

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

October/November 2020

Recruitment update – See Page 16

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Welcome

Welcome to the October/November 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.

Cover photo: Empty city streets during the pandemic.

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

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The public need to understand there is a person behind the uniform



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

The death on duty of any police officer sends a shockwave through the policing family.

At the time of writing this column, it's less than a week since Metropolitan Police Sergeant Matiu Ratana was shot and killed by a man being taken into custody in Croydon in the early hours of Friday 25 September.

Of course, in that time, more details about the incident leading to his death have been made public while enquiries are

ongoing. But, for me, as is so often the case in these circumstances, it has been the release of the personal information about PS Ratana, who was widely known as Matt, that has been the most heart-breaking.

Born in New Zealand, he came to the UK and joined the Met Police in the late '80s which meant that he was fast-approaching retirement age, reportedly opting for a role in custody to take himself away from the rigours of front-line policing.

Described by his partner as a 'gentle giant', he was a rugby fanatic with his club saying he was 'irreplaceable' and 'incredibly generous'.

These details, I believe, make people understand the man behind the uniform and I hope that is something which resonates with the public.

The majority of officers put on their uniform for work but underneath that they are still someone's son or daughter, a

husband or wife, a partner, a father or mother, a sister or brother, an uncle or aunt, a cousin, a friend or a colleague.

Yet, there are some people who want to attack them just because of the uniform they wear. In recent years, and even during the pandemic, there has been a growing number of assaults on police officers. They are pushed, slapped, thumped, spat at, kicked, battered and even run over.

Thankfully, we are seeing efforts by the Government to tackle this with plans now underway to increase the maximum sentences for these attacks to two years.

This is a step forward, though we still need the courts to use those maximum sentences, something they so far have seemed reluctant to do even with a one-year maximum sentence.

Maybe what is really needed is a minimum sentence. If those offenders who seem to take the risk that they won't get

“ Maybe what is really needed is a minimum sentence. If those offenders who seem to take the risk that they won't get much more than a slap on the wrist knew the minimum sentence for attacking a police officer was two years, perhaps it would have an impact. ”

much more than a slap on the wrist knew the minimum sentence for attacking a police officer was two years, perhaps it would have an impact.

Along with this change to legislation in terms of sentencing, we are also seeing the Federation's campaign for a Police Covenant taking shape too. This will enshrine in law a duty to offer protection and support to all members of the policing family. We look forward to seeing this taking effect so that all officers and staff, both serving and retired, and their family members can access any support they need.

The Police Covenant was first set out in the Police Powers and Protections Bill which is due to come before Parliament soon. The bill also includes the changes to legislation required to make sure that police drivers are not judged against the standards of the careful and competent driver, as is currently the case.

Our deputy secretary, Tim Rogers, who is also the national Federation's pursuits and driver training lead, was at the forefront of the campaign for this change to the law which will mean that police drivers' training and experience can be taken into account when assessing their driving.

He is now seeking a further change to legislation that will give better protection to officers involved in police stops following a series of incidents in which officers have been seriously injured, see Pages 8, 9 and 11 for more details.

Finally, I would just like to mention this year's National Police Memorial Day. This annual event is one of the key dates in the policing calendar, recognising as it does those officers who have died while serving their communities.

The memorial day provides an opportunity for the policing family to come together with fallen officers' loved ones, show our respects and show that we will never forget them.

This year, as with so many other events, the memorial day itself – which was due to take place in Lincoln – was cancelled due to restrictions. But the trustees of the memorial day charity were keen to ensure the day did not go by without a suitable tribute to our fallen colleagues.

A virtual service was put together with the patron of the memorial day, HRH The Prince of Wales, recording a message in which he acknowledged the unique role of police officers in society.

The service, of course, had the added poignancy of being just two days after the loss of Matt Ratana which highlighted the risks officers face each and every day. We will remember him and all our fallen colleagues.

Police Covenant will become law

West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott says plans to create a Police Covenant will recognise the unique role of officers and staff and will improve support and protection for them.

Jon welcomed an announcement by Home Secretary Priti Patel at the Police Superintendents' Association annual conference that a Police Covenant will be introduced in legislation.

He said: "Policing is a unique job. Our members put themselves in harm's way every day to support and protect the public.

"It's only right that officers, police staff, former colleagues and their families are given the support and protection they deserve.

