

YOUR VOICE

Ffederasiwn Heddlu Gogledd Cymru /
North Wales Police Federation



June 2015

CONFERENCE
2015 SPECIAL
EDITION

**'Scaremongering'
Federation told to
'stop crying wolf'**

Representing • Negotiating • Influencing

Secretary's foreword 2 - 3

Enough is enough - chair wastes no time in getting his message across 3

Chairman's message 4

'Scaremongering' Federation accused of 'crying wolf' 5

Neighbourhood policing: an endangered species? 6 - 7

Home Secretary Q & As 8 - 9

BWV: 'Best bit of kit' 10 - 11

College talk for detectives 11

Officer assault 'never, ever' part of the job 12 - 13

Posthumous award for PCs

Fiona Bone and Nicola Hughes 13

Mental health custody scandal - much more to be done 14 - 15

Lively debate over political challenge 16

Forces need to look at diversity 17

Women in policing - 100 years of change 18

Federation on track with reform programme 19

Neighbourhood policing vital in fight against terrorism 21

Panel calls for drink-drive limit to be cut 23

Support the Federation in challenging times 25

Inspectors and chief inspectors urged to take part in well-being survey 25

My last shift 27

Published by North Wales Police Federation, Police Federation Office, 311 Abergele Road, Old Colwyn, Conwy LL29 9YF
Designed and produced by XPR (UK) Ltd
www.xpruk.com

Conference photos by Anderson Photography
www.andersonphotography.co.uk

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Cuts are bleeding the police service dry



By Richard Eccles, Secretary, North Wales Police Federation

This year the focus for the Police Federation Annual Conference seemed to have reached a point whereby the agenda was more focussed towards some key topics for operational officers.

Officer assaults

Body worn video

Diversity – myth or reality?

There was still the unanswered question as to who would walk away from Wednesday's "battle" for supremacy after the keynote speeches from national Federation Chairman Steve White and Home Secretary Theresa May.

Having witnessed last year's vitriolic speech from Mrs May, I was quite happy to accept another kicking for the Federation as long as that bought some breathing space or concessions for officers struggling to cope at the front-line of the best police service in the world.

The run up to conference had seen a growing band of figures involved in policing signing up to the mantra Cuts Have Consequences.

After an initial period of denial in the offices of certain figures, including

Federation officials, chief officers, Police and Crime Commissioners and elected Members of Parliament, we were starting to see the green shoots of truth breaking through about the impact of cuts on police budgets and operations.

Conference itself was running a strap line of *Cuts Have Consequences*.

The scene was set and it allowed for the Home Secretary to accept that perhaps she needed to reflect and step back from the brink of overseeing the demise of British policing.

Steve White opened up with a stern message:

"The Police Federation always takes British policing seriously.

And, Home Secretary, the current situation is deadly serious.

So you need to listen. You seriously need to listen.

And do not make the mistake of dismissing what you hear. Thinking - here they go again - the Police Federation, moaning and scaremongering.

No.

Here we are again. The Police Federation. Telling it like it is.

And scaremongering?

Well, if the public aren't scared, perhaps they would be if they knew just how few cops were on the night shift while they slept last night.

So, if you genuinely care about policing, if you genuinely care about the security of the citizens of this country. Listen to us.

Between us, we have hundreds of years of experience. We represent the frontline.

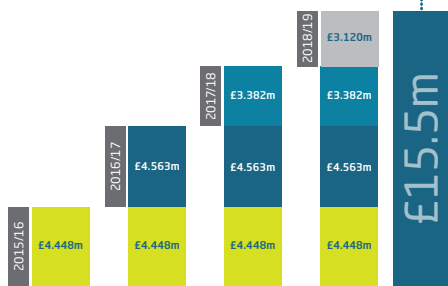
The thin blue line. The ever thinner blue line. The opaque blue line. Stretched to the limit.

The Police Federation is the voice of policing. The real voice of policing.

So this week, we are not shying away from telling home truths. Telling the truth

Financial Savings Programme

Cuts required over the next four years



about the consequences of budget cuts to policing.”

That speech quite clearly spelt out the impact of ongoing budget cuts on policing and the communities across England and Wales.

The Home Secretary was clearly in no mood for granting concessions, listening to reason or indeed having an evidenced debate about the police service as she set out:

“We have had to make some tough and difficult decisions. We have reformed your pay and pensions, reduced police spending and yes, there are fewer officers overall.

But despite the predictions of the Federation, and despite the predictions of the politicians who wanted to sell you a false dream of ever more spending, crime is down by more than a quarter since 2010.

You’ve said neighbourhood police officers are an ‘endangered species’.

This kind of scaremongering does nobody any good. It doesn’t serve you, it doesn’t serve the officers you represent and it doesn’t serve the public.”

It is clear that the Home Secretary has no appetite for supporting forces or officers in the face of huge budget cuts and when I asked her about her plans to improve officer morale from its lowest point in 25 years she ducked the question like a seasoned professional boxer!

In reality, if we do not challenge these cuts we will assist and oversee the demise of the British police service over coming years.

I say that as the Government is seemingly determined to implement the budget cuts upon every Force, our figures are set out in the chart alongside this article.

We as police officers will undoubtedly adopt our “can do” approach and continue to deliver the very best that we can as the resources disappear.

What we cannot do is accept that in silence.

Since that session with the Home Secretary and the release of the video setting out “You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone”, I have been heartened

to see the support across the media from officers and the public.

We must ensure that we deliver a clear, accurate, evidenced and honest message at every stage of the debate until we can truly turn around this campaign of cuts.

The public need to realise that Cuts Have Consequences and if we do not stop the cuts then policing will be bled dry.

“We as police officers will undoubtedly adopt our “can do” approach and continue to deliver the very best that we can as the resources disappear. What we cannot do is accept that in silence.”

Enough is enough - chair wastes no time in getting his message across

The Police Federation would send out a clear and simple message to the Government: ‘enough is enough’, the national chairman told delegates in his opening address to conference.

And, he added, it would also be making the public aware that cuts have consequences for the police service but also for communities too. Forces were trying to provide a modern day policing service, with 20th century numbers and funding from the 19th century.

“Cuts have consequences and, quite simply, we can do no more. This week we will be discussing what the consequences have been to the service but, more importantly, we will be looking ahead to the dire potential outcomes if things do not change. The dire outcome for officers and, most importantly, for the public,” he said.

“We will also be hearing about the challenges we have in taking our concerns to the public and the Government before

it’s too late: because, if the Government is not careful, it will be too late and the public and those in power won’t realise what they have got in the police service until it’s gone.”

Politicians, he explained, seemed to think the police were the last great unreformed service but, he argued, the service had undergone considerable change in the last 12 years. His message was: we can change, we are still changing, we do change. He reminded conference that it was the Federation and not the Government that had instigated the independent review of the organisation.

The Federation, he said, would always stand up for its members, officers who were at breaking point. He urged the Government to stand up for police officers rather than stand up to the Federation.

The chairman’s opening address included a film showing footage and interviews at last year’s Police Bravery Awards in London in October.

Did I sense an olive branch?



By Simon Newport
Chairman of North Wales Police Federation

Tuesday 19 May 2015 saw the start of the Police Federation of England and Wales' 91st annual national conference in Bournemouth, Dorset.

As Chairman of the North Wales Police Federation, my first task was to engage in a BBC Radio Wales interview on the breakfast show broadcast live at 0850hrs. I was interviewed alongside the Conservative MP for Monmouth, David Davies, who has in the past been a Special Constable. The initial questions related to the ongoing review of the Police Federation and my expectations for conference.

Following this, I took my place in the auditorium for the start of conference. It was noticeable from the outset that there was a reduced number of delegates and the format of conference had changed. This was in line with the current PFEW reform and was a clear indication of progress.

The main agenda items highly anticipated by all were the keynote speeches of Federation Chairman Steve White and Home Secretary Theresa May MP largely due

to the damning speech she made last year.

These were delivered on Wednesday morning with the Chairman speaking first. He said, in a passionate, well received speech, that it had been a difficult year for all concerned in policing but he would not shy away from telling the truth about the effects of continuing cuts.

He informed the Home Secretary policing was not a business but a service and, importantly, a service that doesn't say no and always tries to find a way to protect and serve communities.

He remarked to the Home Secretary that "You don't know what you've got until it's gone" and a video was played which has since gone viral on YouTube. The hard-hitting film showed everyday events being dealt with by police that go unreported and unnoticed until during the final scene an officer was not available and the incident made the headlines.

Mention was made that the police are propping up other public services that take away many officers' hours from policing duties and Mr White encouraged the Home Secretary to work with police instead of against them. Calls were made for an independent review on policing and the Criminal Justice System, a review of the structure of the existing 43 forces across England and Wales and the roll-out of more Tasers.

Mr White's speech was received with a standing ovation from delegates in the room, an indication that his words had been well received.

In response, the Home Secretary addressed conference and immediately remembered fallen officers and thanked all officers for their bravery and dedication to duty.

Once the niceties were out of the way, the Home Secretary accused the PFEW of scaremongering and urged it to stop crying wolf. This was the headline that the national press picked up on and published in their news reports following her speech.

Despite this no nonsense approach from the Home Secretary, once she had spoken of this matter, the rest of her speech was rather more conciliatory.

My overall view of the Home Secretary's speech was that it was transparent and set out clear objectives. It definitely had an 'olive branch' feel about it.

My hope now is that the national PFEW takes the offer of working with the Government seriously. This Government has, over the past five years, fundamentally dismantled our terms, conditions and pensions.

The wounds that were opened up from Winsor and pension reform will take many years to heal but there is an old saying that you should keep your friends close and your enemies closer and it is my view that the offer from the Home Secretary to work together should not be dismissed out of hand.

Overall, this year's conference was different for a host of reasons as a direct consequence of the ongoing work of the PFEW review. As this continues, I expect conferences from 2017 will look even more different.

