

# FRONT LINE

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The magazine of Nottinghamshire Police Federation **SPRING 2024**





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# CHAIR'S FOREWORD

By Simon Riley, chair of Nottinghamshire Police Federation



**W**elcome to the spring edition of our magazine, giving members news and views from Nottinghamshire Police Federation.

It has certainly been a very busy start to the year, with the publication of two key reports causing concerns for the Force.

The first report came in March when His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary moved Nottinghamshire Police into an enhanced level of monitoring.

This means the Force must now work closely with inspectors from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to address the issues identified which are around the effectiveness of investigations, the support offered to victims and governance arrangements.

As a Federation, we are keen to stress that this development should not be seen as a reflection on frontline officers. Policing is challenging at the best of times and in recent

years it has been even more so – given the ever-increasing demands placed on officers, particularly during the years of budget cuts when officer numbers were drastically reduced.

We now need to see strong leadership from our chief officer team and senior leaders to ensure that the Force addresses the concerns raised by the inspectorate.

But the publication of a second report based on the findings of the 2023 Police Federation of England and Wales Pay and Morale Survey should serve as a wake-up call not just to our chief officers but also to Government.

To highlight a few of the key findings (you can read a fuller report on Pages 6 and 7), 45 per cent of Nottinghamshire Police Federation who responded to the survey, carried out at the end of last year, said their personal morale was currently low or very low. And 79 per cent of respondents said that overall morale within the Force was low or very low.

Almost three quarters (71 per cent) said that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their overall remuneration and almost nine out of ten said they do not feel respected by the Government.

These figures are quite alarming, but sadly they are not that surprising either.

Police officer pay has fallen by 20 per cent in real terms over the last 10 years or so, and there are no real signs of the Government redressing the balance.

No one becomes a police officer to get rich, but I think there is an expectation that we will be paid fairly for the unique role we play in society, the risks we face and the challenging nature of the role.

Currently, not only have we seen our pay lag behind that of others, but we have also seen this exacerbated by the fact that we have lost faith in the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB), the so-called independent arbiters of police pay.

Sadly, PRRB is not independent

at all. The Government sets its remit and even then, if it's not happy with its recommendations, it can simply choose not to accept them. There is no arbitration process, as was the case before the current pay review mechanism was established.

This is part of the reason why we have withdrawn from the PRRB process, and we are arguing for a more independent body.

But we are also calling for the Government to commit to longer term and sustained investment in policing so that the service can recover from the austerity years and provide the service our communities deserve, with a workforce that feels valued, supported and fairly paid.

We are already in the midst of a crisis in terms of retaining our officers, but this is only going to get worse if the Government does not act soon.

Having highlighted these two reports, I would just like to finish on a more positive note.

After a lengthy campaign led by Bryn Hughes MBE, the father of murdered Greater Manchester Police Officer Nicola Hughes, it was announced earlier this year that the Elizabeth Emblem had been created to posthumously honour emergency service workers who have died in the line of duty. Nicola was murdered along with her colleague, PC Fiona Bone while on duty in September 2012.

This recognition, I am sure, will mean a lot to the families of our fallen colleagues who can now apply for their emblem.

It is right and fitting that those who give their lives when serving their communities are recognised and that their sacrifice is not forgotten and I am pleased that Bryn, whose campaign was supported by the Police Federation of England and Wales, has achieved what he set out to do.

Finally, I would just like to remind members that the Federation is here to offer help to members, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need support.

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# ELIZABETH EMBLEM TO HONOUR FALLEN COLLEAGUES

An Elizabeth Emblem which will be given in honour of emergency service workers who have died in the line of duty has been welcomed with open arms by the chair of Nottinghamshire Police Federation.

A formal announcement was made earlier this year confirming that a posthumous award will be given to the family of police officers and other public servants in recognition of the ultimate sacrifice they have made.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), along with the Police Superintendents' Association and the Prison Officers Association, have been campaigning for such an award.

Speaking about the announcement, branch chair Simon Riley said: "We've always backed this campaign and we couldn't be more pleased that our fallen colleagues will formally receive the recognition they deserve.

"This award will mean so much to the loved ones of officers who have been killed on duty. Whilst it can't bring back their

family members, The Elizabeth Emblem will undoubtedly provide some comfort to those left behind following such tragic circumstances."

Bryn Hughes MBE has helped lead the Medals for Heroes campaign after his daughter, Greater

Manchester PC Nicola Hughes was killed while on duty in 2012. Nicola and fellow PC Fiona Bone were tragically murdered while responding to a report of a burglary.

Bryn said: "Nicola and Fiona went to work that day wearing the Crown and they lost their lives while responding to what they thought was a call for help from a member of the public.



*Elizabeth Emblem to be awarded in honour of fallen officers.*

"To receive this news that their sacrifice is to be formally recognised by the Crown and State is overwhelming.

"I meet with many other families of fallen officers and I'm sure that many of those too will be thankful for this formal recognition."