"As a Federation, we've been campaigning for a covenant that recognises the role we have in society, so it's pleasing to see it take another step towards becoming a reality," he added.

The covenant applies to serving and former police personnel and creates a statutory duty for forces to support police officers.

It will focus on protection, health and wellbeing, and support for families, and places

It follows a campaign by the national Federation which included a public consultation process that found more than 90 per cent of respondents backed Government plans for a covenant.

Home Secretary backs BWV campaign



Home Secretary Priti Patel.

The chair of West Midlands Police Federation says the support of the Home Secretary is a welcome step that strengthens the Federation's campaign for forces to share body-worn video (BWV) footage with the public.

Jon Nott's comments come as part of a campaign aiming to protect officers from being at the centre of a social media storm when selected clips of incidents involving the police are posted on the internet exposing them to personal abuse.

Jon said: "The support of the Home Secretary serves to strengthen our campaign and sends out a positive message to our members. We've seen how

clips that are taken out of context can get a reaction from some members of the public.

"They can quickly go viral and suddenly officers can find themselves at the centre of a social media storm, which can be a difficult and unpleasant place to be.

"It's only right that, where appropriate, we can counter any false narrative to support and protect our members and to preserve the trust the public has in policing."

Jon was speaking after national Federation chair John Apter recently raised this topic with Home Secretary Priti Patel during an exclusive interview for POLICE, the Federation's magazine.

Ms Patel branded the publicising of unbalanced footage in an attempt to vilify officers as 'unacceptable'.

As a direct result, the Home Secretary has now written to Martin Hewitt, chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), encouraging forces to be proactive in considering when BWV footage can be released to demonstrate the good work officers do and to show that selective footage can be misleading.

She said: "It is in this context that I am expressing my support for the Police Federation's recent campaign to protect officers from unfair criticism via social media."

The NPCC and the college have agreed to begin reviewing BWV guidance with the Federation feeding into the process.

- Read more about the Home Secretary's interview for POLICE magazine on Page 30.

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.
- 8** 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. 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.
- 9** To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented. 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.

'Officers at risk due to delays with training'

The Force will continue to put officers at risk while it fails to prioritise the production of a better training package to ensure they can safely deal with incidents involving vehicles, according to West Midlands Police Federation.

The Federation has been calling on the Force to do more to protect officers after a spate of incidents in which officers, locally and nationally, have been injured by people making off after a police stop.

But, at the most recent Force assaults meeting, it was announced the Force was waiting for the College of Policing to re-write the training package and this would not be ready for launch until April next year.

"The fact that the training is being updated is, of course, good news. I understand it will be a scenario based package, giving officers guidance on how to deal with people in a vehicle; something we feel is needed," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"But while this is progress of sorts, we are disappointed and frustrated at the slow progress on this issue.

"The Force has had the internal

recommendations for a year now and the lowest level response was to put together a training video which it has done but, frankly, this falls short of what is required unless there is a compliant member of the public in the car.

"This is something we will raise again with the Force to reiterate our concerns. We feel the Force has had more than enough evidence to show that there is an issue and that officers are being left vulnerable to being seriously injured or even killed. It appears the Force is willing to take that risk and wait for national changes but meanwhile that leaves our officers in danger. It is totally unacceptable that, having recognised officers' vulnerability, the Force is prepared to wait even longer before implementing change."

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation lead for pursuits and driver training, is equally frustrated with the Force stance.

He explained: "The five options put forward to the Force to address the increase in incidents in which officers were being injured at police stops started with the basic

video. This should have been the first stage followed by design and implementation of useful practical training. It has taken over a year for a basic video to be launched, and now the Force is saying it's OK to wait until the recommendation for the national review comes out.

"The figures quoted by the Force in terms of officers injured by vehicles are low but the next officer injured as a result of an attempted vehicle extraction needs careful scrutiny from a legal perspective. The Force knows there is a risk, it identified this. It concedes officers have no tactics nor training to deal with these incidents yet it is content for them to continue to face this danger untrained. This is a foreseeable risk and one that would make any injured officer eligible to pursue a personal injury claim.

"Having identified a clear and serious risk, 13 months on we still do not have appropriate measures in place. Leaving officers in a position of known vulnerability is incomprehensible. The first duty of any police force should be the protection of its workforce."



