

# YOUR VOICE

Ffederasiwn Heddlu Gogledd Cymru /  
North Wales Police Federation



March 2014



Representing • Negotiating • Influencing

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# Focus on the positives



By Richard Eccles, Secretary, North Wales Police Federation

Every edition of *Your Voice* magazine I get the opportunity to review the contents before they are sent off for printing and, whilst I dread poring over the detail of the articles trying to detect errors, it does provide a lot of positivity around policing within North Wales.

Sadly, in recent times there has been little positivity around the efforts of police officers across the UK as they strive to deliver a high quality of service to their communities.

It seems at times that the police are in fact the constant recipients of the kicks

and punches, often well below the belt, from certain sections of the media, politicians, the IPCC and any other group seeking to generate a headline at the expense of others.

There is no doubt that there is a great deal worth celebrating about the police service both locally and nationally.

Yes, at times we make mistakes.

Yes, at times we see officers acting outside of the rules.

Yes, occasionally we cannot deliver the service that is desired.

When any of that happens there are investigations and reviews to try to put things right or even punish those involved.

We must never lose sight of the fact that policing is a vocation carried out by hard-working and dedicated officers striving to do their very best in the face of criticism, violence and diminishing resources.

I hope that you will see through the cheap negative headlines placed by our detractors and reflect upon the great positive articles captured in this edition of *Your Voice*.

It is sad that our critics cannot put into context the huge amount of outstanding work that is done compared to the odd slip of standards.

Hopefully, whilst this trial by headline continues, we can together carry on writing our own headlines which are more accurate and reflective of the policing picture across North Wales.

## Your magazine...

This is your magazine; it is written for the benefit of you, our members.

If there is anything you wish to have included then please send an email to [Chris.Warner@nthwales.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Chris.Warner@nthwales.pnn.police.uk).

Chris, our Policy and Consultation Manager, leads our communications programme and will be happy to include your ideas in forthcoming editions of *Your Voice*.

The printed and electronic versions of our magazine are available on a quarterly basis - March, June, September and December.



# Federation must embrace the independent review



**By Simon Newport, Chair, North Wales Police Federation**

**Firstly, I would like to introduce myself as the newly elected Joint Branch Board (JBB) Chair of the North Wales Police Federation. Previously, I was the Constables' Branch Board Secretary.**

I am extremely proud to have been elected in November by my JBB peers and will be Chair for the coming triennial period of 2014 to 2017.

I officially took office on 1 January 2014 and I have definitely hit the ground running. This is probably the most turbulent time in the history of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), an organisation that goes back almost 100 years to 1919.

Last year, PFEW underwent an independent review focused on ensuring it is fit for purpose for another 100 years. The review was instigated by the national Chairman, Steve Williams, and the review team was headed by Sir David Normington.

The review was announced after the now infamous 'Plebgate' incident and, it is fair to say that recently, PFEW has come under a continued attack by the press and politicians who have criticised certain aspects of the way it is run.

JBB Secretary Richard Eccles and I attended the launch of the review team's 84-page report in London on 20 January this year. The report is hard-hitting and contains 36 recommendations.

Since its launch, a further two meetings of JBB chairs and secretaries have been held to discuss the detail contained within the report and, both locally and nationally, there is a determined will to ensure the recommendations are implemented to ensure the Federation is better able to represent its members, more focused on serving the public good and increasingly viewed as a creditable organisation that is the envy of other 'employee' groups.

Of course, the recommendations are exactly that, 'recommendations'. The devil is in the detail and I am aware that over the coming months further national meetings are scheduled before the report is taken to national conference in May for members to decide the fate of the organisation. I look forward to these meetings and Richard and I will ensure that our voice here in North Wales is heard loud and clear on a national level.

As a backdrop to this, it is my view that policing and politics should be kept apart but over the last few years I have been saddened by the way policing has been used for political gain.

That said, it is often difficult to defend what has been reported regardless of the spin. This is why it is essential that the Federation embraces the independent review and changes for

the better, both nationally and locally, in order to show it is a creditable and transparent organisation, capable of modernisation.

Turning away from the independent review, I was delighted on 12 February when the Home Secretary, Theresa May, ratified the Police Arbitration Tribunal's rejection of recommendations for compulsory severance. I am aware that many colleagues were concerned about this matter and, if it had been refused, it effectively meant that officers could be made redundant.

In my opinion, redundancy would have effectively ended the 'Office of Constable' role that we are so familiar with and would have totally undermined the Attestation.

Human rights organisation Liberty had taken a stand against compulsory severance for police officers – claiming the proposal is a "significant threat" to the Office of Constable. Its Director, Shami Chakrabarti, insisted that officers' independence could be compromised if they believed their actions could lead to redundancy.

Overall, this decision has been very welcome and will no doubt put minds at ease.

