



## Welfare Van Is Great Success

**A** new welfare van will provide hard-working Norfolk Police officers and staff with a much-needed space to rest and refuel when they're policing major incidents.

Norfolk Police Federation Chair Andy Symonds started the project two years ago, as he saw the benefits a welfare van would bring to members.

Over the past few weeks the brand-new air-conditioned Fiat Ducato van has toured stations around the county to great success.

The cabin contains comfy chairs and table, there is an awning to provide shelter, and the van will be stocked with hot and cold drinks.

The van will be deployed at certain crime scenes and pre-planned policing operations.

Andy continued: "It's important for when officers are out at a scene where they can't easily get back to a station. They might have to stand there for hours on end in inclement weather, or too hot weather, so they'll have somewhere they

well-earned breather."

The van was paid for by both Norfolk Police Federation and the Police and Crime Commissioner and it will be maintained and resourced by the force. Officers will be able to request deployment via the control room.

Andy hopes its introduction will encourage the force to finance further vans once they realise what an important resource it is.

He added: "It is new, super duper and ready

**"Officers will have somewhere to shelter, relax and have a hot drink"**

Andy said: "I'm biased, but I think we've got the best one in the country. We've already deployed it to a couple of recent policing events and it's gone down a storm, with really great feedback. Officers were impressed."

The van contains a microwave, fridge, sink and boiling water dispenser. The rear has a toilet, hand-washing facilities and storage, while the rest of the van has room to seat up to six officers, along with three in the front.

can go to seek shelter, warm up or cool down, get off their feet, relax and take a cup of tea or coffee, use the toilet and get back out. It will make a world of difference.

"Our view is the force should have been doing this years ago, and they do have some static bits of kit but they are cumbersome and take a few days to get organised. This van is going to be super-quick, it can be deployed anywhere and everywhere and it will enable cops to take a

and raring to go. It's really exciting and it will be good for cops. When you look at other emergency services – particularly the fire service, which has had welfare units like this for many years – you realise we didn't have anything similar and it's a bit embarrassing.

"Finally we are catching up. I see this as a forerunner for the force to realise that these are

■ continued on page 2

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invaluable bits of kit that will help with officer welfare.”

Norfolk’s former Police and Crime Commissioner Lorne Green initially agreed to part-fund the welfare van.

He said the idea of a welfare van to support officers in demanding situations made “great sense”.

He added: “I was an impatient Police and Crime Commissioner – impatient to improve the safety, welfare and wellbeing of Norfolk’s police family.

“The women and men of the Norfolk Constabulary leave home daily ready to place themselves in harm’s way to keep us safe. We own them a great debt.”

Norfolk Police Federation Chair Andy Symonds invited the then-PCC to a Federation meeting, where the subject of the welfare van was brought up.

Mr Green explained: “Discussion turned to the prospect of a Norfolk Welfare Van to support officers in demanding situations out in the community facing long and possibly cold hours attending accident or possible crime scenes. Officers in such situations shouldn’t have to go behind a bush to answer nature’s call.



“The possibility of a hot drink should be at hand. But the question arose where the funds would come from to buy and equip a van. And this was only one of the many potential roadblocks – where would the van be stationed, who would operate it etc.

“It was obvious to me that the idea made great sense. I said that the cost should not be a deal breaker – I would assure partial funding if the other issues could be resolved, and I encouraged senior management to clear the administrative roadblocks.

“My preoccupation with police welfare was not limited to the men and women of the Con-

stabulary. I tried my best to stimulate a fund to support the fantastic canine corps, animals and their families, when the dogs were retired. Here too I ran out of time.

“Norfolk Constabulary is well served by a committed and officer welfare focused Federation under the leadership of Andy Symonds.

“Why don’t we have an annual countywide Norfolk Emergency Workers Appreciation Day? I’m still impatient to see the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the Norfolk Police family, present and past serving officers, staff, and their families receive the respect and recognition for all they do to keep our county safe.”

## Forces Need To Invest In Officers’ Wellbeing

“Investment is required by forces into officers’ health and wellbeing. We’ve seen improvements, but it’s nowhere near enough or consistent.”

