

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

July 2020



Policing in a pandemic Pages 6 to 17

Focus on roads policing Pages 20 to 22

Supporting our members in everything we do

www.polfed.org/westmids

McALISTER

FAMILY LAW



Fixed Fee Divorce

£350 + VAT*

FREE first appointment

West Midlands Police Divorce and Children Law Specialists

McAlister Family Law is the country's leading provider of police divorce and family services. Whether you are facing divorce and are worried about the impact on your pension or are seeking contact with your children or any other family law dispute, we are here to help.

- **Leaders in police divorce and children cases.**
- **Over 20 years' experience in representing police officers facing divorce and children disputes.**
- **Experts in police pensions and divorce.**
- **Fixed fees and discounted rates for police officers and personnel.**

*Conditions apply. See website for details.



Amanda McAlister
Managing Partner

McAlister Family Law.
2nd Floor, Commercial Wharf, 6 Commercial Street, Manchester M15 4PZ

www.mcalisterfamilylaw.co.uk

0333 202 6433

Welcome

Welcome to the July 2020 edition of *federation* - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role – though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

Published by:
XPR (UK) Ltd

Editor:
John Nott, chair

Deputy editor:
Chris Cooper,
Member services team leader
ccooper@westmids.polfed.org

Design and sub-editing:
XPR (UK) Ltd

Contact us:

Guardians House,
2111 Coventry Road,
Sheldon, Birmingham,
B26 3EA

Telephone:
0121 752 4900

Email:
westmidlandspf@polfed.org

www.polfed.org/westmids

Federation is printed by XPR (UK) Ltd on behalf of West Midlands Police Federation.

The articles published do not necessarily reflect the views of the Branch Council. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit any material submitted.

Every care is taken to ensure that advertisements are accepted only from bona fide advertisers. The Police Federation cannot accept liability for losses incurred by any person as a result of a default on the part of an advertiser.

All material is copyright and may not be reproduced without the express permission of the editor.



What's inside

- 04 Chair's introduction
- 05 Conference backs rise in Federation subs
- 05 Claim your tax relief
- 05 Policing events cancelled
- 06 Federation health and safety team helps Force with coronavirus recovery plans
- 06 Use My Time when seeking annual leave
- 07 Flexible working may boost effectiveness, says Federation's deputy secretary
- 09 Recruitment progress welcomed
- 09 New recruits adapt to initial training pandemic style
- 10 DHEP recruit builds on training with response role
- 10 'I have been loving every minute'
- 12 Tutoring: rewarding and challenging role
- 13 Learning and development adapts to allow training to continue
- 14 Assaults on Police Employees 10 Point Plan
- 15 Sergeant talks about reality of policing during crisis
- 15 Officer assaults up despite fall in crime
- 17 Care on Demand offers invaluable service to members during pandemic
- 17 Support on hand
- 17 'One of the most challenging periods ever for policing'
- 18 Sam looks to improve Force support after breast cancer treatment
- 20 Backing for move to better protect officers who stop vehicles
- 21 Officer tells of being dragged by vehicle
- 22 Time for roads policing to be prioritised
- 25 IOPC chief pledges to build on improvements
- 26 Consider the Force needs and your own when seeking flexible working
- 26 Know your regs: working into annual leave
- 27 You really can make a difference by being a Fed rep
- 28 David Walliams sends message of support to ACC Chris Johnson
- 30 'Irwin Mitchell were there every step of the way'
- 33 Retirement seminars now going ahead
- 35 West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund
- 35 Boot offer
- 35 Chester Zoo opens for visitors

Advertisers

- 02 McAlister, family law
- 08 George Burrows, financial health check
- 16 George Burrows, Group Insurance Scheme
- 24 Police Insure, motor, home, motorcycle and travel insurance
- 30 Irwin Mitchell, family law
- 31 First Call Financial, independent mortgage advice
- 32 NARPO, member services
- 32 Gorvins, police and family law
- 33 Warren & Co, independent mortgage advice
- 34 Slater & Gordon, family law
- 36 Slater & Gordon, police law

The challenges of policing a pandemic



By **Jon Nott**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

I have been a police officer for close on 22 years now so it's fair to say there is not much that surprises me in terms of the realities of policing.

But, even as a seasoned detective and with almost 13 years as a Federation rep under my belt, I have been quite shocked that assaults on police officers have escalated during the current pandemic.

Latest statistics show that these attacks have increased by around 25 per cent recently, with a significant number of these being linked to incidents in which people have spat or coughed over officers while claiming to have coronavirus.

I guess we all know that there will always be people who will try to use a crisis to their advantage but this really is stooping incredibly low.

Police officers are dedicated to serving their communities. In normal times, their focus is on fighting and preventing crime, tackling disorder and protecting the vulnerable. At this time of crisis, they have been on the front-line, putting their own health and, therefore that of their loved ones at home, at risk as they have tried to uphold the Government's lockdown measures through engagement, explanation, encouragement and, as a last resort, enforcement.

I think they should have a reasonable expectation not to be assaulted while carrying out their duties. Perhaps the difficulty is that the offenders carrying out these hideous attacks can't see beyond the uniform. If they could, they would see a human being who, even though a police officer, has a family and friends and just wants to get back home to them unscathed after completing their shift.

Since this seems to be an unlikely shift in their mindset, the only thing we can hope is that Home Secretary Priti Patel is true to her word and doubles the maximum sentences available to the courts when convicting people of assaults on police officers and

other emergency service workers. We then need the courts to make full use of the sentencing powers available to them when they are faced with people who have assaulted officers.

Ms Patel made this pledge – pre-election – when addressing the Federation's centenary celebrations in November last year and, more recently, when taking part in an online meeting with the Federation's national chair and three officers from across the country who had been assaulted on duty. We will have to wait to see how this unfolds.

So, while on one hand we have the issue of officer assaults showing some of the worst of humanity, on the other, I am also incredibly impressed with the way in which officers themselves have responded to the pandemic.

And that doesn't just apply to our established officers.

We are, of course, now in the throes of the most significant officer recruitment campaign for many, many years with the Government embarking on a three-year plan to take on 20,000 officers nationwide. It requires an enormous effort for forces to reinvigorate their recruitment and training processes to get this number of recruits in place.

And that is in normal times. However, we

“ Help is at hand. No one should suffer in silence. Just contact your rep, the Federation officials or the office and they will help you find support tailored to your needs. ”

are in far from normal times so adding a pandemic to the mix has added to the enormous challenges involved.

The Force has pulled out all the stops and done its best to adapt. But, even so, you have to feel for the new recruits who have started their training in the midst of this crisis.

Many will have been forced to train in the confines of their homes and I can only imagine how difficult that has been, and not just in terms of the information they have had to take in but also in relation to not being able to properly get to know the rest of your cohort. The friendships and relationships you build in your early training usually stay with you throughout your policing career so these new recruits start out with something of a disadvantage. Hopefully, this is something they will be able to pick up on when the lockdown measures are eased.

You can read about the experiences of one new recruit on Page 9 and also follow the training of DHEP recruit Pete Bock, who we featured in the last edition of this magazine, on Page 10.

Incidentally, while we are on the subject of the pandemic, together with the Force and the Benevolent Fund, we have as a Federation been financially supporting officers who chose to move out of their homes to protect their families while they continued to work in front-line roles. This was very much a personal decision for them to make but we are pleased to have been able to give them some assistance.

The Police Federation has also promoted other support available to officers during the coronavirus crisis. While police officers themselves may not have been affected in terms of their salaries, we appreciate most households are going to be impacted in some way – perhaps through a partner losing their job or having their pay cut. Help is available for anyone who is struggling financially and it is just a case of contacting your local Federation rep or the Federation office and they will be able to signpost you to specialist organisations or financial support through Caroline Harris.

But, it's not just people's finances that are being affected. Some people have suffered mentally during the lockdown, perhaps through isolation while working from home or due to anxiety about the pandemic. Again, help is at hand. No one should suffer in silence. Just contact your rep, the Federation officials or the office and they will help you find support tailored to your needs.

Find out more about contacting us on the [Meet the team](#) or the [Find my reps](#) pages of our [website](#).

Conference backs rise in Federation subs

Police Federation subscriptions will go up by £2 a month from September this year.

The increase in subs, supported by delegates at a Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) virtual conference on 17 June, is the first since 2011.

It means members will pay £23.58 a month for the range of support, advice and services provided by the Federation but this will actually amount to £18.86 when tax relief is applied.

"This decision allows the Federation to continue to do the very best it can for our members and to represent them to the best of our ability," said national Federation chair John Apter and secretary Alex Duncan in a joint statement issued after a vote by Federation representatives from across England and Wales.

They explained: "PFEW's National Board recommended the increase after considering it was in the best interests of the members, and the organisation. Having avoided any increase in subscriptions for a decade when colleagues suffered years of austerity and pay freezes, this increase was essential to allow current levels of support and assistance for members to be maintained.

"For a number of years, PFEW has bridged the gap between income and expenditure by using reserves. This is not sustainable in the longer term as costs continue to rise due to inflation.

"Increasing subscription rates for our members was not a decision we have

come to lightly. In an ideal world we would have been able to continue as we had but, after almost 10 years of subscriptions being frozen, we reached the point that doing nothing was not an option."

Delegates voted in favour of three motions, all with effect from 1 September 2020:

- **The monthly voluntary subscription rate to PFEW to be £23.58**
- **Student officers who elect to subscribe to PFEW will be entitled to a 50 per cent discounted rate for the first year of their service, thereafter they will pay the normal subscription rate**
- **Those who join the service on the Direct Entry Inspectors' Scheme will pay the full subscription rate.**

The virtual conference was organised after the annual national Police Federation conference which would have been held in Manchester yesterday and today was cancelled due to coronavirus. Last year's conference was also cancelled, as a result of a cyber-attack on PFEW.

The online conference began with the national chair welcoming delegates to the Microsoft Teams event before national treasurer Simon Kempton outlined why it was felt necessary to increase subscriptions and how it was decided to seek a £2 a month rise. Delegates' pre-submitted questions were also answered before a series of votes.

[Subscription rise FAQs.](#)

Claim your tax relief

Members can either send a letter direct to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to claim their tax relief on Federation subscriptions or download a form which must be then filled out and sent by post.

There are two template letters on our website – one for officers and one for

student officers – which you can use to help.

Or you can download the form and get more information from the HMRC website.

[Template letter – officers](#)

[Template letter – student officers](#)

[Download the HMRC form.](#)

Policing events cancelled

In addition to the annual Police Federation conference being cancelled, other key events in the policing year will not go ahead this year due to the pandemic.

The Police Bravery Awards in July have been cancelled along with the Care of Police Survivors memorial service and the Police Unity Tour, both of which were also scheduled for July. National Police Memorial Day in September has been cancelled too.

Federation health and safety team helps Force with coronavirus recovery plans

The Federation's health and safety lead has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure the safety of officers and staff during the pandemic.

Deano Walker, whose full-time position in the Federation team was extended due to the coronavirus crisis, has worked across the Force area, meeting Federation reps, and managers to help address any concerns.

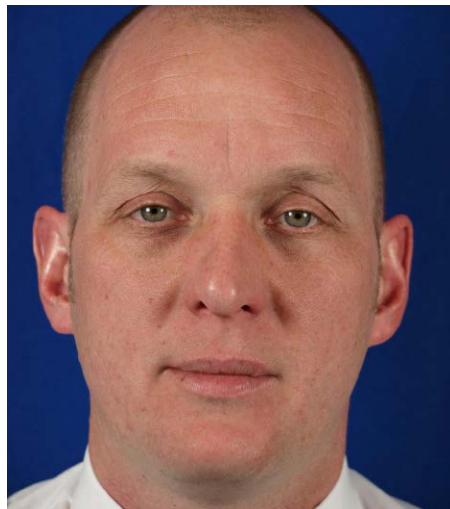
"My full-time post was initially to plan the restructuring of the Federation's health and safety committee. This has now been completed and we have a strong, committed and knowledgeable committee which has been essential at this time," says Deano.

"We are scheduled to meet monthly, however, during the pandemic we have met fortnightly due to the amount of health and safety issues that have understandably arisen. The committee members have obviously been kept busy, carrying out risk assessments for the Force and challenging some that had been completed and identifying those that hadn't.

"I have been able to travel Force-wide, meeting with reps and ironing out lots of health and safety concerns. These visits have enabled me to assess police buildings for their suitability for those members who have remained on the front-line and then getting those back to work once the guidelines changed allowing people back to work if social distancing could be adhered to in their working environment. We are an essential public service so on occasions we have had to apply some common senses to allow policing to continue.

