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YOUR VOICE

Manchester Central Convention Complex



POLICE FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE RETURNS

– see Pages 2 to 21

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH



By Mark Jones, secretary of North Wales Police Federation.

It was good to get back together with colleagues at the annual conference - the first to take place in person for four years.

There can often be throwaway comments made about attending conference but it is a golden opportunity to gather as a collective group of Federation representatives together with some of the most influential people in policing to thrash out the issues affecting our members.

One of the highlights of the conference was the performance of our guest speaker Kriss Akabusi who was incredible. His energy, enthusiasm and passion was clearly evident. Wow - what a way to open conference!

To listen to his story and to hear how he became an Olympic medallist was truly awe-inspiring. It reaffirmed to me that every single thing we try to do to help our members does make a difference. In the grand scheme, it may only be a small contribution but it is all part of getting our members "across the line".

But if Kriss was a highlight, the low point was continuing to hear just how many of our colleagues are struggling in terms of finances, mental health, resilience, and so on. Enough is enough.

Steve Hartshorn, our new national chair, welcomed everyone to Manchester with a real tone of humility and sincerity. I thought he delivered a really strong keynote speech. It was to the point and was clear about what we are asking of the Home Secretary

and the Government. He kept his points realistic and they should all be achievable from a Government point of view.

Steve pointed out that not all changes we are asking for incur a cost: a lot of them are simple legislative or policy measures which are all within the gift of the Home Secretary. At a time when the Government insists that expenditure has to be closely monitored, real, tangible changes can be made without having to dip into any budgets.

Steve made his speech inclusive when he addressed delegates from Wales in the Welsh language. It was a small but important gesture that was hugely appreciated by his Welsh colleagues. It really is the little things that can make all the difference.

The most hard-hitting aspect was the focus on the police pay - or lack thereof. Steve made this the main thread of his speech and rightly so. This is undoubtedly the number one issue affecting every single Police Federation member at this time and it is right that it featured so heavily in Steve's speech.

Maybe he could have been more hard-hitting but equally he wasn't shying away from challenging the Home Secretary robustly. I think it is always about striking the right balance and he did that perfectly.

He was followed onto the stage by Priti Patel and, to coin a phrase from our more southern colleagues, her speech was a lot of "blah".

The Home Secretary delivered a recipe consisting of a few shovels of platitudes, a good dash of insincerity, a bucket load of self-congratulations and a wisp of underlying tones - all mixed together to tell us absolutely nothing.

She heard very clearly from our North Wales Police colleague Vicky Knight about the reality of living within the current pay and conditions and no one in the audience could fail to be moved by what Vicky was so passionately saying. This is the human reality of the decisions the Government makes. Human beings, not numbers.

As far as saying anything new, Ms Patel informed us we will not find "a greater champion" for policing in Westminster than her. Will wonders never cease?

Pay and conditions is far more technical than most people think so it is essential to have people leading the negotiations who

have that deep, intrinsic knowledge. It is clear national secretary Alex Duncan and deputy national secretary John Partington understand this area of business but, equally, it is always disappointing when you hear that one side of the negotiation table holds all the cards.

The ongoing pay campaign has gained traction but the Police Federation is going to have to think creatively to find more innovative ways to get the message across and seek the changes our members deserve when it comes to their pay and conditions.

The Treasurer's Report was always going to be a difficult session. Treasurer Simon Kempton did a really good job at eloquently explaining the financial situation presently and the risks to Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) on the horizon. This wasn't scare tactics but to give an honest, upfront overview.

The Police Federation exists primarily to represent its members when they need it most. Taking out some of the sins of the past and squarely looking to the future we need an organisation that is match fit to take on this challenge.

However, we cannot, and should not, ignore the fact that our members are living through a cost of living crisis.

We heard at conference of members who were having to use food banks, payday loans and beg for money from family members just to make ends meet and then in the next breath we are asking them to contribute more towards the Federation.

Even though the proposed rise would fall in line with the percentage pay rise we get/ don't get then the actual figure in pence could be quite small, even before tax relief.

The decision was placed in the hands of the delegates - the Fed reps elected by their peers to represent them.

The views and votes of the North Wales delegates was to NOT support the motion calling for a subscription rise but the matter was debated at length and the democratic vote of the delegates present meant that the motion was carried.

Cover photo: National Federation chair Steve Hartshorn and Home Secretary Priti Patel delivering their keynote speeches at conference.

Conference photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.

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THE FEDERATION IS FIGHTING FOR FAIRNESS



By Vinnie Jones, chair of North Wales Police Federation.

This issue of the magazine focuses on the Police Federation's 2022 annual conference so I wanted to share some of my thoughts on the event.

It was my first in-person conference - they have been held remotely for the last three years - and it was pretty much as I expected it to be. I had asked Fed reps who have previously attended many questions and had a good idea what to expect.

It was great to be able to network with other branches and gain an insight into how they deal with various aspects of policing and Police Federation work.

The conference was kicked off by the former world champion athlete Kriss Akabusi who gave a very powerful presentation. I can see where the Police Federation was coming from when it brought him in to deliver his motivational speech.

I could really relate to it because I understand that my colleagues and I will often find ourselves in despair and

demoralised beyond all previous experience but we have to keep going, we have to keep fighting for what we believe in and that includes ourselves.

The conference could perhaps have had a bigger emphasis on the current pay campaign and the strategy behind it but it was still given a fairly high profile and the Home Secretary was left in no doubt of our position.

Steve Hartshorn has only recently been elected as national chair and I think he delivered a very strong, solid debut speech which was informative and to the point.

He should be proud of himself. He put himself forward, was elected and took up the role just over a month before having to stand up in front of a packed theatre of colleagues, external observers, the Home Secretary and the public through the various cameras in the room.

His use of Welsh in his bi-lingual opening sentence was a clear statement that he is fully aware it is the Police Federation of England AND Wales which was warmly welcomed by his colleagues representing the Welsh branches whose cheers highlighted their appreciation.

And he gave a hard-hitting speech. It was solid, structured and had clear and concise key points. It was true and honest without any theatrical flair which promoted the Federation's professionalism and commitment to getting things sorted using sensible and structured methods.

Steve was followed onto the stage by Priti Patel. It was good to hear the Home Secretary wants to stand shoulder to shoulder with the police and it was great to hear her say she appreciated the police. But once again there was a lot of talk, with no action or meaningful commitment. She had nothing new to say.

I think the Government has tasked Ms Patel with getting the Police Federation back at the table with the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) because

she was clearly pushing the point that unless we go back on our decision to withdraw support they will be unwilling to listen and the matter won't move forward without it.

But the fact of the matter is that we came away from the PRRB because of the constant yearly lack of listening, the decade of lack of acknowledgment and appreciation of the unique work the police do. That is why we came away. We weren't the only ones to come away from the PRRB either. Many other staff associations have also walked away from the PRRB and that clearly speaks volumes and shows the issue lies with the pay review process not those who have displayed their vote of no confidence in that system.

Earlier we heard from national secretary and deputy secretary Alex Duncan and John Partington who held a discussion on police pay.

It is clear we have overwhelming public support for our pay campaign and the idea that police pay should represent the dangers involved in the work.

I'm pleased this is the opinion of the public as I have been working hard myself to promote the pay campaign and broadcast the messages the "engine room" has been pushing.

It was a comment from Alex that for me highlighted just how fragile the situation is and how close to total burn-out our members are: "You can't run any engine hot for a sustained period of time before things start breaking and falling off."

I think that quote very neatly summed up our view as a Police Federation along with this year's conference theme which was *Fighting for Fairness*.

So, it is worth sending out a reminder that we are here to fight for and support all our members so anyone with issues or concerns shouldn't hesitate to get in touch.

CHAIR URGES HOME SECRETARY TO WORK WITH THE SENEDD ON POLICING

The newly-elected chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has urged the Home Secretary to take account of the devolved functions in Wales when making policing policy decisions.

Steve Hartshorn urged Priti Patel to work with the Senedd when making decisions in Westminster and take into account the impact on policing in Wales.

Steve made the comments during his keynote speech at his first Police Federation conference since becoming chair, with Ms Patel among the audience in Manchester.

He said: "Home Secretary, we need you to take account of the devolved functions in Wales, and to work with the Senedd to ensure our valued members in Wales are not left out when you make decisions in Westminster.

"I rightly hear from my Welsh colleagues about announcements made in Westminster that take no account of the devolved functions in Wales and the impact on policing in that country."

Steve had earlier opened his speech with a welcome to delegates from Wales in their own language.

"Cydweithwyr prynhawn da a chroeso i'r gynhadledd," he said.

Steve also used his speech to urge the Home Secretary to address the pay crisis facing police officers as the cost of living continues to soar.

Steve said that after years of real term pay cuts, officers were struggling to make ends meet and even having to use food banks to feed their families.

Steve said: "Over the last decade, we have seen a real term pay cut of around 20 per cent. Other costs haven't stood still – gas, electric and fuel costs all continue to rise, and National Insurance contributions increased.

"Yet the very people who put their lives on the line during the pandemic, alongside other key workers, were told they deserve nothing extra to help with these costs.

"They are told they are brave; they are told they do a unique job. They were thanked for putting themselves and their families in danger as Covid gripped the country, and yet that acknowledgement – amounted to nothing.

"It's frustrating to see and hear from colleagues who are struggling to feed their families and going to food banks.

"It angers me to hear good and experienced people talking about leaving the job – not because they want to, but because they can't afford not to.

"This cannot go on. It's time for change."

He called for a fully independent body to assess police pay and make recommendations which "are binding on Government and implemented in full".

He said the Police Remuneration Review Body (PPRB) isn't truly independent and the

decision by the Federation last year to walk away wasn't "taken lightly".