Federation seeks support of transport minister

Transport minister Grant Shapps is being asked to support a change in legislation which could give better protection to the police when they stop vehicles after a series of incidents in which officers have been seriously injured by drivers making off during a police stop.

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the national Federation's response and driver training lead, is heading a campaign to amend two sections of the Road Traffic Act 1988 which would give police officers the authority to require drivers to turn off their engine when stopped and also to demand that all occupants leave a vehicle.

"Sadly, incidents in which police officers are injured by drivers fleeing during a police stop are happening more and more as people

appear content to use their vehicles as a weapon in their bid to escape justice," says Tim.

"Clearly, police officers are vulnerable. As servants of the Crown, they should rightly expect the Government to prioritise their safety and ensure that safety is enshrined in law."

The Federation wants the Department for Transport to get behind changes to the Road Traffic Act as part of the Police Powers and Protections Bill which is due to come before Parliament in the autumn.

It is calling for the bill to include:

- **An amendment to S163 of the Road Traffic Act to extend the obligation on motorists to stop to an obligation to stop and switch off the engine**

- **An amendment to S164 of the Road Traffic Act to require occupants to get out of a vehicle when required to do so by a police officer.**

In the letter to Mr Shapps, Tim explains: "Our legal advice confirms that these changes could be implemented by minor amendments to the existing sections and would not involve a significant curtailment of existing civil liberties.

"While it is currently an offence to fail to stop for a constable in uniform, once the vehicle has stopped, the obligation on the driver is satisfied – they only need to stop. Under S164, an officer can require people to provide information and documents. But this means the officer has to get out of their own vehicle to make the request or check



any documents produced putting them in an incredibly vulnerable position since the driver can make off and use the vehicle as a weapon, as all too often is the case. This unwarranted risk to police officers could be minimised by creating an obligation on those in the stopped vehicle to get out when asked by an officer to do so.

"I would hope that, as transport minister, you could support our calls for a change in legislation to give police officers better protection and avoid more incidents in which officers are injured, or worse, when seeking to uphold the law and serve their communities. It should be the duty of the Government to commit to ensuring police officers, in serving their communities, are equipped and suitably protected in law when dealing with vehicles and their occupants.

"Since officers' vulnerability has been identified, as evidenced by them being driven at each day and regularly being injured, we believe the Government should back our calls for a change in legislation. Not having the extra powers we are asking for will curtail our members' ability to safely and effectively police the roads."

Tim has already led a successful Federation campaign for a change in the law that will allow police officers' special training and expertise to be taken into account in the law rather than them being judged against the standards of the careful and competent driver. That change to legislation is part of the Police Powers and Protections Bill.

Safety review confirms need for better protection for officers



Tim Rogers.

A report on officer safety is calling for new legislation that makes it a specific indictable criminal offence for anyone to use, threaten or attempt to use a vehicle to deliberately target a police officer or front-line staff member.

The Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) has been compiled by the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and follows the largest ever survey of police officers, staff and volunteers in England and Wales with more than 40,000 people responding.

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and pursuits and driver training lead within the national Federation, has welcomed the report and its findings, particularly in relation to measures to improve the safety of officers dealing with motorists at the side of the road.

He is already heading a Federation campaign to amend two sections of the Road Traffic Act 1988 which would give police officers the authority to require drivers to turn off their engine when stopped and also to demand that all occupants leave a vehicle.

"This report further highlights the risks officers face when they stop motorists and adds further weight to our campaign for a change in the law," says Tim, "We know that more and more people are prepared to use their vehicles as a weapon against the police and the review has clearly brought this to the fore again.

"However, I really don't think having a new indictable offence is what's needed to tackle this. The law already outlines offences with which these people could be charged. If someone deliberately drives at another person they should be charged with dangerous driving or attempted murder. In my opinion, it's the failure to apply charging standards that is causing these offences not to be properly dealt with.

"The Federation has successfully campaigned for an increase in the sentences available to courts when dealing with offenders who have assaulted officers but still we find that the tougher sentences are not being handed down. It's the same with people who drive a vehicle at others, the more serious charges are not being laid and therefore the sentences don't fit the crime."

The OSSR report includes 28 recommendations for improving officer safety covering training for roads policing officers, improved equipment and further research on the link between shift work and safe driving practices with the review having identified the high number of officer deaths as they travelled to and from work.