There is much more hard work to come but please be ensured that as your Joint Branch Board Chairman, together with the Joint Branch Board Secretary, Richard Eccles, and the other members of the North Wales Police Federation, we will continue to represent, negotiate and influence on your behalf.

“ The rest of her speech was rather more conciliatory. ”



to be used as an overspill facility for A & E - or for secure children's homes to use the police to control the children in their care. "And I will do everything I can to work with other departments to reduce other unnecessary demand on policing."

Technology will change too. Notebooks and pens could be a thing of the past for officers, with handheld tablets loaded with apps, currently being used by Cambridgeshire, possibly the way of the future along with body-worn video.

The Home Secretary envisages police cars becoming mobile police stations, removing the need for officers to go back to the station to type up paperwork.

And she promised she will listen to the Federation, saying: "If, in everything I am talking about, the Federation comes to me with serious proposals to help change policing for the better, then I will listen."

"Because if we do this right, if you come with me and if you work with me, then we will be able to deliver the reform necessary and improve the working lives of police officers while cutting crime for the public."

She continued: "The choice is yours. As Home Secretary, I can – as I have for the last five years – reform the police without the support of the Federation. But the opportunity to work constructively with Government should make the world of difference to you. So join me and work with me to change policing. The reward will be a better police – for officers and staff and the public you serve – and a country that will be safer and fairer than ever before."

She promised up to £15 million is to be made available to deliver health-based places of safety in England so no-one is to be detained by police and held in custody due to a lack of suitable alternative.

And she announced a major independent review of the use of local crime and performance targets in every police force in England and Wales, to be led by Irene Curtis – president of the police Superintendents' Association.

She concluded: "What I have set out today will help transform policing for the better. If you want British policing to be the best it can be, join with me to make that happen."

Home Secretary Theresa May has warned the Police Federation to stop 'crying wolf' over the cuts and warned more savings will have to be made over the next five years.

Speaking at the annual national conference in Bournemouth, she said the Federation had spent years 'scaremongering', with promises of rising crime rates which had failed to materialise, and claimed reform had been 'unambiguously good' for policing.

She announced that 'police reform is working', with the cutting of bureaucracy and central targets saving up to 4.5 million police hours – the equivalent of 2,100 full-time officers.

And she said more cuts were to come: "If we want policing in this country to be the best it can be, then we must reform further."

The Home Secretary told delegates: "There is no ducking the fact that police spending will have to come down again. The last five years have shown that it is possible to do more with less – crime has fallen, the front-line service has been maintained and public confidence in the police is up, even as spending has reduced."

She continued: "I know there are those who say there is no more waste to cut. But I simply do not accept that. It is perfectly possible to make savings without affecting

the quality of neighbourhood policing.

"Because I know – as you do – that there is still wasteful spending in policing and that resources are still not linked to demand."

She suggested savings are found in more collaboration, a reduction in staff officers and improved ICT and said the next five years of reform would mean working to understand and reduce demand on policing.

There would be more focus on greater reporting of previously ignored or under-reported crimes, such as child abuse and less 'social worker' activities.

"As I have said, the police are not social workers, they are not mental health nurses, or paramedics. I stand by the sentiment," she explained.

"It is not good enough for police custody

“ I know there are those who say there is no more waste to cut. But I simply do not accept that. It is perfectly possible to make savings without affecting the quality of neighbourhood policing. ”



Neighbourhood policing: an endangered species



The effects of cuts to neighbourhood policing in North Wales.



Forces are being forced to choose between neighbourhood policing and 999 responses now they are cut to the bone.

Steve White, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, expressed concerns about the decline in neighbourhood policing saying it was becoming an endangered species.

“Neighbourhood policing, the foundation of local confidence, trust and reassurance in communities that the police are there; that the police will be there when needed, policing with their consent,” he said in his keynote address to conference.

“Neighbourhood policing - the source of so much information that stops the public from becoming victims of crime; that keeps people safe, that prevents terrorist attacks on our country.

“And neighbourhood policing is just one

of the endangered species in the new stream-lined barren policing landscape.

“A generation of young people is growing up never seeing their local police unless they are unfortunate enough to experience a serious crime. Is that the type of police service the public deserve?

“Policing is about building relationships. Not statistics. Not computer says no. Not chancellor says no.”

And he hit back at Government claims that the cuts were having no detrimental effect, saying: “Home Secretary: cuts really do have consequences. And we see them every day.

“We see the shocked, traumatised faces of the victims of crime. We see the tears of people who feel rushed, passed over, dismissed, as fewer officers try to deal with the number of emergency calls.

“Police officers forced to run from job to job, at the expense of being able to provide the highest quality service to those asking for help.

“We share the heartache of the public who tell us we are a service, not a business. A service that they expect to be there when they need it; a service that doesn't say no. But the cuts are now making that impossible.”

ies?

He said chief constables and police and crime commissioners across the country fear the consequences of further budget cuts and warned civilianising police officer roles 'sure as hell' wasn't a solution.

"Police officers understand their role is to serve the public. They are not private security guards or box-ticking functionaries because they do more than going through the motions. They are committed professionals trained to go the extra mile," he said.

"Let's look at the real costs of cuts. The human cost to my colleagues. Colleagues who have to deal with the stress of leaving one job half done to get to the next emergency call; the cost to their own health and welfare. The low morale officers feel; undervalued, unappreciated by Government.

"When you look at the national budget, the amount we spend on policing in comparison to other areas, such as overseas aid, is peanuts. So what else do you expect us to cut? We have responded magnificently over the past five years, but it has come at a cost."

He hit out saying the cuts now felt personal, with officers being expected to do much more with much less and the pensions goalpost having moved significantly.



Steve White.

And he called for an independent review of policing that takes account of what the public wants.

He went on to suggest the option of a one-force model is explored further saying: "We currently have over 43 police forces operating in England and Wales. Who does that really benefit? To the public, the police are the police. They don't distinguish between cap badges.

"To them the structure is irrelevant. What matters is when they need help, they get it. What matters is feet on the beat; cops investigating crime. Shouldn't we at least be having a conversation about structure? A look at how many forces we need?" the chairman asked.

He called on the Home Secretary to

ensure the resources, such as Taser, will be there as extra protection for officers.

And he said the Federation was standing by 'ready to be part of the conversation'.

He said: "We are not asking you to put your life on the line as so many police officers do every day. But we do ask that you act for the long term.

"Home Secretary, after five long years in office, you know the Police Federation has never been an obstacle to change.

"We have shown you we are changing ourselves. We have actively sought change. But change that is considered; change that is long term. And change that is for the good of policing and the public."

OUR REPS SAY...

Steve White gave a polished and well rehearsed speech. He received a standing ovation at the end. There was conciliation to a point in terms of his delivery but he by no means rolled over or apologised for some of our previous embarrassments. Members appeared happy with what he said.

Overall I agreed with what he said. I would like to have seen a more reflective approach and a move towards working together in partnership and the Home Secretary stole the headlines in that respect. I think that was a missed opportunity. I would like to have seen more of a discussion around a reduction in the number of forces in England and Wales.

Andy Broadhead

Our chair, Steve White, came out fighting. He laid it out, what had happened and was happening in British policing. I am not 100 per cent sure that comments about Plebgate were really appropriate, I'd hoped that the affair had been put to bed, raking over the coals isn't always necessary, after all we had regained the moral high

ground, this felt like we were rubbing her nose in it!

Steve was positive, he stressed we had moved forward, that we had embraced the Normington Report and PFEW was moving forward with the restructuring of our organisation. He was right to highlight the changes to members' pay and conditions and most importantly to the pensions. We can't negotiate, but spot on Steve, there was protection on changing our pensions, that was written in law and no one in the service can be happy that the law was rewritten to enable change.

Dave Thomas

I was impressed with the message and delivery from Steve and it represented what the members would want him to say. It offered some challenges to the Home Secretary about engagement with PFEW. On two or three occasions he strayed into an area of personal comments which probably did not help and could have backfired; Plebgate was never a case that either side won. Great use of videos to highlight the role we do and the risks of cutting numbers further.

Richard Eccles

Home Secretary Q & A



There were four pre-selected questions in a post-speech Q and A session with the Home Secretary before questions were taken from the floor. The first came from North Wales Police Federation Secretary Richard Eccles.

He referred to the 2010 pay deal and reminded the Home Secretary she had said: I will always back you, I will always support you, I will always fight for you. He said: "I have not known a time when



police morale has been so low, officers feel under sustained attack from the media, the Government and the Home Office, at times our only allies are the public we serve. Five years on, do you feel you have honoured the original deal and what do you personally intend to do to lift police morale?"

Theresa May responded that she felt she had honoured the deal set out in 2010. That there had been some significant changes in the past five years but that some of those changes had been about making policing more professional and about helping police officers to get on and do the job they want to do. She added that freeing up officers from targets and bureaucracy is important and that the College of Policing is playing an important role in increasing professionalism.

Jon Hassall from Lincolnshire asked the Home Secretary to look at processes around the European Arrest Warrant, and particularly around the need for officers from around the country having to attend

courts and prisons in Westminster. When detainees are being repatriated, officers then have to attend airports in the South East. He said: "Surely it would be more cost effective to allow European Arrest Warrant hearings to take place at local magistrates' courts and keep officers in their forces."

Theresa May said the European Arrest Warrant had been intended to improve the process, but promised to look at the bureaucratic processes around it.

Richie Jones of South Wales asked the Home Secretary to review the current legislation which prevented a police officer resigning or retiring while subject to a misconduct hearing. He asked that she allow them to attend hearings after they have left the Force, and if found guilty to be placed on the disapproved register.

Theresa May confirmed she was happy to look at the issues again but said it was important from the public point of view to ensure police officers cannot avoid going through disciplinary requirements.