"We're not asking for special treatment," he said. "We're 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.

"Government cannot continue to treat the police as the poor relation of the public sector."

Pay was one of four key areas Steve focused on during his speech, with pensions, presence and pride also highlighted.

"Pay – we need fair pay and fair terms and conditions of service for all police officers," he said.

"Pensions – it's not unreasonable to have long-term clarity over pensions so that people can plan for their futures with certainty.

"Presence – Government, police leaders and the media must listen to us and hear what we say, because we are the undisputed voice of policing.

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

Steve urged the Home Secretary to look at the issue of firearms and greater protection for colleagues "as a matter of priority".

And he called for "proper long-term investment in policing" as he made the case for a five-year funding agreement.

HOME SECRETARY ADDRESSES CONFERENCE

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

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: "Lissie Harper campaigned for this very bravely and effectively, with the full-throated support of the Police Federation.

"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".

She said: "As ever, you have not hesitated to put yourselves in harm's way, while a selfish minority of protestors have used guerrilla tactics such as blocking motorways and locking on to oil tankers.

"I know whose side I'm on."

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

Priti Patel giving her keynote speech to conference.



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 REPS SAY:

I found her speech quite poor with empty words and no real feeling that she was sincere or that she truly wanted to fix any of the issues. This did not surprise me unfortunately as I have been present for her public speaking before and have always found her to lack any feeling of credibility or honesty I am afraid.

Dan Ball

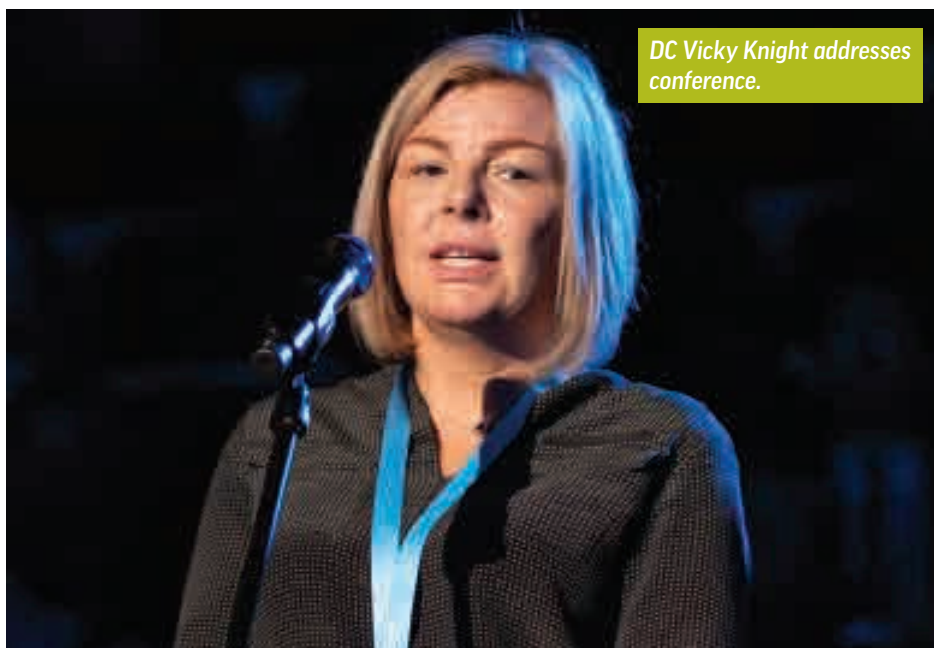
Same old, same old, I am afraid, platitudes with no substance behind them, didn't come across as

authentic. It was poor to be honest, usual of how much she respects the police, but nothing of note to actually show that. Disappointing address.

She comes across as out of touch, not interested in the real issues in my opinion. She didn't get into much detail making out everything was really positive and the Government was supportive of us, which we all know is not borne out in how it treats us.

Ceri Hawe

WELSH DETECTIVE EXPLAINS REALITY OF PAY FREEZE



DC Vicky Knight addresses conference.

North Wales rep bravely lays bare her financial struggles as she challenges Home Secretary

A detective based in Wales stood up and challenged the Home Secretary at this year's annual conference over the impact of poor police pay and rising inflation.

Struggling single mum DC Vicky Knight explained she has resorted to visiting food banks and asking her pensioner parents for money.

Vicky Knight, who is a North Wales Police Federation representative, challenged Priti Patel during the keynote session at the two-day event, asking her: "Could you live on £1,200 a month? How about £1,400?"

Vicky, who has been in the Force for 23 years, described how she has to borrow money from her 69-year-old mother to help pay for petrol, with her comments sparked by Ms Patel's insistence that she is committed to improving pay and conditions for police officers.

"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, in front of a packed auditorium.

"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."

Responding to Vicky, Ms Patel said: "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."

Speaking after the session, 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 as anticipated, 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."

She has a growing 13-year-old son, who regularly requires new school clothes and sport kits.

"My son needs feeding, he needs clothes on his back - and it's not cheap, he's a growing lad," she explained.

"I'm at that point where I literally search for change around the house, so I can pay for petrol. And, by the end of the month, me and my son have to eat whatever we have in the cupboard - literally beans and rice.

"I've been shopping in the supermarket before and one of my friends has actually paid for my shopping because he overheard me telling my son we couldn't afford certain items.

"This is real. This is a real example of what's happening. The system is totally broken, something has gone majorly wrong."

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

Despite struggling to make ends meet, Vicky says her passion remains for the job, which is why she continues to work in the police.

"I love what I do and that's the sad part. It's the people I help on a daily basis, they're the ones that keep me going," she added.

"Honestly though, I have looked at job vacancies online and seriously considered going for one of them. I have sleepless nights, worrying about how me and my son will eat. It's a highly emotional time."

Vicky's comments come after it was revealed police officer pay had suffered a 20 per cent real term cut in the last decade.

"What can be done going forward? The pay needs to be linked to inflation. Even if we're not better off, we won't be worse off - like we are now," she said.

"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."

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."

National chair Steve Hartshorn later told the conference he was frustrated to hear that some colleagues could barely afford to feed their families and said the situation must not be allowed to continue.

He said: "Over the last decade, we have seen a real term pay cut of around 20 per cent and other costs haven't stood still - gas, electric and fuel costs all continue to rise, and National Insurance contributions have increased.

"Our members are told they are brave; they are told they do a unique job. They were thanked for putting themselves and their families in danger as Covid gripped the country, and yet that acknowledgement amounted to nothing.

"It's frustrating to see and hear from colleagues who are struggling to feed their families and going to food banks."

OUR REPS SAY:

It was interesting to know the Federation is trying to get the annual leave entitlement addressed so officers don't have to wait 20 years to get the 28 days.

Ceri Hawe

I found it quite dry and did not really tell me anything I did not know unfortunately. Alex is always knowledgeable and no nonsense for me. Pragmatic and tells things as they are.

Dan Ball

This was a real low after the highs of Mr Akabusi. It was dry and far from inspirational. Perhaps they should have been the other way around!

I didn't really find it interesting. Most things I already knew, and I found that both panellists were too focussed on "what they would have liked" rather than what is actually happening.

Nick Hawe

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.



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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.”

OUR REPS SAY:

A brilliantly engaging speaker, full of energy. He told his story in mostly entertaining light-hearted way while still getting across his struggles and difficulties.

He got across well people’s different backgrounds comparing his upbringing to that of Roger Black in a really good way, showing how people from different backgrounds can come together and make a fantastic team, how we all bring different skills and abilities which make a team stronger.

His passion and enthusiasm for life was inspirational, you couldn’t help but be raised by his drive and humour. You finished the session feeling motivated, you felt uplifted by him. His story shows what can be achieved with hard work and effort.

Ceri Hawe

Brilliant session – a real highlight. Hard for anyone to follow the enthusiasm and energy shown by Kriss Akabusi.

This was an inspirational input into being positive and believing in yourself. It was truly impactive and heartening. I will personally be more positive and try to have more confidence in my abilities after this session.

Nick Hawe

This was an entertaining session, and a good start to conference. I took from this that life is what you make of it. Sometimes people settle for something, but if you push yourself that little bit more you then you can achieve more. Stay positive and be the best you can.

Tony Edwards

CONFERENCE VIEWS

Steve did very well. It must have been hugely nerve-wracking, but he gave a solid and confident speech. He was firm and fair, getting his points across, without ever sounding “ranty” or aggressive. It was professional and considered, which is exactly what we need.

It could have come across badly if his first speech had been too demanding or challenging. He said everything that needed saying in a controlled and firm manner. It is possible to become more challenging or confrontational after starting in such a manner. It is almost impossible to do the opposite with any credibility.

Nick Hawe

It was a good conference overall, good that it was in Manchester and a broad range of topics covered.

Highlights were DC Vicky Knight asking her question to the Home Secretary and Kris Akabusi but the session on pay and conditions was a low point.

I would like to have seen more coverage on increasing Police Federation reps for females and other under-represented groups, a proper strategy to move this forward using positive action, shocking that there is a Branch Board with no females on, that is not representative of our membership, we should all play a proper part in driving more representation.

Ceri Hawe

I would have liked to have seen the subject around the pay review body expanded on. Facilitator Ian Collins asked the Home Secretary: “Why is that an MP’s wage has gone up £20,000 in the last few years when a police officer’s has only gone up £2,000?” The Home Secretary replied it was a different process and that we need to come back to the table. My understanding is that it’s the same process through the independent pay review body. The only difference is if the body recommends for example a five per cent increase for MPs then they accept this without question but when we have a five per cent recommendation the Government rejects this and only awards one per cent.