With that, I would like to thank the Staff Side of the Police Negotiating Board, led by Ian Rennie, the General Secretary of the Police Federation of England and Wales, for its excellent submissions.

There has to be a note of caution, however, as the Home Secretary stated that compulsory severance remains a reform that both the Government and the police should continue to consider.

Finally, I would just like to reiterate that I very much look forward to representing you all as the new Chair of the North Wales Police Federation and I would like to thank the Force's Senior Management Team and ACPO for their support. My role is not full-time and, as well as all the responsibility involved in my Police Federation capacity, I continue with my day job as a response constable. That said, I believe that we have one of the best Federation offices in the country and that we are more than capable in representing the interests of our members.

# Police vehicles moving with the times

**By Dave Thomas,  
Chair of the North Wales  
Police Federation  
Constables' Branch  
Board**



**Love them or loathe them, motor vehicles have become a necessity in the modern day world of policing in the UK.**

The service has seen its budget slashed and the number of warranted officers has fallen quite dramatically. Despite these reduced budgets and falling numbers, the expectation is that we will continue to provide a quality and speedy service to the public.

I joined the Force in late 1985 and, when I was eventually deemed appropriately trained and started to work in Rhyl, the everyday norm was deployment on foot to an assigned beat area. Along with my shift colleagues, I responded to whatever came in on the beat we covered. During the day an officer would be assigned mobile patrol duties, during the evening and night shift that mobile would be double crewed, supplemented at weekends and busy holiday periods by a rowdy van.

Our vehicles at that time were cars such as the Austin Maestro or perhaps a Mini, even a Morris Ital van! They had a little blue light on the roof, possibly a 'Police/Stop' sign and a VHF radio.

There were no protective bubbles or cages and no sirens. And, other than an

assessment by the Traffic Sergeant that you could be trusted to drive them without endangering the public, your colleagues or yourself, there was no driver training, unless you had an ambition to join the Traffic Department.

North Wales Police has a history of developing vehicles suitable for the modern policing world and one of the first vehicles that had a plastic rear seat area and a plastic screen between the police and detainees was the Ford Orion.

In about 1999 to 2000, the Force started to introduce the Ford Focus 1.8 TDCI to the fleet, the first response vehicle designed for answering immediate calls. These vehicle were fitted with a better designed prisoner bubble, they had roof mounted light bars and modern wailers.

Driver training also started, so that officers other than prospective traffic officers received instruction in driving in emergencies.

In the last 13 years or so, the Force has continued its development work, moving from the five-door hatch to the Ford Focus estate with several facelifts and upgrades. It has been a great work horse, but sadly it has come to the end of its life, as Ford made the decision they can't meet our requirements.

Fleet has been looking at alternatives. Work is underway to develop the Vauxhall Astra 1.7 CDTI. It is working with GM Vauxhall and Federal in Spain which has designed a 'single cell' solution. This will



mean that the Astra Estate would be fitted with a single person cell, located behind the passenger seat. This allows the driver's seat to have its full range of movement, so that even our tallest and broadest can fit in it.

The images accompanying this article are development photos and this is still a work in process. The seating lay-out will be very much similar and there will be a shaped, clear plastic dome that will be secured to the bottom area of the pod in which the detainee will be placed.

Despite Spain also being in the EU, Federal didn't plan on installing any form of escape hatch and, had the vehicle been involved in a nearside impact, there would have been an issue in extracting any prisoner from the cell. This is an area still being worked on, but we are almost there.

It is hoped the prototype vehicle will be in Force in the next few weeks and it will then be sent around each area for evaluation. If you do use it, please complete the vehicle evaluation forms, as this is being developed for you and your safety at work.

Feel free to contact me on extension 70601 if you have any questions.



*Work in progress on new prisoner bubble.*

# Unfairness... what do you do?

**By Sam Roberts,  
Chair of the  
North Wales  
Police Federation  
Sergeants' Branch  
Board**



**Almost on a daily basis in work I hear officers talking about how something that has happened to them is unfair. Now I accept that we, as police officers, are champion moaners at times, but there are occasions in our service when something happens that is very unfair and actually could be unlawful.**

What would you do if you felt something was unfair? Just put up and shut up or use the Resolution Procedure? Now I use that term! It has been known as grievance or fairness at work procedure. Whatever you know it as, it basically stands for a process that the Force uses to try to resolve issues between officers.

I have heard many comments over the years about how ineffectual the process is, how it solves nothing, it will go against you in the future and so on. In some cases, those comments are justly deserved and I can talk from personal experience both as a representative of others and also as someone who has taken out one themselves.

However, if you don't use the procedure then what happens? Your issue

never gets heard and you can be left feeling hard done to and bitter!

The Resolution Procedure is a tool for dealing with a work-related concern, problem or complaint quickly and confidentially. It is not designed to apportion blame and there is no guarantee of resolution. It is not about getting your own back on someone but getting people to be able to work together effectively and resolve their differences.