"As a committee, we have visited around 50 police buildings in company with the Force health and safety team from B7 and this has been more concerning for us and challenging for the Force. Some stations are laid out well, staff are being distributed evenly, and work terminals spaced out or closed off.

"However, some were very concerning. All response hubs were visited. With the exception of Solihull, all response teams were struggling to keep to the social distancing guidelines. We found officers were working too close together, change-over was challenging and training days were dangerous. All of this, and other concerns,



Deano Walker.

have been fed back to Gold Command and it's now for local reps and members to feed back to us, with evidence, if things have changed.

"Custody was an issue at Wolverhampton, not just for those staffing it but also those around the building. Issues around air conditioning units had to be addressed, officers had concerns about sharing rest areas and all this was challenged by our custody lead Mick Woods and local rep Raz Neville."

Deano adds: "I have received some fantastic support along the way from a few great local reps who, with the right guidance, have challenged their senior supervisors when things have not been right. I have also met lots of Federation members and

generally they were pleased to see us out there."

The Force has now completed a generic COVID-19 risk assessment which is available on the intranet. Every head of department/NPU is now expected to produce its own version of this to protect officers and staff.

In addition to the work across the Force, Deano and the health and safety committee members have been helping staff at the Federation office at Guardians House with risk assessments and policies to ensure that when the staff return, they are safe. Events held at Guardians House, such as retirement seminars, have formed part of those risk assessments too.

While the work around the safety of officers and staff in offices and buildings has been a priority, the Federation's health and safety committee has worked with the Force to ensure all officers not only have sufficient PPE but also the correct PPE for the role they are carrying out.

Deano explains: "The Force was initially a little slow but it soon picked up and it has now having spent around £3 million on personal safety equipment. Each department/NPU has a SPOC for ordering PPE but officers can also order items via a link on the COVID-19 section of the Force intranet. We all have a responsibility to ourselves and colleagues, if there is no PPE, order some, if you see something wrong challenge it and if you need advice please contact the committee."

Deano's full-time Federation role ended on 1 July.

Use My Time when seeking annual leave

Members are being reminded of the need to apply for annual leave using the My Time portal. And Cliff Tomkinson, the West Midlands Police Federation personnel and equality lead, says that if My Time is offline, officers should make their applications via Shared Services or by sending an email to supervisors.

"It is important for there to be an audit trail," says Cliff, "Then, if there are issues with officers being declined leave, there is evidence of their submissions and the

responses they have received.

"I would not say this has been a big issue but there have been problems with the process. Nonetheless, where there are repeated instances where officers have been refused annual leave it is difficult to argue the case when there is no supporting evidence. Being able to evidence to the Force in writing any difficulties an officer has in obtaining leave is very powerful indeed."

Flexible working may boost effectiveness, says Federation's deputy secretary

A dramatic decrease in officer and staff sickness levels during the coronavirus crisis could show that allowing more flexible working patterns and home working could have an impact on the Force's effectiveness, according to the deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

And Tim Rogers is hoping the Force will do some detailed analysis of sickness rates during the pandemic to see if more permanent changes to working practices could be made.

"Once coronavirus started to spread earlier this year, forces across England and Wales were concerned about how they would cope if a significant number of officers and staff started to fall ill or had to self-isolate. Quite rightly, contingency plans were discussed since, as an emergency service, we needed to maintain an effective service for the communities we serve," Tim explains.

"However after an initial spike in the number of officers off sick, what we actually began to see was a pattern emerging where there was a steady decline in sickness levels. Before the pandemic, as a Federation we were concerned that a snapshot of officers off sick at any one time was sitting at around 500 to 600 a day which means the Force has been paying hundreds of thousands of

pounds in wages to people who are not actually at work.

"But, in the first week of June this year, on one day we had 392 staff and officers off sick so a considerable reduction on the levels we had been seeing. Perhaps this is because giving people the ability to work in a more agile way is actually helping some who would find it difficult to travel to and from a Force building to work and then work there for a full shift to actually work more effectively.

"So, maybe someone has a problem with their back. Travelling into work, sitting in an office for their shift and then travelling home again, perhaps with a half an hour commute either way, could just be too much for them but take the daily commute out of that, allow someone a little more flexibility – maybe spreading their eight-hour working day over 10 hours so they can take reasonable breaks and it can make it more workable. It could be the difference between someone being able to work or not.

"People don't need to be present in a building to give value to the Force and I think maybe this is something we are starting to better understand. I would certainly like to see the Force carry out some more research into this to see if more agile working practices could help officers and

staff but also benefit the Force."

The fall in sickness has been matched by a reduction in the number of officers facing Regulation 28 hearings ahead of seeing their pay cut by half after a long period of sickness. This was averaging at 60 – 80 pre-pandemic which would mean the Force was paying more than £1 million over the period of 26 weeks when officers would be on full pay and then the following month another 60 – 80 would hit the 26-week period representing another £1m plus.

But at the most recent meeting this had fallen to around 45.

"While there is a small minority of officers who simply don't want to work, the vast majority of these officers are people who actually want to be at work and want to contribute to policing even if in a limited capacity. These are officers who are frustrated at the lack of opportunity for them to get back into the workplace," says Tim.

"Before the pandemic, we were seeing automatic barriers to home working and more flexible patterns but, with the Force buying 1,000 laptops when there was a need for as many people as possible to work from home, maybe now there will be less resistance to this continuing in the longer-term. We will have to see."





Let the Federation help you with a free confidential one-to-one Financial MOT.

Your meeting could help you manage the financial issues that may arise throughout your police career and into retirement.

If you're struggling to understand what workplace benefits are available to you and your dependents, George Burrows could help. They have arranged for Caroline Harris, a financial welfare specialist with over 25 years' experience, to work alongside the police Federation and provide detailed information on the range of pensions and schemes available to you.

Contact the Federation to arrange your free, confidential one to one support.

westmidlandspf@polfed.org

Appointments to take place over the telephone

West Midlands Police Federation is an Appointed Representative of George Burrows. George Burrows is a trading name of Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited, which is authorized and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered Office: Spectrum Building, 7th Floor, 55 Blythwood Street, Glasgow, Glasgow, G2 7AT. Registered in Scotland. Company Number: SC108909.

www.ajg.com/uk

GB1432/FP459-2019/V3

See what your colleagues say:

"Caroline helped me put things into perspective and come away with a plan that will allow me to get back control of my finances. I feel in a good place to move forward." Serving police officer, 2019

"I am very grateful for Caroline's support. She could see I found the whole situation stressful but she took that pressure from me and was wonderful. She's a fantastic lady" Serving police officer, 2019

"Not only did she help me to understand how the new pension will affect me but she also helped save me money!" Serving police officer Bennett, 2019

"Visiting Caroline Harris was well worth the time. She helped put my mind at rest with informed information rather than guess work" Serving police officer Skidmore, 2019

"Caroline cleared up any doubts about my pension and helped me understand my tax code better, which has resulted in a tax refund. I highly recommend any officer who is close to retirement come and speak to her." Serving police officer Shippam, 2019



GeorgeBurrows 

Recruitment progress welcomed

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange has welcomed the Force's progress in recruiting new officers as part of the Government's three-year pledge to boost officer numbers by 20,000 over a three-year period.



Steve Grange.

New figures released by the Home Office show that 3,005 of the 6,000 recruits expected to be taken on nationally in Year 1 have now been recruited.

The Force was allocated 366 of these – the second highest allocation of the 43 forces in England and Wales, with only the

Metropolitan Police receiving a higher share. The Force says it has recruited 233 of this figure.

"We welcome the Force's efforts to rise to the challenge of recruiting hundreds of recruits in such a short time," says Steve, "It has been almost like starting from a standstill after years of limited recruitment, so I am sure it has not been without its problems.

"But, hopefully, now the procedures and processes are back up and running, the Force can continue to build on progress to date so that we can get our numbers back nearer to where they need to be.

"However, we are still mindful of the fact that in the 10 years of Government cuts, West Midlands Police lost more than 2,000 officers and even after the three-year

recruitment drive we are unlikely to even get our establishment figures back to where they were in 2010, despite a huge increase in the demand placed on the police service.

"We also have to remember that the issue of officer numbers is not constrained to getting people through the front door. It is equally important that we stop them leaving through the back door and we need to see a far greater effort from the Government in terms of addressing concerns around officer retention."

In total, forces recruited 6,435 officers from November 2019 to March 2020, including recruitment already planned before the Government campaign was announced. There are now 131,596 officers, a five per cent increase on March 2019.

New recruits adapt to initial training pandemic style

One of the Force's new recruits has explained the frustrations of trying to get to grips with their initial training through online learning in his bedroom rather than in a classroom with the rest of his cohort.

George McDonnell started his Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) training, along with 33 fellow new joiners, on 31 March, just a week after the country went into lockdown.

So, instead of spending three months at Tally Ho for face to face training, George (21) has been confined to the bedroom of his parents' home, dialling into online lectures and Powerpoint presentations from around 8am to 4pm each day.

"I really appreciate that due to the lockdown restrictions we couldn't follow the usual training programme," says George, says George, who is the son of our full-time official George McDonnell, "The learning and development department has done its utmost to adapt the training so that we can abide by the rules but still cover all areas of our course.

"But it has been tough trying to stay focussed while listening to the sessions through your computer and, while we have the facility to use a chat function during the training sessions, that doesn't really create many opportunities for interaction in the way that you would engage in a classroom situation.

"If I was in a classroom and the trainer said something I didn't understand I would put my hand up and ask for a further explanation; that's just the way I would learn and I am sure others would similarly put questions to the

trainer to develop their understanding.

"But you just don't do that with the online learning," George explains, "You are worried that you are interrupting the session for others, or that they will think you are always asking questions and delaying the end of the session. You don't get to read people's body language or pick up on their mannerisms."

Despite the restrictions, George's group of new recruits have managed to meet for their personal safety training at Tally Ho and at the sports academy at Tipton.

The cohort of 34 were split into two groups of 17 with each group undergoing five days of training one week followed by a further session of two days and then a further three days.

"I really enjoyed this training. I felt like we all gelled as a group and this gave us a real taster of what the training would have been like in a pre-coronavirus world," he said.

George started the next stage of his three-year training with a placement at Bournville starting on 18 June. He and his fellow recruits will be rotated around various roles and, if successful, will be awarded a degree in policing practice at the end of their three years of training.

"I am looking forward to all aspects of my ongoing training and to just being part of a team after feeling quite isolated from everyone for the last three months. At the moment, I am thinking that I would like to work towards becoming a firearms officer but, of course, you are never sure what roles you are going to be most suited to or will

enjoy until you have experienced the job first-hand," he explained.

George is following in the footsteps of his Dad, also George, who has more than 20 years' service for West Midlands Police under his belt and is now the conduct lead for the Force's branch of the Police Federation.

"I have wanted to join the police from a very early age," says George, "I have seen how rewarding it has been for my Dad. I remember him coming into my primary school with his team to talk about policing and even then I wanted to become a police officer."

While George Senior didn't try to talk his son out of joining the police, he was like any parent, concerned about the dangers he could face and did for a time try to persuade him to be a teacher instead.

But after A-levels, George embarked on a law degree but after a year decided to apply for the PCDA, not thinking for one minute that he would end up starting his training at the height of a pandemic.

"I must admit the online training has been frustrating at times and it is easy to get distracted but the trainers have all been doing the best they can to keep us engaged in what has been such a challenging time for everyone involved," says George.

"Now I am just looking forward to getting my foot in the door of the police station and getting started. I am a bit apprehensive, of course, I know there is a lot to learn and that so much of it will be done through learning on the job, watching others, seeing how things are done. I can't wait to get on with my job."

DHEP recruit builds on training with response role

We featured Pete Bock in our last magazine as he began his time as an officer after entry via the Degree-Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having spent his first few weeks distance learning, Pete has now begun working in Coventry on Response and he says it has been hugely beneficial to be out on the streets learning while on the job.

Beginning any new job is tough, however, starting police life during a global pandemic has provided some very unique challenges indeed.

Along with the rest of his tight-knit cohort, Pete has been forced to distance learn practical elements of the job and, now he has finally started work in Coventry, he has had to risk assess every situation with a lot more detail and try his best to social distance from colleagues in a role where confined spaces are almost unavoidable.

It has also been different to normal police training because, in a job where team work is so important, Pete and his colleagues still have not managed to have a night out or go to the pub yet.

Pete admits, COVID-19 has made his opening months a serious challenge. But the fact that he also says he is 'loving' his new career having switched from teaching aged 26, proves he is also receiving plenty of support and encouragement from those around him.

"The distance learning stage was

challenging and due to illness, I ended up needing to catch up on exams which was not much fun," said Pete.