PFEW National Board member and Medals for Heroes lead John Partington said: "We've waited for this announcement for a number of years. We launched the Medals for Heroes campaign two years ago and this itself was built upon campaigning that we worked on two years before that so I'm delighted by the news the work we have done has helped towards the emblem's introduction."

John added: "I'd especially like to thank all of those who have contributed to our call for formal State recognition. Many colleagues have worked with us on this and I'd like to especially thank the other board members and branch chairs who have added their local backing on behalf of the membership."

## POLICE UNITY TOUR: REGISTRATION OPEN

Registration is now open for anyone wanting to take part in this year's Police Unity Tour to raise money for the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) charity.

Nottinghamshire riders take part the East Midlands Chapter of the tour, joining riders from other forces in the region, including Derbyshire and Leicestershire.

"The Police Unity Tour has become a highlight of the policing year," says Nottinghamshire Police Federation chair Simon Riley, "It takes the form of a sponsored cycle ride involving officers from forces across England and Wales.

"They ride in memory of those colleagues who have lost their lives while serving their communities with each rider wearing a wristband inscribed with the name of a fallen officer.

"Cyclists set off from their home force on Friday 26 July and join up with other teams just outside Tamworth so that they can then ride into the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire together ahead of the COPS remembrance service on the Sunday, having covered around 180 miles."

The Police Unity Tour is now in its 12th year and has raised more than £1.2 million to fund the invaluable peer support offered to families through COPS.

To take part [register online](#) and pay a £150 non-refundable registration fee to offset the costs of two nights' accommodation and a Police Unity Tour cycling jersey.

COPS was founded in 2003 by retired Strathclyde police officer Jim McNulty and Christine Fulton (MBE) whose husband, PC Lewis Fulton, was murdered on duty in Glasgow in 1994.

COPS contacts the survivors of every officer who loses their life on duty, explaining what support the charity can offer and inviting them to get in touch if they need such support.

[Find out more about COPS.](#)

## GLASGOW TO HOST MEMORIAL DAY

Nottinghamshire Police Federation secretary Tom Hill says that National Police Memorial Day service is such an important event in the policing calendar that all officers should try to attend at least one during their policing careers.

The annual service, which rotates around the four nations of the UK, will this year be held on Sunday 29 September at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall.

"As Federation secretary I have had the honour, and privilege, of representing the Force, the Federation branch and its members at the National Police Memorial Day service. It is a very moving service and a poignant reminder of the risks and dangers officers face day in, day out as they go about their duties, serving and protecting the public," says Tom.

"At these services, police officers of all ranks stand alongside the families of our fallen colleagues to show them that we don't forget the ultimate sacrifice these officers made, but also that we keep their loved ones close to our hearts too.

"I think all officers should try to attend at least one National Police Memorial Day service during their careers if at all possible."

The memorial day was founded by now retired Kent Police Inspector Joe Holness QPM OBE following the brutal killing of his colleague Jon Odell in Margate in December 2000. The first service was held in St Paul's Cathedral in London on Sunday 3 October 2004.

[Find out more about the service and book your place.](#)

# SPECIAL MEASURES: NO REFLECTION ON OFFICERS

Nottinghamshire Police Federation secretary Tom Hill says it's 'no reflection on frontline officers' that the Force has been moved into an enhanced level of monitoring.

Tom said officers were doing their best in difficult conditions as he called for 'strong leadership and direction' to take the Force out of special measures.

He said: "This is no reflection on the hard work and dedication of frontline officers. Cops are going out there and doing their best in difficult conditions day after day.

"They're having ever-increasing demands placed on them and this is another kick in the teeth for them.

"They are now looking for strong leadership and direction from line managers and senior leaders to move the Force forward."

Tom was responding to His Majesty's

Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) putting the Force into an enhanced level of monitoring.

He said that austerity, cuts to funding, officer numbers and resources have all had a significant impact on policing.

"The cuts we've had to police funding and policing in general have been significant and our members are doing more than ever with less.

"Crime is more complex than it's ever been, people expect more from the police but without us getting more resources, and unfortunately something has to give."

The full findings of the assessment have not yet been released to the Force, but it has been issued with 'two accelerated causes for concern'.

The inspectorate has advised that the Force needs to improve 'how it manages and carries out effective investigations to make

sure that victims get the support they need'.

The second cause for concern from HMICFRS relates to its observation that the Force doesn't have adequate processes, planning or governance arrangements in place to monitor performance or identify where improvements are required.

Chief Constable Kate Meynell said: "As Chief Constable, I recognise the serious nature of the HMICFRS findings. I have taken urgent action to address the immediate concerns raised and have ensured that all of the initial recommendations that relate to our investigations and support for victims have been completed."

She added: "I fully acknowledge that our Force has work to do to achieve our vision of being an outstanding Force that we can all be proud of. I am fully committed to working with HMICFRS and we will work tirelessly to address their concerns and deliver the best possible service for the people of Nottinghamshire."