That’s the opinion of Norfolk Police Federation Chair Andy Symonds.

He said: “Officers place themselves in harm’s way, both physically and mentally, therefore the services available to them should be first-class. But we’re a long way from this.”

He added: “The Police Covenant is an important step forwards, which will put the provision of officers both serving and retired on a legal footing, so that the Government and forces can be held to account in terms of the provision they supply to officers.

“Locally, we have seen a big improvement, but we’re working with the

force to improve the offer further and to introduce other mental health treatments.

“We have wellbeing champions in force, TRiM for officers who’ve attended a traumatic incident, and our local workplace Fed reps are trained in mental health first aid and suicide awareness. So when we have officers who require support, we can signpost them to the specialist help they need.

“We’ve referred a number of officers onto the Federation’s Welfare Support Programme. This gives access to counsellors and therapists to help officers who are struggling.

“We’re also attempting to get a system in place

that accurately records the many traumatic incidents officers attend during their career. At the moment this is hit and miss. Investing in officers’ wellbeing is a must and will in turn reduce the amount of time they are off sick.

“I encourage officers to look after each other on shift. Colleagues are often the first to see the change in friends and colleagues. Ask how people are, and if they need support speak to a supervisor or the Federation, who can help.”

# Van Is Crucial To Support Police



**Chief Constable Paul Sanford explains why he thinks the new welfare van will make a positive impact for officers in Norfolk and is more than just a place to grab a drink.**

## **Q** Why is the introduction of a welfare van in Norfolk so important?

**A** Policing is an incredibly demanding job, both mentally and physically, and the welfare of officers and staff at any incident is incredibly important.

We have to accept that the nature of policing means that there will be times when we have to work in difficult environments for prolonged periods of time.

However, we should be doing all that we can to mitigate the impacts of this and the welfare van is one way that we can do that.

The van is more than just a place to grab a drink or use the toilet. It is a place where an officer can step away from the pressures of policing for a while, unwind and recharge the batteries.

## **Q** How in your view will it support officers doing their jobs?

**A** In this rural county there are occasions where officers are at locations for long periods of time with no access to a toilet or hot food and drink.

The deployment of this van is one effective

way to bring a suitable location for a rest, comfort break and opportunity to have something to eat and drink to the officers.

If used correctly, it will save time-consuming shuttle runs to and from the police station and therefore increase the numbers of officers for other duties.

The van can be deployed 24 hours a day and will be particularly helpful at long term seals to assist and scenes.

More generally, we need to make sure that we don't wait for officers to be suffering before we offer support.

I truly believe that the van is one way whereby we can show our support and make life a little bit easier.

## **Q** How have you supported the Federation in the project? For example, resourcing it, maintaining it, servicing and repairs.

**A** The welfare van has been purchased by Norfolk Police Federation with funding provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The van will be part of the Norfolk Constabulary Fleet and as such going forward will be maintained and serviced by Transport Services.

## **Q** Why did you decide to do that?

**A** The welfare of my Officers and Staff is of paramount importance to me. The welfare van is an excellent idea which will make a significant positive change to the daily lives of officers and staff for years to come and I am delighted to offer the Federation my continued support for this project.

## **Q** What is your relationship like with the Federation in Norfolk and why is it an important relationship?

**A** I continue to enjoy a strong and healthy working relationship with the Police Federation. In our regular meetings, the Federation provide honest and frank opinion which does influence the decisions that I make as Chief. They are also a great sounding board, allowing me to share my thoughts and plans.

The Federation and I share many common ambitions. We both want the force to deliver exceptional policing for our residents and we both care about the welfare of officers and staff. We both know that achieving those ambitions is not always easy, but we will always be striving to do so.

# Next PM Must Back The Police

**A**ndy Symonds, Chair of Norfolk Police Federation has been talking about what officers want to see from Boris Johnson's successor as Prime Minister...

"My members want to hear from the next Prime Minister, whoever that might be, that they will award my colleagues a decent pay rise that takes into account that we're 20% down on where we should be in terms of pay," said Andy.