It is important that when considering using the procedure you have a realistic idea as to what you want out of it. You are not going to get your superintendent's head on a platter but you might get an apology. Is what you want achievable? It could mean a review of a policy or your disregarded application being reviewed.

What is unfair is not necessarily unlawful but if you have suffered a disadvantage because of something linked to a protected characteristic then it may move into the realms of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. This would obviously be considered by your Federation rep and the legal team that supports the Police Federation.

I chose this particular subject for my article this time because I felt it was important to remind officers that there is a procedure that helps and assists officers

to try to iron out issues they come across in work. You don't always have to put pen to paper but at times this is the only option to allow your grievances to be heard. Managed well the procedure can work very effectively and I have seen this happen several times. Handled badly then it may put officers off ever taking one out again thus putting the whole process at risk.

As Fed reps, we are all trained in how to manage the procedure but I am not too sure how much time is spent training managers to do the same. As a manager, I can't ever remember being given any training and I have seen some very poor practice over the years by managers who seem to think they have to defend the organisation or each other against decisions that are quite clearly unfair! I would remind them that this process is not about apportioning blame.

If you have been treated unfairly contact your local Fed rep and discuss it with them. If you decide not to do anything, that is your choice but the procedure is there for you to utilise. Your confidentiality will be preserved at all times by the Federation.

I don't feel that I can finish this article without a couple of mentions. Simon Newport has recently taken over as the Chair of our Joint Branch Board and I know that he will do the very best job he can. Those of you who know Simon will appreciate how passionate he is about being a rep and I have no doubt that he will be a great spokesperson for the North Wales Board. Good luck, Simon, in your new role.

Lastly, I would like to wish Mark Davies - very affectionately known as 'Large Sarge' - the very best in his retirement. He has been a very important member of the Board and has always been comfortable making management feel uncomfortable! We will miss his wise words on the Board and his company. Enjoy your retirement, Mark, and do plenty of sailing.

Stay safe everyone.



# Challenging times ahead but the Federation can help you



**By Kim Owen, North Wales Police Federation Sergeants' Branch Board**

## **It has been two years since I was elected as Federation representative for Gwynedd sergeants.**

With 14 years' service at the time and having being promoted in 2009, I was ready for new challenges and goals. I was considering my career path and where I wanted to go in the future when the email appeared on my computer for the vacancy of being a Fed rep. Without a second thought, I immediately replied.

At the time I did wonder if I was totally mad or just insane. I had concerns about taking on the role, the extra work, as I had two small children at home and was working full-time, and whether I would be able to do it. After all, I had to take over from a very experienced and knowledgeable rep, Brian Kearney

I am so glad that I took the opportunity when I did, although at times it can be demanding and requires commitment above and beyond your day job. I thoroughly enjoy the role

and find it very rewarding. I particularly enjoy helping and reassuring colleagues with issues, whether they are personal or work related. I enjoy working with them to find mutually agreeable solutions that will help them move forward.

It has also been a role that has helped me to develop my skills. The accredited training courses offered by the Federation and the various skills needed for communication, negotiating and decision-making all help to improve your competence and ability, particularly when dealing with personnel issues.

The past year has been a tough one for the Federation. I had the opportunity to attend a couple of national meetings on the independent review and feel it is timely.

Following the unprecedented changes we have had to endure to our pay, conditions and pensions, the confidence in the Federation as our members' voice is low and there are clearly serious issues with the way the Federation is viewed. At a national level, there is lack of communication from the centre, questions on finances and in-house disputes between the Joint Central Committee rank Boards.

Reform must be embraced by the Police Federation to ensure that we are the respected and trusted voice for members and to work together in a more constructive way.

The Federation is a representative organisation and we are here to represent,

influence and negotiate but within restrictions. We need to maintain high professional standards both within and outside of the organisation.

This review must now be embraced to ensure the organisation performs its vital role on behalf of members in an efficient, influential way in order to restore the confidence of our members and fundamental to that, to engage with you in every which way as we embark on this journey of sweeping reform.

The review has been published along with the 36 recommendations which need to be discussed and progressed. There is no doubt this is going to be a challenging couple of years. Implementing and agreeing such comprehensive change is never easy in any organisation but by steadfastly working together we can make this happen. An overview of the report and recommendations appears on Page 10.

The key issue is that PFEW acts as a credible voice for rank and file police officers and to be able to represent and protect officers the best they can.

Hopefully, there will be a big change in the communications strategy and the way the Federation communicates with members. The introduction of a national database of all Federation members within the country would help keep you updated with important information and decisions as soon as they are published, and would also help when views are needed.

I will end this by urging any officers of Federated rank who are interested in taking up the opportunity to become a Federation rep to just do it. Grasp the opportunity; it is a rewarding role that will bring you new challenges and

opportunities. Not only will you develop your skills but you will be assisting your colleagues at a time when they need you most.