[Read the Force and CC Meynell's statement in full.](#)

**“The cuts we’ve had to police funding and policing in general have been significant and our members are doing more than ever with less.**



# SURVEY FINDINGS: 'FAR TOO MANY OFFICERS UNHAPPY AT WORK'



Nottinghamshire Police Federation chair Simon Riley says 'far too many officers are unhappy at work' after a new report shed light on morale in the Force.

Simon said he was pleased Nottinghamshire Police had a smaller percentage of officers saying their morale was low than the national average, but said more work needed to be done by the Force and the Government to improve morale.

He was speaking as the latest pay and morale survey for Nottinghamshire was released by the Police Federation for England and Wales (PFEW).

It found that 45 per cent of respondents said their personal morale was currently low or very low. This was the lowest figure of all of the forces in England and Wales and

below the national average of 58 per cent.

The report also showed that 79 per cent of respondents said that overall morale within the Force was low or very low,

**“ One way to improve morale almost at a stroke would be for the Government to give our members a fair pay settlement that goes a long way to redressing the decade of real terms cuts they've endured.**

**“It’s shameful that officers are worrying about whether they can afford to pay the rent or the mortgage at the end of the month, whether they can feed their family, and whether they can pay their bills.”**

compared to a national figure of 87 per cent.

The main reasons for low morale were how the police are treated by the Government (92 per cent) how the police are treated by the public (83 per cent), and pay and benefits (74 per cent).

Simon said: “We’re pleased to see the percentage of Nottinghamshire officers who say their morale is low is lower than the national average, but it still means we have far too many officers who are unhappy when they come to work.

“There’s a lot of work to be done to improve that.

“One way to improve morale almost at a stroke would be for the Government to give our members a fair pay settlement that goes a long way to redressing the decade of real terms cuts they’ve endured.”

The PFEW figures show that 11 per cent of respondents in Nottinghamshire Police intend to resign from the service in the next two years or as soon as they can.

The most frequently cited reasons for intending to leave were morale (81 per cent), how the police are treated by the Government (70 per cent) and the impact of the job on mental health and wellbeing (68 per cent).

Some 12 per cent reported never or almost never having enough money to cover their monthly essentials.

Almost three quarters (71 per cent) said that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their overall remuneration.

Simon said: “It’s shameful that officers are worrying about whether they can afford to pay the rent or the mortgage at the end of the month, whether they can feed their family and whether they can pay their bills.

“Almost nine out of 10 of our members do not feel respected by the Government.

“That’s no real surprise given how pay and conditions have been eroded, and how

**FACTORS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING MORALE**

	Nottinghamshire Police %	England and Wales %
Pay and benefits	74	81
Workload and responsibilities	57	66
How the police are treated by the Government	92	95
How the police are treated by the public	83	86
Your pension	56	64
Opportunities for development and promotion	40	41
Work-life balance	53	61

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORKING IN THE POLICE**

	2023 %	2022 %
I would not recommend joining the police to others	63	52
I do not feel valued in the police	64	66

**OFFICERS' TREATMENT IN THE POLICE**

	2023		2022	
	'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' %	'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' %	'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' %	'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' %
I am respected by the Government	1	89	3	89
I am respected by the public	5	80	9	73
I am treated fairly	28	40	38	34

**INTENTION TO LEAVE**

	2023 %	2022 %
I intend to resign from the police service within the next two years or am seeking alternative employment at the moment and will resign as soon as I can	11	19

policing is used as a political football, but it all feeds into low morale.

“Police officers currently don’t have industrial rights. PFEW is looking at balloting members on whether they want to seek greater industrial rights, specifically collective bargaining and binding arbitration in relation to pay and conditions, because we can’t carry on with officers’ pay declining in real terms.”

Other findings in the Nottinghamshire Police Pay and Morale Survey include:

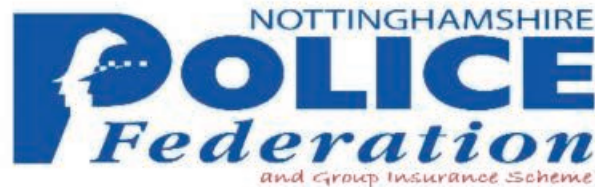
- **58 per cent said that over the last 12 months, their workload has been too high or much too high**
- **Six per cent said they have never or rarely been able to take an 11-hour break between shifts in the last 12 months**

- **31 per cent feel always or often pressured into working long hours over the last 12 months**
- **40 per cent said they find their job very or extremely stressful**
- **82 per cent indicated they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months.**

Simon said he would be sharing the report with the Force’s chief officers.

“We’ll be encouraging them to work with us to improve areas within their gift,” he said. “There’s lots to look at around demand, workloads, and welfare.”

Read the full [Nottinghamshire Pay and Morale Survey report](#).



## You May Be Entitled to a Tax Refund

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You can't assume HMRC will automatically send you a refund if you have overpaid tax.

It is up to you (not your employer) to check HMRC has given you the correct tax codes so you pay the right tax. If you have paid too much, it is up to you to claim it back off HMRC or get a tax expert to do all the work for you.