Jake Vine, Metropolitan Police, queried the size of the cuts to come. He said he believed that while there was more that could be done, it is the rumoured size of potential cuts that he feared. He asked whether the Home Secretary was taking risks with public safety and with the police. He added: "A lot of what you say about saving money is great. I'd love to have an iPad, a Taser might be a nice idea, but I would rather have a colleague."

Theresa May replied that there was a proper process - the Comprehensive Spending Review - which would set the

budgets for Government spending plans for the next five years. That will determine the impact on the Home Office and the policing budget. Nobody yet knows what those figures will be, but she said that HMIC has itself highlighted the scope for further savings and urged forces to look at where those can be made so that the front-line is protected.

The session facilitator, journalist **Krishnan-Guru Murthy** reminded the Home Secretary that she had told the Federation they needed to stop crying wolf, but said in that story both the boy and the sheep got killed.

Theresa May said that over a number of years the Federation has said it was impossible to cut police budgets, and yet the independent crime survey has shown crime falling over the last five years. She added: "Transformation is possible, and it is possible to do more with less."

Another rep said that the Home Secretary has repeatedly mentioned that crime is down, as though it is some sort of Tory success, but pointed out that crime is just a fraction of what the police do. He added that crime is down for a number of reasons - manufacturers making cars more secure, local authorities with CCTV, tracking devices on phones. It is a joint success.

An Essex rep posed a question relating to domestic violence. He asked the Home Secretary when she will ensure all 43 police forces use the same computer systems so they can talk to each other. He said: "I have to deal with CPS on a daily basis and they cannot accept a file bigger than 1MB. If I

wanted to send you my heartbeat from an Apple watch, and you are wearing one, I can do that quite easily, and yet I cannot show violent footage to a CPS lawyer for a very quick decision to protect someone."

Theresa May accepted that this is a valid issue. She promised they would be looking at IT across the criminal justice system. She added that there are changes to be made in police IT, in how it is used and procured. She also said the CPS and the court system are looking at how they deal with IT and how they can improve, and said these reviews needed to be joined up so that the advantages for one part of the system benefit the others. She promised to discuss the issue with the Justice Secretary.

John Apter, Hampshire, said: "Everyone in this room feels that assaults on officers should be a priority, and it is for us. However, we don't really know the true picture of the problem, because there is no national data, no national guidance and no national scrutiny... In the spirit of working together, can I ask you to take personal responsibility for the issues around data, so that we can have a meaningful discussion and nationally we know the true picture instead of force by force?"

Theresa May assured conference that this is an issue the Home Office is looking at to try to get a much better picture and the first step will be to get a better set of statistics.

David O'Riley, GMP, reminded the Home Secretary that in November 2010 she had presented him with a Community Police Officer of the Year award. He went on to say that he had worked for 15 years and believed passionately in what he was doing, but in 2012 he had left because he felt changes were causing community policing to collapse; intelligence had dried up, the service was reactive rather than proactive. He said: "We run the risk here of letting communities down, putting officers at risk and ultimately risking national security. I would ask you to reconsider the budgets and level of cuts for the next five years."

Theresa May thanked him for what he had done as a Community Police Officer, and said she was sorry he had felt unable to continue in that role. But she went on to say that how forces have responded has varied. Figures show the numbers of neighbourhood officers has increased overall, but not in all forces. She acknowledged that there have also been changes to the role, but said that information from the public remains important and that it comes in a variety of ways, not just from the warranted officer. Responding, Steve White said he differed with the Home Secretary. Their research showed that in 30 forces Neighbourhood Community Teams have been subsumed

within response or disappeared altogether. He said: "It is so important that you listen to people like David, Neighbourhood policing is so important. This is not scaremongering. The fact that we have told subsequent Home Secretaries time and again a similar

message means we are not being listened to ... it is not because of Government policy that we manage to be as effective as we are, it is despite it, and it is because of the men and women in this room who have made it work, we always do."

OUR REPS SAY...

I had expected an outright attack and feedback that reform was not quick enough which did not happen! She appeared detached and angry from the moment she walked into the room, but once speaking she seemed to soften her look slightly. The message was at times a repetition of last year and she never accepted concerns around the impact of cuts.

Bizarrely, she seemed to offer a concession which was almost what Steve had asked for, namely joint working on policing matters moving forward. PFEW needs to accept the challenge and structure to fully engage and inform decisions to ensure that officers get the best deal possible on all matters. That will require a leap of faith from both sides to build up trust to prevent officers losing out.

The Q and A session was useful but she failed to answer many questions and, even when presented with real evidence from officers removed from Neighbourhood Policing, she refused to concede points. The session suffered as the facilitator failed to hold her to account.

Richard Eccles

She did not really give much away in terms of 'announcements'. The proposals regarding care were good news but sadly won't apply to Wales. She didn't give us a mauling as in previous years. A typical politician's speech, factual where relevant but lacking detail and warmth or humour.

It was best described as conciliatory I guess. She made the point 'either work with me or continue to shout from the sidelines' and we are in no doubt reform will continue. She was softer than previous years but let's not get carried away until after the next spending review.

Andy Broadhead

One thing you can be sure of, this Home Secretary isn't for shifting far from her stance of the previous five years. There will be more cuts and she is determined to drive forward the "efficiency savings" she believes are still attainable in policing.

ICT was once more raised, this is an area that really needs a focussed approach, but it's difficult; we tried a few years ago to get a single system across the four Welsh forces. The theory is good, the application is very difficult as historically there are many different systems across the country.

It wasn't the lambasting I thought we were in for. This was a more conciliatory address with an offer for the PFEW to perhaps engage more in the future and I think that banging heads with the Home Secretary and Government isn't a productive way forward. That said, there were also some bizarre ideas, like police vehicles becoming more like mobile police stations. The theory perhaps is good, logistically and infrastructure wise it's different.

What does the future hold? Certainly, more cuts to budgets. Certainly, I think reductions in visible police presence on the streets, but it's down to our chief officers to work at a local level with local branch boards to ensure where we cut has the least effect.

One last point: she was talking about reducing the demand on the service in one breath, yet in the next, she spoke of the police taking on more of the case work of the CPS presenting cases at court. Is this because the CPS can't cope because of cuts and this is yet another organisation that falls back on the police to fill the gap?

It was a more productive address and session and at least she did appear to be interested and show some interest in suggestions put forward.

Dave Thomas

I personally felt that the Home Secretary's response was constructive and fair. No attacks in her speech but plain and clear simple language used.

I hope that the PFEW takes up the offer of working together in the next five years as this will see policing issues scrutinised by both Government and PFEW. Working together after several years of fighting is surely much better and I, for one, sincerely hope that the offer is taken up for the greater good of the future of the police service.

Simon Newport



BWV: 'Best bit of kit'

Body-worn video (BWV) has an important part to play in modern policing, but should not be used to supersede the honestly held belief of an officer caught up in a violent, or potentially violent, situation.

That was the message from speaker after speaker at conference as they recognised the many benefits of BWV and highlighted concerns.

Andy Marsh, Chief Constable of Hampshire, referred to the work done within his Force where officers are encouraged to provide commentary when wearing BWV. Many have described it as: "The best bit of kit I have ever been given."

Benefits, he said, included:

- **transparency - showing the level of violence being faced**
- **being an independent witness, catching the dynamic decision-making process**
- **ensuring charges reflect the level of violence**
- **giving victims confidence to give evidence and go to court**
- **a reduction in complaints**
- **earlier guilty pleas when perpetrators are faced with the evidence, saving time and money**
- **possible moderation of behaviour of individuals.**

He is deploying 2,800 BWV to front-

line staff, funded through reserves, and said: "If we are going to have fewer staff, those fewer people have to be well led, well equipped and supported by technology."

PS Adam Smith, firearms training officer with the Met, said the very many differences between seeing through our eyes and the images taken, via a video camera. He went on to say that the mounting options of BWV cameras is of key importance.

Carl Gumsley, Commissioner, IPCC, acknowledged the benefits of BWV, but warned answers must be found to some of the questions around its use.

Scott Ingram, senior principal lawyer, Slater & Gordon, raised concerns that in death and serious injury cases officers may not be allowed to review BWV evidence before making detailed statements at the earliest opportunity. He feared this undermines the position of an officer who is a witness, but who can very quickly become a suspect, and whose recall may be affected by emotional turmoil after events.

Doug Campbell, PFEW, said the Federation is fully behind BWV but wants assurances of issues around video ownership, encryption, standardisation, procurement, sustainability of technology, compatibility and accessibility across the police service and the wider criminal justice system.

OUR REPS SAY...

With the imminent implementation of Body Worn Video (BWV) this session was very relevant and came at the right time. It was interesting to have a good cross section of expert panellists who could approach the topic from their own professional backgrounds and give detailed views on how this new change of evidence gathering will affect front-line officers.

It was impressive to see how Hampshire Police had embraced the new technology and used it to its full potential. What was pleasing was how the courts value this vital piece of evidence and have fully considered it when sentencing. In fact, sentences in some cases had even been increased based on the gravity of the video footage.

The saying goes that the "camera never lies". This has been even more relevant with BWV and research showing that the number of complaints against officers wearing BWV had been reduced. This can only be a good thing. Further research has shown that public confidence is improved, professionalism by officers is unquestionable and that it plays a significant role in being your independent witness by showing first-hand what officers are dealing with at an incident.

Of course, there are always going to be sceptics of new technology but I'm confident that once BWV has been shown to be a useful tool at our disposal then people will see its advantages.

I encourage all officers to embrace this new kit, use it to its full potential and not only will it protect you from vexatious complaints but it will protect the public we serve.

Mark Jones

A good session illustrating the assistance BWV can give in not only providing evidence but protecting officers. An emphasis was placed on training, not electronic based but on a personal level.

Mick Laidlaw

As an RPU sergeant I am not involved in any trial of BWV but have been using in-car video for a few years now, and recently investigated a POLVAC which relied heavily on footage to clear an officer of any possible wrong doing. Collision was dealt with very quickly with IPCC and PSD were happy once footage was viewed.