"I am enjoying the Response PDU a lot, every day is different and there is a steep learning curve but Team D in Coventry is really supportive, and our tutor, Jon Steed, has been great.

"On response, I have started to learn the bread and butter of policing and have been trying to get my head around the basics. That has involved understanding how to risk assess at the scene and to provide the support people need but also understanding how to write it up and use the computer systems when we have returned to Coventry Central Police Station.

prepared when I arrived on response at Coventry and I am needing to learn all the computer systems now - which is taking time.

"I think the tutor system is working well and being with Team D in Coventry has been the best experience so far because every day I am getting to learn on the job and understand how to do the job from experienced officers.

"I think I was definitely less prepared for entering the Response PDU because of COVID-19. So much of what we did due to the virus was distance learning or had to be modified and I believe we got less practical training than we would have if COVID-19 had not been an issue.

“ I am enjoying the Response PDU a lot, every day is different and there is a steep learning curve but Team D in Coventry is really supportive, and our tutor Jon Steed has been great. ”

"Balancing study and a full-time job is always going to be challenging. But, again, our tutor is very supportive and the team is quick to help us when we need it. So even with some of the time constraints, we are picking things up as quickly as possible.

"The main difficulties is just the sheer amount there is to learn. The trainers at Tally Ho did their best to provide us with as much guidance as possible but there is only so much you can learn from initial training that is primarily distance learning.

"This means that I didn't feel too

"Our trainers did their absolute best under the circumstances to teach us and get us ready but there are many elements of policing - such as taking statements, practising scenarios, and the practical side of it - that are difficult to learn through distance learning.

"There really is a lot of support though. When I needed to catch up on exams, the training staff at Tally Ho and Staffordshire University were all really helpful and gave me a lot of freedom to plan my own catch-up and to sit the exams when they

'I have been loving every minute'

Two of Pete's cohort have also given their views on how they are getting on.

Amir Rahman Azadi said: "I have been loving every minute since I have started. I love the endless banter we have, so much that I miss work on my days off!

"What can I say about my experience on response? It has been everything I expected in terms of excitement and more. I still remember my first blue light run with my tutor, one minute I was drinking a coffee at the station and the next minute I had to leave my coffee behind (that's a big thing for a coffee-aholic) and run to the response vehicle and go to the job. I have already experienced some really deep lows. The one that comes

to mind is telling a mother her child has been seriously hurt and taking her to the hospital.

"To put things into perspective, I came into this role with a view to go into investigations and possibly down the detectives' route but what response has offered so far it will be a difficult choice to make after my two years' probation. But, the advantage I have is knowing that I will be doing a super role either way."

Brett Plumb said: "The highlights so far is how welcoming everyone is and how willing they are to help me learn also blue light runs are terrifying the first time."

worked best for me.

"There is still a lot of support available now from both the university and the police side and I think on a day-to-day basis, our tutor and Team D are the people who are helping me the most."

Pete has spent his time in Coventry so far mainly dealing with emergency calls for incidents such as domestics, mental health calls, one sudden death (so far), anti-social behaviour and violent crime.

And it has been the mental health-related jobs that Pete says he has found the most interesting.

"I am interested in them because of how complex they can be," says Pete. "Because I am not a mental health expert it is difficult to know how to help, but it feels good to provide support to people who need it and I think the work the triage team do is really vital."

As with most jobs, the bond and friendship formed with colleagues is something that just cannot be taught and grows over time and experience.

Pete's cohort have already formed a tight bond, no doubt strengthened by the unprecedented situation they – and the Force – find themselves in.

"West Midlands Police has been really welcoming and supportive, all the way from beginning initial training to now being on our PDU," says Pete. "I think I have been lucky with the cohort I am in too. The people in it are always up for helping each other out and having a laugh."

"Our cohort is really well connected and we support each other. WhatsApp and group chats help massively. The main difference is we have not had a chance to do a big group night out, or to even go to the pub yet due to lockdown. I am sure that this will happen in time though."

"In Coventry I am with three other student officers from my cohort: Beth, Amir and Brett. Beth and myself have the same tutor (on D Unit) and Amir and Brett are B Unit."

"We are all at the same stage of learning and try to help each other out as much as possible. There are always little things each of us are picking up at different times and I am learning from them as well as my tutor."

"I have enjoyed most shifts so far and I really like not knowing what the day will bring. My biggest highlight so far is my first arrest; with the subsequent search in custody being less of a highlight."

"We will continue on response and then move to an investigations PDU further down the line."

"At the moment, I look forward to every day and I am loving my new career."

- The tutor's view – see Page 12.

Pete Bock.



Tutoring: rewarding and challenging role

Jon Steed has always maintained that he likes a challenge.

Guiding new West Midlands Police recruits through their early days on the job during a pandemic has really put that claim to the test.

Jon began his policing career as a PCSO with the Force in 2008 and applied to be a police officer in 2015, joining in 2017.

Now a response officer on D Unit in Coventry, he has recently joined the PDU to help new student officers through their response police training as a tutor.

Pete Bock is one of the students under Jon's wing and his continuing story is also featured in this edition of the magazine.

Jon's wish to become a tutor came as a result of an influx of new student officers, like Pete, and a desire to tackle a challenge and learn how to lead and motivate others.

"I enjoy a challenge and see this as an opportunity to instil a firm grounding for the students to start their own careers and develop professionally as well as gain professional development for myself too," says Jon.

"Last year I applied to follow my ambition to become a traffic officer during the opening of the traffic academy but sadly just dipped under the required mark during my interview for the role.

"I feel by now putting myself forward to tutor, I will gain a lot of experience around leadership and motivating others in order to answer confidently those 'harder-to-answer' interview questions, the next time around.

"I am considering doing my sergeant's exam next year and, if I decide to go for that, I feel tutoring will set me up well for any structured board interview I may need to face.

"I also want to tutor because it wasn't all that long ago that I was in their shoes as the 'new person on the shift'. It was a huge, steep learning curve, especially when you first get handed the keys to a patrol car on your first day of independent patrol.

"I want to be able to help the new recruits entrusted to me to feel confident in

themselves as they move on in their career. It will be very rewarding to watch them move in different directions in the Force and know I had a positive influence on their progress by helping them find a firm grounding to build their skills."

Jon is looking after Pete and fellow new recruit Beth Stuart and he is full of praise for both of them since they missed much of the usual practical training at Tally Ho in the build-up to starting their new roles.

The pandemic has certainly created challenging timeframes for both his students and himself as their tutor.

"I'm happy and proud of both of them with their achievements so far," says Jon, "My students have had less Tally Ho classroom time due to COVID-19 and they have had to do more distance learning as a result, which hasn't helped, but we are managing the challenges.

"If less Tally Ho initial training is the new norm, then much more on the job training needs to be factored in for the future."

Pete and Beth both arrived with limited basic training and limited access to police systems which presented Jon with a challenge to help them reach 'competent independent status' in around six sets of shifts.

A modified induction, a talk with a custody sergeant and a blue light run to a suicidal male was packed into a busy few first days.

Feedback, discussions around conflict, paperwork and arrests were soon covered at length and for Jon, more marking of their Eportfolio at home too, so he could create more time to be out on jobs with his students, as opposed to being in the station doing his administration tasks.

"Back when I joined, I had 18 weeks at Tally Ho and was then expected to go out and be guided along the way," says Jon. "It's a much different picture nowadays. Beth and Pete are doing very well considering the timeframes and everything is now beginning to fall into place for them."

Jon says he has really enjoyed his own



Jon Steed.

role in Pete and Beth's progression, despite the demands and pressures involved.

"I don't think a tutor's role is a job for all officers because it's not a job to do if you don't really have an interest in doing it," he added. "It is hard work. I have been going home with headaches from concentrating that much harder because I have been watching both students working.

"Ensuring that everything is done correctly and having to be ready to interject quickly if I spot something that is not going so well makes it quite demanding. I also need to note any things that have been missed and ensure everything required to be done at a job is completed before leaving a job.

"When I'm not doing a job the way I would do it, but watching another do it their way I have to constantly process what's being said and done and where this is leading.

"It is also new to me and I am too having to self-assess and ask the students for their feedback to see if I am explaining things well and not being too harsh with any criticism.

"But it really has been very rewarding seeing them progress and knowing I have had a positive influence in their development."

“ I am considering doing my sergeant's exam next year and, if I decide to go for that, I feel tutoring will set me up well for any structured board interview I may need to face. ”

Learning and development adapts to allow training to continue

A one-way system was adopted at Tally Ho as part of a package of measures introduced by learning and development (L & D) to allow Force training to continue as safely as possible.

While, understandably, methods of entry and personal safety training have had to be cancelled, around 80 per cent of courses are going ahead, according to Jase Sayers, student officers assessor and deputy secretary of the Federation's health and safety committee.

"I have been very impressed with how learning and development has adapted the way it operates to respond to the need for social distancing," says Jase, "It has taken a creative and flexible approach while strictly observing the health and safety measures, and this has meant that relatively few courses have had to be cancelled.

"Under the new procedures, you can only use one door to get into Tally Ho. Once you are inside, there is a one-way system in place to govern how you navigate around the building, there is hand sanitiser available at multiple points, plenty of washing facilities and there are lines on all floors indicating the two-metre distancing.

"Everything has been risk assessed and, while you can never eliminate risks totally, the measures put in place have certainly helped minimise risks as much as possible. Learning and development has worked collaboratively with Force health and safety leaders, the Federation and the unions to do everything it can to maintain learning but



Jase Sayers, student officers assessor and deputy secretary of the Federation's health and safety committee.

also offer protection to everyone undertaking training. We have to protect everyone's welfare."

A similar stance has been taken with the training facilities at Cosford.

In addition to the changes to the way in which buildings are being used, L & D has also adapted at pace to the way in which it delivers some training, which has been particularly crucial given the influx of student officers through the Government's three-year drive to recruit 20,000 officers nationwide over the next three years.

Trainers from the department have

worked in partnership with Staffordshire University and now all the Policing Educational Qualification Framework (PEQF) student officer initial training is being delivered by distance learning.

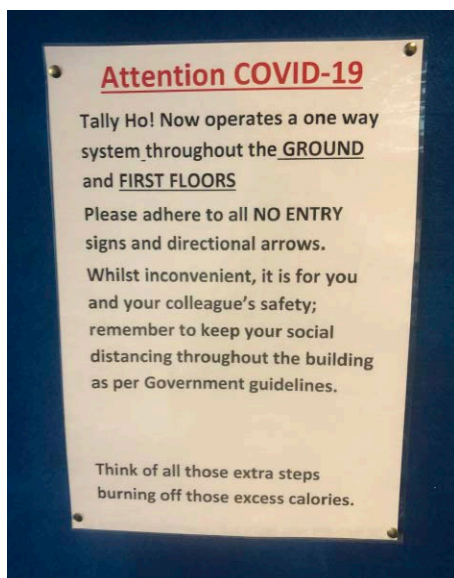
This has also been enabled by flexibility by colleagues within the PDUs. Assessment of student officers and student PCSOs has also been done creatively through remote and virtual methods, for example, through the use of body cam footage.

Jase explains: "With the restrictions coming in as a result of the 'lockdown', everyone had to consider new ways of doing things so that we could deliver the training. Everyone has been very accepting of the new way of training.

"We have had one or two student officers who didn't feel confident about some elements of that training but, where they have come forward, I have worked outside of usual hours with fellow Fed rep Wayne Bennett, who is deputy chair of the health and safety committee, to hold an extra class for them, obviously observing social distancing practice."

Regular meetings are still being held involving L & D, the Federation and the unions so that there is a continual review of how training is being delivered and also regular assessment of safety measures.

"We are listening to all the advice coming out and adapting as necessary," says Jase, "By all parties working together, we are keeping training going by diminishing the risks to all involved."



Assault on Police Employees

10 Point Plan



1

Assaults on police officers and police staff should be investigated with the same care, compassion and commitment as an assault on a member of the public. *This sounds obvious, but too often our response to assaults on officers and staff can be rushed or treated as secondary to other offences.*

2

The assaulted officer / staff member must never be the OIC for the investigation into their own assault. *This is not appropriate on any level and even taking statements from witnesses may be inappropriate. The integrity of the investigation and the impartiality of the officer could be called into question, which could undermine the case and/or heighten the impact on the employee.*

3

The assault is to be raised as a discussion point at the next available local DMM. *The DMM chair is to ensure that early welfare support is put in place and confirm that the Employee's Supervisor is aware.*

4

Colleagues recover better and more quickly if they receive the right welfare and supervision. *This also helps to avoid long-term negative consequences. The assaulted person's supervisor should contact them as soon as it is practical to do so, preferably within 24 hours. The employee may play down the impact on them, but supervisors must recognise the potential effects of the incident.*

5

The iCASS report must be completed by the supervisor along with, where practicable, the employee, for all assaults regardless of severity. *If the employee is not available, that should not delay the completion of the report.*

6

The supervisor must ensure that the Local Command Team is informed, should the Police Employee be hospitalised then the on call chief officer is to be notified. *This will allow them to provide continuity of welfare support, and to ensure it is discussed at the DMM.*

7

The supervisor must ensure that they notify the Police Federation or Trade Union Representative. *The Staff Associations and trade unions can provide additional valuable support to the employee.*

All assaults on police officers and police staff will be treated seriously and WMP will seek to ensure appropriate redress through the criminal justice system.