As a member of Nottinghamshire Police Federation, you are eligible to have your tax checked by professional tax experts at The Tax Refund Company.

Hundreds of members have already had a refund after using the service.

The main points to understand are...

- ✓ **Your tax review is free if you do not get a refund.**
- ✓ **For every £1 you receive back from HMRC, you will keep 62p (minimum fee £38\*).**
- ✓ **You keep 100% of refunds you get for a current tax year, + any extra money you get paying less tax in future months and years.**
- ✓ **Nottinghamshire Police Federation members using this service have got back an average of £216.35 each.**
- ✓ **Peace of mind is guaranteed – in the rare event you get an unexpected tax bill as a direct result of using this service, it will be paid for you\*\*.**

To use The Tax Refund Company and get your tax checked by professional tax experts, scan the QR code.



\*You only pay a fee if you get a tax refund. If the refund is under £38, the minimum fee will be reduced to the amount of the refund.

\*\*T&C's apply – [www.thetaxrefundcompany.co.uk/our-guarantees](http://www.thetaxrefundcompany.co.uk/our-guarantees)

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# PLANS TO IMPROVE TIMELESS INVESTIGATIONS WELCOMED

Nottinghamshire Police Federation chair Simon Riley has welcomed Home Office plans to improve the timeliness of investigations into police officers' conduct.

Simon described the announcement that investigations into officers suspected of committing offences in the line of duty will be sped up as 'long overdue'.

The Home Office has also announced a rise in the threshold for referring police officers for criminal prosecution, saying that 'only cases that have a reasonable prospect of conviction should be referred'.

Simon said: "We welcome the changes announced by the Home Secretary to improve the timeliness of investigations – which are long overdue.

"Of course the public expects the highest standards from police officers and, while the vast majority of our members meet those expectations, those that don't should face action and, if appropriate, dismissal from the Force.

"But officers all too often find themselves under investigation for doing their job in line with their training and to the best of their ability.

"Policing can be high-pressured and decisions are made in a split-second. There has to be the right balance between accountability and support for officers who use their powers effectively.

"Also, there is no cap on how long a complaint can be investigated and many take years to come to a conclusion, which can't be right for any party.

"And you can't underestimate the impact this can have on the officer, their family and their colleagues

"Through our [Time Limits campaign](#), the Federation has long been calling for a 12-month limit to disciplinary proceedings against officers, and I think these proposals to speed up the process will



*Home Secretary James Cleverly.*

boost confidence in the system for both officers and the public."

In September last year, the then Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, announced a review of the way in which police use of force and police driving related incidents were investigated.

Announcing the outcome of the review and [reforms to the police accountability system](#), Home Secretary James Cleverly said: "Our police officers act bravely in the line of duty, and they should not fear that their actions, when lawful and taken in line with their training and guidance, could damage their careers, wellbeing and family life.

"It is vital for the public and our policing that officers are held to the highest of standards and a balance must be struck between making sure officers can do their jobs safely and confidently and holding them to account.

"That is why the changes we are setting out, and further measures in the coming months, will ensure both our officers and the public have faith in the accountability system."

Other proposals include giving the [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#) (IOPC) the ability to refer cases to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) earlier, once an investigation has finished rather than waiting for a final report to be drafted. This will allow them to speed up the referral process and give officers and victims clarity sooner, the Home Office said.

The Home Office also said, to ensure that no cases slip through the net, the IOPC's Victim's Right to Review policy will be put on a statutory footing, strengthening the ability for victims of police use of force to challenge when cases have not been referred to the CPS.

**“Our police officers act bravely in the line of duty, and they should not fear that their actions, when lawful and taken in line with their training and guidance, could damage their careers, wellbeing and family life.**

# WOMEN'S SUPPORT NETWORK: ALWAYS THERE FOR MEMBERS

**D**etective Inspector Kylie Westlake, the chair of Nottinghamshire Empowering Women to Succeed (NEWS), says the network is 'always there as a friend' to anyone who needs its help or advice.

"I see it as a business-as-usual network," she said. "We're always here to support you. We're a constant."

Kylie, a Nottinghamshire Police Federation member, said the group was open to everyone in the organisation.

"It's not just for women," she said. "I'm very much for supporting and empowering women and raising issues that relate to women, but also it's open to everyone else in the organisation because we need to give everyone the tools to be able to support women."

Kylie became involved in the network in 2019 as an active member of its steering group. She took on the role of vice-chair before taking over as chair.

She has since rebuilt the NEWS steering group and collectively they have set out a new mission statement 'to provide a professional support network which will encourage and empower women in the police family to maximise their potential'.

The network also has a new set of objectives:

- **To create opportunities for women by improving access to networking, role models and mentors as well as providing support for recruitment processes**
- **Create a signposting function to help women and other colleagues access support**
- **Create an inclusive and diverse network.**

Kylie explained that one of the group's main areas of work was around the gender pay gap.

"It's a key one for me," she said. "We signed up to the pledge in 2022 and I'm helping to ensure the organisation meets that pledge."