"The new Prime Minister would need to personally take ownership and direction in resetting the way police pay awards are managed. They should instruct the Home Secretary to start serious conversations about how a future pay award process would work.

"They should enter these conversations in a manner that is open and transparent, with a commitment to change the system that recog-



nitions, it can simply impose whatever rise it sees fit. This is simply not fair and treats police officers with contempt.

time, we've had many officers retire and resign. Since 2010, the population has increased, and the work of the police has become much more complex, with online crimes including financial or sexual abuse.

"We've seen other public-sector bodies struggling to cope with their demand, which means this work lands with the police. We're attending more and more mental health-related incidents, and we're attending incidents that require ambulances, not police officers.

"So, we need a Prime Minister and a team at the Home Office who are laser-focused in terms of their commitment and understanding of the issues facing policing.

"It cannot continue to limp along as it has been, with officers juggling so much – it's having an impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

**"We need a Prime Minister and a Home Office team who are laser-focused in their understanding of the issues facing policing"**

nises the many restrictions placed on police officers. The process needs to be truly independent and free from Government interference.

"We cannot continue with a system that allows the Government of the day to set the terms of reference for the pay review body, one which, if the Government doesn't like the recommen-

"Finally, we need the next Prime Minister to be accurate in explaining to the communities we serve that, although we welcome the uplift target of 20,000 police officers, this will only take us back to where we were back in 2010 in terms of officer numbers.

"We've lost thousands of police staff in this

"We need recognition of all of this demand by those in power, and for them to be upfront with our communities.

"Then they can start a real conversation about what the public want their police service to do in 2022 with the limited resources we have. The thin blue line can't cope if it continues in this way."

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# Pay Award Is Real-Terms Pay Cut

**M**ore money in officers' back pockets is always welcome, but the police pay announcement still amounts to a real-terms pay cut, Norfolk Police Federation has said.

Chair Andy Symonds was speaking after the Government announced a £1,900 pay rise for all officers from 1 September.

The rise equates to an 8.8% increase for the lowest paid officers – and is equivalent to a 5% overall pay award when all ranks and pay scales are taken into account.

The Home Office said it had accepted the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) in full, saying it reflects “the vital role police officers have on the front-line making our streets safer”.

Andy said: “This is a mixed bag of pay awards and it’s clearly weighted to those younger in service at the Constable rank. This is the right

thing to do in my opinion, but we all know that, whatever length service or rank we’re all at, the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite hard and inflation is due to rise further still.

“More money in our back pockets is always welcome to help pay our bills, support our families and live life well. But the facts are this is still a real-terms pay cut for us all, regardless of length of service and rank. Even with this pay award we’re all still facing difficult decisions in terms of cutting household budgets to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.

“Over the past 12 years we’re still over 20% down on where our pay should be. So, in reality we’re still not further forward in terms of making inroads into this lost pay, particularly when you take into account the current inflation levels.

“The Federation is still working through the pay review body report and further details and

analysis will follow in due course once we’ve properly digested the report.”

The Government also announced it has raised the starting salary for officers joining on the Degree Apprentice programme to £23,556 – also from 1 September.

The Dog Handlers’ Allowance will also be increased by 5%.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said: “It is right that we recognise the extraordinary work of our officers who, day in, day out, work tirelessly to keep our streets, communities and country safe.”

In its recommendation to the Government, the PRRB noted concerns about the cost of living on junior ranks.

The Home Office said it would be supporting forces with an extra £350 million over the next three years, from its existing budget, to help cover the associated costs of the pay award.

## What Pay Rise Means For Officers In Norfolk

- PCs on the entry pay point (starting salary) of **£24,780** will get what equates to a **7.6%** pay rise
- PCs on the top pay point of **£41,130** will get **4.6%**
- Sergeants on the entry pay point of **£43,965** will get **4.3%**
- Sergeants on the top pay point of **£46,227** will get **4.1%**
- Inspectors on the entry pay point of **£52,968** will get **3.5%**
- Inspectors on the top pay point of **£57,162** will get **3.3%**
- Chief Inspectors on the entry pay point of **£58,332** will get **3.25%**
- Chief Inspectors on the top pay point of **£61,725** will get **3%**

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# Officers Honoured At Awards

**T**wo Norfolk Police officers who safely apprehended a gun-wielding man intent on ending his life in a 'shootout' were nominated for The National Police Bravery Awards.