Tony Edwards

This was my fourth, and last, conference. It was a good conference, professionally presented and in a good location. The topics discussed were relevant and useful. Conference is much shorter nowadays, and I think they do well to get such a lot packed in.

Highlights for me were Kriss Akabusi, Ed Simpson and the welcoming of a new chair. DC Vicky Knight was a huge highlight and her questions to the Home Secretary were spot on, and they were appreciated by everyone but Priti Patel.

Nick Hawe

The highlight for me was when our own Vicky Knight bravely stood up and told the Home Secretary how it is. She was completely taken by surprise and didn’t know how to respond, squirming in her seat. Vicky has helped to generate national awareness on this subject and should be commended for it.

Tony Edwards



South Wales Police Federation secretary Leigh Godfrey (left) explains the issues officers face. Also pictured are (left to right) Paul Turpin, Mark Lake and National Board member Gemma Fox.

‘REMEMBER THE PEOPLE AT THE END OF THE PROCESS’

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.”

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 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.”

OUR REPS SAY:

It was pointed out during this session that if you are not in the pension scheme then you cannot ill-health retire unless it’s an injury on duty. In all cases, an injury on duty award cannot be considered until after you have left the service further adding to an already stressful process.

I chose this session as a colleague had been asking about the process and I was both keen to learn what it entailed and the process itself for him. I have had no experience in supporting anyone through his process and wanted a better understanding of it if I needed to support anyone in the future.

I did find the session to be helpful and informative and was surprised at the complexity and inconsistency across the various forces. The whole thing was an eye-opener.

Tony Edwards

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.

OUR REPS SAY:

The evidence is there to show that there is disproportionality with BAME officers. Supervisors lack confidence in how to deal with issues and they can escalate unnecessarily. The picture is the same nationally.

It was interesting to hear the Home Office's take on workforce data. They seem to be out of touch on this issue saying that forces have all the data on their HR systems already. The fact is we don't and it's a work in progress. Officers need to have confidence in supplying their equal ops data and understand why it's important to share it, so the Force can understand its workforce and look to identify issues and support staff where it is needed and offer positive action for

example. This is also a culture issue that will take time to influence.

Paul Odle came across well. In fairness, I think our Force is well sighted on this issue already and it's a work in progress.

Ceri Hawe

All four speakers were good and brought relevant inputs to the discussion. Paul Odle stood out for me as he was well balanced and informative. We should all be open-minded and treat everyone fairly and with awareness of their needs, beliefs and issues.

Nick Hawe

A TSUNAMI OF DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS



National Board member Ian Saunders.

Break-out session considers the impact of the 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 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.

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

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.

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 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



National Board member Steve Taylor.

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.

PENSIONS FOCUS

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.



National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald.

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.

"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."

POLICE UPLIFT: 'LIKE PPI MISSELLING SCANDAL'

The Police Uplift Programme was compared to the 'PPI misselling scandal' by the secretary of North Wales Police Federation when he took part in a conference panel session.

Mark Jones was speaking as a panellist in a session debating whether the Government's flagship policy of a 20,000 uplift of officers was "more than just a numbers game".

Mark warned that for many new recruits, the perception of what policing is about did not match-up to the reality.

He added: "I think policing needs to be very clear to potential candidates what they are signing up for. It's almost like the PPI scandal.

"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.

Mark said: "Police forces are feeling immense pressure to keep hitting the target and stay on track. Colleagues are saying that just one resignation can skew a figure and they are very conscious of when the next quarter is due, for fear of repercussions."

Dr Sarah Charman, a professor of criminology 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



North Wales Police Federation secretary Mark Jones.

and also bullying and harassment," she added.

Sarah Davenport, from the National Police Chiefs' Council, said an attrition rate of 10 per cent had been expected, however, the focus for year three of the uplift was to drive that figure down further.

Jo Noakes, Director of Leadership and Workforce Development at the College for Policing, praised the uplift for its successes in recruiting from diverse backgrounds, with

an "edgy campaign".

Kurtis Christoforides, a director at the Police Now programme, told the audience the recruitment market is changing: "The idea of a career where you would sign up at 18 and serve for 30 years in the same job is unusual these days. We are lucky there are people who want to do that, but many people want a 'portfolio career'. That goes hand in glove with a more flexible entry and exit into the service.

"We will have people leaving relatively early but hopefully coming back and bringing other experience back into the job and probably the service needs to recognise that recruitment reality and capitalise on it."

Earlier in the session, the panel were shown a video montage which included Federation National Board member Dave Bamber questioning whether the police service was prepared for a 20,000-officer influx.

Dave's point was: "It's an impossible to say we don't need more staff. But having hollowed out training departments, human resources departments, having reduced tutoring to a minimum, were we prepared to take these officers in? Have we developed an efficient and effective workforce or 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?"

The panel and audience also saw footage of two Surrey student officers, PCs Dani Stilwell and Toby Benson, who are finding the role rewarding but hard work.

PC Stilwell ends up doing course work on her rest days, but she added: "There are lots of rewarding moments like finding missing persons, or when you turn up to a job and people are distraught but when you leave you have made the difference."

PC Benson talked about a domestic incident he attended, where a mum and her children later told him he had saved their lives.

Radio host Ian Collins, who compered the session, commented that the media had been "absolutely appalling" in some of its coverage of the police, highlighting bad incidents and creating the perception that it represents all of policing.

In light of this, the panel agreed that it was commendable of new recruits to still want to join the service and to step up to serve their community.

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.

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



Phill Matthews, Police Federation National Board.

we need to get moving.”

But John doubled-down and cast doubt over 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), which traditionally comes in for criticism at Police Federation gatherings, unusually had a good session. Its 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.”

OUR REPS SAY:

This was a good session overall, and I found it interesting. The legally qualified chair was very good as was Phill Matthews. We need to keep pushing PSD and IOPC for adherence to guidelines and updates to members.

Ceri Hawe

Hearings are still taking too long and this is unfair on both officer and complainant.

Tony Edwards

We need change because things are still taking too long. This is detrimental to all concerned, but mostly to the officer awaiting any updates or outcomes.

I felt it was a good session, open and frank, with all speakers getting their points across.

Phill Matthews made all of his points very well and I felt very reassured that he was doing his best for our members. John Bassett spoke quite passionately at times and I thought Kathie Cashell was fair and balanced with her inputs.

I was surprised by the input from Mr Bassett who raised very valid concerns about the dangers posed to Legally Qualified Chairs and his views on the standard of some Professional Standards Departments.

Basically, as a Force, we need to keep on top of cases and keep pushing PSD and the IOPC to comply with guidelines and to provide meaningful updates, with rationale or background where necessary, on cases.

Nick Hawe

“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.

The panel (left to right): Manjit Atwal QPM from the College of Policing, Zoe Wakefeld 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 told delegates: "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 a panel discussion on day two of the Manchester conference, National Women's Group chair Sue Honeywill told delegates: "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.

"And while the word is now in regular use, it is frequently misunderstood with some high-profile politicians having mistakenly said such behaviour involves behaviour towards males. For the avoidance of doubt, it doesn't.

"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."

OUR REPS SAY:

Misogyny exists in all forces and we would be naïve to think otherwise. It's in society therefore it's in the workplace. The culture in NWP is very different now to what it was in the early 90's when I joined and I am confident that it has changed for the better but there is still more work to do and more of a culture change needed.

We are still very much male-dominated and this plays out in conversations at times, more so through micro-aggressions and people not realising that they are being sexist as such. I think compared to larger metropolitan forces we have a more positive culture in this area.

It was good to see this topic covered but there could have had more structure to the session itself as it concentrated on small examples and not wider culture, again a strategy is needed for this linked to positive action and the Federation needs to have policies that hold its reps to account leading by example which would encourage more representation.

Ceri Howe

I enjoyed this session. I always take something new away each time I hear it. I have come to the conclusion that it's mainly about respect. It was interesting to hear that something could be said in one way and would be classed as misogyny and yet wouldn't necessarily be if just banter.

Tony Edwards

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.

TACKLING THE STIGMA OF SUICIDE



The panel.

'We need to fight that 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."



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.

OUR REPS SAY:

I have been arguing for a long time now within North Wales that we are facing a real crisis in terms of mental ill-health so when I saw the subject of this session it was immediately of interest. I wanted to know how officers from other forces were dealing with these issues and if we could learn anything to take back home with us.

The statistics and stories shared were really concerning and stark. The number of officers taking their own lives each year is staggering and clearly the single biggest risk to officers lives is not violence from the public or terrorism but the mental health pressure placed upon them from doing the job that they love! The utter refusal of the HSE to agree that suicide of serving officers should be recorded in the same way that other injuries or death in the workplace should be was really worrying and disappointing.

Most forces, including NWP, are now putting a lot of effort and resources into mental health awareness and support but this is putting a sticking plaster on the problem. What needs to happen, and what I have been arguing for a long time now for members, is for us to have a complete top to bottom review of what the organisation is expecting from officers, particularly those in uniform on Response. The situation at this level is as bad as I and others have ever seen it and it is only by taking an honest and hard look at what we are asking these officers to do each day that we can begin to fix the long-term issues.

The guest speakers presenting their own experience of mental ill-health and suicide were both extremely impactful and incredibly brave. My heart went out to them both and I could see so many parallels between their stories and those of others that I have worked with, and do work with. It is clear that we are all at risk of mental health crisis and that it is so important that we are able to talk about these issues openly and ask for help.

Dan Ball

I think that mental health awareness is a crucial part of policing nowadays and one that we are still learning about, although there is much good work being done to promote this.

It was interesting to learn how the word "suicide" is avoided by some people when such issues are being discussed. It is a very real concern and the session proved it was a very real consideration for some officers at times. We must not shy away from this word or these conversations.