8

Charges relating to the assault of a police officer or staff member should not be dropped because charges relating to more serious crimes are being brought. This can send the wrong message to offenders and doesn't recognise the effects the assault could have had on public confidence in the Police Service.

To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented.

9

Victim personal statements should be used and whoever is investigating the assault needs to fully understand the 'points to prove' for assaults on police officers or staff. An officer's self-written statement provided straight after the event could be made in haste and might not contain all of the key facts. As a result, cases sent for prosecution sometimes fail to meet basic evidential needs.

10

The Victim Code applies to all victims and therefore to assaults on police officers and staff. *Complying with the Victim Code means keeping the employee updated, discussing outcome options, and taking account of the employee's point of view before imposing an outcome.*

Sergeant talks about reality of policing during crisis

A video highlighting the fears of a West Midlands Police officer during the coronavirus pandemic was featured on Capital FM Midlands News.

In the video, Sergeant Gareth Spreadbury talks about the 'frightening' reality that front-line officers are facing during the crisis as members of the public use the threat of spitting or coughing COVID-19 onto them as a weapon.

Sitting in his response car, talking to his camera, Gareth says: "Having officers shout for back-up when they are being potentially assaulted is hard at the best of times but even more so during COVID.

"When my officers were dealing with a male who was interfering with vehicles, he threatened to spit at them and was telling them they would have COVID.

"There is a realistic possibility that if he spits at any of us and we catch COVID, in two weeks' time we may go to the hospital and we may never get out. It's frightening."

Away from the Twitter video, Gareth added: "My job as a sergeant is looking after everyone's safety and with COVID coming along I have to balance the needs of the public with the needs of my officers too.

"Spitting is something that we have always dealt with. I have been spat on multiple times, mainly on my feet and uniform. But

Capital Midlands News
@CapitalMidsNews

There have been more than 240 assaults on frontline emergency staff in the West Midlands, since lockdown began just over six weeks ago. @WMPolice sergeant Gareth Spreadbury tells us what it's like at the moment #CapitalReports



with COVID, spitting is now a biological weapon. If someone else's spit gets into our system, it could end up killing us so we have to tactically assess each situation even more than we would on a regular basis.

"People who threaten us with this want to put us on the back foot and fear for our own safety but I have to say that they are still a very small minority. I know that 99.9 per cent of the public have been fantastic and have been thanking us for what we are doing."

Gareth's message comes on the back of swift legislative guidance which allows courts to increase custodial sentences to those people who threaten officers with coughing and spitting.

A number of offenders have now been jailed for spitting or coughing at West Midlands officers while claiming to have COVID-19.

Officer assaults up despite fall in crime

West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott has expressed his anger and frustration that assaults on police officers and other emergency service workers have continued to increase despite an overall fall in crime.

Provisional figures released by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) show that police recorded crime for the 43 forces in England and Wales has fallen by 18 per cent overall in the 12 months to the end of June this year.

However, assaults on emergency service workers increased by 24 per cent in June, compared to 14 per cent in May.

"It makes me angry to think that while police officers and their blue light colleagues have been on the front-line seeking to protect both their communities and the NHS there is a mindless minority of people who seem to think it's OK to assault them," says Jon. "It can never be acceptable for someone to assault the very people who

are seeking to help others but, in the current crisis, it is just even more frustrating that our officers are having to face this type of despicable behaviour.

"The increases in these offences could well be driven by cases where people have spat on or towards officers while claiming to be infected with COVID-19 and, again, it just beggars belief that people would do this."

Jon said the increase in assaults on emergency service workers could also include some assaults related to disorder at a number of protests around the country.

John Apter, national chair of the Police Federation, has also expressed his dismay at the increase in assaults on officers.

He explained: "It is of serious concern that while overall crime has dropped, assaults on emergency workers have increased by 24 per cent. I do not accept any excuses for this rise - any violence shown towards police officers or any emergency workers must be taken seriously

by the criminal justice system and should send the message that this is completely unacceptable."

In terms of the overall crime figures, there was a slight increase in recent months, perhaps as a result of the easing of lockdown restrictions. There had been a 28 per cent fall in recorded crime for the four weeks to 12 April and a 25 per cent fall for the four weeks to 10 May. This is likely due to the effect of lockdown restrictions easing and more people being allowed out of their homes, creating more opportunities for criminals.

NPCC chair Martin Hewitt said: "The vast majority of the public have followed the rules in place to limit the spread of the virus and, as a result, we have seen sustained reductions in crime over the course of the lockdown period. It is no surprise that as more people are able to move around freely, we will begin to see movement towards previous levels, however, this is a gradual change. We are reassured to still be observing significant falls in crime overall."

Did you know...



the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance scheme* includes **new** GP Care on Demand?

Providing subscribing scheme members and their resident families with **unlimited access via telephone or app** to a GMC licensed practicing GP, **from the comfort of their home.**

At £24.60** per month the scheme also includes:

- £130K Life assurance
- £15K Critical Illness
- Best Doctors®
- Personal accident cover
- Sickness benefit
- Worldwide Family Travel insurance
- Mobile Phone / Gadget cover
- RAC Motor Breakdown assistance

Available 24/7, 365 days a year, worldwide - you can even use it when you're on holiday!

Visit the Federation website for further details:

www.polfed.org/westmids

Or email us: **westmidlandspf@polfed.org**



GeorgeBurrows 

* Full details are available from the Federation or George Burrows. Terms and conditions apply.

** Correct at 1 June 2020 the premium includes the Federation administration fee and Insurance Premium Tax (IPT)

GP Care on Demand is provided by Teladoc Health, Inc. Teladoc, Inc. is a telemedicine company that uses telephone and video conferencing technology to provide on-demand remote medical care via mobile devices, the internet, video and phone. www.teladoc.com

Arranged by George Burrows. George Burrows is a trading name of Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered Office: Spectrum Building, 7th Floor, 55 Blythswood Street, Glasgow, G2 7AT. Registered in Scotland. Company Number: SC108909 www.ajg.com/uk.GB1529/FP1268-2019 | ARTUK-418407181

Care on Demand offers invaluable service to members during pandemic

With huge demand on GPs and hospitals due to the coronavirus crisis, members of the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) are being reminded that they can gain access to a GP 24/7 through the Care on Demand service.

And Care on Demand is available not just to the GIS members but also their eligible dependents.

"In my opinion, this is probably the best service we have provided to members in recent times," says Dave Hadley, West Midlands Police Federation's discipline lead. "I used it for both of my children when the pandemic struck, when physically getting to the GP was nigh-on impossible. No waiting for weeks for an appointment, the doctors I have spoken to have been great and the call was at a time I wanted. Fantastic!"

Another member emailed the Federation office to say: "I just wanted to thank the Fed for the extra 'Care on Demand' service which has been absolutely invaluable during the COVID-19 situation as both my wife and I have been quite ill and required antibiotics and, as a result of the service, we did not need to put ourselves at risk by going to the

GP... superb service."

Through the service, members arrange an appointment with a GMC licensed GP and can do this whether in the UK or while abroad. For any non-emergency case, whether physical or mental, members can discuss health concerns with a GP, via phone or video consultation.

Calls can normally be arranged within two hours of your request. And unlike a GP visit, there is no time limit on the consultation (video consultations are for up to 30 minutes) and you can ask more than one question.

Furthermore, the Care on Demand GP can arrange for a private referral to be sent to you or a private prescription* to be sent to a pharmacy of your choice if you are in the UK.

It's a service that is not designed to replace your own GP but to work on conjunction, entirely in line with the Secretary of Health's strategy of introducing digital solutions to the NHS.

* Within safe online prescribing guidelines.



'One of the most challenging periods ever for policing'

Officers could suffer a long-lasting mental impact as they respond to more and more deaths during the coronavirus crisis, according to the Federation's national wellbeing lead.

In a blog update, Belinda Goodwin said she was aware of one officer who attended 15 coronavirus-related deaths in just 24 hours.

"He's certainly not the only one to be dealing with such a high volume of incidents, and this volume will undoubtedly rise," Belinda admitted, adding that this was one of the most challenging periods ever for the Federation and the police service as a whole.

Belinda's views were echoed by West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott who has also expressed his concerns for officers.

"As a Federation, we have worked closely with the Force to ensure members' welfare is put to the fore at all times and we have been doing all we can to offer officers support and advice," Jon explains.

"We contributed to the information that is being put out on the Force intranet but we can also signpost members to other support organisations, including those that can help any officer who finds themselves suffering mentally or financially. Help is available so members should not be afraid to come forward if they need support."

The has set up a Multi-Agency Response Team (MART) to respond to incidents involving coronavirus deaths. Officers volunteering to be part of the team will use enhanced PPE and will also be provided with accommodation to protect them and their families from potential infection. The Force will provide trauma support to them via TRIM practitioners as and when required to try to protect their mental health and wellbeing.

Support on hand

The Federation backed Welfare Support Programme (WSP) provided invaluable support to police officers in the front-line dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, according to Dave Hadley, West Midlands Police Federation's deputy discipline secretary.

Dave, who is the Federation's contact point for the WSP, says that while there had not been a marked increase in demand on the programme due to COVID-19 issues it was there should officers need extra support.

"There will be officers experiencing some awful things in their professional and personal lives and it's important they know

that the Federation has support on offer for them in the form of the WSP; they don't need to suffer alone," says Dave.

Earlier this year the Police Federation of England and Wales doubled its funding to the WSP which is operated through the Police Firearms Officers' Association.

The programme is staffed day and night by professionals trained in police discipline and with an awareness of Post-Incident Procedures and mental health first aid.

Officers or their close family members can be referred to the service by a Federation



rep and, if needed, given access to counsellors and coaches.

West Midlands officers can access the WSP via Dave, their local workplace rep or the Federation branch.

Sam looks to improve Force support after breast cancer treatment

An officer who has returned to work after treatment for breast cancer is now working with the Federation and the Force to try to improve the support that is offered to others who find themselves in similar circumstances in the future.

PC Sam Hughes, who is also a Federation workplace representative, began a phased return to duties put in place by the occupational health team in September 2018 and is keen to share what was good in terms of the Force's response to her illness, but also what was not so good.

"So much of what the Force put in place for me has been very, very good," says Sam, "But there were still some areas where things could have been done better. When I came back I reached out to Pauline McGuire, the HR manager, to see if I could help shape Force policies.

"My phased return, for example, was really well managed and I got excellent support through Red Arc, the counselling service available to all members of the Federation's Group Insurance Scheme. The nurse I spoke to at Red Arc was absolutely superb, she was calming, understood what I was going through and was available at any time of the day to listen, understand and offer support.

"But, on the other side of the coin, I found myself scrambling around trying to get information in terms of the various organisations that could offer help and support. It would have been better if there was some kind of 'tick list', summing up everything for me. It's hard to go through various websites and paperwork when you are unwell and focussing on your treatment and getting better.

"I am sure many other officers are the same but you have deductions taken from your pay each month for things you have signed up for but when it came to it I was not really sure what I had access to and what I didn't.

"I would also like to see a mentor programme put in place so that people can



Sam Hughes.

speak to someone who may not have medical training but can be a source of support and encouragement."

Sam has met with Cliff Tomkinson, the Federation's equality lead, and the pair are hoping to work with HR and the Force wellbeing team to put in place some of the improvements she has suggested.

But Sam is also keen to talk about her experiences and wants to encourage colleagues not to shy away from speaking to

someone who has a cancer diagnosis.

"I found it really upsetting that so many people just couldn't bring themselves to talk to me when they heard I had cancer," she says, "Some would say they couldn't handle it but I had no choice. Some people won't even say the word cancer, as if they are going to contract it just from saying it."

Despite the odd disappointment at people's lack of understanding, Sam says, on the whole, she had great support. Tom



Sam during her treatment.

Payne, her sergeant at the time of her initial treatment, was very supportive, arranging for someone different to attend each of Sam's chemotherapy sessions with her.