PC Leanne Payne and PC Joseph Konieczny joined colleagues from across forces in England and Wales at an awards ceremony in London in July.

A total of 76 nominees from 39 forces in England and Wales were honoured at the ceremony.

On 23 May 2021, PC Payne and PC Konieczny were called to a pub in Surlingham following reports of a man dressed in military-style clothing, armed with what was described as a rifle.

The suspect had gone to the location with what turned out to be an imitation gun, intent on provoking a police shooting as he "wanted to be shot dead".

He had told a member of staff at the pub: "I will come into the pub in a minute, I will be armed."

When the officers arrived at the pub, they were confronted by the man holding what looked like a genuine weapon. They described the incident as like a "nightmare".

But while threatening the officers, the man slipped, which afforded them time to deploy a non-lethal baton round, striking him in the leg.



The officers then arrested and detained the suspect.

The man was charged with numerous offences and was later jailed for four years and four months.

In sentencing the man, the judge said he was "clearly intending a fatal action against [the officers]", adding he had created a very serious risk of severe psychological harm to those present as well as a high risk of his own death.

Sam Hawkins, Secretary of Norfolk Police Federation, said: "What incredible work from Leanne and Joseph. We are so proud of them.

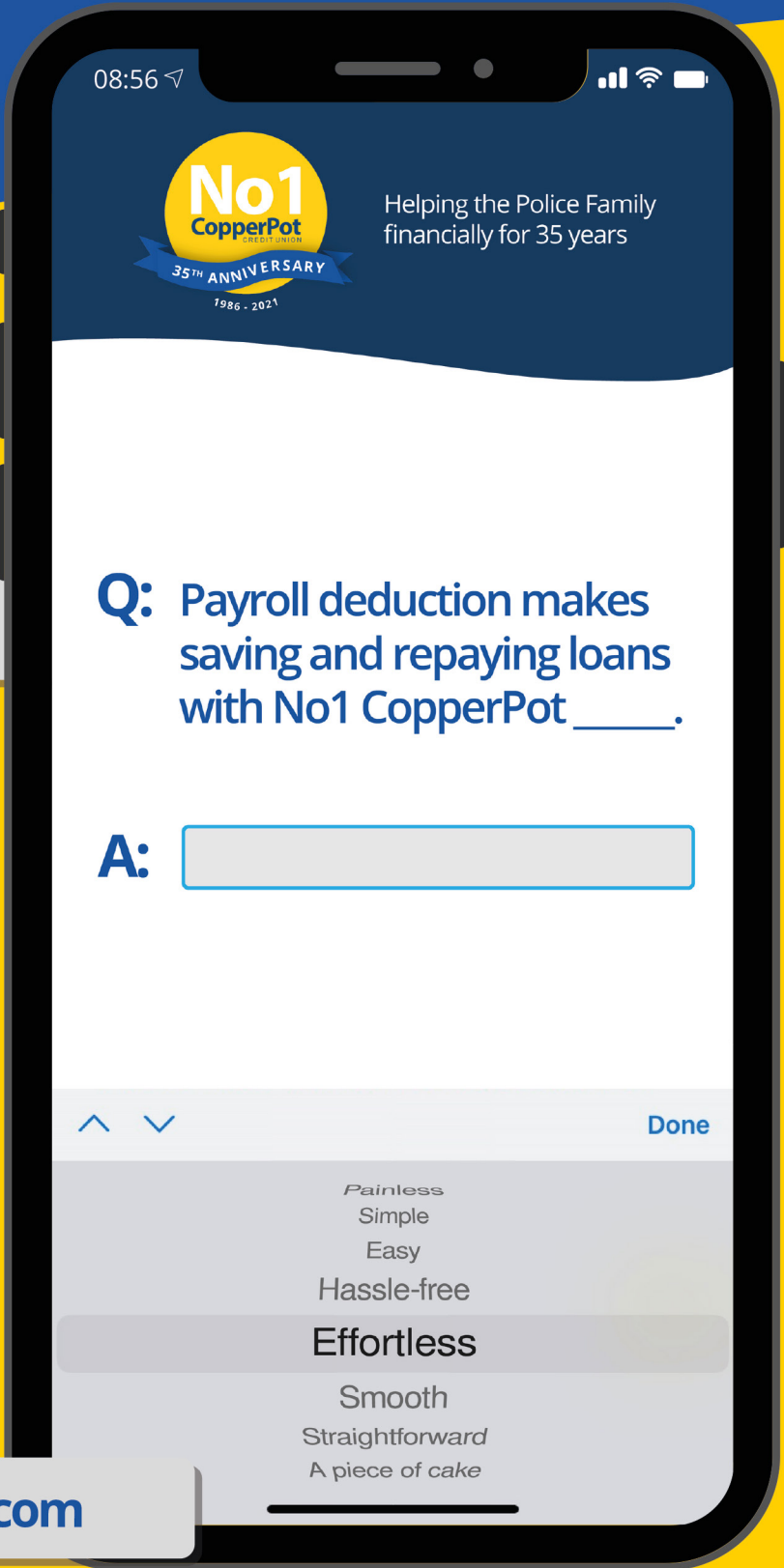
"They understandably believed this man had a genuine weapon, and feared for their lives. But their calm professionalism and quick thinking meant they were able to disarm him and detain him, protecting everyone around them.

