of the list, because it's an area of high frequency and high risk. It is really important."

Mr Gardner added: "When this legislation comes through, if your members aren't in date – effectively you are driving against the law. You really need to get on to them and tell them they have got to be trained, and they have got to be in date – if they are not, they'll be committing a criminal offence."

Tim highlighted how officers' driving would be assessed.

"Without appropriate governance, we would have found our campaign for officer driving to be assessed against that of their similarly trained colleagues and it could have led to officers being at more risk of prosecution than less," he said.

"A breach of driving policy could be considered a breach of law, which is why we needed those assessing the drivers through this new legal process to have the professionalism, knowledge and expertise required, so officers have the confidence to use their skills and training in the way intended without fear of prosecution."

A panel of subject matter experts will consider cases where police officers' driving is questioned with DCC Woods and Tim being part of the process.

They will ensure that proper disclosure of all the evidence takes place, putting an end to previous failings whereby only selective information and evidence has been put forward. The panel's reports will be available to both prosecution and defence.

The break-out session also stressed the importance of standardised training in police driving units.

Driving schools will now be expected to submit self-assessment forms covering all aspects of their work and spot-checks will be carried out. The College of Policing will issue new Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

Delegates were urged to ask questions of their driving schools and find out if they had completed their self-assessment forms. They were also encouraged to check their chief officers were prepared for the new law.

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National Board member
Ian Saunders.



A tsunami of discrimination claims

BREAK-OUT SESSION CONSIDERS THE IMPACT OF COVID PANDEMIC ON CLAIMS

Barriers faced by disabled police disappeared overnight at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic but are returning and creating a “tsunami of new claims”, the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

National Board member Ian Saunders said the number of Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) claims fell away dramatically during the pandemic but were now rising heavily and heading towards pre-Covid levels.

“We are seeing a return of what we used to see before in relation to UPP claims,” he told delegates at a break-out session on disability discrimination.

“But the basic point is UPP is not, and has never been, a primary mechanism for supporting police officers.

“It is a performance-related mechanism which is very much unsuited to managing an officer with a disability.

“During the pandemic we saw the number of claims that came in and the number of cases that came in went right down.

“About 50 per cent of the employment budget that goes out of Leatherhead - about £3 million a year - is on disability-related claims and much of that went away during the Covid pandemic.

“Hence the tsunami of claims. It’s more than a blip that’s coming now after a period of quiet, there’s a lot coming through the door.”

Ian said cases of disability discrimination did not come in isolation but were at the centre of a mechanical functioning adopted by line managers.

He told the workshop: “Line managers unlawfully discriminate against colleagues with disability absence on their record by using UPP.

“Even though unlawful, line managers are serving written improvement notices and asking colleagues to report to work against or without medical advice. UPP is not designed to manage disability related absences.”

The Police Federation’s in-house solicitor Eleanor Porter said line managers should always refer to the Equality Act while dealing with disabled officers.

She said: “The discretion to initiate UPP must be appreciated as most regulations that follow are mandatory. However, there is nothing to stop the line manager from using their discretionary powers.

“What is really required, for an informed decision to be taken in a case of long-term absence through disability, is a process that requires medical evidence as to whether there is any prospect of the officer returning to work, in what capacity and consultation with the officer about the options, including alternative work, medical discharge and termination.”

'Disclosure guidance causing crisis in policing'



Ben Hudson from the Federation's National Detectives' Forum.

NEW GUIDELINES IMPACTING ON WORKLOADS AND DELAYING JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS, CONFERENCE IS TOLD

Delegates were told of a growing crisis in policing that is pushing officers to breaking point and delaying justice for victims.

Ben Hudson, secretary of the Federation's National Detectives' Forum, led the final conference session to highlight the impact of DG6 – the guidance on charging effective from January 2021.

It has added obligations to the officer in charge of an investigation and front-loaded the disclosure process amounting to a "hidden tax on policing", Ben said.

He played clips of investigating officers who told the real impacts of the changes, both to workloads and to delivering a timely service to victims.