# 'Compulsory severance would have damaged policing'



**By Paul McKeown,  
Chair of North Wales Police Federation  
Inspectors' Branch Board**

**If you are wondering why I am writing in *Your Voice*, it is due to the fact that I recently became the Chair of the Inspectors' Branch Board (IBB).**

I have the honour of replacing Inspector Mark Davies, who has not only stepped down from the Federation but has also retired from North Wales Police. Those of you who know Mark will be aware that his are 'large' boots to fill and, in my opinion, losing his experience in Federation matters from the IBB is a huge blow.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for everything that he did while working for the IBB and wish him all the best in his retirement.

Among other things, I am expected to write regularly for this magazine as did my predecessor. Having reviewed previous articles, I have noted that Mark commented on a number of different issues but always ensured the views he expressed were shared by other inspectors and chief inspectors. Being new in post, I have yet to fully canvass all my colleagues on the issues that are bothering them. Hopefully, I will be able to do this in the next few months and my next article will contain more relevant material.

What I will comment on though is the Home Secretary's decision to ratify the Police Arbitration Tribunal's (PAT) decision to reject Tom Winsor's recommendation to introduce compulsory severance for police officers. The relief I felt when I heard this was palpable. I think, out of all the Winsor review recommendations, this was the one I personally thought would cause most damage to police officers. I had visions of officers nearing (or not) their pensionable age, suddenly being shown the door, as has happened in the military.

I was so worried about it, that when I saw the national Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, our very own Steve Williams, at a meeting late last year, I questioned him at length on how the negotiations were going and what was Plan B should they fail. Steve reassured me that his team was working hard on the issue and to have faith. How right he was and I would like to thank him and his team for what they achieved.

The Home Secretary, Theresa May, however, did state that the question would be considered again in the future,

indicating that she and the current Government are not happy with the PAT decision. I wonder when that will be.

What about the others who supported the recommendation; in particular those in ACPO who wanted to add it as another management tool to control resources? Have they now considered the PAT's rationale behind their decision to reject it? Have they noted what the PAT said about the relationship between officers and their force? (i.e. Officers were required to accept a number of sacrifices and restrictions in their personal lives and, on occasion, put themselves in harm's way. The knowledge that despite making these sacrifices, an officer could still then be subject to compulsory severance as part of workforce planning was, in the tribunal's view, detrimental to the mutuality of commitment between officers and forces).

It has left me hoping that members of ACPO, nationally, have not forgotten where they have come from and what they are.

The independent review of the Police Federation of England and Wales was published in January and included a number of recommendations that hopefully will improve the organisation. I won't comment on these at the moment as I am aware of ongoing discussions on the way forward.

I will say though that we have to ensure the Federation remains in control of its members and not others. The police service may slowly be getting politicised but we certainly do not want that for the Federation.

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# Detectives discuss overnight allowance

**The thorny issue of the Away From Home Overnight Allowance was among the issues discussed at the latest meeting of the Police Federation National Detectives' Forum.**

North Wales Police Federation was represented at the meeting, held in Exeter at the end of February, by DC Nick Hawe.

"The overnight allowance continues to divide opinion and has become an issue on which the Official Side needs to provide a clear definition at the earliest opportunity," Nick explained.

"Ian Rennie, the Federation's national General Secretary, has this on his agenda and is pressing the issue. Examples of where the allowance possibly should have been paid, but was not, are invited – although the North Wales Police stance was made quite clear with an email which basically read that CID would rarely attract the payment.

"My advice at this stage would be to make a note of any times where you feel you should have been paid this allowance, in case the final definition means that you could claim this retrospectively.

"Where this might become relevant is when detectives start being deployed under mutual aid, as has recently been happening as part of the Hillsborough investigation."

Other matters discussed at the meeting included the creation of a database called 'Atlas', which will contain all of the competencies and skill sets of detectives across England and Wales. There will probably be more news on this later this year.

# Officers in line for bravery award after tackling gunman



*Sergeant Gareth Davies (left) and PC John Harrison.*

**Two brave North Wales Police officers were nominated for the prestigious St David's Awards, sponsored by the Welsh Government.**

Sergeant Gareth Davies and PC John Harrison tackled a man armed with a gun after being called to a hoax bomb at the Guild Hall in Wrexham.

They were sent to the scene on 29 May 2012 when the Force control room received a call from council staff at the Guild Hall stating that a man had entered the building with a bag containing a bomb.

Sgt Davies was in the area and immediately helped with the evacuation and the search for the suspect. He was joined by PC Harrison and they were informed that the man had left the building.

But as they opened the door to the Council Chamber, they were faced with the suspect pointing a handgun in Sgt Davies' face at point-blank range. The officers acted quickly and shouted clear commands to the suspect who continued to hold on to the gun. They managed to overpower the gunman and with the assistance of two other officers arrested him.

The suspect package was later discovered to be a 'dummy' bomb.