"It's not just about female representation at the higher ranks, it's around flexible working availability at the higher ranks. That could be flexibility for childcare, but I'm also looking at any caring needs, disability, any type of flexibility."

"I am working with the organisation to address perceived barriers around this."

"I have personally met with a number of women within the organisation who are either constable or sergeant rank, and



*DI Kylie Westlake.*

looking to go to the next rank but feel they may not be accepted in light of their flexible working requirements."

Another key piece of work was around menopause.

"We were the first Force to bring in a menopause policy and menopause continues to be an important theme," Kylie said.

"We are holding coffee mornings bi-monthly. They're pretty relaxed occasions."

"People can come and talk about it, and we are actively encouraging both men and women to attend to raise the awareness further."

"Our first one had about 20 people in attendance and the second one we had more than 60. That says to me we've chosen the right method and people find it helpful."

Other areas of work include coaching and mentoring as well as supporting female colleagues with the fitness test. NEWS has worked with the 'This Girl Can' campaign previously to 'identify barriers and themes' for women and to 'create an encouraging network to support people through the bleep test, and we continue this work in partnership with the training department'.

Also, uniform changes are being progressed 'because we haven't got a fully female-specific uniform'.

NEWS continues to support The Working Families Group, which developed from an idea to ensure there was consistency for women returning to work following maternity leave. The wellbeing team supports the group in delivering regular and consistent KIT days in partnership with people services and payroll.

The group has developed to support all working family dynamics, offering support and guidance regarding IVE, adoption and providing advice on policies in partnership with people services.

NEWS continues to look for new areas to provide support and has started to attend the National Endometriosis Working Group to enable it to bring the latest support and guidance into the organisation.

It is looking to raise awareness of its work through a number of internal communication pieces. These include 'This is me' articles to introduce a number of the steering group members and their areas of expertise, as well as sharing links to inspirational quotes with the intention of colleagues sharing them among themselves to inspire each other.

Kylie ended: "If there's anything else you would like us to start looking at, then let us know."



# OFF-DUTY COP STOPS SHOPLIFTER

Having joined the Force in March 2022, the many aspects of training to become a police officer are still fresh in the mind of Nottinghamshire Police Federation member PC Luke Kerruish – including parts that could only be learnt about and never truly practised.

The 29-year-old officer says he can still remember being told about the responsibilities and expectations of an off-duty cop - about what to do should he ever encounter criminal activity while on a day off or on leave. And, it did not take long until he was required to put words in a classroom into a real-life situation.

“I knew if I saw anything during time off work, I had to use my discretion to assess the situation and at least act as a witness if I thought it to be too dangerous,” Luke said.

“A few weeks after I started, I actually came across a road traffic accident while off-duty and without even thinking, I got involved and did what I could. I suppose it gave me that experience early in my career and stood me in good stead for the future.”

On 12 February this year, Luke was called into action while off-duty for a second time, albeit in somewhat different circumstances. Enjoying a quiet day ahead of a night shift, he walked into OneBeyond in Nottingham’s Castle Retail Park and almost immediately noticed something

untoward inside the store.

“About 30 seconds after being in there, I spotted someone standing around the fragrance section. He looked shifty and nervous and seemed to keep checking if people were looking at him,” recalled Luke.

“I recognised the usual characteristics of a shoplifter, so I kept a close eye on him.”

Wanting to determine how concealed any attempt to shoplift would be, Luke suspected the man may have been planning to sweep as many items as possible into a bag in one quick movement.

“I never got the impression the man was going to discreetly put something into his pocket and then keep a low profile. It seemed like he was going to try to go about it through speed rather than stealth,” he added.

Luke was right and, before long, he was giving chase, after the shoplifter made a run for it.

“Things moved a lot faster from this point. I may have had time to think at first, but I think my natural instinct took over here,” Luke said.

“I eventually apprehended him out on the car park and was then able to bring him into the store’s holding room while waiting for back-up to attend.”

Having noticed from the outset of the incident that there were no in-store security

staff present, Luke says he prepared to take action in the knowledge that he would be doing so without anyone else to assist him. Instead, he would have to take complete control of the situation while in plain clothes.