We must all play our part in recognising or reaching out to our colleagues. We are all there for each other at times of obvious crisis, and we need to be able to spot the signs that may be less obvious, and intervene.

I have heard Ed Simpson bravely tell his harrowing story before. I cried that day and I cried again this time. Ed went through so much, suffering silently for most of it, and it nearly cost him his life. He is now doing such a positive thing, showing us all that we can speak out and ask for help. Reminding us that we are humans, and we will have times where we are struggling. That is not failure, that is life. I continue to find Ed to be inspirational.

Nick Hawe

POLICE DRIVERS SET TO GAIN BETTER PROTECTION IN LAW



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

But conference session highlights need for officers to be “in ticket” if they are to benefit from new legislation

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, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the national Federation lead on pursuits driving and driver training, has led a long campaign to bring about the change in law introduced through the new legislation.

Under 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 training 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 their training to ensure they benefited from the new protection and was supported by DCC Terry Woods, the 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.”

Individuals needed to take responsibility to ensure they are “in ticket” but the responsibility did not end with them, managers, chief officers and forces also had to share this, delegates were told.

Tim also highlighted the way in which 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 now consider cases where police officers’ driving comes into question with DCC Woods and Tim being part of the process.

They will ensure that only complete evidence is provided, 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.

This process will be part of the new legislation when it comes into effect.

West Midlands Police Federation has already hosted training days at its offices for a range of stakeholders including the Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), and specialist lawyers.

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

Driving schools, which could become licensed in the same way as firearms units, are now expected to fill out self-assessment forms covering all aspects of their work and spot-checks will be carried out. The College of Policing will also 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.

“We are in a better position because we campaigned for eight years. It’s a major achievement.”

During the session, Simon Hill from the Metropolitan Police Federation, introduced footage of a police pursuit of a scooter which led to an officer being charged with causing death by dangerous driving, illustrating the jeopardy officers found themselves in under the previous legislation when they were doing the job the public expected of them.

The officer was cleared by a jury but only after what was described as six years of hell for him and his family.

The session ended with questions from delegates and Tim thanking all those who had helped secure the new legislation including Sir Henry Bellingham, the former Norfolk MP who was among the first politicians to get behind the Federation campaign.

'DISCLOSURE GUIDANCE CAUSING CRISIS IN POLICING'



Ben Hudson (left) from the Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum with Assistant Commissioner Nick Ephgrave (centre) and Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill QC.

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."

OUR REPS SAY:

The extra workload is crippling officers and is unsustainable long-term. People are already leaving the Force because of it or are going off sick increasing the workload on others. I genuinely believe we will start seeing more officers ill-health retire with serious mental issues due to constant stress.

It sounds like Max Hill and his team are in a similar boat. Although I was surprised to hear him answer a question about redacting BWV, and not understanding the work involved and answering the question incorrectly. The Attorney General needs to be taken to task over this whole issue.

Tony Edwards

This impacts on everything from morale to the ability to provide the service the public expect.

It was a positive session, with some common ground found between the speakers.

But Max Hill from the CPS appeared to basically say that this has been put in place and therefore the police have to deliver, as it is now. There was recognition that there may need to be some changes to assist officers, but this did not sound too encouraging, and there was no recognition that there was a lack of consultation with those who it would affect the most.

Nick Hawe

JENNIFER LANDS AWARD

An inspirational mother-of-four who juggles working as a police officer with raising her family was presented with the prestigious Outstanding Contribution to Women in Policing Award at this year's conference.

Jennifer Sharpling, a sergeant in the Metropolitan Police, won the award after devoting much of her time to maternity-related issues in the workplace, using her own experiences to become a pioneer in perinatal mental health.

After having her first child in 2016 and suffering from significant mental health issues, Jennifer found there wasn't any specific support for police officers and staff with these conditions.

She now leads a national team of officers from across the country, who are working together to write a national policy that will better support staff.

She also works closely with professors on research projects, so the police service can understand the impact perinatal mental health issues have on officers and staff.

Jennifer is also the co-founder of #BleepKind, a peer support group designed to offer a safe space for police officers and staff to share their concerns surrounding the bleep test, which comes annually for officers as part of a fitness assessment.

The Federation presents the Outstanding Contribution to Women in Policing Award to recognise a serving or recently retired officer who has gone above and beyond their job, while on duty.



Jennifer Sharpling.

BRYN STEPS UP MEDAL CAMPAIGN

A father whose daughter was murdered while on duty says that by next year's Federation conference he hopes to be wearing a medal in her honour, as he continues the campaign for an award to recognise emergency service workers who are killed on the job.

Bryn Hughes is leading the fight for an Elizabeth Medal to be given posthumously to emergency service workers killed while on duty, after his daughter PC Nicola Hughes (23) was murdered by gunman Dale Cregan in 2012.

Having attended this year's annual conference and heard the Home Secretary's brief mention of the award during her address to the auditorium, Bryn says he now hopes to meet with Priti Patel, so they can drive his ambition forward.

"Next conference, I want to be wearing a medal in Nicola's memory," said Bryn, "We were waiting to see what the Home Secretary said at the conference before we decided our next steps."

During her speech at the conference, Ms Patel spoke briefly about such an award, saying: "In relation to death in service, there is no doubt that every life lost in the line of duty is a tragedy. I am resolutely determined that, in the future, this sacrifice will be recognised."

Bryn said he was surprised by her comments, adding that the Home Secretary could have said a lot more to "show she cares about" the campaign, which uses the hashtag #MedalsForHeroes.

"It would have been nice if the Home Secretary would've acknowledged the

bravery and potential sacrifice these police officers make on a daily basis," he explained.

"When I speak to others, they're surprised such an award isn't already in existence. I'm hoping to meet with the Home Secretary and when I do, the question I will be asking her will be simple, 'Why can we not have this award?'"

"This award will never bring our loved ones back or change things, but it will honour their memory."

Nicola, who worked for Greater Manchester Police, was killed alongside her colleague Fiona Bone (32) during an ambush, following a routine burglary call.

The award is based on the Elizabeth Cross, which was first awarded in 2009 and is given to relatives of members of the armed forces who have been killed in action since the end of World War Two or as a result of a terrorist attack.

"The financial cost of this award would be insignificant, compared to the personal grief we're all going through," Bryn added.

"We're all on a journey, from the moment we open our eyes to the minute we close them, we struggle - this award would show us the Government cares, that they recognise the journey we're all on."

Bryn has also launched a charity in memory of his daughter, the PC Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund, which aims to provide learning opportunities and pre-employment skills in the form of support through grants or services to children who have experienced the death of a family member through violent crime, such as murder or manslaughter.

"Nicola wanted to help everyone, that's exactly why she became a police officer in the first place, something I'd like to think she got from me," said Bryn.

"If Nicola would want anything, it would be to help someone who has experienced the loss of someone close to them. To know that we're providing some sort of basic help to people who need it, I know she would be overwhelmed."

One person the charity has helped is a widower in his 70s, who became the legal guardian of his three grandchildren after his son-in-law killed his daughter.

"I remember walking in, and this gentleman in his 70s was ironing his grandchildren's school uniform. His wife had died just 12 months before and he had spent a fortune on school uniforms because he didn't know where to shop.

"It was at that moment, he said to me, he hadn't even grieved for his daughter because he didn't have the time," explained Bryn. "We've been supporting him by sourcing school uniforms for him since."

"He had been grieving in private every night, so he didn't show emotion in front of his grandchildren. In some ways, I can relate to what they're going through."

Bryn says that for him, the charity and the Elizabeth Medal campaign give him a reason to get up every morning, adding: "I could definitely have just spent my days in bed after Nicola died but doing this, in her memory, gives me a purpose."

"I'd like to think that what happened to Nicola doesn't define me but instead, what I've done since then."

CONFERENCE VIEWS

A delegation of North Wales Police Federation representatives attended this year's national Police Federation conference. They give their views on the two-day event.

CHAIR'S WELCOME

He came across well, very professional for his first conference, I liked the fact that he started off his address bi-lingually with a Welsh pre-fix which I have never heard before from the national chair, a refreshing change and inclusive of the Welsh forces.

Ceri Hawe

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - CHAIR

I thought his address was well put together and covered all the areas well that we want to focus on as a Federation. He pitched it about right for his first one, having not met the Home Secretary before.

Ceri Hawe

He was obviously nervous - as I would have been - but he kept calm and delivered in a controlled manner. He was to the point and concise with his speech pitched at the right level.

Tony Edwards

He came across as down to earth, open, approachable and human rather than a polished politician. I am sure once he becomes used to the role his nerves will ease but I hope he keeps the other qualities.

I would have liked to see the chair challenge the Home Secretary harder on PRRB and the disgusting double standards of the politicians who have a binding pay body but won't let us have that same deal. However, he is very new to the role and hopefully next year he will have found his feet and will push back more with whoever the politician is who takes over from our current Home Secretary.

Dan Ball

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - HOME SECRETARY

This was mostly hot air, constantly repeating the same lie about how she champions the police, respects and appreciates what we do

It was false and smarmy to the point of being sickening. She is aware of the crisis in policing but she doesn't care or choose to do anything about it. When asked about pay and conditions, she just said she had only met Steve for the first time that day and would talk to him about it as if he was the first chair ever. Just a joke.

Tony Edwards

UPLIFT

I think we will see more officers coming in and that target will be met, but in reality these are replacing officers the Government has cut from us over the last 10 years. Any new officers are always welcomed but let's not kid ourselves that these are extra; they are replacing what has been taken previously.

Ceri Hawe

I don't think the Uplift Programme will be a success. If it's on top of normal recruiting, it may but if not then no. Also I'm not sure how many want to join police today.