I believe the benefit to individuals involves a reduction in malicious complaints, a deterrent with regards to assaults on officers, and an increase in guilty pleas when evidence is made available.

I don't see what the disadvantages could be providing the policy and procedures are clearly identified. Officers shouldn't be fearful if they are doing their



job in the right way. I believe it will increase public confidence when widely used.

Officers should not be concerned in using these, they are more likely to protect them than prove a wrong doing. They need to embrace them for a number of reasons, to protect officers from assaults and reduce complaints, but need to realise they are not a panacea.

Jane Thomas

This was an extremely useful session bearing in mind the roll-out in NWP. It raised some issues around perceptual distortion and presentation of evidence that will help me representing and advising colleagues. It clearly offers a huge opportunity to reduce public complaints and safeguard officers from false allegations.

The public in general will be reassured but clearly those committing crime or engaged in anti-social behaviour will not welcome the initiative. The session raised some actions for me to take back to inform the Project Group to ensure that we create the best environment for officers deployed with BWV.

It was interesting to see opposing views from the IPCC and others regarding the viewing of footage post incident, this will be a key area for those Federation representatives advising officers.

Richard Eccles

One of the officers on my team has been involved with the trial of BWV and I've found it a fantastic piece of evidence resulting in people being charged for offences who may not have been prosecuted previously due to lack of evidence. I find BWV is very effective but there are concerns in some areas and how others view the footage.

Kim Owen

I sit on the BWV committee and have now started to wear one since the trial began in West Conwy.

It is important that officers are confident of their powers and this can be easily grasped by completing the excellent Ncalt package produced by Hants.

It is clear that from listening to the experts that have presented on this session the introduction of BWV has had nothing but a positive effect. There are some short comings when it comes to retention of data and perception captured by the unit or the "honestly held belief". Despite this, it is our opinion the BWV provides an excellent tool to capture best evidence and this session has only cemented our support for its use."

Simon Newport

College talk for detectives



By Nick Hawe and Paul Speight, North Wales Police Federation representatives

The Police Federation National Detectives' Forum session on Tuesday evening was merely a presentation from the College Of Policing (COP). The theme was that the COP will be 'your professional membership body'. The speakers were Fiona Aldridge (head of membership) and Jo Taylor (policing standards manager). Their vision is to be a world class professional body, to equip members with the skills and knowledge to prevent crime, protect the public and serve the public trust.

The COP is striving to establish chartered status with officers and staff as members. This status will mean that they can become independent of Government.

Their values:

Integrity: deliver a professional service, admit when they make mistakes, uphold the Code of Ethics.

Respect: open and honest, promote equality, work collaboratively, make decisions openly.

Evidence: generate and share, support innovation, admit when they don't know answers, make decisions based on the best evidence available.

Improvement: ongoing.

The COP wants to set the standards for a professional service, using an Authorised Professional Practice, details of which will be available to the public.

They are starting a members' committee which is open to all. There will be a members hub on Polka, and a new website later in the year. At the moment, officers have different log-ins for Polka and Ncalt, but these will all be brought under one site.

The COP will offer extra coaching for professional development (promotion mentoring, for example), which will be a 'paid for' service. Standard membership will be free. Premium membership will be charged, providing further study support, guides, career

support, coaching and mentoring, mobile apps, lifestyle benefits with discounts and offers related to the profession (eg Blackstones books) and professionalised updates. It has not decided whether this will be an annual fee, or pay as you go (for certain services) or both.

A new website, which will go live at the "back end" of 2015, will give each member their own profile, and list training and achievements. If an officer moves force, this profile will go with them. There will also be discussion and mentoring forums.

The college wants to promote and use the best available evidence, practice, standards and professionalism.

PIP was talked about. There was a PIP review commissioned in 2013 and 39 recommendations were submitted to the Professional Committee in July 2014. These are to be implemented and the majority have been completed (some of which are simply name changes to learning programmes).

PIP implementation: the speaker talked about career pathways with assessment, accreditation, registration and Pro 8 which seems to be this system of individual portfolios where members can manage their development and learning in one place. It will fall to the officer to own the profile and keep it up to date. The fact that forces have issues with current training records was discussed.

Concerns were raised regarding possible 'elitism' with richer forces or wealthier officers being able to access more services or courses. It was also accepted by the COP representatives that they had no power to instruct chief constables to 'buy in' to this scheme, and therefore some forces may simply ignore it and be left behind.

Officer assault 'never, ever' part of the job

Assaults on police officers should "never, ever" be considered part and parcel of the job, and every Federation should be challenging what is happening to protect and support officers in their own forces, conference was told.

John Apter, chairman of Hampshire Police Federation, shared his own experience of looking at the issues raised by assaults on officers, and the shocking lack of a national data base to show the true numbers of police officers affected.

Setting the scene was a chilling body-worn video clip from Hampshire Sergeant Kerry Lawrence being severely assaulted last year while dealing with a 'routine' case. The perpetrator later received a three-year sentence, partly because the judge could see the level of violence involved.

John revealed the strong support he had received when he challenged his Chief Constable to protect officers.

John said: "Officers were telling me that assaults against them were getting more vicious, they were all single crewed and the perception from officers was that it was getting too bad and that we, the Federation, had to do something about it."

A Crisis Gold Group, chief officer-led, was set up to look at officer assaults.

Hampshire has developed a simple seven-point plan which it will be

circulating to other forces. The plan spells out how to better protect and support officers, and to help them return to the front-line quicker after injury.

ACO Nicola Cornelius, Hampshire Constabulary, said they discovered that only around 20 per cent of assaults were being recorded on their own health & safety system compared to their CRS system, which they are now relying on for a more accurate and ethical picture.

She said: "I was very surprised to find that some of our own officers seemed to accept assault was just part of the job, it's just what happens. It must never, ever become that. It is never acceptable to come to work and be assaulted."

Chief Superintendent Scott Chilton, Hampshire Constabulary, warned: "We only really hear about the vicious assault, but there are thousands of cases where officers are spat at, punched, kicked or dragged and we don't hear about it. As a service, if we can't protect our own staff, what does that say to the victim?"

John Montague, Senior District Crown Prosecutor, CPS Wessex, had looked in detail at cases in two months in Hampshire this year, there was a conviction rate, if you have assaulted a police officer, of 95 per cent involving police assault against a general rate in Hampshire of 84 per cent.



John Apter, chairman, Hampshire Police Federation.

UPDATE

Since returning from the conference and examining the detail of the work carried out by Hampshire, your local Federation representatives have already engaged with the Senior Management Team and work is planned to fully explore, assess and act upon any areas which need to be improved to ensure officer safety.

OUR REPS SAY...

I thought this session was very pertinent, I watched the video of the female officer in Hampshire being assaulted and was very upset by it at the time. I have been assaulted myself on various occasions, mostly in custody where I too have been guilty of accepting it was part of the role I did. Bruised and grazed legs from kicks and scratches to my arms were all part of dealing with drunken violent prisoners! Officers get assaulted all the time and this session made me realise that this needs to be recorded every time and not be acceptable in any role.

The session explained in detail how Hampshire have dealt with assaults, their seven point plan and how the officer must be looked after properly and treated as a victim. Officers shouldn't have to investigate their own assaults which happens frequently and care and consideration should be taken by both the Force and the Federation to ensure

the welfare of that officer is paramount.

I remember being punched in the face many years ago where I did have to investigate my own crime. I wrote the statements and in court was accused of writing it in my own words and not those of the witnesses. I very recently was spat upon and can quite honestly say that I felt physically sick. Even though I wrote about it in my statement the suspect was not charged with that assault until I went to court for the first of three occasions when I spoke direct to CPS about it.

I think it is a problem in North Wales and is getting worse as violent crime is rising and officers are single crewed more often to incidents as there are just not enough to go around. The public are less likely to help us these days because they fear for their own personal safety. I don't blame them if I am honest, suspects are regularly drunk, under

the influence of drugs and respect for the role that I do has diminished somewhat among the criminals and some young people. Being a woman in uniform now makes very little difference whereas when I started out in my career it made a significant difference, to most, so I am always on my guard and very aware when I am out on patrol on my own.

I think greater sentences would be a deterrent to start the ball rolling. I also think officers should not be so blasé about how they deal with suspects. There are times when officers get assaulted in custody because they let their guard down and feel safe. It's one of the most hostile environments at times and as a custody sergeant it was a regular occurrence that we ended up using force to get individuals to a cell. It can never be the nature of the job, why should police officers expect to be



Sam Roberts, chair, Sergeants' Branch Board.

assaulted? But we all know it may happen as we take people's liberty!

I would like to see all Forces, my own particularly, examining the Hampshire approach to officer assaults and I would like us to be able to record real, up to date figures around the subject. I was heartened by the approach of the CPS and again let's see this mirrored around the country. We shouldn't have to go to our senior managers to get them to challenge a CPS decision about the difference between an actual bodily harm and an assault on the police. If you lay a finger on a police officer who is acting in the execution of their duty then you should feel the full force of the law.

Sam Roberts

The session ended with the reminder to ensure that the points raised are taken back to our forces and applied. Further work is potentially to be undertaken by the College of Policing concerning training. However, it is paramount that the assaults are correctly reported and investigated so proper medical and welfare issues are addressed. It should be the exception not the norm to be assaulted in the workplace.

Mick Laidlaw

I echo what the speakers said in that no officer should ever go to work accepting that being assaulted is just "part of the job". The affects of assaults, no matter what seriousness they may be defined as, will clearly have a lasting impact on the officers, or should we say VICTIMS! I found the session insightful but also concerning as to the increasing volume of officer assaults around the country and that there is still no accurate records on how many officers are assaulted each year throughout the 43 forces. This needs addressing immediately.