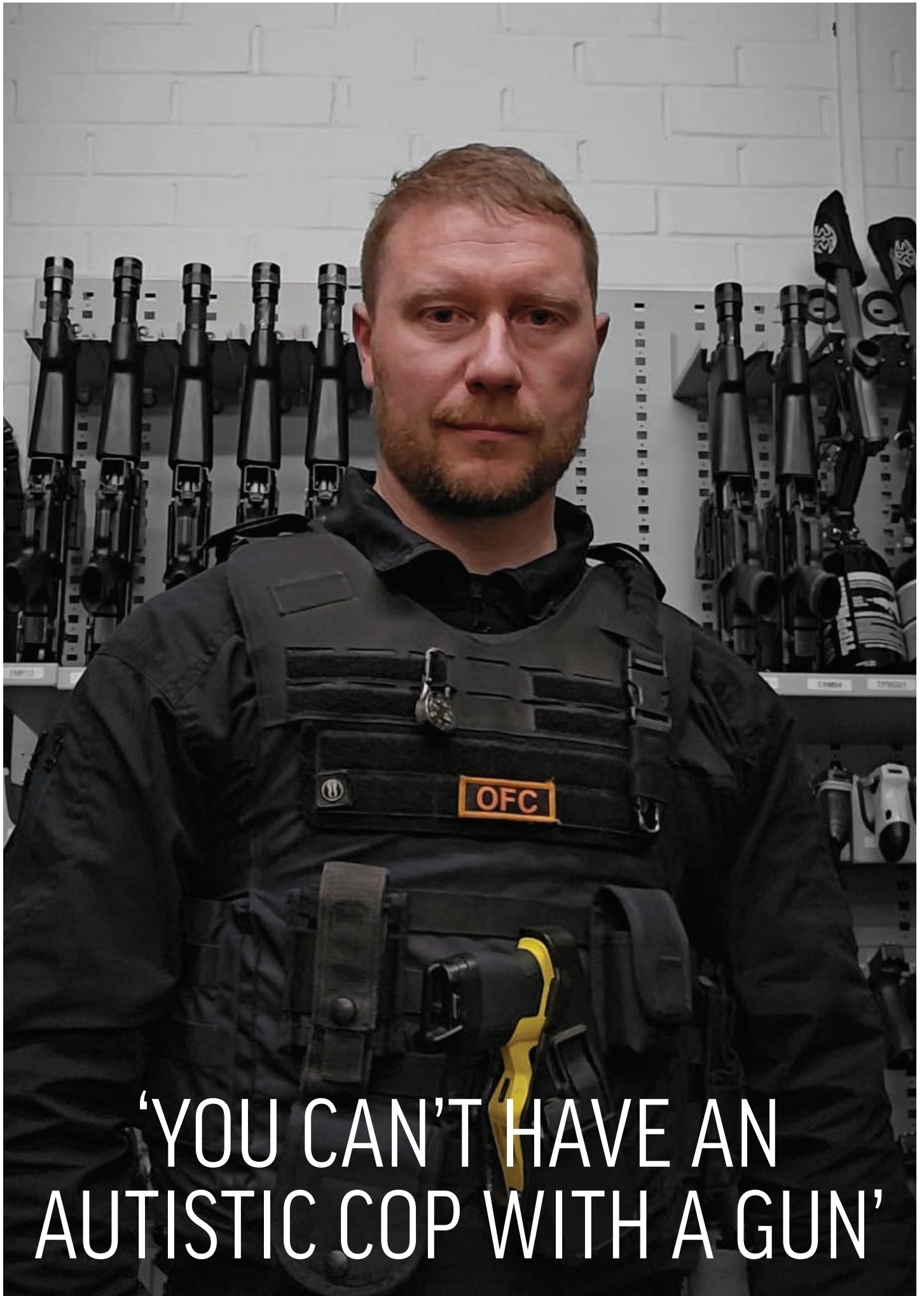
One of the immediate challenges of this, he explained, was to quickly command enough trust and understanding from the surrounding members of the public.

He said: “I had made it clear who I was inside OneBeyond but one woman in the car park didn’t have a clue I was a police officer. From her perspective, she just saw one man chasing after another and grabbing hold of him.”

Fortunately, the onlooker’s confusion was soon cleared up and a group of Luke’s on-shift colleagues arrived to escort away the shoplifter, who was later charged and remanded.

“Even that caused me a bit of grief. I had work mates saying, ‘look at you, causing trouble on your day off,’” Luke laughed, ending: “You always have to be ready to make a positive impact on the community, whether on duty or not. Once you have the eyes for a crime, that sets you apart from the rest of the public.”

“I guess you can never really switch off – it’s all part of being a committed officer.”



**'YOU CAN'T HAVE AN  
AUTISTIC COP WITH A GUN'**

## **‘You can’t have an autistic cop with a gun’. Temporary Inspector Gav Skevington has heard it many times before.**

Gav is Nottinghamshire Police’s chief firearms instructor. He’s also autistic and is shared his story for [Neurodiversity Celebration Week](#) (NCW) to help break down barriers, and to support neurodiverse people in policing and wanting to enter policing.

Gav, a Nottinghamshire Police Federation member, said: “I’m the chief firearms instructor and I’m autistic, so straight away people’s alarm bells go and they say ‘you can’t have an autistic cop with a gun’. Well, they’re wrong.

“Exactly the same as neurotypical people, neurodiverse people are fit for roles as long as we’re given the right opportunities and support.”

Gav added: “If it wasn’t for the way my brain works I wouldn’t have been as good an operational firearms commander as I was.

“I can look at problems in a different way.

“There are the positives and negatives of every element of it.

“I can switch off emotion really well, which for a job that’s high risk is brilliant.”

Gav said he always knew he was autistic but it wasn’t until later in life that he was diagnosed.