I think it's going to be difficult to retain numbers especially once they see how difficult the job is especially in relation to all the file prep etc. I think they will stay until they have a degree then look to move on to better pay with far less chance of fear of spurious complaints and investigations.

Better pay and conditions would help retention along with simplifying processes; the digital age is meant to make things easier not harder.

Tony Edwards

The Uplift Programme is all smoke and mirrors. What is being told to the public, is not what is actually being delivered.

Retention issues will cause it to fail. But this has been spelled out by the Federation over many years, with our fear being that the powers that be would rather have people use the police as a "stepping stone" or just turn it into a career option for a few years, rather than a vocation. This fear is already being realised and will only get worse. This will make the police family weaker and the position of the "decision-makers" much, much stronger. It has been a clear strategy for a long time.

What more could be done to retain officers? Far too much to list here, but pay and conditions is huge, the requirement for a degree qualification is frankly ridiculous, there seem to be false promises made to new officers in relation to what their role will entail. We have allowed outside influences to have too much power in relation to recruitment. We have also seen the College of Policing be entirely hand-in-hand with some of the short-sighted, out-of-touch decisions which have been made, despite the severe reservations raised by experienced and well considered officers and Federation representatives. These same people are now asking the policing family

to help to fix the very problems that they have created.

The highlight sadly, for me, was the Chief Superintendent and change manager on the Police Uplift Programme getting her figures repeatedly (and hilariously) wrong after dismissing something that our own Fed secretary, Mark Jones, had just said.

Nick Hawe

I am very concerned about the possibility of a large percentage of PEQF officers leaving the organisation once they have gained their degree.

We should be aspiring to make the profession attractive enough that people want to stay and improve not gain a qualification, leave and then maybe come back later. This is a false economy and undermines the societal importance of a dedicated and professional police service.

Dan Ball

PENSION REMEDY

Nothing new, the Government has left our pensions in disarray. They didn't cover what was being sorted just repeated what we already knew and what we would like.

Would have been good to have had an up to date sit rep on where we currently were and a presentation on the overall timeline, rather than a general chat about it.

I am caught in the pension trap. I am a female officer who worked reduced hours for a few years to bring up my two sons and also took some unpaid maternity leave.

Ceri Hawe

This session showed the whole remedy is still flawed and that accurate projections still can't be made. I am affected by the pensions remedy but didn't find out anything new during this session. I still find it all a mine field.

Tony Edwards

I think the only thing that stood out is that the whole situation is a monstrous mess which will not be sorted out (to the satisfaction of any party) for years and years to come. This is also a problem which has been created by the powers that be, with too little thought, and too much haste, without any consideration for the huge turmoil and hurt it would cause. I felt that Alex Duncan and Paul Turpin spoke very well during the session, and they clearly know their stuff.



I am affected by the pensions remedy but only in a minor way compared to most. So, in that respect, I feel fairly fortunate - which is ironic, because none of us are in any way fortunate for what has been forced upon us.

I was a little concerned by the responses from the representative from Penningtons law firm when he was asked if there were potential legal opportunities in relation to certain officers being adversely affected by the current position. It seemed like there was a "wait and see" attitude, rather than there being any pro-active approach in seeking out relevant examples - of which I have no doubt there are more than enough.

Nick Howe

MISOGYNY

I have not witnessed this from any colleagues in 30 years. I have seen it from offenders, relating from domestic violence cases to murder cases. I definitely witnessed sexist behaviour towards female officers in the early years of my service. This may have been "the norm" at the time, but looking back, it was wrong and unacceptable. I do think that things have improved massively but there is still more to be done.

Misogyny clearly exists, so there is definitely work to be done in order to educate people and attempt to eradicate the problem.

Unfortunately I regarded this session to have been a missed opportunity. I was encouraged to see it on the agenda, as it definitely warranted a place at conference, but it did not deliver, in my opinion. While I fully agree with the quote, "Is challenging misogyny in policing possible? Yes - and we must see a change in culture" and I welcome the strategy to empower Federation representatives to do even more to support victims and witnesses of misogynistic behaviour, there was not enough structure to the session, which I felt got stuck in some low-level discussions about what was sexist and what was not.

It was great to see this subject getting a session and I am confident that this will be built on due to the drive of the speakers, and other female officers I have encountered, both Federation representatives and members. I would very much like to see a push for more female Federation representatives (as well as pushing for more female chairs and secretaries) which would also go a long way to addressing this issue.

Nick Howe

TREASURER'S REPORT

I have mixed views on this session. I can see the need to increase the funds pot based on the possibility of having to pay out for various legal proceedings but can also see where the argument against increasing funds at this difficult time lies.

Tony Edwards

It is a really difficult time for everyone financially obviously and I was concerned going in that we were going to have a proposal for a big increase in subs payments. Having listened to the arguments on the proposal being presented, a small percentage increase in subs only if we gain a pay increase in September, as well as the arguments against made by several delegates from various branches, it came to the vote.

In the end the vote was carried in favour of this proposal and, while I appreciate that this was always going to go down like a lead balloon for most members, I feel that if we have got to have an increase in order to be financially safe that this proposal was probably the most sensible one.

Dan Ball

POLICE DRIVERS

I am an advanced driver and pursuit trained and represent others on my department that are also advanced and pursuit trained drivers.

I was aware of the changes the new legislation will bring, but not fully. I feel police drivers will have better protection in law but only time will tell following test cases.

Tony Edwards

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

A big issue especially on the back of Covid which affects a lot of members. Good to hear the legal standpoint from Eleanor Porter and the national picture and some examples. Disability is such a broad area, there is always much to learn and benefit from.

I do think poor practices of the past are creeping back in after the can do attitude that was adopted during Covid, lack of flexibility is on the increase again unnecessarily. Workplace adjustments is a big issue, lack of awareness from supervisors and use of UPP wrongly.

At times it can be an issue within NWP. Positive changes are starting to be made with regard to workplace adjustments and education of supervisors and line managers. I have had some good resolutions with HRTSO's and supervisors who were willing to listen and take on board what was needed.

In terms of what more could be done: training for supervisors and line managers on the Equality Act 2010 and workplace adjustments as well as flexible working. Understanding neurodiversity and what it can mean and not wrongly putting staff on action plans when what they need are workplace adjustments and support.

Ceri Howe

OPPORTUNITY IS NOWHERE - GUEST SPEAKER

Very entertaining and a good way to get people interested and set a tone for the day. I have experienced a lot of guest speakers in the past in my previous job and they are very often painful to watch, particularly "motivational" speakers. Kriss was great and really engaging. Opportunities to make a difference should not be under-estimated.

Dan Ball

MUTUAL AID

This is an area of real interest for me so this was a natural choice really. Unfortunately, due to illness and injury I have been non-deployable for some time but I have been on significant operational deployments in the past including the London Riots, NATO conference in South Wales and Donald Trump visiting the UK so have a fair bit of experience with pre-planned and dynamic mutual aid deployments and the inevitable issues that come up each time.

Nationally, I think one of the biggest problems, which was discussed at the session, is inconsistency between different forces when it comes to payments and treatment. It cannot be right that you can have two officers from two different forces with the same level of service, experience and skill who can get paid and treated very differently for carrying out the same role.

From this session, it is clear significant effort and work is going on to try to resolve a lot of the recurring issues around mutual aid but we have a long way to go.

Dan Ball

DISCLOSURE

The guidance is causing massive issues and has been since it came into effect. The amount of time spent building files now is immense. This is one of many areas in which forces simply fail to understand or deal with the huge extra pressures and work placed on officers without and allowance given or extra resources put in place to mitigate the impact.

Max Hill was very much detached from the realities of the relationship between the police and CPS. His talk about "one team" was frankly laughable for me. The Police/CPS relationship is terrible for the most part and extremely combative. I am not entirely blaming this on CPS but it is a massive issue and to see the head of CPS not seeming to realise this was concerning.

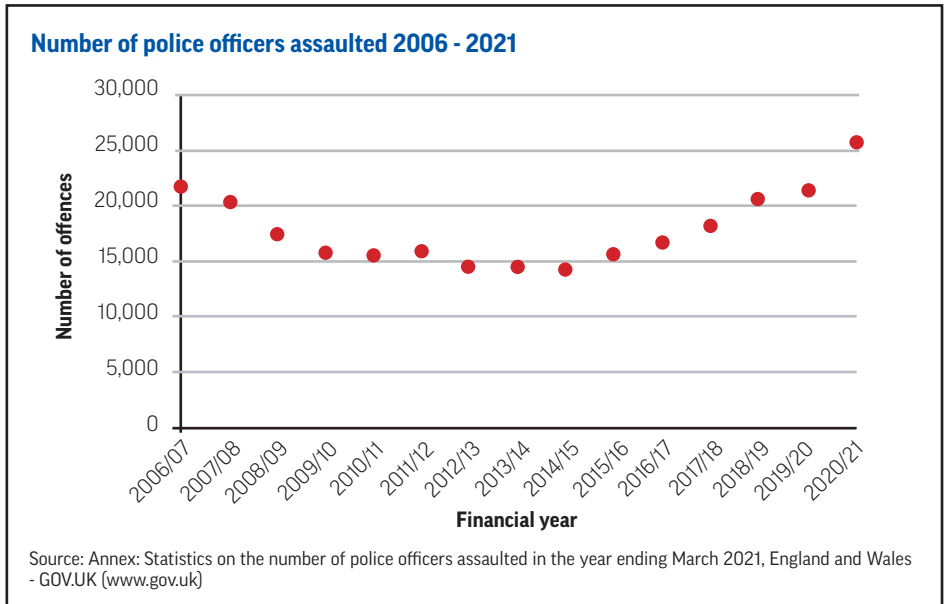
Dan Ball



OFFICER ASSAULTS ON THE RISE



By North Wales Police Federation workplace representative Martin Price.