I was in admiration on how the Hampshire Federation had tackled this head on and that significant progress had been made in identifying root causes, training gaps and equipment deficiencies. The new 'seven point plan' was concise, relevant and now greatly needed to be implemented across the service as a whole.

Thankfully, I have never been a victim of a serious assault in work but I have witnessed first-hand the devastation and long-lasting effects it can have on colleagues and friends. I feel this is an epidemic across the country and North Wales is no exception.

In the bleak and stark reality of the vicious and calculated cuts being imposed by this current Government it is now, more than ever, that we need to look after our colleagues, staff, friends and policing family by ensuring that training is relevant, adequate and fit for purpose; equipment is the best it can be to effectively police without fear and that there is the unequivocal overt support from senior management to back front-line officers when protecting the public we serve. Forces, including North Wales, need to think long and hard on how we accurately record officer assaults to give a true picture and that sufficient resources are ploughed into the aftercare of injured officers, that they so richly deserve.

Mark Jones

The video made an impactful start to the session. The statistics were quite frightening as regards the non-reporting of assaults. More Government guidelines are needed to see that assaulting a police officer should attract heavier sentences.

Mickey Roberts

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Posthumous award for PCs Fiona Bone and Nicola Hughes



Steve White (right) with (left to right) June and Paul Bone and Bryn Hughes.

The two GMP officers killed in a gun and grenade attack on 18 September 2012 were honoured with a newly created annual award during conference.

The families of Fiona Bone and Nicola Hughes received a long standing ovation as they were welcomed to the stage to receive the Police Federation of England and Wales' Women in Policing Award recognising the outstanding endeavour and dedication to duty by female officers.



Mental health custody scandal - much more to be done



Inspector Michael Brown, mental health co-ordinator, College of Policing and mental health lead at West Midlands Police.

The successes and shortfalls of street triage, of liaison and diversion techniques and the urgent need for many more health-based places of safety, particularly for the young, came under the spotlight as a conference opened with a debate entitled *The Mental Health Challenge*.

Throughout the session, there was widespread agreement that police cells are not the right place for those with mental health issues who have not committed offences, but that on too many occasions they are the only places available for someone in danger of harming themselves or others because of a lack of mental health funding and alternative accommodation.

However, the loudest round of applause of the session came when panel member Inspector Michael Brown, the mental health co-ordinator of the College of Policing and the Force lead in this area, questioned why police are so often called to situations which could perhaps have been resolved earlier in the day had appropriate health based services been available.

He acknowledged the many benefits of

both street triage and liaison and diversion, but said he had shadowed street triage schemes where he had been left wondering why police have been called out when there was often no core policing component like a crime in progress or threat to life or a suicide attempt.

Instead, there was a vulnerable person in need of mental health assessment and street triage was seen as the only way to get a response to that person, he explained, adding that police were effectively being used as a means to access unscheduled care for people with mental health needs.

He asked: "Why are police being considered as the gateway for that (unscheduled care) service in the first place?"

Marylyn Haines Evans of the National Federation of Women's Institute had earlier talked about its Care not Custody campaign, to end the inappropriate detention of the mentally ill within the Criminal Justice System by working to improve health-based facilities.

Partnership working, she argued, is essential. Together with the Prison Reform Trust, there is now a unique Care not Custody coalition, which includes the Police Federation of England and Wales and the NHS. There is, she said, some way to go for reform, and called for a sustained, collaborative effort.

Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), reported that PCCs are working with chief constables to make the detention of under 18s with mental health issues in custody suites a 'never, never' event.

Street triage, he says, works, but questioned why it is not being carried out in collaboration with the ambulance and fire service who are also dealing with people in crisis.

Julie Denley, head of Disability Learning Services and Partnerships, agreed with Kate Underhill, mental health co-ordinator, Strategic Partnerships, that street triage should not be seen as an end solution, but that with improved responses to mental health challenges the goal should be to eradicate the need for it at all.

Having posed his 'gateway' question, Insp Brown went on to warn officers against 'simplification' in meeting the challenges. He warned that there are legal pitfalls and that, for people with complex needs and

mental health issues who do commit offences, the responses must be appropriate.

He said there was a need for evidence-based solutions and called for more analysis around the outcomes of both street triage and liaison and diversion. He called for more evaluation to see if it can be demonstrated



Mickey Roberts asks a question during the mental health debate.

that they both result in improved mental health and support for the individual and re-offending or offending is reduced. He also questioned whether mental health services have the capacity to deal with an increase in numbers being diverted to them.

The session was followed by a lively question and answer session.

The debate was held the day before Home Secretary Theresa May announced to conference that there would be £15 million of new funding to provide extra health-based beds and facilities to ensure no-one is held inappropriately in police cells.

Mental health has always been a challenge but in the last five years has become a monster that is growing constantly. The NHS and mental health services in particular are so poorly underfunded that we can't just blame them for what is a problem for the country. I think everyone agrees that mentally ill people should not be in cells if that is their only issue. Even if they have committed a crime, unless a serious one, their mental health has to take precedence. We are still waiting for the dictat that tells us that police cells will not be used, they can't because they don't have the facilities or staff in place as alternatives.

I have heard Insp Michael Brown speak before and it is very obvious that he knows his subject incredibly well. Well done, College of Policing for actually appointing someone who knows what they are talking about. I also found the Dorset PCC very refreshing in what he has managed to push through, such things as the street triage which he half funded and setting up a victim scheme.

I think this is a subject that is relevant to all officers as mental health creeps into all aspects of our work. I think it is useful to bring this subject to the conference but it has been done before and I am slightly concerned that there were no definitive answers today about the way forward. Is it street triage or is this just another sticking plaster?

We are filling in for other partner agencies, I made the point about children and young people and the lack of provisions for them in North Wales. We don't even have 24-hour on call children's mental health social workers so if you come across a young person in crisis on a Friday the likelihood is that they won't be assessed until the Monday. That can't be right, these children should not have to wait and should not be stigmatised by their illness.

Front-line police officers are affected every day; from spending hours waiting for S136 persons to be assessed to dealing with vulnerable adults in the community. There are so many aspects of mental health: some which get services and others like personality disorders who get very little. I recently found a missing person from another force area and took her to hospital on a S136. The doctor told me that he had no doubt that we had saved her life. She was known to services in her area but getting very little support. She was someone's loved one, I hope none of mine ever become mentally ill as I

wouldn't have much faith that they could be managed adequately enough.

Mental health risks in custody were touched upon but this is a massive area where deaths in police custody regularly occur. It is a risk for all staff working around the custody suites and the time taken to monitor these very vulnerable people costs an inordinate amount of money. As a custody officer, they were of the greatest concern to me. I am not a medical professional but I was expected to try to guess the risks that illness posed to those individuals in my care and after they had left the suite. Impossible task, being set up to fail?

The majority of the content was good but they concentrated on S136 patients when just as much work is undertaken on S3 patients at homes. The answer was always challenge other departments. Realistically budget cuts will put a stop to already slow progress and I don't see any change.

They could not answer my question. The reality is that they are all governed by budget cuts and so I can't see how they will get an end result.

Mickey Roberts

The NHS clearly cannot, or possibly doesn't want to, cope with mental health issues. Police officers are being used on a daily basis to attend incidents that more often than not are actually persons in need of medical assistance and haven't committed a criminal offence. We are the last resort when everybody else fails.

I have been affected in my day to day role previously as a respond sergeant in Anglesey and for the last four years as a custody sergeant. People are brought to custody as a place of safety regularly because hospital emergency departments or mental health units have refused to accept them - mainly citing drunkenness or aggression. People in crisis need medical help and a police cell is likely to make them more ill. This is not acceptable and needs to be robustly tackled at the highest level.

Tam Reilly

I think the session was appropriate given the demands of responding to people with mental health problems on a daily basis by all forces due to a lack of consistent care provision by partner agencies on a 24/7 basis. The balance of the panel was a good mix of practitioners and those in strategic posts. Insp Michael Brown, aka Mental Health Cop, is recognised as one of the leading lights in policing regarding MH issues. His inputs strike a chord with all

operational cops.

This is clearly a topical problem mainly due to gaps in other services partly due, no doubt, to financial restraint and funding. It again highlighted that this is a national issue and that there is a difference in process between England and Wales and that currently Wales is lagging behind.

On a daily basis, the police service is having to fill the gaps left in other mental health service provisions. I see this in my day job as a force incident manager trying to co-ordinate responses to incidents involving vulnerable people where the predominant factor is a mental health crisis, managing risks and trying to ensure we provide a duty of care in the form of an initial police response. We deal with too many "revolving door" patients who continue to come to police attention when it should be healthcare professionals. At a strategic level, we need to identify individuals with the requisite ability to challenge partners and NWP needs a dedicated mental health champion to drive this forward.

Andy Broadhead

It shows that there is a real tangible problem of who picks up the pieces when those suffering a MH incident go off the rails. I got the impression that those in the NHS seemed to believe that it was quite right that the police stepped in and took on the role in all cases.

Everyone wants to see less use of police cells for MH detainees, but no-one has a solution or proposal for where they are taken to be looked after. Yes, the triage service discussed seemed a great idea but, as an awful lot of members present said, 'utilising this scheme simply delays the introduction of a real solution'. Overall, this was a very good and worthy debating session, highlighting the problem and the drain, the constant drain, on police resources.

Dave Thomas

It was good for me as a detective who is not front-line to be reminded of the demand that mental health issues place on the police and what things are being put in place to address this. The question of 'who should have the responsibility to react and resolve these issues' still remains.

Nick Hawe

Lively debate over political challenge

Claims from two leading think tanks that the police service could sustain more cuts and deliver more with less were disputed by delegates during an, at times, tense debate on the first day of conference.