Describing himself as being ‘36 years in denial’, he said it was only when his children displayed signs that he decided to do something.

“I did everything to build a mask around me where I’d fit in and I didn’t have to talk about it,” he said.

“It wasn’t until my own children started to show signs that I had to look in the mirror and say to myself to get it sorted and stop being selfish.

“When I disclosed it to work, I sat in the car park for ages trying to work out how to say it. I looked in my rearview mirror and said ‘I’m Gav and I’ve got autism’. Saying it to myself was a huge step for me.

“I remember going to my own chief firearms instructor and saying this is the diagnosis I’ve got and expecting to lose my

ticket. But I didn’t.

“I got overwhelming support, which was brilliant for me.

“The moment that happened was a turning point for me because I could say I’d achieved all of this in the firearms world – I was five years in firearms at that point.

“I’d been an operational firearms commander, a tactical rifle officer, instructor, and I did that despite, or because of, the fact I’m neurodiverse.”

Gav is part of Nottinghamshire Police’s Neurodiversity Working Group. It’s been running for three years.

“It’s chaired by Inspector Nick Wood, who comes from a dyslexia point of view,” Gav said.

“We’ve got Inspector Adam Pace, who comes from the managerial support side. I come from an autism point of view.

**“It’s not just neurodivergent individuals, or people who think they are, or who are going through that process who come to us. We’re getting line managers coming for some advice.**

“We’re trying to find the best ways we can encourage neurodiverse members of staff to come forward, and provide them the necessary support.

“It’s not just neurodivergent individuals, or people who think they are, or who are going through that process who come to us. We’re getting line managers coming for some advice.

“More people are open and willing to talk about it.

“We want to lead from the front and share those experiences that will break down people’s natural barriers.”

Gav said that more people in the Force were contacting the group for advice.

And he said it was trying to build a network of support for officers and staff.

“If I go to give a talk, afterwards I’ll have a flurry of emails, which is great,” he said.

“Our group’s concern is that we’re doing this on top of the day job and will have people reaching out to us on the verge of crisis or going through bad times.

“We’re trying to build those mechanisms to show that as a neurodiversity group we’re here to support you, guide you through a diagnosis process and those sorts of things.

“And it’s then signposting to other services like wellbeing support, EAPs, so that we don’t hold it all. It’s joined up.”

He said that people could also turn to national groups – the National Police Autism Association, the ADHD Alliance and the Police National Dyslexia Association.

“If people don’t want to talk in their own Force there are those national forums where they can get advice,” he said.

The Force’s Neurodiversity Working Group’s work has led to Gav being invited to sit on the College of Policing’s Neurodiversity in Specialist Operations Policing Group.

And he said that policing needed ‘central guidance’ that forces could draw on and would provide consistency across the service.

“I’ve spoken to forces which have two people in a room on top of their day jobs

who are the neurodiversity contact,” he said.

“We’re lucky here. Yes, we do it on top of the day job but there are a number of us who can spread that out.

“Other forces have huge groups and have conferences and events, and it’s that inconsistency. We need a central drive.

“In Nottinghamshire we have a really good connection with chief officer level. (Deputy Chief Constable) Mr Cooper welcomes the Neurodiversity Group into a bi-monthly meeting where we talk things through.

“Having that connection to the top corridor is really good because you feel listened to and empowered.

“But I think that on a national level we need that input to steer us in the right direction.”

Away from policing, Gav runs a clothing line and writes fiction books, which are about empowering people.

“Over 18 years of policing I spent the first 13 trying to fit in, trying to fit that mould and expectation of what Gav the firearms cop should be,” he said.

“Then there’s the little man inside me saying that’s not me. It’s only as I’ve got more confident that I’ve been able to change that.

“The mask still goes on but I am a lot more comfortable with me as a person. I’ve had to challenge that, realise my blockers, the biggest one of which is me.

“My fiction books are about characters who have to accept themselves and realise they are their only limit.

“If you internalise it, you’re the one stopping yourself.”

**“If it wasn’t for the way my brain works I wouldn’t have been as good an operational firearms commander as I was. I can look at problems in a different way. There are the positives and negatives of every element of it.**

# TEAMING UP WITH TV STAR

**A** Nottinghamshire Police Federation member has spoken about a new partnership between the Force, the BAFTA award-winning actor Vicky McClure and her Dementia Choir which aims to support people living with the condition.

Inspector Jemma Connor-Iommi said the Force was working with the choir to help raise awareness about dementia in the community, and to ensure frontline officers and staff are given the relevant skills and training for when they come into contact with people living with dementia.

Jemma said: "We've teamed up with Vicky McClure's Our Dementia Choir, which was set up to support the dementia community.

**“It’s for people living with dementia, but also their family members, carers - it’s a mini community of support for people.**

“It’s for people living with dementia, but also their family members, carers - it’s a mini community of support for people.

“It’s remarkable because the music brings people to life, and you can see they’re engaged, singing and happy. It’s a joy to see.”