Sgt Davies said: 'It all happened so quickly, we didn't have time to be afraid, we just knew we had to do something to protect ourselves and the public.'

PC Harrison, who drew his Taser in exchanges which brought the potential stand-off to an end, added: 'We are proud and honoured to have been nominated for this award.'

## 'Policing should be devolved'

Control over policing should be devolved to Wales, a report into Welsh Assembly powers has recommended.

Following a year-long review the second Silk Commission report said most evidence submitted supported the devolution of policing as a way to bring it in line with other public services. But responsibilities for the National Crime Agency should not be devolved. The report said:

- **Powers relating to arrest, interrogation and charging suspects should not be devolved unless criminal law is**
- **Police pay should be devolved but not pensions**
- **Treatment and rehabilitation of youth offenders should be devolved**
- **A Welsh Criminal Justice Board should be created.**

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# Federation in need of fundamental reform

## The Police Federation of England and Wales is in need of fundamental reform to enable it to improve significantly, according to the findings of the independent review.

The 84-page report, published in January, makes 36 recommendations for reform set around three key themes: trust, professionalism and unity.

The recommendations will be discussed at May's Police Federation conference in Bournemouth.

The review team's recommendations cover 11 key areas including trust and public accountability, openness and reporting, better communications to members, diversity and equality and professionalism and standards.

More specifically, they include:

- **The Federation should adopt immediately a revised core purpose which reflects the Police Federation's commitment to act in the public interest, with public accountability, alongside its accountability to its members**
- **A new National Board should replace the Joint Central Committee**
- **A director of equality and diversity should be appointed**
- **A new performance and standards agreement will be drafted, consulted upon, and signed by all reps**
- **Rank committees locally and nationally should be removed from the governance and decision-making structure**
- **A new professional means of selecting the general secretary. The Chair will be elected by the membership**

- **National conference to be slimmed down in time and numbers**
- **There should be a 25 per cent reduction in subscription levels for one year in 2015 financed by the reserves of the rank central committees. An extension of this should be reviewed.**

The Federation's national Chairman Steve Williams admitted the report makes uncomfortable reading and identifies the need for 'deep cultural change'.

He says: "It shows that the organisation is currently failing to perform its role effectively and efficiently, is ineffective and uninfluential, has lost the confidence of its members, and is in need of urgent reform.

"Its recommendations are far reaching and set out a roadmap of reform. There is no doubt that root and branch change is required. The Federation needs to embrace this challenge however difficult that may be. Its findings will be seen by some as controversial and that they undermine the fabric of our organisation. However, I have no doubt that if the Federation fails to deliver the change required, others will do it to us.

"The Police Federation plays a vital role and it is essential that we are an effective voice representing front-line police officers. But we need to do that with the highest standards and the greatest of integrity.

"The independent review gives us the opportunity to build the Federation of the future. An organisation that we can be justly proud of, that has clear purpose and direction, is accountable and transparent. Only by achieving this can we once again become the trusted voice for front-line officers."

## Overview of the review

The review was set up by the Police Federation of England and Wales in spring 2013.

Six people sat on the independent panel. Their terms of reference asked them to consider "Whether any changes are required to any aspect of the Police Federation's operation or structure in

order to ensure that it continues to promote the public good as well as meeting its statutory obligation to represent the interests and welfare of its members and the efficiency of the police service".

In particular, they were asked to look at how the Federation:

- **acts as a credible voice for rank and file police officers**
- **genuinely serves the public good as well as its members' interests**
- **is able to influence public policy on crime and policing in a constructive manner**
- **is an example of organisational democracy and effective decision-making at its best allowing genuine ownership of the organisation by police officers and effective communication between members and the Federation at all levels**
- **is recognised as a world class leader in 'employee voice'.**

In making their recommendations, the panel members were to have regard to: value for money, the unique position and responsibilities of the Office of Constable, the importance of enhancing public confidence in policing, equality and diversity, and transparency of decision-making and the subsequent action.

## Change needed for Fed to have a credible voice

The effectiveness of the Federation was questioned widely by both those inside the Federation and out.

The panel determined that in order for it to have a credible voice change was urgently needed.

The reason for the Federation is not questioned, with the report stating: "It is in the nature of their work, which by definition may involve fine, split-second judgments, that police officers get complained about more than most, often unjustly, sometimes not.

"Police officers need – and greatly value – an organisation that represents them in individual cases of investigation or discipline; and can give them and their families wider support when they are under stress.

"This absolutely necessary protection means that it is desirable for membership to be universal given the widespread risks that individual officers face. That is why membership of the Federation is automatic upon enrolment."



# Chief puts health and wellbeing drive to the fore



**There is a lot happening to the police service as we know it, where 'change' has become the new normality. The financial imperative for change is self-evident and has struck at the heart of the psychological contract of policing.**

Chief Constable Mark Polin is leading a drive to ensure that staff are encouraged to gain and maintain the best possible levels of health and wellbeing so that they can lead a meaningful and purposeful working life. This will see all managers within the Force play a key role in operationalising wellbeing.