Since becoming a workplace representative I have been shocked at how many emails we receive relating to assaults on colleagues, so I thought I'd have a look at what has been happening over the last few years.

We, North Wales Police, have seen an increase of 11.6 per cent (463 - 517) between 2019/20 - 2021/22. That's an increase of 54 recorded assaults our colleagues have been subjected to. Some may say that it comes with the job, but I disagree. I know that I don't come to work to be assaulted and I've never seen it mentioned in any police job description.

There has also been an increase of recorded assaults on police officers nationally as shown above.

Of the officers who have been assaulted within North Wales in the past three years, more than 50 per cent of the victims have been colleagues within their first five years of service. This is possibly due to that fact that when you join the police service, the first area you are assigned to is LPS Response. The number of assaults reduce over the length of service and could be due

to officers wanting to move to different departments that are not as forward-facing, but just as important, as a Response officer.

In recent years we have seen the introduction of an Eight Point Plan that should be recorded on all incidents where officers have been assaulted. The aim was to improve the way forces investigate assaults on police officers, staff and volunteers. We currently have a 23.5 per cent completion rate for these plans.

This is one area I feel we can improve upon, ensuring that officers who have been victims of an assault are offered appropriate support and signposting where necessary, taking into consideration the incident and the officers wellbeing..

There are areas we can make a difference, in an attempt to reduce the potential of officers being subjected to an assault and protecting ourselves:

- **SAFE SEARCHING.** Remember what we have all been taught during our personal safety training (PST).
- **ALWAYS STAY SWITCHED ON - COOPERS COLOUR CODE.** We should always be alert to everything that is

going on around us when attending and dealing with incidents.

- **POSITIONING WHILE ARRESTING SUSPECTS.**
- **REMEMBER THE LEGISLATION FOR USE OF FORCE/SELF-DEFENCE.**

Any force used must always be proportionate, legal, necessary and officers are accountable for their actions.

By remembering the excellent PST training we have all been provided with, we can protect ourselves and prevent the number of assaults on officers and staff continuing to increase.

There are no easy fixes to this issue. Some may say we need more officers on Response, some may argue we need to keep more experienced officers in frontline roles. What we do know is that we can go some way to reducing assaults by police by remembering our training regarding the techniques discussed. Sometimes we need to think before taking action and by putting our safety first.

If you feel you require any further information or assistance please contact the Force training department.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



By North Wales Police Federation workplace representative Dan Ball.

I think it is fair to say that the vast majority of you, particularly those in Response and NPT roles who I speak to every day, have been feeling the pressure of relentless workloads and serious staffing shortages for some time now.

The general feeling from those I speak to is one of fighting an uphill battle like never before, feeling undervalued and being ground down with no hope of improvement

on the horizon. This, many may argue, is nothing new in policing but what is going on at the moment feels different.

Many of the causes of the dire situation we are in are outside of the control of North Wales Police. The huge change brought about by the Attorney General guidance on files and the catastrophic impact from WAST being unable to respond to their own demands and the knock-on effect this has on us are just two of many examples.

But others most certainly are within our control: the huge amounts of extra work for officers having to deal with EOELs, the Crime Management Plan, our seeming unwillingness to say no to the public and other agencies even when the issues are nothing to do with policing, the never-ending drain of experienced officers from Response roles to "specialist" departments... and on and on.

All these things are within the control of North Wales Police to do something about and if properly addressed would have a significant impact on the wellbeing, morale and outlook of officers and staff.

I, and others within North Wales Federation, have been trying to raise these issues with senior officers for several years now with, it seems to me, very little success, I am afraid to say.

I have had the opportunity to discuss these issues directly with some very senior officers and, although the response has

always been positive with those officers generally agreeing that things need to improve and change, nothing actually has improved or changed - certainly not changed for the better anyway. This has been both extremely frustrating and disappointing, as I am sure many of you can imagine.

More recently, I have been lucky enough to be in attendance at the last two Branch Council meetings at which we were able to ask questions and raise issues with Chief Constable Carl Foulkes and Police and Crime Commissioner Andy Dunbobbin.

On both occasions I, and other reps, have taken full advantage of these opportunities to ask some challenging questions and plea for something to be done.

For those of you who have not had the opportunity to meet and speak directly to the Chief or the Commissioner, I can tell you that they are both, in my opinion, genuinely caring and very approachable people. Both are very clearly passionate about making the organisation better and both do really care about welfare and wellbeing.

It is too early to say what, if anything, will come from these meeting but I hope that the result will be the start of a journey towards improving the workloads and working conditions for you all.

We will keep the pressure on and see what happens next.

'A PRIVILEGE TO ATTEND'

The International Association of Women Police (IAWP) Board Meeting and Regional Training Conference was held at Dublin Castle.

The conference focussed on enhancing knowledge and skills, with an overarching aim to provide a forum that facilitates open discussion about the challenges and best practices for women in policing.

It took place over three days from 8 to 10 March, hosting both national and international delegates, including representatives from North Wales Police, and North Wales Police Federation rep and All Wales Additional National Women's Seat representative Ceri Hawe.

The IAWP was founded in 1915 to strengthen, unite and raise the capacity of women in policing internationally. The IAWP has members in more than 60 countries and supports the unique role women play in law enforcement.

The IAWP provides training, mentoring, peer support and networking for members and highlights issues affecting women in

law enforcement throughout the world.

It encourages the application of the highest ethical standards of the law enforcement profession and identifies, recognises and rewards performance, distinction and achievement among law enforcement.

The key objectives of this training conference are to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of delegates to meet their career objectives.

"This is the first IAWP event I had attended," said Ceri, "I went as part of the Gender Equality Network. It was such an inspiration to be a room with so many female police officers from all around the world.

"Dame Cressida Dick was in attendance, she was a fantastic speaker who came across extremely well, for me this was the highlight of the event. What she has achieved is amazing, you could feel so much respect and love in the room for her, she is truly an inspirational woman, she has still kept hold of her sense of humour regardless



T/Insp Emma Williams, Insp Ceri Hawe and DCI Emma Naughton.

of what she has been through and how she has been treated. It was easy to see why she is so well respected.

"The event was a great opportunity to network and meet lots of interesting officers and hear about initiatives to support females in policing. It was a privilege to attend."

The swimming pool.



PUTTING A SPOTLIGHT ON THE BEN FUND

North Wales Police Federation representative Trystan Bevan has visited the BEN fund and gives it a glowing review

Welfare and wellbeing, looking after staff, supporting staff during difficult times, both in work and outside of the work environment, this is something we all do and want in place. The Force has got some excellent schemes and offers in place in respect of support for officers.

Most of you, as did I, will have signed several documents in your first few days as police officers as you were advised by your trainers at the time you need to join "just in case". These would have been the Police Federation, Police Treatment Centres, PMAS etc. If you were like me, you did as you were told, being young and fit, thinking about pensions and needing treatment for injuries was something for people later on in life.

Fast forward 20 years and policing is in a very different place and we, as a service, are much more in tune with looking after people. Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing. This was never a concept when I signed those forms 20 years ago.

Having been a Fed rep now for several

years, I have been personally affected by witnessing, investigating and being involved in a number of incidents which have had a significant impact on officers. I have been assaulted on duty and suffered personal injury. I look back now and consider whether I should have looked to activate some of those schemes that I signed up to in 2002? The answer is possibly "yes" but I was of the opinion – and still am - that I wasn't that bad and there will be people

worse off than me needing support. As a number of you will be aware, I also farm in my spare time and being a part-time farmer, I don't part with money very easily. I look at my pay slip monthly and think "Do I really need to still be paying these, can I save by cancelling them?" But I continue to pay "just in case" and if I was to cancel something I would get injured the following week most probably. As a Fed rep I have since 2021 been seeking help for officers through the BEN fund, either to get them some assistance or just helping them get some time out from work due to the mental or physical injuries



A view of the orangery and the outside of the pool.

they have sustained. I like many of you have heard of the BEN fund but don't really know what they have to offer.

So, what did I know about the BEN fund? In 2021 North Wales Police signed up to the BEN Fund. NWP have paid for more than 150 spaces for officers to attend a two-day event at the BEN fund to assist and support them both mentally and physically. The spaces can be allocated to officers or staff just requiring some time out. Accessing and being allocated a space through the NWP paid scheme can be done through the Force wellbeing team. A number of officers have attended as individuals or as a team and they have been very complimentary of the facilities and what is on offer.

What is the BEN fund and what does it offer? If I was to direct officers towards the BEN fund I needed to know more, and this is what I found out.

The BEN fund is an independent charity dedicated to supporting and caring for the police from recruitment to retirement. It is dedicated to supporting police officers' physical and mental health, and wellbeing.

We recognise that you may, from time to time, look at your pay slip to ensure you are getting value for money from the various schemes you may be in. The BEN fund provides you with a unique care package representing excellent value for money including: -

- Physiotherapy treatment at St Michael's Lodge, Lancashire and within satellite offices in Cheshire, Cumbria, GMP, Merseyside and soon to be North Wales
- Holistic treatments available including mindfulness, massage, and alternative therapies
- A counselling service provided to members on a self-referral and confidential basis
- Free respite breaks to members and their partners, who require them
- Discounted luxury breaks available at the state-of-the art facility St Michael's Lodge
- Financial hardship assistance via grants and interest free loans
- A death in service grant of £5,000 payable immediately
- Wheelchair and mobility aids for short-term loan.