Ben explained a survey showed 45 per cent of respondents felt the number of victims withdrawing from active participation with their investigation had increased due to the changes.

Previously, if officers submitted 100 cases to

the CPS, around 75 would result in a charge and require completion of a full file. Since DG6, all 100 require a file, even though 25 will not result in a charge.

The Federation's concerns were put to Max Hill QC, Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), who insisted "I do get it," before adding: "DG6 came into force on 31 December 2020 not because I chose that date but when the Attorney General decided after a long conversation that there had to be a step change."

The DPP admitted the CPS had too often got it wrong when it came to disclosure and cases were coming unstuck in court. He conceded the system is "front loaded" currently. However, he argued the police and the CPS were working more effectively now as "one team" even if staff on both sides were more tired or carrying more cases.

Also on the panel was Nick Ephgrave, assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, who said there was now "increased rigour" around the application of disclosure law, and an exponential increase in the volume of data.

He said: "I say to my people you've got to start thinking of disclosure from the minute you read the crime report. If you do that some of this workload will get spread across the time period – it's not the solution, but it's the other side of the coin of investigation."

The panel agreed an impending review of the impact of DG6 by the Attorney General's Office offered the possibility of reducing the burden on officers and speeding up justice.

Ben also highlighted the pressures officers were facing due to redaction requirements under the Data Protection Act.

He said: "We would urge the Government to address this immediately. An amendment to the act to allow the CPS and the police service to be treated as one entity would make a huge difference and save considerable time.

"An expert review of nine files found that the new redaction requirements involve, on average, an additional four hours per case. And this will be considerably higher for more complex investigations."

'Tough decision on Fed subs'

Hertfordshire Police Federation representative Michael Dring said it was a tough decision to support the small increase in subscriptions at the annual conference.

Michael said it was a vote he "didn't want to give" as the cost of living continues to rise.

But he said that needed to be balanced against safeguarding the future of the Federation so that it can continue to give the best advice and representation for members.

Michael said: "There has been a lot of recrimination around the increase to subscriptions voted on by delegates at the conference.

"I will be trying to explain to members in Hertfordshire my rationale for voting for the increase.

"It's a vote I really didn't want to give in the current economic climate. However, it's vitally necessary to safeguard the Federation financially with ongoing potential litigation claims and to ensure members can be legally represented with the best advice when allegations are made against them."

The conference motion looked at future options for an increase in subscriptions on the basis that it would only be introduced once it has been confirmed by the Government that members will receive a pay increase.

As a result of the motion, the conference supported increasing the rate of all types of Federation subscriptions effective from 1 September 2022, in line with the percentage uplift to police pay for 2022/2023.

Michael has also reflected on his first conference, which took place in Manchester.

"It was really good speaking to delegates from other forces and knowing they are facing similar issues," he said. "The event ran very smoothly and was about the correct length.

"The highlight for me was the opening speech by motivational speaker Kriss Akabusi and his Opportunityisnowhere presentation. His energy was a great way to start the conference.

"The low point for me was the Home Secretary Priti Patel's speech. It was full of hollow words and no substance."

He added: "The ongoing pensions saga needed covering in more depth and the Home Office should have been present to explain what they're doing to remedy the situation of officers being in the dark about what they'll receive in their pensions.

"This is particularly relevant to those close to retirement."

"The new national chair's speech was full of really good content on what we want, particularly in terms of a meaningful pay enhancement and conditions.

"However, he came across wooden in his delivery, which I think is understandable as it was his first major event."

OUR REP'S VIEWS

Michael Clark has been a Hertfordshire Police Federation workplace representative for less than a year and was therefore attending the national conference for the first time.

Michael says the event lived up to his expectations with the panel session with Home Secretary Priti Patel being a highlight and the national Federation chair seeming nervous when he delivered his keynote speech.

"I felt the break-out sessions were too short; they covered important issues that deserved more attention," said Michael.

"In terms of the messages I will be taking back to the Force and members, I will be talking about the new legislation in relation to police driving."



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