Mr Polin said: "By operationalising wellbeing I mean ensuring that we create an environment that focuses on good standards, having due regard for the core values of North Wales Police, developing strong leadership and a clear drive and enthusiasm for good health.

"The majority of staff within this Force will experience an element of pressure in their role and we saw evidence of this in a recent article by The Daily Post in which it reported on the increase in sickness levels.

"While this article is worrying, I was encouraged that staff do feel they work in an environment where they can report such matters and that is why wellbeing is a serious business and should be an un-coerced choice for staff."

Enjoying better health and having more energy are a few of the benefits in an almost never-ending list of reasons to buy in.

#### **So what is North Wales Police doing?**

Members of the Chief Constable's management team have started a review of the measures in place to support all of the above with particular attention to the management techniques and

procedures in Force.

The Cycle to Work Scheme will soon re-open and the Lifestyle Matters/ Wellbeing site on the Force intranet will be refreshed to provide supporting information for all staff. There will be a drive on good health during the course of this year and line managers will play a supporting role in that pursuit. Staff and managers are encouraged to support this drive and as always are encouraged to offer any suggestions or ideas to help improve existing measures.

Richard Eccles, Secretary of North Wales Police Federation, said: "I am pleased to see that we are refreshing and revitalising this area and I intend for the Federation to be fully engaged in every aspect. I personally feel that officers and the general public benefit massively from some of the initiatives linked to previous work in this area."

## New guide for pregnant officers

**The Police Federation of England and Wales has issued a new maternity guide.**

Female police officers do not have exactly the same rights at work as other women employees so it is important they get the right information about their entitlements.

The booklet provides general information on their baby's development, their health care needs and their rights as a working police officer.

It covers health and safety issues, maternity leave, maternity pay and returning to work. The maternity guide is available on our website.

The Force's HR team send out the pregnancy guide to officers when they are informed of their pregnancy. Extra copies are also available from the Federation office.

The new guide can be found on our website under Pay and Conditions/FAQ/Maternity/Federation Advice.





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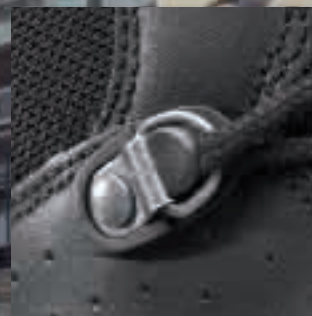
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# Under financial pressure?



**Pay freezes, no progression on paycales, higher pension contributions and increases in the cost of living have all had an impact on police officers.**

But there are a number of organisations dedicated to helping those who find themselves short of cash, in need of debt management or advice or, perhaps trying to find an

affordable loan.

In this feature we give you an overview of two organisations closely affiliated to the police service – Payplan and No 1 Copperpot.

For more information contact your Federation representative or the Federation office.

## 'We provide sensible guidance'

Payplan was formed in the early 1990s specifically to support serving police officers who were encountering debt problems.

Since that time the company has helped many North Wales Police Federation members experiencing such issues.

Payplan understands that there's no "one size fits all" solution to getting out of debt but, whatever your situation, will provide sensible guidance.

Its advisers start by looking at your income and expenditure, your lifestyle and your priorities with a view to identifying a realistic, appropriate and affordable solution... and most importantly, one that's right for you.

Following your initial conversation, you will be invited to work on a more detailed assessment of your financial circumstances at a time convenient to yourself.

Payplan provides impartial, non-judgmental and completely confidential support for anyone who considers themselves to be struggling with debt and, what's more, any advice or debt solutions suggested will be made available to you entirely free of charge, so you've nothing to lose and everything to gain by making the call.

**If you are experiencing financial difficulties and would like to speak with Payplan for a completely non-judgmental discussion, please contact the Police Debt Line on: 0800 009 4146 quoting North Wales Police Federation or go to [www.payplan.com/police-federations](http://www.payplan.com/police-federations)**

Don't hesitate, make that first step towards debt freedom today, remember Payplan does not charge fees for the debt help service it provides.

## Exclusive to the police family

No 1 CopperPot Credit Union operates exclusively for members of the police family offering savings and loans tailored to suit their needs.

Serving and retired police officers, police staff and their immediate families can become members of No 1 CopperPot Credit Union.

It's free to join and you can save monthly by direct debit or payroll deduction. While offering similar products to a bank or building society, No 1 CopperPot is a not for profit credit union so when you join you become a shareholder.

At the end of each financial year, any profit is returned to the members. Last year's dividend paid three per cent on the Member Account and four per cent on the Notice Plus Account, putting No 1 Copperpot at the forefront of the financial sector.