"It was amazing, as bizarre as it sounds, we would turn it into a bit of an 'outing', sometimes having cakes or other treats. It also served to give colleagues a sense of what I was going through and show them that you can come out of the other end," says Sam.

Since returning to work, she has also had support from Inspector Nikki Everson.

Sam was a relatively late joiner to the police service. Having tried her hand as a swimming teacher, a retail floor manager, a mortgage adviser and a mortgage underwriter, she knew she wanted to do something different and, in her early 30s, with her children aged around 10 and five, decided it was now or never.

Despite having no family ties to the police service, she decided to apply to join the Force and after about two years made her way in.

She will have been with West Midlands Police for 17 years this October and currently works in PPU at West Bromwich within the review allocation team.

Due to having lymphedema as a result of having her lymph nodes removed as part of her treatment, Sam can no longer carry out full policing duties which she finds frustrating as it feels like another thing the cancer has taken away from her.

Her family history – her Nan and an aunt both had cancer – had made her more aware of the need to keep on top of everything in terms of health checks and self-awareness but in May 2017, just four months after having a mammogram, Sam had found a lump in her right breast.

The GP she saw was quite casual about it and asked Sam if she wanted it checked out. Luckily, she did. Within two weeks, after a



Sam (second from left) enjoying her policing duties.

biopsy, breast cancer had been diagnosed and she had a mastectomy with reconstruction surgery as she felt it was critical for her own mental health particularly since she had undergone a hysterectomy in her late 30s.

"It just felt like everything about me had changed and I just wanted to hold on to something that made me feel like a woman, like me, still," Sam explains.

Within days, she was back in surgery after checks from samples taken in the first operation revealed her lymph nodes needed to be removed. She has since had a series of further operations.



A pair of Jimmy Choo's Sam was treated to after her diagnosis.

Throughout she has been supported by her two children, who she said were massively affected by her illness, and she also found a surprising source of strength in her ex-husband, Shaun. The couple had been divorced for around four and a half years at the time of her diagnosis, but her ex stepped

up to the plate and they are now back together.

"He has been my rock. It has been a blessing; something like this makes you realise what's important and who's there for you. There are people who avoid you like the plague and then there are those who surprise you with their kindness," she explains.

"I had my long hair cut shorter during my treatment but then it started to really fall out so I shaved it off and my best friend, PC Jam Ismail, came with me to wig shops and we treated it like a dressing up session. It was hard losing my eyebrows and eyelashes and I just didn't feel very much like a woman and then, of course, you are living this life of CT scans, bone scans, operations, the chemo, then 15 rounds of radiotherapy and you are drained but also wondering if you are going to survive."

She was also touched by the efforts of her colleagues DC Katie Hughes and DC Marie Carmichael who set up a Just Giving page for Sam after she joked when diagnosed that she didn't want flowers but a pair of Jimmy Choo shoes. They got her the shoes!

Now firmly out the other side, Sam has had chance to re-evaluate her life and priorities and, in addition to trying to work with the Force to put a range of support in place for colleagues facing similar situations, she has bought a static caravan in North Wales close to where her parents live.

"It means we have somewhere to go to spend time near to my Mum and Dad and our children can use it too. I have had a chance to really consider what is important and being with your family is right up there," she says.

- Sam is happy to speak to anyone who may be going through similar treatment. She can be contacted on Samantha.hughes@polfed.org

Backing for move to better protect officers who stop vehicles

The Federation is working with the Home Office to amend the new Police Powers and Protections Bill to allow for a new requirement for officers to require motorists to get out of their vehicles when requested to do so after a police stop.

It comes after a series of incidents in which officers have been seriously injured by drivers fleeing after being stopped, with there being four reported incidents a week in the Midlands in which the occupants of a vehicle refuse to get out and the driver then drives at officers when making off.

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and pursuits driving lead for the Federation nationally, has already successfully campaigned for legislative change to give better legal protection for police drivers and this has

been included in the new bill meaning their driving will no longer be judged by the standards of the careful and competent driver with their training and expertise being taken into account.

But, while liaising with the Home Office to progress the new bill, it has become clear that an amendment to Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 or a new power under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) could potentially be incorporated too.

"Despite the current crisis, ministers appear to remain committed to introduce the bill, which was introduced in the Queen's Speech last December, later in this Parliamentary session which is very positive news," says Tim.

"Legislative vehicles for such improvements; improvements that will have

a positive impact on all officers do not come along very often. Therefore, we have several matters on the same bill."

Tim wrote to the Home Office in March to ask for consideration of an expansion of Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, to introduce a new power that would allow police to make people get out of a vehicle on request.

The move has the support in principle of the National Police Chiefs' Council's roads policing lead, Anthony Bangham.

But Tim also urged officers involved in incidents where they have been injured – or risked injury – due to a driver making off after a police stop to get in touch so that he can gather further evidence to present to the Home Office.

● Read some of their stories on Page 21.



Officers tell of being dragged by vehicles

An officer has described being trapped between a car and an open door and then being dragged backwards in an incident where a driver failed to stop.

The officer suffered a tibial plateau and was in hospital for almost two weeks after an operation on their leg resulting in a plate and screws being used to repair damage to their knee.

The officer's account was just one of many sent to West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Tim Rogers who, as pursuits driving lead with the Federation nationally, is collating evidence to seek a change to Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act that would give officers the power to ask someone to get out of their car after a police stop.

One officer, responding to Tim's request for evidence from officers who had been involved in incidents involving police stops, commented: "It's true that having the fairly general power to stop vehicles is meaningless if we then can't engage with the driver! A power to instruct the driver to turn the engine off, remove the keys, open the window/door, get out etc does appear to be a necessary, yet long over-due, addition to S163."

Another explained how an incident had unfolded and resulted in them being injured.

"Stopped a vehicle, asked the driver to get out, refused, told me no need, engine started to rev. I stood directly in front of the car, doing my best 'police stop' signal, in full high visibility attire but the driver was determined to get away. The wheels span and it came speeding right for me. Luckily, I've back stepped quickly enough to only be hit by the off side wing mirror. The driver continued to make off at speed through the crowded streets, ignoring red lights etc.

"I suffered quite agonising pain to my wrist from the collision with the wing mirror. I attended the local minor injuries unit the following morning where I was assessed. My wrist was quite swollen and



Tim Rogers.

they queried a small fracture but couldn't tell due to the swelling."

While, a third, submitted this information: "I dealt with a male who had committed a series of traffic offences as well as showing as having no insurance for the vehicle. He pulled over compliantly but was instantly very aggressive and wound his window down marginally to speak with me. I asked him to come and take a seat in my police car, however, he refused. He was getting more and more aggressive and wound his window down more purely so he could see what I was doing at the side of his vehicle. It became apparent to me that there was something more to this and it was also very clear that the chances of him driving off were extremely high.

"As a result I reached in to take his keys from the ignition to prevent this. I was single crewed. He instantly took hold of my wrist and started to wind the window back up trapping my arm. Fortunately, I managed to remove his keys and pull my arm away

before he caused significant damage, though I suffered pain. He then wound his window back up and refused to get out of his vehicle which resulted in me having to request a few further officers to try to remove him from the car, as I was going to seize it and needed to issue him with a ticket.

"I believe that if there was a piece of legislation which allowed us to instruct occupants from this vehicle then this would have maybe de-escalated the situation as he believed he did not have to get out, and it would have also given me more power to remove him from the vehicle before having to look at other justifications."

One officer wrote to Tim to say: "The vehicle was seen with the occupants acting suspiciously. Vehicle was stopped at the forecourt of a petrol station in order to speak to the driver and any occupants. Officers immediately smelt a strong smell of cannabis. The driver put his window down slightly and I was unable to either grab the keys or do anything tactical to prevent him from driving off.

"The vehicle then drove off as I was about to smash the window to conduct the search. The vehicle drove dangerously and recklessly off the forecourt showing no regard to other road users and people potentially walking the street. He could have killed someone. This could have been prevented if we had some sort of legislative power to make the driver either get out of the vehicle and/or put the window down fully so we're able to grab the keys. The driver was later found and arrested for above offences."

Another wrote: "Back in the latter months of 2019 I had reason to stop a vehicle. The driver had been acting erratically. Upon being stopped, he refused to produce his driving licence or alight from the vehicle. I requested a breath test but he again refused to alight so I arrested him for refusing. As I attempted to remove him from the vehicle, he drove off, dragging me a short distance as I clung to the window."

While a further officer wrote: "In short car pulled over, driver refused to open window or get out. He then drove off with an officer standing by the driver's door causing him to have to take avoiding action in order not to be run over. There was a pursuit and the driver and passenger were detained. The driver was found to have 100 wraps of Class A in his pants. Charged with PWITS, no insurance, assault on emergency worker and dangerous driving."

“ I stood directly in front of the car, doing my best 'police stop' signal, in full high visibility attire but the driver was determined to get away. The wheels span and it came speeding right for me. Luckily, I've back stepped quickly enough to only be hit by the off side wing mirror. ”



Time for roads policing to be prioritised

The Government is being urged to prioritise roads policing to save lives and fight wider criminality in a new report from a transport safety charity.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is also critical of cutbacks in roads policing and points to a widespread belief that a failure to reduce the number of deaths on the road is at least partly due to a downgrading of roads policing.

"There are currently around 1,800 deaths a year on our roads, that is more than twice the deaths from homicides and terrorism combined," says Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the national Federation lead on police pursuits.

"Cuts to force budgets have had a massive impact on roads policing. In relative

terms, the number of roads policing officers has fallen by far more than the overall reduction in police numbers. More than 20 years ago Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary concluded roads policing had been marginalised despite a year on year growth in traffic. Now dedicated roads policing officers make up just four per cent of total force strength and we also have to take into account that a significant number are double-hatted and therefore are not solely working in roads policing.

"With the fall in roads policing officers, we have also seen a reduction in the number of motoring offences detected, bar speeding where automated enforcement is in place. But the number of 'causing death' offences has not decreased and in the last 10 years the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads have remained at the

same rates.

"Many of the recommendations from this report are in line with what the Police Federation's own roads policing group have been putting forward for a number of years now. We need to see roads policing prioritised so that we can bring about a reduction in these numbers so I hope this report will make the Government and chief officers consider appropriate reinvestment."

The report has been published ahead of a cross-Whitehall review of roads policing, with an Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report and public consultation anticipated shortly.

It highlights international research evidence of the effectiveness of roads policing in increasing compliance with traffic laws and reducing road casualties, cutting some collision types by around a quarter. A detailed analysis by PACTS of the 'fatal four' offences (speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, driving under the influence of drink or drugs, and using a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel) since 2010 shows that where

“ There are currently around 1,800 deaths a year on our roads, that is more than twice the deaths from homicides and terrorism combined. ”

enforcement has been increased, compliance has improved and casualties have dropped but where cutbacks have affected enforcement, there has been little or no improvement.

PACTS calls on the UK Government and, where powers are devolved, the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to:

- **Make roads policing a national priority in the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)**
- **Reverse the cuts and expand the number of specialist officers**
- **Take a more proactive approach to use of technology and information sharing.**

Police forces are recommended to:

- **Work more closely with other forces and agencies**
- **Engage the support of the public through communications and use of dashcams**
- **Collaborate on research and improve monitoring and reporting.**

Tim has welcomed the recommendations and believes that efforts to make roads policing a national priority in the SPR would be a significant step forward.

"This is something West Mercia Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, the National

Police Chiefs' Council's roads policing lead, highlighted at the Federation's roads policing conference earlier this year and is something that chief officers must commit to. The Home Office review is currently scoping where this essential resource best sits. The track record of cuts and a lack of prioritisation by some chief officers has damaged roads policing," he explained.

"The Federation called for the cuts to be stopped and reversed as far back as 2015/2016. We started the Roads Policing Learning Project in 2014 which led to role profiles and minimum standards of training for RPU officers. This still has a long way to go and is being reviewed due to the Fed's work with the College of Policing at this time. This will prevent chief constables claiming they have x amount of roads policing officers. You cannot just say that without showing they are suitably trained and have the right skills and accredited qualifications.

"All this said, however, I feel this is a very positive time for roads policing thanks to this work and the HMICFRS and Home Office reviews. It is time for everyone to recognise and prioritise its importance. Chief

constables have to take notice and allocate budget accordingly. If this doesn't happen, perhaps the Government will take matters into its own hands and give the roads policing budget to a transport policing style model for the roads."

PACTS, which is a registered charity, promotes evidence-based policies to improve to road, rail and air safety. It works with the Government, Parliament, experts and stakeholders. Its founders were responsible for the 1981 legislation which made it compulsory to wear a seatbelt in the front seat of a car.