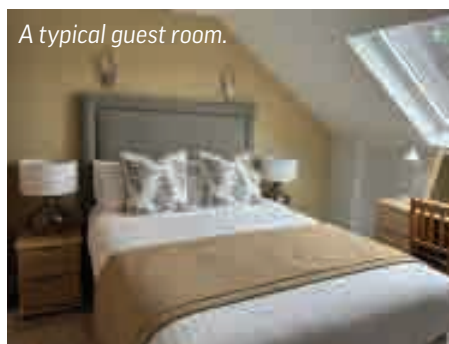
Still not content or convinced that I should part with additional money from my monthly pay, I recently visited the BEN fund with Mark Jones and Jayne Humphreys from our NWP Federation office for one night to experience first-hand what was on offer at their main site in Langho, Lancashire.

On our arrival, we were provided with a full tour of the facilities meeting several of their staff from physiotherapists to the wellbeing team. We were shown round the leisure facilities they had on offer including the gym, pool, sauna etc as well as a new

structure they had recently opened allowing evening activities for activities such as spin classes.

We did partake in a few of these activities and used the facilities. I had access to a one-to-one physiotherapy session. I have been suffering for some time with a shoulder injury. I therefore took full advantage of the services at the BEN fund. The services on offer and treatment and advice I was given was excellent. I was given some physiotherapy on my shoulder and so far, this has worked.

All three of us took part in mindfulness sessions. I must be honest this isn't my thing and I had never tried or been involved in such classes before as I wasn't convinced it worked. Having been given the opportunity to try a few classes I really can see the benefits. Mark even commented that he did feel much better after the session. Visiting such a facility and taking part in these activities really does make you realise that we all need to take some time out on occasions.



A typical guest room.

The hotel accommodation was of high standard, we did have the rooms which have recently been refurbished, but I was advised that all the rooms were in the process of being upgraded to the same high standard. The food was excellent and cooked to order and I really can't fault it in any way. The overall experience of my visit was very positive and what is on offer is second to none.

A few key questions I had in my mind: - What is the actual cost?

Your monthly donation of £7.40 comes from your monthly pay, so the benefit of tax



The gym.



Mark Jones and Trystan Bevan outside the reception area.

relief is applied to the gross amount you pay. This means that a 20 per cent taxpayer is contributing £5.92 per month, and a 40 per cent taxpayer is contributing £4.44 per month.

What do I get for my money in real terms?

In addition to the things I list at the start of this article, as a member you are entitled to four nights, together or separately visits to the BEN fund every year to use the facilities just for respite. The option is also there for you to take a partner who isn't a member with you for an additional £20 per night. That included breakfast, lunch, and an evening meal.

What is the difference between BEN Fund and Treatment Centres?

In all honesty, if you need treatment, they are very similar. But if you are looking at a cheap option and excellent facilities to have some time out and relax, but also have the added reassurance that support is there for you should you need treatment then the BEN fund provides this. As a member you can also pay to stay at the hotel for weekend breaks with your family and friends. A weekend break for a couple staying two nights bed and breakfast would be in the region of £140.

Following my return from my visit to the BEN fund I have enrolled to be a member. For me, as previously mentioned, as a part-time farmer parting with cash does not come easily. Yes, I am still paying for the Treatment Centre in addition to this as I personally feel they offer two different things. I am also going to make sure I get my money's worth annually from the BEN fund by using my four nights stay during the next 12 months.



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MOTOR SOURCE GROUP'S TOP FIVE HATCHBACKS



Seat Cupra Leon



Toyota Corolla

Famed for their tight handling and responsive acceleration, hatchbacks are more than just a boot configuration; they overflow with personality and can be more practical than you think.

Here's a list of five that we consider the best hatchbacks on the market today, from a wide range of manufacturers, and, of course, all with a great discount for serving and retired police officers and staff.

TOYOTA COROLLA

Toyota placed in the top five of the 2021 What Car? Reliability Survey out of thirty brands, with the Corolla achieving a five-star Euro NCAP rating, with automatic emergency braking, lane-departure warning, traffic sign recognition and automatic high beam assistance all coming as standard.

All of this is wrapped up in a compact, cheap-to-run package. The hybrid version of Corolla can get up to 60 miles per gallon, and you'll be having fun for all of those miles with its precise, grippy handling and sharp acceleration. This is one for those who still have the heart of a racer, but still have jobs to do.

You can save more than £4,000 with Motor Source Group on a new Toyota Corolla today.

VAUXHALL ASTRA

The Vauxhall Astra has been a mainstay on UK roads for decades, and the newest model lives up to the prestige. Now it sports an aggressive front 'visor' and a revamped interior that looks more like a spaceship than a family hatchback, all while keeping its trim price tag.

Its boot is larger than most of its rivals, with a 422-litre capacity with the seats up. In the cockpit, front and rear passengers

will enjoy plenty of comfort in their seats. There's plenty of options for customisation too, with a wide selection of engines available, including hybrid and plug-in hybrid options. 2023 will also welcome a fully electric version, bringing a classic fully into the future.

Save up to £5,000 with Motor Source Group Astra police discounts today.

MAZDA 3

It might look unassuming, but the Mazda 3 provides plenty of bang for your buck. With the 3 you get everything you could ever need from a hatchback: low emissions and running costs, plenty of tech to keep you safe and plenty of space, all from a reliable manufacturer. You get a wide choice of engines, whether you need a motorway-ready diesel or something better suited for short hops. If you've been burnt by new cars breaking down in the past or just need that extra bit of security, you can rely on Mazda's famous build quality to keep the 3 on the road.

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CUPRA LEON

Cupra are known for their hot versions of Seat cars, and their Leon is no exception. It's powered by a 2.0 litre turbo-charged four-cylinder petrol engine that takes it up to 60 in 5.7 seconds - outracing every car on this list. It's been tuned down to the chassis level to feel exciting to drive while having the trappings of an everyday run-around.

The practicality from the Seat has been preserved, with plenty of space in every position and a cushy interior trim. Best of all - even with its souped-up spec - it's still

competitively priced compared to other similarly sized cars.

You can save more than £4,000 on a new Cupra with Motor Source Group

VW GOLF

No hatchback list would be complete without this staple. The Golf has always been a go-to, and the mk 8 launched last year is no exception. It retains the iconic shape and size but packs a wealth of new updates and technology.

Every Golf now sports upgraded instrument clusters and a 10-inch touchscreen where you can plot your route, tune the AC and set up the myriad of assistance tech just how you like it. You can even use voice commands to safely alter things while you drive; some trims even come with a jet-fighter-esque head-up display, projecting your route onto the windscreen and keeping your eyes on the road.

Save thousands off your new Volkswagen Golf with Motor Source Group.

As a North Wales Police member, whether still serving or retired, you are eligible for new car discounts with Motor Source Group. The emergency services new car specialist also offers deals on leasing and used cars, to find out more visit www.motorsourcegroup.com/NWPF



PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS UPDATE

By Jonathan Belcham of Ralli



In this edition, I thought I would address the issues relating to a number of similar instructions that I have received over the past few months where police officers have been injured during the course of an arrest.

Often injuries are sustained while an offender is resisting arrest. The offender was not intending to cause injury but in most cases this will constitute a crime of violence because it can be foreseen that some injury may be sustained, even if the actual injury cannot.

Ordinarily there will have to be contact between the offender and the officer during the course of a struggle for a crime of

violence to have occurred within the meaning of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme of 2012. Claims should be submitted on line. Keep a note of the reference as you will need this to correspond with them and if you receive a decision that you are not happy with you may be entitled to legal representation to pursue an appeal.

Do not be at all surprised if your claim is rejected and you should contact the Federation at that stage to advise further. There are two years to lodge a claim. Whether you are entitled to a payment will depend upon whether your injury qualifies under the terms of the scheme which is tariff based. If you wish to claim the following link should help you to their website <https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-criminal-injury/make-claim>

If you slip or fall while chasing an

offender or sustain any other form of accidental injury the strong likelihood is that the CICA will reject your claim on the basis that an exceptional risk was not taken and such actions form part of the normal duties expected of a police officer.

In addition to a CICA claim, there is always the possibility of suing the individual responsible for the assault. Such claims almost never produce successful outcomes, even if it appears that the offender may have assets. Rarely have I therefore advised that such claims be pursued as at best payment of compensation and legal costs would take many years and default is the most likely outcome.

In addition to a CICA claim, you can apply through the DWP for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB). This is a no fault scheme for victims of accidents at work and which can result in weekly payments being made to reflect the extent of any disability caused in the workplace. The threshold for payment is 14 per cent.

However, if there are further injuries in the workplace the awards could be aggregated and result in a payment that otherwise would not have been received in isolation. There is also an opportunity, if the claim is accepted at any level, to review in the event of the worsening of a condition. Once you have completed the paperwork the DWP will make enquiries and if they are satisfied they are dealing with an accident in the workplace they will confirm the same.

It will then be necessary to actually apply for an assessment of any disability. There is no time limit on claiming this benefit but it would not be assessed for three months after injury and can only be backdated three months. You can therefore apply for any old injuries on duty that give rise to any disability now. This link should assist <https://www.gov.uk/industrial-injuries-disablement-benefit>

Finally there is **Injury Pension** – this is a supplemental pension that can be paid either upon normal or ill-health retirement. It involves consideration of any injury sustained on duty that causes an ongoing disability.

There is a lump sum tax free amount that would be added to the normal pension entitlement and an annual tax free amount potentially payable for life. The amount would depend upon the extent of disability. Keep a copy of this advice and speak to your Federation at or around the time you intend to retire.

Jonathan Belcham has been advising members of the Police Federation for more than 30 years – if you have concerns, or a possible claim that you would like to discuss first, just contact the Federation office or contact Ralli directly on 0161 207 2020.

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We understand that behind every uniform, lies a person

NEW TEAM SCORES WITH COMMUNITY SIDES

A North Wales Police football side has been hailed for breaking down barriers with an ongoing community engagement initiative.