[Read the report.](#)

Gaz back at work after being run over by thief in police car

More than 12 months after being run over by a thief in a stolen police car PC Gareth Phillips is still unsure about his long-term future in the Force.

He returned to work in August, a year after the incident in which he was critically injured, and is now working five hours a day in the Central Motorway Police Group control room but, even after months of treatment and various operations and tests, he still has to wait for the results of further scans before he will know if he can fully return to the job he loves.

"It's all a bit of a waiting game," says Gareth, who is widely known as Gaz.

He is waiting for the results of his latest CT scan at the end of September. The scan will show how his pelvis and spine are healing and whether he needs another operation.

Like so many other people, he has been unable to have his regular physiotherapy during the pandemic and that has meant he has been unable to lie on his front.

"My back is the biggest issue for me," he explains, "It's the most painful and causes me the most difficulty. If I lay face down for more than 10 minutes I literally cannot



Gaz Phillips and canine companion Kensie.

get up."

This, he fears, could lead to major problems if he was to return to front-line duties.

"If I was knocked to the ground, I just don't think I could get up quickly enough to avoid any further attack on me once I

was down."

Gaz was injured when he and other officers tried to stop two men suspected of stealing a Range Rover in Moseley in August 2019. One man was arrested but the other escaped, got into a police vehicle and reversed into officers, knocking Gaz over and then running over him.

He spent two weeks in intensive care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and underwent surgery on his pelvis and spine which were repaired with metal. His hand was also seriously injured.

As part of his recovery, he attended the Flint House police rehabilitation centre which he says was 'amazing'.

"The first day I got there, I couldn't even reach down to touch my knees but at the end of the two weeks there I could touch my toes," he says, "I would urge all officers to make sure they are subscribing to Flint House. You just don't know when you might need it and it played a huge part in me getting this far and getting back to work."

He believes a Force Fox red Labrador called Kensie, which provided company when he was recuperating and also makes him get out for a walk each day, has also been a huge benefit.

Chris highlights 'bit of luck'

Just 12 months after being left in a coma by a fleeing driver, brave West Midlands PC Chris Burnham attributes his miracle recovery and return to the job he loves to "a bit of luck, a bit of effort and a lot of NHS".



Chris began his shift as normal in Holbrooks, Coventry, a year ago on 25 September, when he spotted a suspect, wanted in relation to a robbery, in traffic. Chris ran to the car to make the arrest but the suspect sped away and then drove back towards Chris, hitting him. The 48-year-old officer was thrown over the car and his head smashed the windscreen.

Chris was in an induced coma and medical staff predicted he would be in hospital for weeks and well into this year. But he has defied the medical odds and was fully conscious, albeit disorientated, after

just six days. Even more remarkably, he was discharged from hospital and taking his first steps to recovery 21 days after the horrific incident.

He returned to work in June in a new role with the partnerships team in Coventry.

"No-one expected me to be in this position; not six months ago and certainly not 12 months ago," said Chris, "My recovery is down to a bit of luck, a bit of effort and a lot of NHS. It's something that happened and will never go away but it will not hold me back."

Chris's leg injuries were so serious that he now has three screws holding his left knee cap together so he is unable to run but can walk, swim and cycle. But he says he's not interested in vengeance.

"It has been more about getting better not even," he said, "I was glad to see the back of the court case and felt better when it was over."

Banned driver Tekle Lennox was jailed for seven years in March after admitting

wounding with intent to resist. The 37-year-old also received an additional four months after pleading guilty to possession of drugs.

Chris, who fortunately suffered no long-term psychological damage, has no recollection of the incident or the following days so he asked to watch footage of the immediate aftermath and has driven past the accident site.

He has previously suffered a broken jaw while on duty but admits he is now more aware of the risk and dangers that officers face daily.

"We do a dangerous job," he said, "We are in a role where when it goes wrong, it can go wrong very quickly. But that shouldn't stop us from doing things. It's about remembering to stay aware and keeping safe."

He added: "I would really like to thank the large number of people who have provided support and well wishes. It's been a massive help to me and my family over the last year."

Officer assaults: maximum sentence to double

New legislation to double the sentence for assaulting a police officer has been fast-tracked by the Government.

The maximum prison sentence will now increase from 12 months to two years in a change in law that the national Police Federation has lobbied for extensively.