Its executive director David Davies said the coronavirus lockdown has highlighted the importance of roads policing, with traffic speeds increasing on empty roads and incidences of extreme speeding.

He commented: "The public support more enforcement. Roads policing provides double value: tackling those who drive dangerously often disrupts wider criminality. For example, Essex Police found that almost half the drug-drive offenders had previous arrest records for serious crimes such as burglary, drug dealing and violent crime."

[Read the full report.](#)

THE 11 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Government should recognise that the loss of life resulting from road users who break the law is one of the biggest causes of traumatic deaths from law breaking and requires a nationally-coordinated response. Roads policing should be included in the Strategic Policing Requirement set by the Home Secretary.

Recommendation 2

Police and Crime Commissioners should prioritise roads policing and road safety in their Police and Crime Plans. They should also provide details as to how they intend to address key road safety issues in their areas.

Recommendation 3

The Government should include roads policing within its pledge to fund 20,000 additional police officers by 2022.

Recommendation 4

The NPCC roads policing strategy should be revised in the light of this report and the findings of the Joint HO/DfT/NPCC Review. It should offer greater guidance to police forces on the priorities for policing within the safe system road safety framework. Speed enforcement guidelines should be included.

Recommendation 5

HMICFRS should inspect police forces'

roads policing functions and include this in its annual PEEL assessment, the programme which draws together evidence from its annual all-force inspections to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of the police.

Recommendation 6

Police forces should continue to seek out collaboration with other road safety stakeholders. This includes road safety partnerships, other police forces, other government agencies such as DVSA, HSE and Highways England and parts of the private sector.

Recommendation 7

Intelligence and data collection should be enhanced and more widely shared to improve targeting and effectiveness of roads policing.

Recommendation 8

Enforcement technologies, for which there is strong evidence of a compliance and road safety benefit, should be used more widely across the road network.

The Home Office should develop a more proactive strategy to ensure that the most important traffic safety enforcement technologies and equipment are available to the police. Type approval procedures should be reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendation 9

The involvement and support of the public

should be encouraged. Forces should establish, and more widely advertise, schemes which allow members of the public to submit video footage of road users apparently committing traffic offences. Forces should consider giving increased support to Community Speedwatch schemes. Awareness of enforcement activity should be enhanced through communications, consistent with behaviour change principles.

Recommendation 10

Forces should adopt safe system strategic road safety indicators to monitor those elements within their remit, such as compliance with speed limits and seat belt wearing. These could also be used for HMICFRS assessments of forces.

As a matter of urgency, all forces should adopt the new CRaSH casualty reporting system.

Recommendation 11

Forces should be encouraged to collaborate in robust research on the effectiveness of roads policing strategies. They should ensure that research findings are disseminated and taken into account when planning operations. Wider research should also be made more readily available to forces.



POLICE INSURE

**SAVE
UP TO 40%**



“QUALITY INSURANCE AT INTERNET PRICES”

Great value insurance,
for all serving and retired
Police Officers, Specials,
Staff and Partners.



EVERYTHING TAKEN CARE OF:

-  MOTOR INSURANCE
-  HOME INSURANCE
-  MOTORCYCLE INSURANCE
-  TRAVEL INSURANCE
-  MOTOR BREAKDOWN COVER



Call 0161 762 4416

or visit [policeinsure.co.uk](https://www.policeinsure.co.uk)

Follow us on:



[facebook.com/PoliceInsure](https://www.facebook.com/PoliceInsure)



[@PoliceInsure](https://twitter.com/PoliceInsure)



IOPC chief pledges to build on improvements

West Midlands Police Federation's conduct lead George McDonnell has welcomed a commitment from the director general of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) that will mean officers are notified if they will be served with a notice within three months.

Michael Lockwood, joining an online meeting with Police Federation conduct leads, also said the IOPC was working hard to learn lessons and improve.

"This commitment from the director general to improve the way in which the IOPC conducts its investigations is, of course, good news," says George, "For far too long, officers have faced prolonged inquiries that have left them in limbo for months and sometimes years. While we have seen some signs of improvement, we still need to see the IOPC build on this.

"These long investigations can have a massive impact on officers' mental health and wellbeing and there can also be a knock-on effect for their families and friends."

Mr Lockwood told the Federation reps: "We know that, for police officers and staff involved in our investigations, this can be a time of considerable concern. To reduce this impact, we will introduce a new commitment that, when an investigation is not completed within three months, we will aim to confirm the status of all those involved – whether they are to be considered witnesses or to serve the appropriate misconduct notices."

He pointed out the IOPC had streamlined its case management data entry and hired specialist report writers, adding: "This is a great opportunity here to future-proof investigations. If we can do them in two or three months, let's do them in two or three months - but not at the expense of quality."

George is hoping that the progress made



Michael Lockwood.

within the IOPC, and the commitment made to further improvements, will also be replicated at a local PSD level.

"Sadly, we are seeing local PSDs lagging behind and the IOPC seems to be leading the way in making firm commitments so as to expedite matters that greatly affect our colleagues and their families," George explained.

"All too often there seem to be sound bites about officers' welfare being paramount but they are just that – soundbites. They need to convince hundreds of officers still disaffected and lacking in trust and confidence that this is the case.

"There is a real danger that they will lose officers' trust forever. We are not advocating anything that would be to the detriment of a complainant or the process itself but we need a commitment to more efficient practices, fair allocation of cases, more transparent processes and better

accountability."

During the meeting with the Federation, the director general explained the IOPC had closed 93 per cent of investigations within 12 months to the end of October 2019 but said: "We are not at the winning line yet. We need to make improvements which are sustainable by operating quicker, being proportionate and learning best practice from other organisations.

"I am in the process of visiting all forces and I am grateful for the advice already given to me by front-line officers I have spent the time speaking to."

The IOPC inherited 538 legacy cases from its predecessor, the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which were two years or older but has reduced these to 17 and they "should be cleared by August".

The IOPC is discussing participating in Post-Incident Procedures training with the College of Policing and has introduced a Quality Committee as well as investigator training to improve the standards of its investigations.

Mr Lockwood identified several thematic areas where he would like to focus on learning. These included mental health issues, domestic abuse, abuse of authority for sexual gain, RTIs and near misses in custody in a bid to improve police practice to reduce the number of incidents in these areas.

Phill Matthews, the national Federation's conduct and performance lead, said: "We are encouraged that Mr Lockwood recognises his organisation still has a long journey ahead of it and has plans to continue to change and improve it. There is a willingness to work with us rather than against us to improve the complaints system that will benefit everyone.

"We will continue to hold the IOPC to account where an investigation could have been handled better and push for outcomes for members that are just and proportionate."

- The IOPC has come in for criticism from the Police Federation over cases that have dragged on for five or more years, as highlighted by the [Time Limits campaign](#) which is calling for investigations to conclude within 12 months as standard, from the point of an allegation being made.

“All too often there seem to be sound bites about officers' welfare being paramount but they are just that – soundbites. They need to convince hundreds of officers still disaffected and lacking in trust and confidence that this is the case.”

Consider the Force needs and your own when seeking flexible working

Officers seeking flexible working arrangements need to take into account not only their own needs but also those of the Force when submitting their applications, and should highlight the benefits to both them and the organisation, according to the Federation's personnel lead.

Cliff Tomkinson says anyone considering applying for a flexible working pattern should have an informal conversation with their first-line supervisor first.

"This should always be the starting point as it can highlight where there might be difficulties," Cliff explains, "The next stage should be to consider the impact any change to working arrangements could have on pay, pension and leave entitlements and also to read the Force's Flexible Working Policy which is available on the intranet, along with the application form.

"Officers should then identify why they need to work flexibly, and this is a really crucial part of the application process, along with a consideration of what the Force's needs are. This can vary considerably. For example, perhaps you are in a role where there is a lot of liaison with a local authority that generally operates between 8am and 4pm which would mean an officer would also need to be around at those times too."

But he advises officers not to be inflexible themselves.

"Officers need to be prepared to compromise and this can be a critical area where some fall down," says Cliff, "Officers

need to consider where there could be some leeway in their application, and the Force too needs to consider if it can make compromises too. Ultimately, if the Force refuses a request then it has to be justified. The more reasonable the request the more difficult to refuse.

"Where an officer is in a relationship with another officer perhaps initially only one will apply for a flexible working pattern but that may not be completely acceptable due to the Force's needs so maybe the solution is for both officers to apply for flexible working arrangements that complement each other. Or maybe officers need to consider that they might have to change roles so the Force can accommodate their needs to work flexibly."

Cliff also suggests that officers planning to come back to work after family leave submit their applications to work flexibly at least three months before their scheduled return date. The more time given to consider the application, the less stressful it will become when having to arrange childcare around any agreed shift pattern.

Once an application has been submitted, Cliff recommends that officers seek a meeting with their line manager so that any concerns, from either side, can be discussed.

"If an issue is identified, this could be the time for a member to seek advice from their Federation workplace representative or the Federation officials," says Cliff, "The aim should always be to balance the needs of the

individual and those of the Force concerned and this will always be part of the decision-making process."

"A line manager will have to give their rationale for refusing a request for flexible working and, if necessary, this may then be passed first to a second line manager, who again will have to explain their reasoning if they turn down an application, and, eventually maybe Workforce Strategy will consider the case. It is critical that officers complete the relevant paperwork and ensure that it is submitted in accordance with the Force's Flexible Working Policy."

"Should the request not be accepted locally, the officer can then make a final appeal which will be heard by a senior HR manager and SLT member not connected with the application. The Federation can and will support on this matter."

Timescales for the process are clearly set out in the application form, with any possible claims under equality legislation having to be made within three months minus a day. Therefore, it is important that if an officer thinks the refusal of an application is not justified, advice is taken from the Police Federation on the matter.

Officers are also reminded that they can make as many flexible working applications as they want since the needs of their role can vary according to where they are posted. Any agreed flexible working request can be reviewed after 12 months.

Know your regs: working into annual leave

[The West Midlands Police Federation website – polfed.org/westmids](http://polfed.org/westmids) – features a **Frequently Asked Questions section where members can find the answers to the queries regularly put forward to the Federation officials, reps and staff.**

In each edition of the magazine, we highlight one regulation that regularly prompts queries. This time we focus on working into annual leave.

Q I was kept on duty and worked into a day that was scheduled for annual leave what can I claim?

A Working into annual leave is not contained in either Regulation 25 (over-time) or Regulation 26 (PHL/rest day) of police regulation and determinations, so it is not classified as over-time. Regulation 33 (Annex OO) does state that it is compensation for being recalled to duty. It is also applicable for officers required to work on an annual leave day as well, therefore covering the retained on duty scenario.

Once the recall from annual leave has been compensated,

the day reverts to whatever the rostered duty was (eg 07:00 - 16:00, 10:00 - 18:00, rest day) that was booked off. At this point, Reg 25 and 26 come into play and any over-time that would normally be payable is payable.

So, for example, an officer is retained on duty until 08:00 hours off nights having booked one day's annual leave for the following nights tour of duty, which is then attached to two or more rest days, TOIL, PHL or free days. In this case, the officer would receive compensation of a day back plus a day's pay at double time (nine hours because it was a nine-hour shift the officer had booked off).

Now it gets confusing, because the officer had the annual leave day cancelled by working into it, the officer has to work the nine hours but because they only worked one hour they owe the Force eight hours. This could be sorted by just returning the one hour the officer had worked back onto their annual leave.

[FAQs.](#)
[Regulations: Quick Reference Guide.](#)

You really can make a difference by being a Fed rep

Chris James says he gets huge 'pride and satisfaction' from helping others as a Federation representative.



He says he can help make a real difference to people through *Chris James.*

the role and would encourage anyone thinking of becoming a rep to go for it.

"I have found it to be a great source of pride and satisfaction from helping others," he said. "However, I would offer the caveat that it's not easy and you only get out what you put in.

"You need to be committed and willing to be flexible. If you think that it fits in with your shifts and you get to go to a few meetings, then maybe it is not the role for you.

"If you really want to help people – which is the whole reason I joined the police – and are willing to put in the required effort, then you really can make a difference.

"Helping the public is an important part of all our roles, but in my view helping my colleagues can be even more rewarding.

"Nobody knows when they may need the Federation, but when that day comes you want a rep that really cares and is going to do everything they possibly can for you."

Chris, who is known as Sid by colleagues as a nod to the British comic actor Sid James, joined West Midlands Police in 2007 and started on response working out of Dudley police station. He joined CAPT at Stourbridge until 2016 and is currently posted to Force support based at Tipton.

He was elected as a Federation rep in 2018.