The session, The Political Challenge, putting the public first – investing in policing, saw representatives of both the Policy Exchange and Reform having their views challenged by officers who found considerable support from Surrey PCC Kevin Hurley, who said the service was at tipping point, some sympathy from his Sussex counterpart, Katy Bourne, but more from shadow policing minister Jack Dromey, Labour MP for Erdington.

Glyn Gaskarth of the Policy Exchange summarised eight key points including problems with forces' buildings which, while valuable, were often poorly designed and not fit for purpose, the need for forces to share some support functions to reduce the administrative burden and a drive towards a focus on crime prevention. Money could be saved by more collaboration with other emergency services and also by reducing demand. His concluding comment that police could do more with less brought laughter from the conference floor.

Charlotte Pickles from Reform may have lulled delegates into a false sense of security by starting out with praise for the police for the 'tremendous job' of delivering improvements in the last five years.

But, she then said, a drop in crime proved police claims that crime levels were linked to officer numbers were not true and asserted there was further scope for cuts, pointing out that HMIC said there was potential for substantial savings.

The focus needed to be on productivity and capability, the workforce skills mix and increased use of new technology including pre-populated forms and face recognition software, increased collaboration and an overhaul of the criminal justice system to reduce time wasted in the court process.

"I do not think budget cuts going forward is in itself the wrong answer," she concluded.

But Mr Hurley disagreed. The cuts, he said, had taken the service to tipping point and it would take a long time for it to recover. A lack of investment in training was problematic as was the fact that

police officers had never before felt so undervalued with a continual onslaught from Government 'every other day of the week'.

He expressed concern at the drop in officer numbers saying the 17,000 lost over the last five years corresponded with the number who 'stopped London burning' in 2011.

"Without you, there's no-one protecting us from the baddies," he said.

Mr Dromey made three key points – Labour would stand up for the police service, defending neighbourhood policing; it would halt the reform agenda and create a victim centred criminal justice service.

It was 'absolutely wrong', he said, that MPs attended the Police Bravery Awards and then gave the police 'a good kicking' in the House of Commons.

He called for a very different approach, explaining that it had never before been so important for the service to have a strong and effective Police Federation.

The finger-wagging from ministers needed to stop. "It is time for the



Shadow policing minister Jack Dromey, Labour MP for Erdington.

Government to strike a very different tone and that's certainly what we intend to argue," he said.

During the question and answer session, many delegates took the think tank experts to task for their views, saying they did not really get what the police do, that officer safety was at risk, more could not be done with less and that while the service had embraced new technology it could not always replace the officer on the beat.

OUR REPS SAY...

Firstly, there were two guests who clearly think, or have been indoctrinated in the belief, that policing can continue to absorb cut after cut of the budgets, and I, for one, get sick and tired of hearing about working smarter, collaboration this and that. Yes, in an ideal world all the forces would use the same IT systems, but we've tried to go down that route many times before, including the four Welsh forces, and with just those four forces, a mere 7,000 officers we couldn't get an agreement!

We have collaboration of firearms and helicopters and one glaring observation is that the public and officers are the losers. Our firearms cover only goes as far west as about St Asaph or Colwyn Bay, nothing down south or further west until there is a job, then we have teams travelling great distances at speed endangering themselves and the public. The North Wales Police helicopter has gone east to Harwarden, south and west lose again. No Dog Section officers ever seem available in the south and west. Is there a common theme?

Does anyone in power listen? You get LESS FOR LESS.

The PCC from Surrey spoke a lot of sense and duly earned the applause.

Dave Thomas

This was very interesting with different points of view from the panel but a bit too much tub-thumping from the political side

There was too much concentration on crime stats and other aspects of policing were ignored. If you are going to measure the police it must be as regards all aspects of the work they do. The Federation should have had statistics ready to show the other work we do to confront them with."

Mickey Roberts

Forces need to look at diversity



Inspector Kam Bria of the College of Policing.

Long-term strategies are needed to ensure that police forces become more representative of the communities they serve, Inspector Kam Bria of the College of Policing told conference during a session on diversity.

Insp Bria argued that all forces needed to take responsibility for increasing the number of women and people from BME backgrounds in the service and said it needed to involve everyone not just HR staff.

He highlighted the Federation's BME Progression 2018 Programme commissioned in 2013 which aims to work with forces to develop and improve recruitment, career progression, opportunities for specialisation and retention of women and BME officers.

"We all need to do better at addressing this issue of under representation," Insp Bria explained during the session which was entitled The Myth of Being A Diverse Police Service, adding that there would be challenges in this area in the next five years.

There were a growing number of new communities, retention issues and a high number of BME officers reaching retirement age having joined during a recruitment surge around 25 years ago.

It was imperative for operational policing that more was done to make

the service more representative, he said, pointing to events in America as indicative of the disquiet 'bubbling under the surface' and threatening to erupt.

Diverse teams led to a better informed service, an improved perception of fairness within policing, improved trust

and confidence in policing from members of the community and in turn improved community engagement.

Policing needed to reflect, represent and look like the communities it serves. There should be a step change in thinking so that differences are valued.

Jayne Willetts from the Police Federation described the work being done around diversity in the organisation. There was more engagement with groups representing minority groups.

"There is still some way to go before everything is equal," she concluded.

About Kam Bria

A Derbyshire officer, Kam Bria is seconded to the Faculty of Integrity and Professional Development Programme at the College of Policing and has more than 20 years' service.

He has worked as a patrol officer, a detective within operational and major crime departments and within counter terrorism as a detective sergeant and detective inspector.

"During my career I have seen a lot of change within the police service with increasing demands being placed on officers and police forces with decreasing budgets. However, the one thing that I have not seen is the positive change towards increasing the representation of BME officers who reflect those communities we continually serve on a daily basis," he says.

OUR REPS SAY...

I did not find it that interesting although I do agree there is an issue regards having equal representation. But this is a big area and there are several issues surrounding the reasons why numbers are so low representing certain groups, such as gender, race and so on. Forces need to work towards ensuring every person is treated fairly and with respect and that everyone has the same opportunities and choices available to them.

Kim Owen

A very interesting topic which has been in the public arena for over 20 years. The Met appears to be making inroads in recruiting BME officers. What is their secret? Perhaps other forces like NWP should be asking this.

Inspector Kam Bria highlighted a number of issues which I think have been put on the back burner because of the recent police reforms. The public have seen that the police pay and conditions have been cut. This itself is likely to undermine any recruitment drive.

A diverse police service is a myth at the current time. The number of female officers in relation to male officers shows this. BME recruitment is hardly mentioned now. So career progression is hardly likely.

Positive discrimination is required as long as quality is maintained.

Paul McKeown



Women in policing - 100 years of change



Facilitator Samantha Simmonds from Sky News interviews two women officers in specialist uniform.

The inspirational women who over the past 100 years have helped shape policing as it is today were centre stage for the final day of conference.

And it was clear to see how far attitudes have changed since even the mid-late 1900s, when a clip was shown of retired female police officers interviewed for BBC Four's Fair Cop programme. First on stage was Pamela Collier, Birmingham City Police 1966-1978, WPC 134, whose career had started in an era of separate women's divisions.

It was a time when a famous singer, on seeing her and another female colleague in uniforms on crowd control duties back stage, felt it was alright to ask them to attend a party the next day in their uniforms; when it was accepted women officers would sit on the laps of male colleagues if space was short in prisoner vans.

By the time she left the Force in 1978, however, things had changed, with parity of pay and men and women working alongside each other as equals.

Lynne Owens, Chief Constable of Surrey Police, revealed how she has had an amazing career since joining in 1989, but there had been two negatives along the way.

The first, she said, was when she wanted to return to work after having her daughter and the second was when she transferred forces.

She said the service needs to embrace difference: "The public are not one amorphous bunch, and neither should we be. We should be bold enough to embrace our differences because that is how we get our legitimacy with the public and our ability to police with consent.

"We need different skills. We need people who are brave, those who are strong, those who are emotionally courageous and those who are mentally courageous; we need people who can bring in new ideas and bring in innovation, those who can do detail and make good

detectives. None of us can do all those things so we should value the differences we all bring."

Looking ahead she feels optimism. The Leadership Review is looking at the organisational structure to overcome some of the challenges preventing not just women but many others from reaching their potential.

She is anxious, however, that as the service shrinks, it might become more cautious about flexible and part-time working. She added: "I worry there are less opportunities for people moving across specialisms, or upwards, and I do worry that in the absence of opportunity we might lose some of our brightest and our best people."

She is also concerned the progress in representation may be slowed. She said: "We have made a lot of progress for women, but we have not made the same progress for our black and minority ethnic colleagues and I worry about what that means for the future."

Looking at the Federation itself, she said she was optimistic when she hears the passion, but she challenged it to do more to embrace difference within itself.

OUR REPS SAY...

I found the two speakers very interesting giving a great insight into their experiences. Lynne Owens gave an insight which was more familiar to me personally as I joined in 1987 when there was only about 10 per women in the Force and very few were in supervisory roles. A third of officers now are women and have equal responsibilities.

The session highlighted that flexible working is seen as being a problem but some of the most capable officers are part-time. Some forget at our heart we have to serve the public to provide our core purpose.

The role of women changed vastly during the '80s. The police women's unit was no longer evident, women had equal pay and women were carrying out more varied roles. When I joined there was still token females in specialist roles ie CID and traffic. There were very few role models. I can recall in my days as a probationer on numerous occasions being called in to babysit found children or look after children of prisoners, despite not being particularly maternal. I also remember being put on the front desk on a Christmas Eve as it was identified as a busy night with potential violence. I was then sent to spend the night in another police station out of my division because there was a female prisoner who needed a police woman to be in the station.

There have definitely been improvements in this area but we are not entirely there yet. There are still barriers to women being promoted and a number of perceived reasons for this: child responsibilities, not being in "the gang" and also women not having the confidence to go for promotion. Promotion prospects and opportunities in the higher ranks especially at chief officers' level still need to be addressed.