The chair of West Midlands Police Federation, Jon Nott, welcomed the news: "The Federation's Protect the Protectors campaign was all about pushing for increased sentencing and getting the message across that assaulting emergency service workers is completely unacceptable.

"Assaults against our officers and blue light colleagues are increasing and, even during the pandemic, some individuals thought it appropriate to attack by coughing or spitting on officers while claiming to have coronavirus.

"I just hope the increased sentencing acts as a deterrent but we need the courts to hand out the toughest possible sentences."

More than 11,000 people were prosecuted for assaulting an emergency worker in 2019, according to Ministry of Justice statistics.

This latest change in the law will be the second in two years after the 2018 Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act increased the maximum sentence from six months to a year.

The new law will mean that when a person is convicted of offences, including sexual assault or manslaughter, a judge must consider whether an offence against an emergency worker merits an increase in sentence.

Assaults increase by 31 per cent

Assaults on emergency service workers increased by 31 per cent when comparing July this year to the same period last year.

The figures, released by the National Police Chiefs' Council, cover the four weeks to 2 August 2020 and have been compared with the same four weeks in 2019.

"I would like to say that I am shocked by these figures but, having asked for figures from our Force recently, I am not," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"In our Force area there were 267 officer assaults in April this year and 279 in May - compared to 234 in April and 279 in May 2019. What does shock me is that while police officers have been on the front-line of the nation's response to the pandemic, there are so many mindless individuals who seem to think it's OK to attack a police officer or another of our blue light colleagues while they are doing their jobs and serving their communities.

"Time and time again, officers are taking the brunt of these people's anger and frustration with some even coughing over or spitting at officers while claiming to have coronavirus.

"We need the courts to hand out the toughest possible sentences when these offenders are brought before them. These despicable attacks have to stop. All the time the number of assaults on emergency service workers continue to rise I would suggest offenders are not being suitably punished or we would perhaps see them changing their behaviour and others being deterred from carrying out these attacks."



At the end of my money I still have some month left!

Do you need support with your budgeting?



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

Your meeting with Caroline Harris could help you manage 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 dependants, George Burrows could help. They have arranged for Caroline Harris, a financial welfare specialist with over 25 years' experience, to work alongside the 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

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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 very 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 me save 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

New Pension Working Group is to launch first survey

The newly formed West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) Pension Working Group wants to understand what officers know about the current situation around pensions.

The working group was set up earlier in the summer and is made up of nine Federation representatives with a mixture of both those in the Pension Challenge, those in the Police Federation of England and Wales group action compensation claim and those in neither.

At the working group's first meeting, in July, it was agreed to submit a response on behalf of WMPF to the Government's consultation on its proposed remedy to the discrimination found in the transitional arrangements on the launch of the 2015 Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Police Pension Scheme.

And at subsequent meetings, members

discussed the need to establish what officers know about the current situation around pensions.

"Therefore, it was proposed to initiate a survey to help us fully understand the position of members and to provide information as to the Government's proposed remedy to the discrimination found in the transitional arrangements put in place when the 2015 pension scheme was launched and how it could affect individuals. This will then help us going forward with further discussions and proposals," says Jon Nott, West Midlands Police Federation chair, who is a member of the working group.

The group's primary stance is that all members should be reverted to their original pensions, if they wish, and remain on these since these were what they signed up to and that any new scheme should be

for new members. There are a number of questions within the consultation that deal with different parts of the remedy proposal and the working group will provide responses to these.

In addition to the Federation branch chair, the West Midlands Police Federation Pensions Working Group is made up of:

- **Chris (Sid) James – chair**
- **Aaron Bell**
- **Richard Cooke**
- **Trudy Gittins**
- **Steve Grange**
- **Darren Neville**
- **Rod Rose, and**
- **Steve Temperton.**

The Government consultation, which also applies to other public service pension schemes, closes on 11 October 2020.

Retirement seminars – 2021 dates are set

Dates have been set for next year's West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminars.

The seminars, which are for officers in their last three years of service, will be held at the Federation offices at Guardians House, Coventry Road, Sheldon, on:

7 January 2021 – now fully booked

4 February 2021

4 March 2021

1 April 2021

6 May 2021

3 June 2021

22 July 2021

26 August 2021

9 September 2021

7 October 2021

18 November 2021.

The retirement seminar programme was suspended during the early months of the pandemic but has since been resumed with social distancing and other safety measures in place. PPE is provided for everyone attending with cleaning stations and hand sanitisers also available.