"I was keen to join the Federation as I have always had an interest in representing people from an early age," he said. "When I was a teenager my local council set up a youth council which I joined and was elected as chair. I enjoyed this experience as it allowed me to ensure

the voices of young people were heard.

"During my previous employment working in a call centre for a large international corporation, I became a member of the staff consultancy committee. Our role was to give all staff members the opportunity to have their feedback and ideas heard by management in our centre but also globally."

He added: "Since joining the police I've endeavoured to have a good understanding of the regulations resulting in a number of colleagues coming to me for advice prior to me becoming a rep.

"It was some of these colleagues who suggested that I put myself forward for election. I've always thought that the Federation has done some great work, especially locally.

"However, I also felt that it had much more potential, so getting involved was the best way for me to try to implement my ideas."

Chris said he was encouraged to become a discipline rep by former Federation conduct lead John Tooms who retired last year.

"The more he told me about the role the more I knew it was something I wanted to do," he said. "To be able to help my colleagues during what can often be the most difficult time in their career or life was somewhere I felt I could make a real difference.

"I attended my discipline course and began to represent colleagues through a variety of misconduct and criminal investigations.

"I later completed an advocacy course to further develop my knowledge in relation to representing officers at misconduct or gross misconduct hearings."

He added: "I've represented officers from PC to inspector from various areas. As well as my discipline work, I've dealt with grievances, sickness related matters and many others.

"I'm not afraid to speak out on behalf of colleagues and challenge management

when the need arises.

"I have a good relationship with SLTs especially on operations where I meet regularly with Chief Superintendent Bell to discuss any issues.

"I also sit in the operations health and safety meetings and diversity and inclusion boards. I like to be involved in all areas of the Federation and have recently become one of the trustees who oversee the Federation spending in the West Midlands."

Chris said he was passionate about officer welfare.

"This is an area I am trying to push the force on," he said. "I feel that for such a large metropolitan force this is something we should lead on.

"I've made proposals for welfare vans to give officers on scenes and major events somewhere to make a drink, heat food and use the toilet.

"I've already established that this is not going to be a quick process as I have come up against many obstacles, however, I'm undeterred and will persist with this issue as I am not one to give up easily."

Chris said the Federation was doing some great work locally and nationally, but there was still much more for it to achieve.

He added: "In my opinion, the Federation must continue to develop and evolve. I've really pushed for us to move into the digital era and we have made some good strides forward. However, there is still a long way to go for us to reach our potential, both locally and nationally.

"Like any large organisation, mistakes are made but I feel it is how we learn from them that is the key. I'm aware we've lost the confidence of some of our members but this is something we can earn back.

"It is not just about what we have done in the past, but about what we do now moving forward."

“Nobody knows when they may need the Federation, but when that day comes you want a rep that really cares and is going to do everything they possibly can for you.”

David Walliams sends message of support to ACC Chris Johnson

David Walliams is the latest high-profile celebrity to publicly support a group of officers, staff and friends from West Midlands Police and other forces nationwide who are running the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in the autumn to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) and the Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove.

The author, comedian and star of TV show Britain's Got Talent has recorded a video message backing the team who are supporting West Midlands Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson who has MND.

On hearing of his diagnosis, West Midlands Police officer and Federation workplace representative Detective Sergeant Trudy Gittins decided to take part in the marathon and urged others to join her by setting up #WMPMND with the full support of Chris' wife and fellow officer Sharon. Now more than 350 people have signed up for the event which, due to the coronavirus outbreak, has been re-scheduled for October 24 and 25. It was originally due to take place on Sunday 24 May.

Olympian Paula Radcliffe quickly threw her support behind their efforts, before good-luck videos came in from TV cop Vicky McClure, from the BBC's Line of Duty, and Ruth Wilson, the star of series like Luther,



David Walliams.

Jayne Eyre and The Affair.

Now David Walliams has sent a wonderful message to offer his support.

"Hi Chris, David Walliams here," he says. "I have been told about your diagnosis and I realise that this must be an incredibly tough time for you and your family.

"I hear you are still working, serving and helping your community. You are a hero. Keep up the amazing work!"

Sharon reacted to David's message by saying: "Love that man."

Money is already pouring in towards the #WMPMND fund-raising target months before the rescheduled date of the half and full marathon.

Their initial target was £12,000 and when that was reached, it was increased to £16,140 (Chris's collar number).

Recent efforts have now seen that figure surpassed too and the current target stands at a staggering £27,520, which is Sharon's collar number. At the time of writing, more than £22,700 has been pledged.

Those efforts were helped on 24 May – the original marathon date – when, encouraged by Sharon, supporters took to the streets for run 'for an hour' and donated into the pot, while asking friends and family to do the same.

Those taking part included South Wales Chief Constable Matt Jukes, Commander Alex Murray from the Metropolitan Police, Deputy Chief Constable Serena Kennedy from Merseyside Police, Assistant Chief Constable Jayne Meir from West Midlands Police plus other officers from Derbyshire, Surrey, Staffs and North Wales.

Sharon said: "Team, you have done me proud. Chris and I are so grateful that we have smashed the target."

While Chris commented: "Today has



Sharon Johnson (right) and Kristal Taylor with a medal especially made for them by Lucy Brown.



Nick Moorehouse and family.



Dave Webb (left) and a running companion.



Lucia Guttuso, Nigel Johnston and daughter Amara.

been truly inspiring. This MND thing is a bit rubbish but seeing everyone's posts has been completely uplifting for both Sharon and I. I want to say thank you to every one of you that has taken part and for the efforts you have taken to help raise awareness and funds for both MNDA and Primrose Hospice. My collar number target has been smashed. You are doing a great thing, thank you and I look forward to seeing the sea of yellow at the main event later in the year."

After seeing a Facebook post showing the fund-raisers' efforts on the Sunday, he added: "This post, all these pictures....I think it is a bit dusty in here. Thank you."

DI Chris Jones wrote a song called: 'On The Run. A Charity Song for MND' which has been released to support efforts. It was sponsored by West Midlands Police Federation and policediscountoffers.co.uk

Paula Radcliffe has recorded a video to urge people to download the tune.

"If you download that song, you can donate and by donating you will be entered into a prize draw that has some amazing prizes in it," said Paula.

Watch the video that accompanies the 'On The Run' release. Just a pound will make a huge difference and will enter you into the prize draw.

Download the song as [WAV](#) or [MP3](#) and please share it with family and friends as there are some fantastic prizes up for grabs!

[Support the fund-raising.](#)
[Watch David Walliams' message of support.](#)



Trudy Gittins (right) and her daughter.



Neata Simpson and her family.



Nick Geiss.



Rod Rose and Wendy Bird.

'Irwin Mitchell were there every step of the way'

Irwin Mitchell's family team has a wealth of experience in dealing with separation, divorce and financial matters. The team has a longstanding relationship with the Police Federation, having supported members with legal issues not only relating to divorce and the financial matters arising from the same (including extensive expertise in police pensions and related issues) but also in respect of matters relating to child arrangements and issues of domestic abuse.

The Government's decision to limit the nation's movements as of 23 March 2020 in a bid to control coronavirus had an immediate impact on everyone. For some of our clients within the Police Federation, the lockdown has also presented them with difficult and even dangerous situations relating to their family lives including issues relating to child arrangements and also in respect of domestic abuse with such referrals having, sadly, increased, during the pandemic.

During lockdown, Irwin Mitchell has provided increased expert support and advice to police officers dealing with issues including their children's movement between family homes during the pandemic. Our solicitors have successfully secured urgent court orders from the Family Courts for reinstatement of child arrangements where no reasonable excuse has been provided for contact being prohibited by the other parent (notwithstanding the Government lockdown guidance), and also orders relating to domestic abuse including non-molestation orders, protecting clients from the risk of further harm experienced prior to and during lockdown.

Irwin Mitchell recognised that, following the Government's advice that all must socially isolate and stay at home as much as possible, the support services usually open to victims of domestic abuse would be stretched further than normal and, for victims, their home would not be

their safe haven. Domestic abuse reports soared, with calls to the National Domestic Abuse helpline run by Refuge reaching 25 per cent above average in the second week of lockdown and 49 per cent higher than normal after three weeks.

In response to these concerning figures, the Government gave more than 100 domestic abuse charities a share of £8.1 million to continue to provide life-saving services.

It was clear to Irwin Mitchell that it, too, must provide support to its clients during the pandemic.

To that end, Irwin Mitchell began offering free 20-minute consultations in April 2020, for the purpose of offering advice and guidance to anyone with any domestic abuse concerns. Irwin Mitchell's free advice helpline has transformed several people's lives, and we would encourage any member of the Police Federation to access this support if necessary (or signpost to those who are in need), to secure the civil

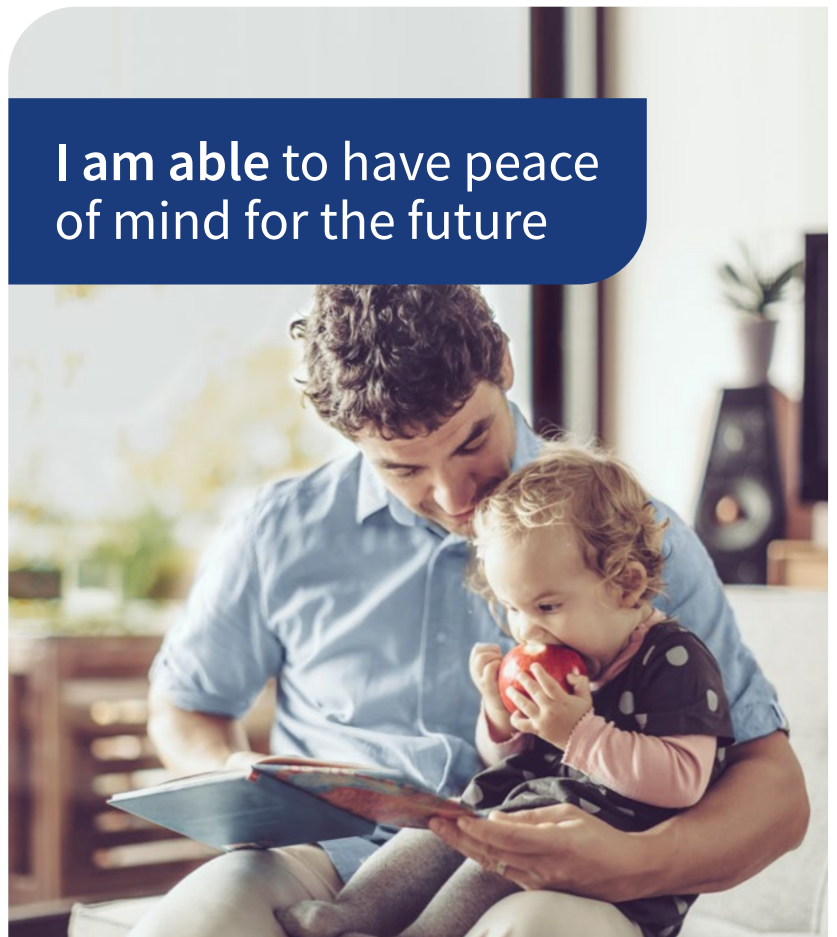


Expert Hand. Human Touch.

Our family team are hugely experienced in advising and supporting members of the police force dealing with separation, divorce, financial or children matters, including looking after your pension.

For free initial advice call the Birmingham office on **0121 214 5278** and ask to speak to **Clare Wiseman** or **Mark Hands**.

 irwinmitchell.com





Lucy Todd.

protection required.

All potential victims should call us on **0370 1500 100** for a free 20-minute talk.

A previous client of Irwin Mitchell, and member of the Police Federation, has kindly provided the following comments on their experience with the Irwin Mitchell family team:

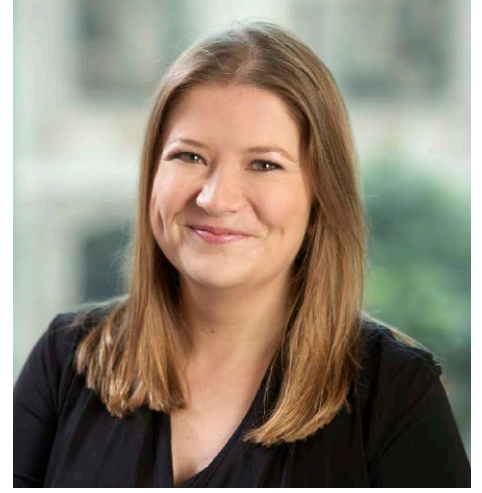
"Splitting up from your partner where there are children involved can amount to one of the most distressing periods of your life. I remember being at rock bottom and not knowing which way to turn. As a police officer you have all the advice in the world to offer and support other people, but then



Dipal Patel.

when you find yourself in a similar position, it is a very lonely place.