"Leanne and Joseph embody the best of the police service – they deserve all the praise and recognition they are getting."

The National Police Bravery Awards honour officers from across England and Wales who have performed outstanding acts of bravery while on- or off-duty. The Awards are sponsored by Police Mutual.



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# 'Harper's Law' On Statute Book

**H**arper's Law is now officially on the statute book, introducing mandatory life sentences for anyone convicted of killing an emergency worker while committing a crime.

It follows a long campaign by Lissie Harper, the widow of Thames Valley PC Andrew Harper. Her campaign was supported by Thames Valley Police Federation, the PFEW and Martis Media.

Lissie was in Parliament to see the law coming in, where she met with politicians including Home Secretary Priti Patel, Secretary of State for Justice Dominic Raab and Labour MP Holly Lynch.

Lissie said: "Twenty months ago, in the midst of grief and incomprehensible loss, I set out on a journey for justice. I knew it would take time and a lot of hard work, but in my mind there was no other option than to make Harper's Law a reality. Today marks the success of all of that hard work, campaigning for change.

"Today I can say that it was all worth it as Harper's Law becomes just that – a law that is in the statute books. The law – as we demanded – will introduce mandatory life sentences for anyone convicted of killing an emergency worker while committing a crime.

"Almost three years ago my husband was robbed of his life and we were both robbed of our future together. Nothing will ever change that. This law will not change the outcome for his killers. But no longer will a family have to endure the pain of injustice in court as I did those many months ago, and that is a significantly powerful outcome.

"My trusted friend and Andrew's colleague, Inspector Andy Fiddler of Thames Valley Police, has been by my side fighting for this important cause since day one. After many long hours and days, journeys, meetings and events we can be proud of the hard work we put into our campaign.



"I could not have done this without him and the Martis Media team who have supported this challenge with determined dedication. I must thank all those who supported me and urged me on for all of these demanding months, including my loving family who continue to give me strength through all the battles thrown towards me.

"Trying to put into words what the instatement of our new law means to me is difficult. A mixture of great relief and pride in the efforts that have gone into this. We have received so much support from members of the public, emergency services, as well as MPs.

"I am just pleased that the Government and the people we have been working with have stuck to their word. Harper's Law was so needed

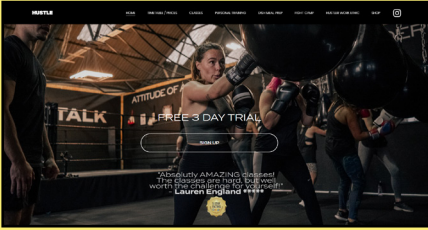
in our country and we did it; finally our court systems may see some justice prevail within them. Finally a law that we can be proud of.