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**
- **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 the Federation

office at 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, proposed retirement date and any dietary requirements in the email.

Places are currently limited to officers only. Partners were previously able to attend but available spaces have been reduced due to the safety measures in place.



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Chris completes charity challenge as he leaves the Force



Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson has retired from the Force, completing the final stages of a 5,000 step walk for charity when he left Force Headquarters for the last time.

Chris, who was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND) two years ago six months after becoming ACC, started the last day of his service with a live interview with Charlotte Hawkins on ITV's Good Morning Britain. The TV presenter is a patron of the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) and lost her Dad to the disease.

He talked about his determination to complete Mission 5,000 – a challenge through which participants walk 5,000 steps in aid of MNDA and for the 5,000 people in the UK living with the illness.

Chris said: "The steps are tough. I've had two weeks to do them. I set myself a target of doing 350 to 400 a day. I'm on track to finish today. My ambition is to leave our headquarters building at Lloyd House this afternoon and complete my 5,000 steps to help mark that moment."

He added: "That pain and discomfort is nothing compared to hopefully raising awareness around motor neurone disease.

"Every step I take is for everyone across the country who is currently living with that disease. It's a great initiative by the MNDA to raise awareness and to raise the funds that are missed through the Covid-19 pandemic."

He told Good Morning Britain that he's determined to keep fighting for his family, his wife, Sharon, and his two children.

"You can't choose much with this disease," he said. "There's no known cause and no known cure, and your life-time chance of getting it is one in 300.

"If you dwell on that sort of stuff, I think it would bring you down. So, the only thing you can control is how you choose to face it.

"I'm determined not to be defined by the disease and to keep fighting every day, one for myself but, more importantly, for Sharon and the children.

"I'm determined to be here for as long as possible."

MNDA encouraged an army of fund-raisers to cover 5,000 miles – a mile for every person living with MND in the UK – during the five-week Mission 5,000 challenge. People are being urged to run, walk, swim, cycle or even scooter to add to the total.

The charity expects to lose more than £2 million this year due to the cancellation of community, sporting and fund-raising events because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

MND affects the brain, spinal cord and nerves and stops muscles functioning.

A fund-raising appeal set up in the ACC's name has already raised almost £25,000 which will be split between MNDA and Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove which is supporting Chris and his family.

A life of service

Chris Johnson spent his entire policing career with his home town force having worked his way up from beat bobby on the streets of Birmingham to be a chief officer.

He's been Police Commander in Dudley and Birmingham – where he's remembered for his passionate community policing in the mid-90s – and even oversaw the safe detonation of a huge World War II bomb that threatened to destroy parts of Aston in 2017.

In 2018 he was promoted to Assistant Chief Constable – the proudest moment in his police service – but just months later Chris and his family were told he had MND. It's a terminal illness for which there is currently no cure.

He vowed to continue serving the Force for as long as possible.

For the last 18 months, he's continued as ACC overseeing the Force's Operations department with responsibility for traffic policing, dogs, emergency response units, the contact centre and firearms plus other specialist police teams.

He handed over his warrant card on 25 September but, even though he now relies on a wheelchair to get around, managed to complete the 5,000 step challenge.

Chris said: "When I got my MND diagnosis I was determined it would not define my policing career. I've served the people of the West Midlands for almost three decades; it's what I've achieved over those years that I'll reflect on.

"I am determined to remain positive and keep fighting, doing what I can to raise awareness and support to one day help find some form of treatment for those who may be diagnosed in the future."

In addition to raising awareness for MND – which has included interviews on national TV ad radio – Chris has also used his experience to urge all employers to look past disability when recruiting.

He added: "West Midlands Police made some simple and cheap adaptations to allow me to continue working since my diagnosis.

"I have been able to continue to work, which has been important to me. And even through the Covid lockdown our advances in technology, with police systems-enabled lap-tops and remote meetings, have meant I have still been able to play my part.

"We've certainly come a long way since I joined in 1991, which was a time of telex machines, pagers, faxes and an office filled with card index systems."

Force is faring well with recruitment

The Force is currently managing almost 1,000 candidates a month for student officer roles as the Government's plans to recruit 20,000 more officers across England and Wales gather momentum.