Jemma said part of the collaboration was to promote the Herbert Protocol form, which the Force and many others nationwide, turn to for vital information when a person living with dementia goes missing.

Jemma said: “It’s a simple form but not a lot of people know about it.

“It gives the police relevant information such as names, addresses, previous employment, family members’ addresses, places that the person likes to go.

“A lot of people with dementia, when they go missing, they go back to old addresses, they go back to where they were 10 or 20 years ago, they go to places that have a relevance to them. If a person has the Herbert Protocol in place it allows us to respond quickly and effectively.

“It’s difficult for the person reporting their loved one as missing to feel able to give information during what is a crisis time for



*Vicky McClure and Inspector Jemma Connor-Iommi.*

them, so if this form is filled in prior to that, it gives us that starting point.”

Jemma said the collaboration also aimed to raise awareness within Nottinghamshire Police of how officers deal with incidents involving people with dementia.

She said: “That could be missing persons, victims of crime, custody procedures, safeguarding issues. There are lots of things we’re doing at the moment.

“We have a package put together to train our frontline officers and staff to make sure they are given the relevant information about the signs and symptoms of dementia,

what it is, because lots of officers won’t have had exposure to dementia.

“It’s about understanding what it is, how it affects people, and making sure people have support when we come into contact with them.”

Jemma has contributed to [a Nottinghamshire Police video](#), produced with the choir, which is calling on people to fill out the Herbert Protocol.

“We are very aware of just how vulnerable people living with dementia can be and want to do all we can to keep them safe,” she added.

# FED BACKS POCA PETITION

A petition has been launched to propose the introduction of a policy that would see organisations providing care to affected officers, both active and retired, receive an annual portion of money recovered from assets obtained through criminal activity.

“It is really encouraging to see this campaign gaining momentum because a rethink has been long overdue,” says chair of Nottinghamshire Police Federation Simon Riley, “Hopefully, we can finally start looking at getting a better deal out of the Proceeds of Crime Act.”

The act, passed in 2002, recovered £339.1 million of assets through Confiscation, Forfeiture and Civil Recovery Orders in the financial year 2022 to 2023. This figure is down only five per cent from 2021 to 2022, the highest year on record for

proceeds of crime recovered, and still reflects the overall rising trend in asset recovery over the last six years.

While acknowledging that funds generated have historically been distributed back into the Force for good use, Simon echoes the idea that individual police officers should be considered more directly.

“As police officers, our commitment to our jobs can sometimes compromise our own safety. How can it be right that we could be harmed in tackling criminal activity head-on, leading to money being seized, to then not see a penny of it?”

Beneficiaries of the campaign’s success would include Police Care UK, which has appealed for more funding in their efforts to support the welfare, recovery and wellbeing of current and ex-staff who are injured or living with disability and mental health issues

as a result of their roles in the police service.

“Causes that offer this kind of support are vital for the welfare of officers and staff both past and present. Something that happens at an incident of crime could change an officer’s life forever,” Simon continued.

“The public won’t always be aware of that but, thankfully, these charities are.”

The petition, which was rolled out at the end of February, has now passed four thousand signatures on the Official UK Parliament website, and Simon believes Federation members should add their own.

“I would urge all members to do their bit in maximising this real opportunity for police colleagues around the country. I’m sure we all know someone who could benefit from this movement.”

Members can sign the petition by [visiting its official page](#).

# ADDICTION SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Members of Nottinghamshire Police Federation are now able to download an addiction support app for FREE.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has partnered with [Help4Addiction](#) and [Rehubs](#) to offer 24/7 confidential support for police officers, providing bespoke advice and guidance for those living with addiction.

The Rehubs app, which is available on Google Play Store and the App Store, offers a modern, digital approach to addiction recovery with an online rehab programme.

Members can use the code POLFED, under the ‘use company code’ prompt at the bottom of the payment page, to download the Rehubs app for free.

Nottinghamshire Police Federation chair Simon Riley has emphasised the importance of using the available support. He said: “Police personnel often project a tough exterior, a shield of protection, yet, at the core, we are all human. Addiction is a genuine concern and now, more than ever, we need to highlight the support accessible to officers.”

Any form of addiction can be supported, including alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography, acknowledging that any unhealthy relationship with a substance may signify a problem.

Simon stressed the significance of Help4Addiction and Rehubs providing a secure, non-judgmental space for officers and police staff during challenging times.

“As policing faces unprecedented



demands and pressures, officers seek ways to unwind or escape daily stresses,” Simon continued.

“The trouble is there’s a real stigma surrounding addiction - not just in policing, but in life generally. The Help4Addiction helpline and Rehubs app are both indispensable for our members, offering confidentiality and, crucially, external assistance outside the police structure.

“I’m urging anyone who is experiencing addiction or feels that somebody they know might be facing such challenges to reach out to Help4Addiction or to download Rehubs. We need to make the most of support like this that is so accessible for our members.”

If you or somebody is suffering from addiction and needs support, call Help4Addiction on: [0330 058 8227](tel:03300588227) or download [Rehubs](#) today.