"I know that many, many people will feel vindication at actually being able to believe in some legislation written in our history books. Throughout this journey I have met so many incredible people, fellow widows and widowers who know this unique pain I feel, as well as too many others who have lost loved ones in unspeakable ways and still have not seen any justice.

"I hope that this will help not only me but all of those who have experienced these cruel atrocities; we may never move on but we can try to move forward.

"I will never be rid of the hollowness that the burden of grief inflicts, but I know without hesitation that my husband Andrew would be immensely proud of this achievement in his name. Andrew believed in fairness and peace. He had the strongest moral compass of anyone I ever met and that is why I know without a shadow of a doubt that he is smiling down at me with pride and love as Harper's Law, his legacy, is now achieved."

## Gym Offer



**O**fficers in Norfolk are being offered a discount on a Norwich gym membership. Hustle Norwich provides a range of non-contact boxing, HIIT, Barre, Circuit and Strength classes in a safe and friendly environment in NR7.

The gym has launched an Emergency Services membership, and includes unlimited Hustle classes and open gym sessions.

Emergency Services Prices are:

- Unlimited monthly membership – £55
- Unlimited 6-month membership – £300
- Unlimited 12-month membership – £600

To take advantage of this offer, email [hello@doyouhustle.co.uk](mailto:hello@doyouhustle.co.uk) from your work email and you will be sent a membership code to use when purchasing your chosen membership package. For more information, see [doyouhustle.co.uk](http://doyouhustle.co.uk) or [www.instagram.com/hustle\\_norwich/](http://www.instagram.com/hustle_norwich/)

# Financial Wellbeing

**F**inancial times are tough for many of us, with the increasing cost of living and rises in food and utility bills.

There are a number of resources available to police officers to help them make the most of their money in these difficult times.

Budget planners can help you make the most of your money, and there are various options to help you if you struggle with your finances and find yourself in debt.

There are also plenty of tips online about how to build up your financial resilience, so you are more able to cope financially in the event of a relationship breakdown, unemployment or long-term sickness.

For more information and advice on managing your money and financial wellbeing, visit [www.policemutual.co.uk/](http://www.policemutual.co.uk/), [serveandprotectcu.co.uk/prepare/](http://serveandprotectcu.co.uk/prepare/) and [www.no1copperpot.com/financial-wellbeing/](http://www.no1copperpot.com/financial-wellbeing/)



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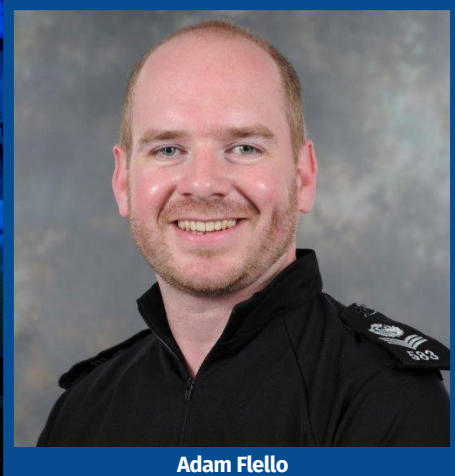
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Book your slot by phoning the Federation office on 01603 971420 or emailing [norfolk@polfed.org](mailto:norfolk@polfed.org)





Adam Fello



Chris Hobbs



Sherry Locke (pictured with Kriss Akabusi)

# Reps' Views On PFEW Conference

**T**hree Norfolk Police Federation reps share their thoughts on this year's PFEW Annual Conference, held on 17-18 May.

**What did you think of this year's conference?**

**Adam Fello:** It was apparent a great deal of work goes into organising the event. The speakers were experts in their fields and it was a good opportunity to meet reps from other Federations.

**Chris Hobbs:** The theme 'Fighting For Fairness' was really appropriate and summed up this year's aims around pay and conditions and the welfare of hard-working officers.