But there are far more women supervisors in the sergeant rank and specialised departments than there were when I joined. The introduction of women's associations has assisted in getting women to put themselves forward for promotion. In North Wales Police 10 years ago the Women's Association was set up and chaired by the one female chief superintendent in the Force. Various events were planned to ensure women officers had the confidence and ability to go through promotion systems. They also ran development days to encourage females to go on specialist departments. Since these events, female RPU officers have increased as have firearms to a lesser extent. The opportunities for females to go on PSU has increased.

Jane Thomas

Federation on track with reform programme

The Police Federation has completed 40 per cent of the reform programme instigated by Sir David Normington's independent review.

Andy Fittes, general secretary, told national conference delegates this meant the organisation was on track with reform but that some of the proposed changes required legislation. However, the tractor-like Home Office, he warned, was not built for speed.

A number of the 36 recommendations from the review team, all of which were approved at last year's conference, have already been implemented including:

- **The creation of a Joint Fund for members' subscriptions**
- **The inclusion of a financial transparency clause in Regulations**
- **The appointment of Accenture as the change programme manager**
- **The acceptance of the Federation's core purpose**
- **The publication of an annual public value report (available online at polfed.org)**
- **The establishment of an Independent Reference Group.**

Work is actively in progress on 23 more recommendations including changes to the election system with the Federation involving market leaders Electoral Reform Services since it was such a complex issue.

Consultation meetings will also be held with Federation branches across England and Wales during June and early July in relation to the recommendation relating to a standardised expenses, hospitality and honoraria framework.

The general secretary

Andy Fittes joined the Metropolitan Police in 1987 as a constable working in the East End of London.

He became a sergeant in 1996 and was first elected as a Federation representative in 1999.

In 2013, Andy joined the Joint Central Committee (now known as the Interim National Board) and last year he took over as general secretary following the retirement of Ian Rennie.



Accenture's change programme director, Lynsey Lauer, and Andy Fittes, general secretary.

By May next year, Accenture expects 80 per cent of the work to be completed, again keeping the project on track.

The Thursday afternoon conference

session The Transformation Challenge was jointly led by the general secretary and Accenture's change programme director, Lynsey Lauer.

OUR REPS SAY...

As a whole this session was very PowerPoint based with lots of facts and figures on the slides. Unfortunately, this wasn't great for me as we were at the back and I couldn't read them.

"I really don't want to sound negative but the General Secretary wasn't the most inspirational or engaging speaker. I saw people chatting among themselves during his input.

However, the information he gave was interesting and I will share this with members. They need to know that we are on track and have already made 40 per cent of the changes. I think this is positive and shows work does go on at the centre.

I found the speaker from Accenture very easy to listen to, she was much more enthusiastic about her role and clearly explained where they were and the challenges they had faced. It was nice to hear that things were moving. I think members are at the point of "just get it done" now.

I got the impression that if Accenture had not been bought in, we may still be in limbo. There seems to be a clear path now and target dates set. This is great progress by the Federation.

I think the biggest challenge will be keeping to the deadlines, but I'm optimistic.

Becky Lloyd

Very little transformation that I can see to date - a lot of talking, yes, but seems extremely slow on action. Lots of numbers, dates, targets but nothing tangible I can take back to members. I can't see any real progress. I would like to say that things are progressing but I don't think they are.

I find it hard to understand why we have chosen four people from the House of Lords to be part of the Federation's change committee - how are they experienced in policing?

The challenge now for PFEW is to gain some credibility with the front-line members - and it also appears to be toothless in making any credible challenge to the Government. We are in for a very difficult five years.

Tam Reilly

YOUR SAFETY MATTERS

On duty?

- Body armour – PPE – tactical awareness
- Do people know where you are?

Booking off?

- Conceal your police ID
- Don't travel in uniform or half-blues
- Think of your security when at home too

At all times


- Don't be predictable
- Vary – your route – where you park
- Think who's watching, who's listening?



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Neighbourhood policing vital in fight against terrorism

Effective neighbourhood policing is essential in the fight against terrorism and extremism, delegates heard in a session led by the country's counter terrorism chief.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the National Police Chiefs' Council leader for counter terrorism, highlighted the increased risk of terrorists, extremists and other criminals exploiting 'blindspots' in technology to pass under the radar with IT 'capability degradation' leaving parts of the internet unpoliced.

And, he once again stressed the 'severe' threat to police officers highlighting that new guidance, advising officers on safety precautions, would be issued soon.

"We must ensure that our officers are as safe as possible," he told conference, adding that withdrawing officers from the streets would mean the terrorists had won and therefore a balance had to be struck between officer safety and a visible presence.

"It still remains our job to step into harm's way. As the challenge changes so has our response."

He explained that there were currently hundreds of live investigations, with 60 per cent being run jointly with MI5, 124 investigations followed reports of missing people.

On average there were 85 arrests per quarter with only half being charged with an offence but officers were using every tool available to them to cause 'relentless disruption' to terrorist activities which was helping prevent attacks.

AC Rowley said the service needed to build a strong counter terrorism model with a regional footprint and an international reach, with wider collaboration with the National Crime Agency and a link between



Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the National Police Chiefs' Council leader for counter terrorism.

local policing and other parts of the network.

"Neighbourhood policing is at the forefront of our fight," he explained, having pointed out the growing evidence of street gang members being vulnerable to becoming radicalised by extremist groups along with homeless people, those with mental health issues and detainees in prisons. A third of those arrested under counter terrorism laws had no previous terrorist link.

OUR REPS SAY...

The most obvious threat is at present Al-Qaeda and ISIL. They possess a sophisticated system of recruitment and propaganda to achieve their aims. There are several reasons why the threat has increased which include globalisation, failed states such as Syria and Iraq, the Snowden revelations which they have taken advantage of, and their communication capability has increased due to the emergence of communication systems such as the dark net.

This has presented a problem for the intelligence and security services.

What was more interesting from this session was the emphasis he placed on the importance of community engagement. Convictions have been achieved and persons of extreme concern identified from within the community.

This identification has not only materialised from local policing but also from education establishments, local authorities and the NHS.

The main importance for myself is that within daily community policing we can assist and play an important part in reducing this risk for the community.

Mick Laidlaw

He stressed that local officers have an extremely important role in combating the threat by their daily community engagement. This engagement he describes as a critical role in the fight against terrorism. We are currently part of a national vigilance campaign which is crucial to protecting the public. The threat is real and officers must adhere to the safety advice their forces have given out.

Paul McKeown

We must not be complacent in dealing with the threat from terrorism. Although police officers are operating under a severe threat, we continue to operate normally, largely unarmed and step into harm's way as we have always done. Local policing continues to be critical in supporting counter terrorism investigations. It is everybody's responsibility - police, partners and community.

Community engagement is essential in preventing and disrupting attacks and local forces bridge the gap between local and national demands and strengthen our capabilities. All officers and staff are critical in facing this continued threat.

Paul Speight

“ *It still remains our job to step into harm's way. As the challenge changes so has our response.* ”

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Panel calls for drink-drive limit to be cut

An increase in the number of women caught drink-driving has prompted a call for the limit to be lowered.

During a conference session called Women & alcohol – the drink-drive challenge, it was suggested that the limit is lowered from 80mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood to 50mg. This would bring England and Wales in line with Scotland which reduced its limit in December last year.

Vicki Martin from the Police Federation of England and Wales explained that, while the number of men caught drink-driving had halved, women were not changing their behaviour. In addition to a reduction in the drink-drive limit, she would also like to see a set minimum unit price for alcohol and called for roads safety to be put back on the agenda.

Kristine Beuret, director of Social Research Associates, explained that drink

driving among women was going up while it was generally falling and said women's metabolic differences meant they could be more affected by alcohol than men and yet considered themselves less likely to be stopped than male drivers. In 1998, nine per cent of those caught drink-driving were women compared with 17 per cent in 2012.

Her views were echoed by Superintendent Jane Derrick, Surrey and Sussex Police RPU Operations Command, who said it was time for a debate around how to tackle the growing problem of women getting behind the wheel when over the limit suggesting that perhaps women were self-medicating with alcohol due to mental health pressures. She argued that it was time to start stopping women drivers on the school run and for officers to change their perceptions of drink-drivers.

She said: "We've seen a huge increase,

but it is the tip of the iceberg. We are stopping people based on our perceptions.

If I see a woman driving a car I may view her differently to a male driver because of my professional knowledge, but also my own perceptions."

She pointed out that 63 per cent of the alcohol consumed was now drunk at home, with fellow panellist Inspector Colin Dobson from Durham Constabulary saying that many people were drinking alcohol bought at supermarkets before going out to pubs and clubs.

Deborah Hay, senior licensing and regulatory solicitor for JD Wetherspoons, said her company was doing its bit to educate people about the strength of drinks, unit values now being displayed on menus, and gave financial support to the charity Drink Aware.

OUR REPS SAY...

Great session, highlights the growing issue, explained to some extent why it is a persistent issue. Was a little concerned that the suggestion was being made that some women managed to get away with offences by the fluttering of eyelids, I don't believe for one minute that actually happens, well I hope not. I always used to say when a drink-driver challenged me to 'go and catch the real criminals', drink-drivers often kill themselves or others, burglars and shoplifters rarely do, so who is the biggest criminal?

Dave Thomas

I did find this issue interesting and some of the facts shown were interesting. I didn't really think about this as an issue up until the input but following this session I can put this into perspective and, looking back now over the past year, I have seen an increase in female drink-drivers.

This is an issue and I feel there appears to be an increase in drink-driving arrests over the past year which is highlighting that this area needs to be targeted again. But, unfortunately, we are seeing cuts constantly to the traffic department and front-line policing so officers are not getting any time to do proactive policing. Driving to conference which was 268 miles, I only saw one police van over the whole journey. That to me says it all: unless you call the police the likelihood is you won't see them and therefore you think you'll never be stopped...