The recruitment drive has led to extra staff being taken on to speed up processes and get successful applicants started on their training programmes.

Nicola Price, the Force's director of people and organisation development, admits it has been a case of stepping things up to enable the Force to cope with the increased number of applications.

"In July, we welcomed 234 new student officers to West Midlands Police, which is the most we have ever recruited in one month and actually more than we recruited in the whole year in 2017. We are attracting a significant amount of people, and have really reduced the amount of time it takes from someone applying to receiving an offer," she explains.

"The current volume is significantly different to the volume of hires over the last few years. The nature of applications is also very different than it has been in previous years. Prior to Covid, it was a very candidate driven market, we were seeing candidates applying for multiple roles in various organisations, so the way we communicate with them has had to change and we have had to move much quicker to engage them and keep them interested in a policing career.

"We have seen a huge increase in the numbers of applications for our roles in June and July this year, which is really good for us as people are interested in joining. We are managing almost 1,000 candidates per month just for student officers at the moment."

Nicola continues: "We have had to ensure we have more people to manage our recruitment pipeline – in terms of recruiters, vetting officers, occupational health and learning and development to ensure we are managing our candidates effectively and enabling them to start.

"We have also made changes - and continue to make changes - to our systems and processes to make them more user-friendly and automating where possible to make the process faster and the experience better for our candidates."



Nicola Price.

As the second largest force in England and Wales, West Midlands Police has the second biggest officer uplift target (366) and, taking into account all recruitment activity, is looking for almost 3,000 new police officers to join by March 2023.

Coupled with the pressure put on the Force to ramp up its recruitment process, there has also been a period of adjustment as, starting last year, it implemented the new policing entry routes – the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) and Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) – through which 580 people have so far been recruited.

Work is also ongoing with the regional forces and Staffordshire University to develop a detective constable entry route while Police Now has also launched a detective scheme with new colleagues expected through that route early next year.

All this would cause challenges at the best of times but the pandemic has added to the mix.

Nicola explains: "We had a dip in applications when lockdown was announced, but since then we have seen a large increase in applications. We have moved to the new online assessment centre, which has been helpful with managing social distancing.

"We have also had to implement many

other changes in our processes around medical appointments, fitness testing, uniform fittings, attestations and induction to ensure we are able to recruit the right people and adhere to the guidelines set out by the Government around social distancing.

"We have also been working closely with the Home Office and national uplift team to ensure we have the latest national guidance in place, to help us bring new student officers safely into the Force and their new policing careers."

The Force was one of the first to launch the new College of Policing Online Assessment Centre in May this year. Completely different to Search, candidate feedback has been really positive, so this will be continued, and developed, as the year progresses.

A large proportion of student officer training has taken place online due to Covid-19 and the Force will try to ensure training remains as a 'blended' delivery model including both face to face and online sessions.

Given the immense amount of work that goes into recruiting and training student officers, the Federation has had some concerns about the number of new recruits who, very early in their careers, seek a transfer to another force.

The direct costs in terms of the training provided by the Force to support the Staffordshire University courses alone give an insight into that investment.

For the PCDA, this is roughly £19,850 per student which is the net amount the Force invoices the university for the training it provides over the three years. DHEP amounts to £4,934 which is spread out over 24 months.

So, while recruitment – and then retaining those new recruits - is one element of getting officer numbers back to pre-austerity levels, what is the Force doing to try to halt the departure of existing officers?

"It is as important to retain great skills and experience as it is to recruit good people aligned to our Force values and mission to protect our communities from crime," Nicola explains.

"We need to balance our organisation with people who have experience and those who will develop and grow. We are looking

at ways to retain police officers after retirement and encouragingly have seen a number who extend their retirement date or return to take on police staff roles.”

Early this year the Force introduced a retention interview to capture the views of officers who has resigned from the service or were looking to transfer to another force.

This identified that some were relocating to another part of the country while another officer was planning to leave due to their posting with the Force, an issue that was resolved leading the officer to stay with West Midlands Police.

However, some also expressed frustration with the promotion processes.

“We are continually reviewing our processes and our goal is to introduce a promotions process that takes into account periods of temporary promotion and draws directly on performance in the workplace,” says Nicola.

“We are working on the introduction of a performance management framework ‘WMP Conversations’ which will underpin this approach in the future.”