**Sherry Locke:** I certainly learnt a lot. It was good to meet people and put names to faces, especially as I have, since being back, already dealt with a couple of those people over the phone.

**Which sessions were particularly informative?**

**Adam:** The breakout session 'Fighting for Your Lives' was the stand-out session for me. The

experiences of the officer suffering mental health issues and talking openly and honestly about that and also the treatment he received from his supervisors will stay with me for a long time. Also the sessions on pay and pensions reassured me that we are not just 'rolling over' and taking whatever the Government imposes on us.

**Chris:** Being the Detective Lead Fed Rep for Norfolk, I found the DG6 input on disclosure really informative and I welcome the imminent revised guidance on the implementation of DG6.

**Sherry:** I found the pensions session and ill-health retirement sessions really interesting. And Kriss Akabusi's speech was brilliant and motivating.

**What learning have you taken home that will help you be a better Federation rep?**

**Adam:** I now understand the work that is going on to combat the rising bureaucracy in case files, and that improvements appear to be on the

horizon. The sessions on misogyny and mental health has caused me to reflect on my own behaviours and thoughts, especially as a frontline supervisor. It was also good to hear the arguments for and against a rise in subscriptions.

**Chris:** I have not yet received Federation training in equality, so to get an input around this within conduct investigations, and the misogyny session, was an invaluable insight.

**What did you think of the Home Secretary's speech?**

**Adam:** I was impressed with how much she spoke without saying very much! She avoided the issue of pay and conditions completely until she was confronted by the panel and delegates.

**Chris:** I was glad that she spoke passionately as our supporter and got a neutral reception. I think it is important to have a presence and to engage with the Home Secretary around pay and conditions.

# Policing Must Root Out Misogyny



**T**he police service has a number of changes that need to be made if discrimination and sexism are to start to be properly stamped out.

Sam Hawkins, Secretary of Norfolk Police Federation, said the service could not bury its collective heads in the sand on the issue. She said: "Misogyny is hatred of women. Police officers are drawn from society and if these issues exist in society then that sadly will be reflected in policing.

That does not mean people holding these views should be police officers, and we should continue to work together to root these people out of the police service.

"There is banter in the police station report rooms – that isn't misogyny. It's not individuals hating their female colleagues. But sexism is bred into us as a society. Yes, we've made an improvement in recent years, but there's still a lot of work to be done.

"I have been a police officer for more than 30 years – and we must note that policing's inclusion, integration and value of women has improved – but there is more to do. We can improve. We can get better. And we can make our colleagues' working lives better. And indeed make police forces more welcoming or more attractive to people from all diverse walks of life."

Sam listed more appropriate roles for women coming back after they've had maternity leave and better job-sharing arrangements.

She said: "If women are breastfeeding, they can't wear body armour. HR might say this is a

problem because they're restricted. But we just need to think more creatively. Women are the only ones that can have babies. We're going to carry on having babies. But we can still be effective police officers and we can still be effective police officers if we're breastfeeding or returning back to the workplace after having a baby."

Sam said there was still a barrier for women working part-time because of caring responsibilities.

She added: "As an inspector working part-time, I have been in roles where I haven't been able to make a difference and use my skills, because the organisation hasn't known what to do with me. I was told I couldn't be a response inspector or core shift inspector because I couldn't work nights – I was a single mum at the time. But there are job-share opportunities.

"You don't have to be with your team on every single one of their shifts to be an effective manager to them."

Sam said the service needs to think of flexible working for the benefit it brings. She added: "We need to turn it on its head and not think of it as a problem. I was part-time for 15 years, but now I'm full-time again and I'm in my 33rd year of police service.

"Norfolk Constabulary is getting many more years out of me. Our children grow up. We don't need those different adjustments then. So there's a benefit to the organisation there.

"We must remember that there are tens of thousands of fantastic, caring, compassionate and committed police officers serving us, out there right now. Bravely saving lives, tackling criminals, stopping terrorists and keeping people safe. We must always remember that."