I feel it needs further advertisement campaigns educating people, both male and females. I feel the Government should Lower limits and it would be easier and simpler for everyone if it was no alcohol if you're driving. Then there's no confusion in the area of units etc.

Kim Owen

As a Roads Policing Officer and Family Liaison Officer, I know only too well how alcohol and driving do not mix. I thought the approach to the issue from Deborah Hay, the Wetherspoons solicitor, to be particularly interesting as she would support a reduction in the drink-drive limit even if that would impact on her employer's business as the facts show that most drinking now takes place at home. I am aware of this issue, which not only affects women, but I feel that more older men still take the risk to drive home after an afternoon or evening of drinking.

I have not noticed a particular increase in the number of female drink-drivers in the North Wales area but I have noticed that those caught do not tend to be just over. They are well over which suggests they don't take account of how much they have had or as the panel suggested, they don't expect to be stopped as young men would be. I think a reduction in the drink-drive limit is long overdue and we should push for that to fall in line with the rest of Europe. This would give a clear message that the safest thing to do if driving would be not to drink at all.

Better campaigns in the media would also help. Graphic pictures of the possible consequences would be more impactful. Overall an interesting session with an interesting mix of panellists.

Barry Andrews

Personally, I found the drink-drive issues interesting being a RPU officer but felt it lacked substance. I can't really see how lowering the drink-drive limit will solve the drinking culture with women. I see it being relevant to the Federation and agree with Victoria that PFEW needs to be involved in this legislation due to the impact on an ever decreasing police service.

I was not really aware this was an issue and I discussed with colleagues who haven't really

experienced an issue with women drink-drivers. But, having heard the presentation, I wonder how much our perception towards women is a major factor. Interesting to learn experiences of other forces with women doing school runs over the limit. We need to ensure campaigns are aimed more towards women and the difference between how the male and female body reacts to alcohol levels. We need to target females more and look at better intelligence-led policing in this area.

Jane Thomas

Although I believe it's an issue, I don't think it should be directed at just women. I think alcohol is a huge problem for the police and it's linked to most of our domestics and violent crimes. I'm of the opinion that we should be tackling the issue but haven't we been doing this for years? I mean everyone who comes into custody is offered support for any addictions, why do we need to spend any more money on an issue that's been around for 100 years?

I also think that adults make their own choices. I don't think a police officer can stop a female (or male) consuming too much alcohol.

I think a general discussion on the link between alcohol and crime may have been more beneficial. My own personal view is that when women are drunk they're more likely to be vulnerable and more likely to become victims, not commit crimes and become suspects. Women need to be educated through social media in relation to unit sizes etc.

I would have liked there to be more discussion on women in the job turning to drink. This is because it's something the Fed could tackle, for example, helping colleagues deal with stress differently.

Becky Lloyd



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Support the Federation

By **Kim Owen**,
Federation
representative

Overall, I found conference better than last year and I have not come away deflated like I was last year. I feel a little more positive that the national Federation is working towards implementing the Normington recommendations and moving forwards, although it does feel it's very slow. But I suppose there are many changes to bring in; they have to be done correctly and right first time.



I feel there is still more to be done around conference and certain areas I did not feel relevant such as the international challenge. I found the mental health, officer assaults and accountability sessions interesting and relevant to issues being faced and considered within our Force.

I felt Steve White spoke well in his keynote speech and found the video screened "You don't know what you've got until it's gone" showed exactly what officers do every day, largely unrecognised. It's nice to see this being viewed now on YouTube by so many and by Saturday morning it had been watched by over 60,500 viewers. This has to be a positive and will relate to so many members of the public, I'm sure.

The overall message I want to feed back to the wider membership is the Federation is changing and it will change for the better but it will take time. I would ask that officers trust and support the Federation. All Federation representatives locally and nationally are working to implement the changes and feed back their own thoughts and views of the members. I joined the Federation in 2012 and have found the role very rewarding and challenging. There is no doubt there are many more challenges ahead for the Federation as a whole and for police officers, but I'm looking forward to being part of those challenges and working with others

to get members through these and making things better.

Following Theresa May's speech, it is clear that the Government is going to make further cuts to policing and this is going to have further consequences for the public and officers. Officer numbers will no doubt fall again, which will reduce visibility, increase workloads and result in further stress and sickness.

As a Federation, we need to be ready and prepared to fight to ensure we have the equipment needed and the resources and support in place so officers can do the job we all joined to do. We have to inform the public of the consequences of the cuts and highlight the good things that police officers do daily that aren't highlighted in the Press enough. People don't realise how hard officers work and what challenges they face daily and this needs more work to ensure our messages are put out in the public domain and to show the Home Secretary was wrong when she said we are crying wolf. Facts and figures show this is not the case and we have lost 17,000 officers; the demands on policing have increased significantly and this is not just crime.

The Federation has many challenges ahead and needs to keep improving communication with members and the public.

North Wales Police Federation needs to ensure our voices are heard by the Federation nationally and make our members fully aware of what is happening. At the beginning of the year we ran a #cutshaveconsequences campaign where we saw a video produced showing the true facts of how the cuts have affected North Wales. We saw posters on the buses around North Wales, our Chair, Simon Newport, was interviewed on radio and press articles were also published. We need to continue to get our messages out to the public and will listen to members' concerns.

I would ask members to support us during this challenging time for the Federation we are all working hard to get their concerns heard.

If any members have any concerns or want information please speak to me or other Federation representatives.

Inspectors and chief inspectors urged to take part in well-being survey

For those of you who don't know me, I am Ceri Hawe, Flintshire Inspectors' Federation representative and District Inspector for Flintshire North.



Ceri Hawe.

With the recent cuts to Patrol Inspector numbers, it seemed like an ideal time to capitalise on some funding available from Leatherhead (Police Federation of England and Wales HQ) for a well-being survey for our ranks.

We are one of only 10 forces nationally being afforded this opportunity so we need to make the most of it!

It will be offered to all inspectors and chief inspectors in North Wales Police and will be based around Working Time Regulations, work load and any related issues.

It's vitally important that we all record our working hours fully and properly on Northgate as any complaints around excessive hours being worked need to be backed up with evidence and fully documented. The back of a book with your own jottings won't cut it; it needs to be on the Force systems.

So, if you are not already logging your hours properly, can I please request that you start doing this on Northgate? It's for your benefit. I suspect the main offenders for not recording hours will be District Inspectors and Chief Inspectors – including me at times.

We are all busy people but this is one job we all need to make time for. It takes literally a few seconds a day to log onto Northgate and put in your 'clockings', or you can do them retrospectively.

The survey will be put together by academics from Cardiff University. Members from the Inspectors' Branch Board will meet with them to formulate the types of questions we want covered so we can glean as much information as we can about the demands placed upon us and how they are affecting the membership.

We need as many inspectors and chief inspectors as possible to complete the survey so we can get a true reflection of what the issues are with staff and what impact the cuts are having in the different inspecting roles.

The idea is that the results will help us form the basis of a Well-Being Action Plan for inspecting ranks. We hope to get the buy-in from both senior management teams and ACPO to address any issues you may have.

We will keep you updated as to its progress.

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My last shift

'Torchy' is given a 'guard of honour' as he completes his final duty.

By Dave (Torchy) Roberts, ex-PS 161.

It doesn't seem long ago that I was writing my last *Your Voice* article. With the Christmas period and my 'goodwill to all men' approach, I haven't had time to get worked up about any particular subject.

Some of the most memorable things to me about 1985 were that The Live Aid concerts took place, Terry Waite was kidnapped, EastEnders was first screened and I joined the North Wales Police.

I was PC 161 and my initial posting was to Rhyl. 'In those days' we all did a four-week attachment to an out station and mine was St Asaph.

My first shift was a morning shift, a 6am start. I had moved into my 'digs' in Rhyl the previous day with the help of my landlady, Margie, and her husband, Jim. I had an electric alarm clock which Jim kindly set up for me and the alarm was set for 5am to allow me plenty of time.

Unfortunately, and unbeknown to me, Jim had mixed up the am and pm and consequently the alarm was set for 5pm. Margie had a clock in her hall that chimed and, being full of anticipation for what lay ahead, I spent most of the night

listening to it.

When I heard the clock chime five times, I was about to get up when it chimed once more. Yes, I was late for my very first shift. I grabbed my uniform which was a blue collared shirt, thick woollen trousers and newly-buffed boots and headed to the station.

Arriving some 20 minutes late, my tutor ex-PC 540 Dave Maslen-Jones told me to go home, get sorted and never let it happen again.

So began my career which has had so many memorable moments and involved so many great people that, when I look back over the 30 years, it seems to have passed so quickly.

My last shift was Wednesday 25 February, an afternoon shift. I so much enjoyed my job, the area that I worked and the people that I worked with, I questioned myself as to why was I retiring. I didn't have to but I felt that the time had come.

The first few hours of the shift passed quickly, a typical day in North Flintshire going from immediate to immediate, trying to sort out other bits in between. At about 7pm it began to lull. I took this opportunity to start packing things away; items I had collected over 30 years being

placed in a cardboard box, this time not for a move to another station but for total closure. That was when the emotions really kicked in. This was not a job I was walking away from, more like an extended family.

At 10pm, the night shift came in and my rota and I went to the canteen where we had a take away and I was given some great gifts, most memorably a silver engraved Maglite which will always be on display in our house.

Then it was time to walk out for the last time and, I have to admit, I did shed a few tears, however, I could not have anticipated what was waiting for me.

A number of friends were stood with batons raised to form an arch, my car was filled with balloons and there were fireworks in the car park. It was a celebration with a big dollop of sadness dumped in the middle.

I know that there are times when 'The Job' can get you down and we all wished that we did something else but the good days always counteract the bad ones. However long you have left to serve, enjoy it because one day you will turn around and it will be you who is retiring and wondering where did those years go.



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