As well as savings, the company also offers a range of loans developed with police officers in mind and tailored to suit each stage of their careers.

These flexible and affordable loans, with no penalties for early or lump sum repayments and a top-up facility, allow you to apply for more funds at any time or to pay off your loan ahead of schedule.

No 1 Copperpot also offers mortgages.

Unlike banks, the interest on its loans is accrued daily which means you only pay interest on the actual amount that you owe.

Membership comes with life cover up to the age of 65 so if the worst was to happen your savings would be doubled and any loan would be cleared (terms and conditions apply).

**For more information visit [www.no1copperpot.com](http://www.no1copperpot.com) or call 0845 130 1852.**



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# Near misses – keep the Force informed

## How has health and safety had any effect on police officers?

**Think of body armour, CS spray, radios, handcuffs, Taser, police vehicles with bubbles, custody suites, management of incidents, and so on.**

Those who have been in the job a few years will recognise the vast improvements in equipment, vehicle, uniform and working practices. That isn't to say that the job is any less dangerous, it is still as dangerous as it has ever been, but many of the risks have been identified and acted upon.

Despite best efforts in raising awareness of the HS1 near miss process over recent months, some very worrying incidents are still coming to light. Such incidents have included the inappropriate deployment of PCSOs and the conveyance of drunken and violent offenders to custody centres by lone officers; significant issues that should have been captured much earlier by the HS 1 reporting process.

It is crucial that the full picture of the risks our staff are exposed to are captured early and the starting point for this should be the submission of HS1 (near miss) forms. Staff should be submitting them whenever they perceive they have been subjected to any risk. Compared to some other forces, we are fortunate to have a supportive health and safety management team which actively encourages and, in fact, recognises the value of the process.

## Why are near misses Important?

What is a near miss? Usually a near miss is defined as an accident or injury that almost happened – but didn't. For example, the situation where diminishing staffing levels create a higher potential for assaults on officers or prolonged disorder, or when someone is almost hit by a reversing police vehicle in a station car park.

In these two examples, no injury resulted but this was the result of good luck rather than good management. A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage – but had the potential to do so.

In the simple examples given above, if an injury had resulted, an investigation into the circumstances would have been carried out and some form of corrective action taken. In other words, the decision to investigate and take corrective action is based on whether a

person has been injured. So, if no injury occurs, no investigation takes place and no attempt is made to prevent the same event occurring in the future.

In essence, there is no investigation and corrective action put in place until a serious injury or major damage occurs which is not in the best interests of our staff and contrary to the Force's legal obligations.

When near misses occur they can be regarded as early warnings that something is wrong somewhere – whether this be a local issue or a failure within the safety management system.

## What next?

An essential element of the Force health and safety management is an effective procedure for the accurate and timely reporting of near misses which will facilitate remedial action, however, there will be no significant progress until a baseline picture of the problems staff are experiencing are properly identified and the evidence captured.

To that end the Federation, in conjunction with the Force health and safety team, has arranged an ongoing series of inspections across the Force. This is not a fault finding exercise but is predominantly aimed at ensuring the working environment of our staff is safe and that we are doing all we can to eliminate any unnecessary risks or hazards whether that relates to buildings, vehicles, equipment or working practices.

Many accidents can be prevented by taking prompt action to prevent a hazardous situation from continuing or developing into something worse. Therefore, use near miss reports as your early warning system. Waiting for the injury, accident or for damage to be caused before acting just doesn't make sense!

The last thing that staff want to do at the end of a shift is submit a form BUT it is these forms which effect change because someone MUST look at the issues raised. If you don't raise them then they are ignored.

The information supplied by you in HS1s will be used by your local rep in conjunction with local commanders to ensure that you have the safest possible working environment



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# NWP to host British Police Fell Race

By Chief Inspector  
Dave Owens

North Wales Police will host the British Police Fell Race at Abergwyngregyn in May.

Police forces bid to host the event (that attracts competitors from around the UK) and this will be the third time the race has been held in North Wales since 2007 (2007 Clwydian Hills, 2011 Horseshoe Pass).

Similar to the Snowdonia 7 the British Police Fell Race is a great example of the camaraderie that exists in the policing family. The post event presentation and buffet are always good-humoured affairs.

That said the event, which will be held on 14 May, is hotly contested, especially when the sun is shining, as competitors take on the hills of the host force area.

The geography of North Wales is particularly suited for this type of event and the route chosen for 2014 exemplifies this.

Starting near to the Aber Falls car park, competitors must gain the high ground and continue over Drum to Foel Fras. The second half of the route will take competitors back to the Aber Falls car



park, possibly testing their route finding and navigation, especially if the weather closes in.

The possible navigational challenges do highlight that the event is not a 'fun run' and competitors need to be able to look after themselves on the hills, however, there are a number of checkpoints along the way where marshals can offer assistance if required.