"I eventually opened up to a colleague who suggested that I speak to the Police Federation to see how they could support me. This was something that I had never even considered. I made an appointment at the Federation with Caroline Harris who talked me through my finances and ways that Federation schemes could support me and then in turn Caroline put me in touch with Mark Hands, a solicitor from Irwin Mitchell, Birmingham, to talk through my separation. Mark rang me up and within



Kathryn Evans

minutes he put me at ease and I trusted him. We arranged an initial appointment, free of charge. Mark subsequently assisted with my divorce and complicated financial order and I was so thankful that his fees were very reasonable.

"This is a period of my life where looking back now I can say that I was in crisis. Not only were the Federation there for me in a way that I never expected, Mark and the team at Irwin Mitchell also supported me every step of the way and for that I will truly be forever grateful."

Member of the Police Federation

(Anonymous but published with consent).

First Call
financial

Need a Mortgage?

Make us your first call...

- Residential Mortgages
- Protection
- General Insurance
- Buy to let
- Advice on Key worker and New Buy schemes

Take advantage of our **FREE** No Obligation Mortgage Review

Simply call me to arrange a home, or station, visit. Alternatively pop in to see me, I am available between 10am and 4pm **EVERY DAY** at police stations across the force.

Our service is open to all Police Officers and Civilian Staff.

We normally charge a fee for mortgage advice with a typical fee being £200. However for anyone responding to this promotion (website and poster) we will not charge a fee. The Financial Conduct Authority does not regulate most Buy to Let mortgages.

Contact **Louise Norton** CeMap M: 07968 317 671
Independent Mortgage Adviser E: louisenorton@hotmail.com

AVAILABLE
EVERY DAY
AT POLICE
STATIONS ACROSS
THE FORCE

LIKE US 
on Facebook First
Call Financial (Leics)



YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE.

First Call Financial (Leics) Ltd is an Appointed Representative of PRIMIS Mortgage Network which is a trading name of Personal Touch Financial Services Limited. Personal Touch Financial Services Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

www.firstcallmortgages.net

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS



NARPO is a rank-free association of retired police officers, dedicated to improving benefits for its members.

**NARPO has Branches across West Midlands:-
Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.**

- **FREE ADVICE –** Pensions, Benefits, Computing, Taxation;
- **MEMBER SERVICES –** Welfare Support, Car, Health and Travel Insurance, Car Purchase, Domestic Appliances, Trusted Legal Advisors, Mobile Phones, Travel Discounts, Job Opportunities + National/Local Websites, National Magazine, Branch Newsletters;
- **SOCIAL EVENTS –** Keep in touch with old friends and colleagues.

Annual membership fee deducted from pension:- £20.64 in 2018.

ARE YOU RETIRING SOON?

Join on-line www.NARPO.org, or for more information, contact the secretary of your preferred Branch:-

Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall:-
Wolverhampton:-

www.NARPOWestMidlands.org
www.NARPO-Wolverhampton.co.uk



Legal Services for West Midlands Police

With 20+ years' experience working with the police, Gorvins Solicitors, have been a leading provider of legal services to the Police Federation and all its members. We also act for officers, their partners, police personnel and families, so whatever level of support you require during the divorce process, we can help.

Cost effective: Fixed fees and discounted rates for officers, police personnel and families

Expert team: Specialists in police pension treatment on divorce and dissolution and also in relation to children matters

Prompt service: First appointment free, including telephone meetings

Other Legal Services

- Wills, trusts and probate
- Employment law
- Residential conveyancing
- Personal injury claims (on or off duty)
- Dispute resolution matters



GORVINS SOLICITORS
police divorce
the specialists in police family law

Contact your dedicated force representatives today on

0161 930 5274

e-mail police-divorce@gorvins.com

or visit us at www.gorvins.com/wmp



Retirement seminars now going ahead

The Federation's retirement seminars programme has been resumed but with reduced numbers of officers being able to attend and social distancing and other safety measures in place.

Aimed at officers in their last three years of service, the seminars planned for April, May and June were all cancelled and any member who may have missed out as a result is being offered the chance to re-schedule or take part in a webinar that would cover many of the topics in a more condensed format.

"We are scoping the feasibility of putting together a webinar which might also be useful as a pre-attendance session for the full seminars and full details will be announced shortly," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"We are also considering a pensions and financial wellbeing webinar that would be open to officers with more time left before they retire to provide information about their pension and also to help in making financial decisions that would be more beneficial by having a longer timeframe to take effect.

"Members interested in re-arranging a seminar or taking part in either of the planned webinars should just register their interest by emailing the Federation."

The existing seminar programme will restart from 23 July. PPE will be provided for everyone attending with cleaning stations and hand sanitisers also available. Where possible, a one-way system will be in place.

Those attending are usually encouraged to take their partners along too but for the remainder of this year at least, due to the restrictions on numbers to allow for social distancing, they will be open to officers only.

Among the topics covered at the seminars are:

- **Managing change and uncertainty**
- **CV writing and interview techniques**
- **Transferable skills**
- **Pensions**
- **How do I manage money and these financial changes?**
- **Budgeting**
- **Starting your own business**
- **Taxation**
- **New horizons (what's next?)**
- **Savings**
- **Investments and finances**
- **Protecting your wealth.**



Members are being urged to register their interest in attending retirement seminars in 2021 by emailing westmidlandspf@polfed.org

Please ensure you put 'Retirement seminar' and the month you would prefer to attend in the subject title and include your name, work email address, personal email address, personal phone number, and proposed retirement date in the email.

FREE Independent Mortgage Advice

As part of our commitment to your Federation, we offer advice and appointments to suit you via phone, email and video call.

For further information, contact the Federation Office on:

westmidlandspf@polfed.org

Warren & Co are a Member Service, therefore there will be no charge for administering your mortgage

Contact Warren & Co on 01452 547783

or contact@warrenifa.co.uk

Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up the repayments on your mortgage. Think carefully before securing other debts against your home



WARREN & CO

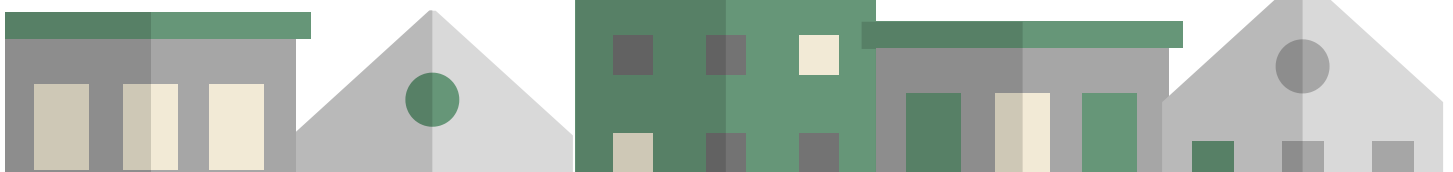
COMPLETE FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS



WWW.WARRENIFA.CO.UK



[WARRENMORTGAGE](#)





Authorised and Regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

"It's nice to relax knowing my divorce settlement is sorted."

Getting a divorce is never easy, especially on top of the pressures of police work. At Slater and Gordon we offer Police Federation members a free initial consultation, a divorce fixed fee package and discounted hourly rates. We'll be with you every step of the way so you can focus on your job and let us deal with everything else.

**Slater
Gordon**
Lawyers

For all life's legal needs and with offices throughout the UK.

0808 175 7710

slatnergordon.co.uk/police-law

West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund

An update from the chair

It's been several weeks now since the Benevolent Fund closed its office to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Three months on, as restrictions to daily life ease, I wanted to say a personal thank you to all our members for your continued support during these exceptionally challenging times: from simply keeping up your membership to sending messages of support and for all the donations we have gratefully received.

This clearly demonstrates the close police family that exists between the Benevolent Fund and the West Midlands Police force.

We were scheduled to hold our AGM in July but this year's event has now been postponed, therefore I would like to give you a brief update on our news, plans and services.

Despite the recent lockdown, the Benevolent Fund, like many other charities, has continued to offer help to those who need it. We have continued to support members who are currently off work through illness or injury. Earlier this year we introduced a new e-voucher scheme called Vex Vouchers that gives members the choice of more than 150 shops where they can redeem these.

A total of £1,530 has been given in sickness vouchers to officers and police staff currently unable to work this year already.

Over the coming weeks, you can find the latest information on our website, including the phased re-opening of the convalescence facility, St Michael's Lodge and, of course, the availability of our holiday homes.

Our two holiday properties remain closed in response to COVID-19 and we know members were looking forward to spending a seaside break at our holiday homes this year.

When bookings do resume (which we hope won't be too far away) we want to reassure members that both holiday properties will continue to maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

Many of our planned events have now been either cancelled or postponed, including this year's Diamond Awards. However, I am pleased to announce that we have been chosen to become West Midlands Police's nominated charity for next year's event.

Sadly, we have had to cancel the family fun day at Blackwell Adventure that was planned for 26 August. A new date has now been arranged for 25 August 2021 and we will be providing more information about this later in the year.

We still have our children's Christmas

party scheduled for this December in partnership with the WMP Sports and Well Being Association. Of course, we will be monitoring the situation closely and will notify members as to whether the party can go ahead as planned.

Our membership subscriptions remain at £2 a month for serving officers and staff and £1 for retired members.

Membership benefits include;

- Shopping vouchers if you are unable to work through injury or illness
- Convalescence and rehabilitation breaks at the multi-million pound treatment centre, St Michael's Lodge
- Access to grants and interest-free loans in times of hardship or distress
- Discounted seaside breaks at our holiday homes in Weymouth and Devon.

Members who are serving officers or police staff are also entitled to:

- A death grant of £3,500 to a nominated beneficiary
- £25 per week for all surviving children up to the age of 18

The last few months have been challenging for all of us and as a result, we have seen an increase in non-members turn to the Benevolent Fund for possible support.

We deliberately keep subscription fees to a minimum in order to make it affordable for everyone. Therefore, unfortunately, we have been unable to offer assistance to those who are currently non-members.

PLEASE, please help us by encouraging colleagues who aren't currently members of the Benevolent Fund to join. You can apply to join on via our website:

www.wmpben.co.uk

Times have dramatically changed for all of us and we want to carry on supporting you the best way we can.

I want to thank you for your continued patience and understanding so far this year. We are looking forward to having you back at our holiday homes and welcoming new members to the fund.

Stay safe and keep well.

John Williams

Chair of West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund



Boot offer

A top boot manufacturer has launched a special offer for members of West Midlands Police Federation.



With almost 100 years' experience in manufacturing, LOWA leather boots are known for their comfort, versatility and performance.

And now, members can take advantage of an exclusive **15 per cent discount** on all LOWA boots ordered through Task Force Distributions, the company's official UK importer and distributor.

To take advantage of the offer, officers and staff should just enter the code **PFEW2020** when placing an online order on any boots that are not already discounted or on special offer.

A range of boots has also been developed to suit the shape and size of women's feet. Boots come in sizes ranging from UK 3 to UK 14 and every pair comes with a 12-month warranty. When properly looked after, the boots can endure regular use for between five and eight years, according to LOWA.

The LOWA designs are ideally suited to the rigours faced by officers and incorporate a number of footwear technologies including Gore-Tex® membranes, Cambrelle® linings, Vibram® soles and Cordura® fabric.

They are worn around the world by police, security personnel, emergency services and armed forces personnel.

[Find out more.](#)

Chester Zoo opens for visitors

If you're itching to get out and about now that the Government is easing the lockdown restrictions then a trip to Chester Zoo could be an option.

The zoo re-opened on Monday 15 June with various measures in place to ensure visitors can social distance. They are also limiting the number of entry tickets on sale for safety reasons.

Police officers and staff can get discounted entry tickets via Staffordshire Police Federation, simply call 01785 242 215 for more information.

Chester Zoo has more than 35,000 animals and 128 acres of zoological gardens to explore.

[Find out more.](#)

● Federation members can get discounts on other attractions via our [Member services](#) page. While many of these have been closed during the coronavirus pandemic, they are slowly re-opening so please check their websites for further information.



“Now the pressure's gone, I can get back to my police work.”

You never know when you're going to need legal advice. Slater and Gordon have been advising and supporting Police Federation members for more than 60 years, taking the legal stress away and leaving you to focus on keeping people safe.

For all life's legal needs and with offices throughout the UK.

0808 175 7805

slatergordon.co.uk/police-law

24h criminal assistance

0800 908 977

**Slater
Gordon**
Lawyers