Wrexham Town Police Station FC was formed earlier this year in a bid to forge stronger links between officers and the communities they serve.

Since its formation, the club has played three friendlies against community sides that all champion inclusion and diversity.

The officers' latest opponents were Yellow and Blue FC, a non-profit organisation offering support to vulnerable members of the community.

The match ended in a convincing win for the officers, though the final score was secondary to the occasion itself.

Speaking after the game, Yellow and Blue founder Pete Humphreys was effusive in his praise for the police side.

He said: "It's amazing that the police are playing these community clubs. Our guys will remember this for the rest of their lives.

"We work with a lot of people from the homeless and temporary housing community, and with those going through rehabilitation.

"There's stigma attached to the police and there's stigma attached to them.

"Sometimes you've just got to sit down at the same table, lower your barriers and realise that everyone's just coming into work



Photographs courtesy of Phil Green Photography

and doing the same job with loads of their own responsibilities.

"To see everyone coming together on the pitch as part of a community initiative – that's what breaking barriers is all about.

"One of our players – Harry – four years ago he wouldn't have entertained playing against the police, but he's been out there on the pitch and now he's having a bit of banter with them.

"I think that's what it's all about."

The police side was founded by Sergeant Dave Smith in late 2021, with kits acquired via funding from the Police and Communities Together (PACT) scheme.

Speaking ahead of the next friendly against the fundraising team from a local hospice, Sgt Smith is pleased with the progress made so far.

He said: "When we started playing

matches at Colliers Park in January, we had to be proactive in seeking out community sides from Wrexham to play against us.

"It seems that we're now reaching the wider community and that clubs are now approaching us to get games arranged.

"That's great from our point of view because from the outset this project has been about breaking down barriers between the public and police officers.

"Building lasting friendships is also an important element of this project too.

"It's great because the more games we play – the further the reach of our message.

"It feels like we're showing a human side to policing, and highlighting the fact that we're members of these communities too.

"I believe that message has really got through to the teams we've played and we want to build on those foundations now."

RUGBY TEAM WINS CHAMPIONSHIP

North Wales Police rugby team faced a Greater Manchester Police/Lancashire Police combined side in the final of the North West Forces Championship at Winnington Park RUFC.

Before the match on 20 April, team coach Sergeant Geraint Owen said: "This is a really exciting fixture for us, it is the first time NWP rugby team have ever been in a position for some silverware. We're unbeaten in the competition having had two tough opponents in the Combined Services and a windy derby game against Cheshire Police. We were also fortunate to also be gifted a bye by Staffordshire Police which now puts us in a 'grand slam' position. The final is arguably the biggest game of NWPRFC's history."

After a thrilling 56 - 17 win against the GMP/Lancs combined side, the men's rugby team completed a clean sweep. Despite being tested by a lively opposition, the side managed to control the game throughout, finishing with a convincing scoreline. Player of the match was stand-off PC Cameron Owen, who played a pivotal role in controlling the game, as well as consistently breaking the gain line in attack.

Speaking after the momentous victory, Geraint said: "I couldn't be prouder of the lads



and the performances they've displayed throughout the tournament.

"There's a lot of people involved with this team, and it's more than the 22-man squad named for each game. We are growing from strength to strength, and it's an absolute credit to the team's commitment and hard work."

He added: "I'd also like to thank the support we've had from ACPO, the PCC's office and local SMTs - without your support, we would really struggle to field teams. Diolch yn fawr iawn!"

North Wales Police Federation general secretary Mark Jones and assistant secretary

Mel Jones were at the match.

"I was very impressed by the high calibre performance the lads gave at the final," said Mel, "They played really top quality, attractive, running rugby and thoroughly deserved the win against a combined team of two large police forces with a much greater pool of officers and staff to select from than North Wales.

"It was great to see the Chief, ACC and the PCC in attendance to support the lads. All the players and the backroom staff deserve the highest of praise – they are a credit to North Wales Police.

"Di iawn hogiau!"

A FOND FAREWELL TO CONWY POLICE STATION

By North Wales Police Federation workplace representative Kim Owen.

Well, I'm writing this article as we are slowly in the process of packing up Conwy Police Station, after 162 years. It's definitely the end of an era and a part of the history of North Wales Police for the many current and retired officers who have worked here over the years.

I think, like so many officers, I never thought the day would come that we saw Conwy Police station close and de-commissioned. It's an iconic building in Conwy town, and one of the oldest police stations in the North Wales Police estate.

But, unfortunately, it is happening and the new move date was planned for May.

Luckily, we are remaining in Conwy and not moving far as we have sourced new premises in Rose Hill Street which is a council owned building above the tourist information centre.

The history of Conwy Police Station dates back to the 1860s, it is believed. It's shown on the Black's Guide to North Wales in 1869 as a police station, although the present station building dates from the early 1900s. It underwent a refurbishment in 2004 when the old cells were removed and the lay-out was adjusted to keep up with the times.

I first worked in Conwy as a Special in 1997, when there was a station full of officers and we had response officers based here on each rota, along with an inspector and a sergeant and also CID working from here for a short period. I returned to Conwy as a PC in 2003 as a response officer and, more recently, it has been brilliant to have worked back here as the Neighbourhood Police Sergeant for the last two years. It's strange to think that I will be the last police sergeant to work from here along with the five Police Community Support Officers and the Community Beat Manager, PC Michael Couling.

On 29 April 2022 I met up with retired Constable 59 Gwynfor Griffiths who was an officer from 1957 to 1984. His first station was Conwy, until 1968 when he moved to the police station in Llandudno Junction. I was honoured to be presented with a lovely painting he has done of the station, Lancaster Square and him on the police bicycle in 1958, which will be put up in the new police station for the public to see.



Retired PC Gwynfor Griffiths presents his picture to Kim Owen.

It was interesting to hear some of his stories of working from Conwy, such as when the current road bridge was being built and how his sergeant at the time made him walk across the girders of the bridge, during the night, so that they were the first to ever walk across.

He also told stories of how on night patrols on foot they had to be at certain points at certain times and how the inspector would visit the points and make sure they were there and then endorse their note books to say they were on the points, which were normally the phone boxes in the town. It was also interesting to hear that half the station at that time was a house in which the superintendent for Conwy lived and he had the office at the front on the ground floor.

He said at that time there were eight police constables, three sergeants, an inspector and the superintendent based in Conwy. They had the two cells and the local court was by the castle in Conwy. How times have changed!

Gwynfor also recalled an incident in late autumn 1960 when the police station nearly caught fire. He recalls being on foot patrol at around 9.30am in Lancaster Square when he noticed a strong light flickering through Supt Moss' office window. When he rushed back into the then clerk's office, PC Eric Evans (retired deputy chief constable) was on duty and unaware of the fire.

They both rushed into the office and managed to extinguish the fire, which was burning the lino floor as lumps of coal had



The Conwy Team taken on 8 April 2022. Back row: PCC Andy Dunbobbin, Chief Constable Carl Foulkes, DPCC Wayne Jones. Middle row: PCSO 3407 David Madden, PCSO 3030 Beverley Owen, PC 2960 Michael Couling. Front row: PCSO 2809 Nikki Adams, PCSO 3913 Sara Owen, PCSO 3971 Ciara Regan and PS 1762 Kim Owen.

fallen from the fire in the grate. Gwynfor says that their quick action saved the whole station from setting on fire and possibly destroying the building.

There is no doubt we all have many stories from working out of Conwy over the years. Some of mine will be the mysterious noises that occur on a night shift within the station from doors shutting and footsteps within the building.

While trying to keep as much of the history of the station as possible to take with us and to keep for the history of the Force, I have been lucky enough to obtain some old photos from retired officers and of note these were given to me by Gwyndaf Williams which are of his great grandfather George David Jones (Sgt 5) taken 100 years ago. George was promoted to Conwy in 1919 and three years later to inspector in Llandudno.

The new base for Conwy is a lot smaller and will comprise of a kitchen area, two offices for staff to work from, a locker room and a welfare room in the main area upstairs and then downstairs on the ground floor we will have a public-facing office where we can meet the public and hold meetings. Most importantly we are still based in the town and will maintain a valued police presence.

FUNDRAISING APPEAL FOR NEW NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL FOR WALES

A new National Welsh Police Memorial will honour heroic officers and staff who have given their lives to protect the people and communities of Wales.

The Police Roll of Honour Trust has launched an appeal to help fund the memorial, which will remember the courage and sacrifice of all those across the police service in Wales who have dedicated their lives to serving the public.

The fundraising drive has the backing of North Wales Police Federation, which is encouraging members to get involved.

Secretary Mark Jones said: "Wales is the only country in the UK without a dedicated national police memorial and we'd really like to change that.

"More than 80 police officers have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty in Wales and we want to ensure that sacrifice is never be forgotten.

"A Welsh National Police Memorial would give family, friends, colleagues and the public a place to reflect on the loss of members of our police service and can carry

out their own acts of remembrance.

"Any help in making it become a reality would be fantastic," he added.

Students from the University of Wales Trinity St David's (UWTSD) Swansea School of Architecture won a competition to design the memorial.

It will be located in Alexandra Gardens in Cardiff, close to the National Welsh War Memorial and National Welsh Falklands War Memorial.

John Giblin, vice-chair of the Police Roll of Honour Trust, said: "It's intended the memorial will be funded by public and workforce fundraising and donations.

"Donations have already been received



from the police family and are being held by the trust.

"We're a small charity managed by volunteers, who are serving officers, retired officers and the relatives of fallen officers.

"The trust is rich in experience but poor on funding, so we make every penny count."

To donate to the memorial, visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/welshpolicememorial



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