Indeed, the marshals along the route play an integral role in the success of the event and the image of the host force. We have been particularly well served in previous events by a number of staff who have volunteered their time to ensure that the event has gone as planned.

There have already been a number of volunteers to help this year, although additional helpers would be a great help. Anyone who would like to help can contact me on extension 39502.

## COPS Challenge Trophy

Footballers from North Wales Police, Greater Manchester Police and the North Wales Dragons went head to head in a charity football fund-raiser held at Parc Eirias, Colwyn Bay.

Colwyn Bay based PC Medwyn Lewis did a fantastic job organising the tournament on Sunday 16 February with the emphasis on raising as much money as possible for two good causes – COPS (Care of Police Survivors) and The Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund.

GMP won the day in a tense final against the North Wales police team.

Bryn Hughes who launched the Run To Remember campaign to raise money for the memorial fund set up for his daughter - PC Nicola Hughes - also attended the tournament.

Bryn created a national fund-raising

event involving officers from Forces all around the country who have signed up to a 125-day running campaign to clock up 250 miles (400km) between now and April. In April, Bryn will then undertake a gruelling North Pole marathon in sub-zero temperatures.

NWP colleagues who are currently raising money through the Run To Remember also attended to run two miles with Bryn.

An amazing array of prizes donated by local businesses in the North Wales area was auctioned off on the day. The event was really well attended and has raised almost £2,000 to date.

Federation JBB Chair Simon Newport said: ***"I would like to commend Medwyn and all the other people involved for their hard work and dedication in arranging the***

***COPS Challenge Trophy. It was a fantastic event supporting two very worthy charities."***



### CARE OF POLICE SURVIVORS (COPS)

Caring for the surviving families of officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, COPS aims to provide them with the support they need to rebuild their shattered lives

### PC Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund

The charity aims will be to provide assistance to children who have lost a close family member through violent crime by funding or providing educational and or pre-employment opportunities.





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## Blogberry

### Usual cut please!

Officers in Colwyn Bay arrived to relieve their colleagues at shift changeover when several of the oncoming officers noticed a colleague who was sporting a rather new and styled haircut.

Comment was passed about the officer's new bouffant and immediately came the cry that there was a story behind the new style.

It turned out the officer had attended his usual barbers and upon going into the shop his regular hairdresser was making a brew and without turning, greeted the officer by his first name and told him to take a seat as she would be there in a moment.

Once comfortable and seated the officer was tended to by the usual hairdresser who asked the officer if he wanted his usual cut. Yes came the reply and the hairdresser commenced her work.

Midway through the cut, a conversation broke out and chit chat and small talk was the order of the day.

The conversation went along the

lines as follows:

*Hairdresser:* "You working over Christmas?"

*Officer:* "Yes."

*Hairdresser:* "Aww, shame but I suppose someone has to."

*Officer:* "Yes."

*Hairdresser:* "Are you working on Christmas Day?"

*Officer:* "Yes."

*Hairdresser:* "Oh! People don't mind you being in their homes on Christmas Day then?"

*Officer:* "No, well, I don't particularly want to be there but they call me and I have to go."

*Hairdresser:* "Well if I was having building work done I wouldn't want you in my house on Christmas Day."

*Officer:* "Building work?"

There was a brief pause as the hairdresser looked in the large mirror and then said: "You're not Steve the builder are you?"

*Officer:* "No, I am Steve the policeman."

Seconds later, the hair cut was over and Steve the policeman was left sporting Steve the builder's 'usual' haircut that was so short it was impossible to revert to Steve the policeman's usual cut!

### When did you see her?

One of our fledgling probationers had her first experience of a sudden death when an elderly lady had passed away unexpectedly.

The witnesses present at the scene were close friends and next door neighbours to the deceased. Keen to broaden the experience of the young officer,

who had just progressed to independent patrol, in the handling of such distressing incidents, her supervisor instructed her to accompany the witnesses to their house and record first accounts and background information.

Upon entering the couple's house, the lady immediately informed the officer to be careful of her guide dog as it could bite.

The officer quickly reassured the couple that it wasn't a problem as she was used to handling dogs as she has one herself. She then proceeded to sensitively elicit the information she required.

The conversation went:

*Officer:* "When did you last see the lady?"

*Witness:* "I haven't seen her."

*Officer:* "What do you mean you haven't seen her?"

*Witness:* "I have never seen her."

*Officer:* "What do you mean you have never seen her?"

At this point the officer was visibly very confused particularly as the couple had previously said that they regularly visited and checked on their neighbour.

The witness then replied: "I couldn't see her because I am blind."

The officer's developing powers of deduction kicked in - guide dog and the special mobile phone that the witness spoke into which spoke back to her!

The embarrassed and very red-faced officer immediately apologised to the couple, who to her relief, completely saw the funny side.

Needless to say the officer did not receive an adverse entry in her SOLAP.

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***Don't forget... send us your stories before someone else does!***







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