## Mutual Aid Regulations 'Not Fit For Purpose'

**O**fficer welfare should be front and centre of mutual aid operations, the conference heard.

Policing has shown improvement in the way it deals with issues around accommodation, food and welfare of mutual aid operations, but there is always room to improve, according to National Board member Steve Taylor.

He told the conference in Manchester: "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."

PFEW Treasurer Simon Kempton, Essex Police Chief Constable Ben-Julian Harrington, and NPCC Strategic Lead Assistant Chief Constable Owen Weatherill also addressed the meeting. They identified areas that need more work, as the current regulations are not fit for purpose.

CC Harrington 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."

Simon Kempton added: "Mutual aid is becoming so prevalent – it is important we get this right for our members and also the public."

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# 'Crisis' For Detectives

There is a "crisis in policing" as officers, particularly detectives, are struggling to manage their workloads following changes in CPS guidance, the conference heard.

A panel session focused on last year's changes to the Crown Prosecution Service Director's guidance, DG6, which requires officers to provide the CPS with a trial-ready prosecution before it makes a decision about charging.

The new disclosure rules, which started in January 2021, have increased workloads by 33%. In a PFEW detectives survey, almost 96% of respondents said the changes had increased the number of hours spent on pre-case file preparation, and, 61% of respondents said they had increased their intentions to leave their role.

Panelist Ben Hudson, Secretary of Suffolk Police Federation, described it as a "crisis in policing". He said: "Morale among colleagues is low. It is unnecessary, time-consuming and counter-productive to produce full case files when people plead guilty straight away. We urge the CPS to reconsider the full impact of these changes and how they can be mitigated.

"We cannot afford to lose any more of our professional investigators. It also puts off those who wish to become detectives."

Delegates also heard from officers who were

affected by the changes, including Wiltshire PC Georgie Dodd, who said: "Morale is low in the station. You can see officers sinking in their seats as they have so much to do. I feel we are letting our victims down."

Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill QC said: "I do get it. I know we're looking at police professionals and I can't put it better than it's about locking up bad people and protecting victims of crime. We're with you on that.

"[DG6] is not there to block you but rather to help you in your investigation."

Nick Ephgrave, Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Lead for Criminal Justice, said issues had arisen due to the need for increased rigour around the disclosure law, along with a massive increase in the volume of data officers were having to deal with in a digital age.

He suggested that "officers should start thinking about disclosure from the outset of an investigation to make sure that the burden of their workload is being spread out".

But he added that positive changes were coming, as the Solicitor General had completed a review of the guidelines and was attempting to reduce the burden of redaction and deal with the difficult matter of third-party material.



# Support For Ill-Health Retirement

"The ill-health retirement process is adversarial, leaving officers feeling even more devalued and more unwell," delegates at PFEW's Conference were told.

Police forces needed to be more compassionate and supportive of officers, according to PFEW Ill-Health Retirement Lead Gemma Fox (pictured). She said there were inconsistencies in how forces dealt with ill-health retirement.

Gemma 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.

"The biggest thing that could change overnight is an element of compassion and an element of understanding that police officers need support.

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

Leigh Godfrey, Secretary of South Wales Police Federation and Ill-Health Retirement Liaison Officer, said an officer he had helped through a particularly arduous process had been left with mental health issues.

He told the session that the selected medical practitioner (SMP) had agreed the officer was



disabled, but could not find him to be permanently disabled. South Wales Police Federation applied for funding from the PFEW HQ Claims Department, and new evidence was submitted to the SMP, but the case to prove he was permanently disabled was still dismissed.

The officer then had to face a Police Medical Appeal Board to successfully appeal the decision.

Leigh said: "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. The steps we have to

go through are unbelievable."

On the positive side, training for Federation reps to become Ill-Health Retirement Liaison Officers has "increased massively over the years", Leigh said, pointing out that reps can now access an online Ill-Health Retirement Forum.

A key point was that forces should invest in their Occupational Health and be more proactive about rehabilitating injured officers after they had been injured on duty.

Gemma added that she would like to see forces sign a pledge to ensure high standards in the selected medical practitioners that they used.



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