The Federation has concerns about the effects the current processes can have on officers who are acting up in roles and then not passing the process, even though they have no performance issue and can clearly show operational competence.

Nicola admits she understands those concerns.

“We want all of our competently performing officers to progress their career and to be rewarded for the efforts they are putting into progressing our policing objectives. It is recognised that not all officers perform as well during an assessment centre which doesn’t always reflect their performance on a day to day basis,” she explains.

“The approach that we would like to move to in the future will go some way towards recognising this. The process that we currently have in place is applied fairly and consistently and is recognised as good practice nationally, with the support of the Federation we will continue to develop this further to reach our preferred objective.”

Police officer recruitment

| | Last 12 months | Last three months (May - July) |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| PCDA | 305 | 142 |
| DHEP | 250 | 96 |
| Transferees/rejoiners | 42 | 7 |
| Re-joiners | 8 | 1 |
| Police Now | 92 | 92 |
| Direct Entry | 2 | |
| Total | 699 | 338 |

Police officer turn-over

Resignations, ill-health, dismissal, retirements and transfers

| Full-time equivalents (FTE) | Last 12 months | Last three months (May - July) |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Resignations | 62.1 | 12.4 |
| Ill-health retirements | 33.2 | 8.0 |
| Dismissal | 14.0 | 3.0 |
| Retirements | 158.7* | 29.6 |
| Transfers | 100.1** | 5 |
| Other | 2.0 | 0 |
| Total | 370.1 | 58 |

* Forecast retirements in the next 12 months – 220 FTE.

** Of the 100.1 transferees over the last 12 months only one officer has transferred with less than four years’ service. This officer was an ex-Police Now student and transferred to North Yorkshire Police.

Agile working will continue

The Force will continue to support agile working but is not advocating a home-based Force, according to the director of people and organisation development.

Nicola Price said the Force will continually look at the changing landscape and guidance from the Government to ensure it can be a Covid secure employer.

“We analyse our daily data on sickness, testing and tracing and look for patterns of positive cases, checking it by location or demographic data or protective characteristic. We have learnt through Covid that we can work agile and have supported the most vulnerable to work from home,” she said.

“Although we are not advocating a home-based force, we will continue to support agility in the workplace.”

There has been a drop in sickness levels during the coronavirus crisis which

Nicola puts down, in part, to social distancing and lockdown significantly reducing the transmission of both Covid and other related illnesses.

“Sickness levels in January and February are always higher than the following months as we move out of the flu period,” Nicola explained.

“The temporary reduction in demand in areas such as Response and Custody has in turn reduced potential for accidents, assaults and stress-related illness.”

But, she also believes that officers and staff have worked together to ensure colleagues are supported with a more personal commitment to ensure teams and functions can remain resilient.

The potential reasons for reduced sickness will form part of a research project for one of the new master’s courses the Force launched in September

ABOUT NICOLA PRICE

Nicola Price joined West Midlands Police in November 2019 as director of people and organisation development.

A professionally qualified human resources leader with more than 20 years’ HR experience in all areas, she has worked in centres of expertise, HR shared services and HR business partnering across Europe, the Americas and the Asia Pacific.

Nicola completed a master’s degree in strategic human resources at the University of Portsmouth, and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development.

She started her career in the Manpower Services Commission supporting national youth and adult training programmes, to help drive Government initiatives in skilling people back to work.

Since then, she has worked in a large number of public and private sector organisations driving global diverse people strategies in Rolls Royce, Bombardier Transportation and Siemens Business services.

Married to Ken, the couple live in Derbyshire with their dog, Molly, and chickens.

Prince Charles pays tribute to fallen officers

This year's National Police Memorial Day (NPMD) was particularly poignant after the killing of Metropolitan Police Sergeant Matt Ratana two days earlier, says the chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Jon Nott said the virtual service gave officers and family members the opportunity to come together to honour fallen officers, including PS Ratana, despite the fact that the original memorial day service planned at Lincoln Cathedral had to be cancelled due to the restrictions of the pandemic.

"National Police Memorial Day is always one of the key events in the policing year and I am pleased, that despite the difficulties presented through the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, the organisers were able to stage a service so that we could honour the memory of our colleagues who have paid the ultimate price while serving their communities," says Jon.

"The death of Matt Ratana served as a reminder of the risks officers face as they carry out their duties and we should never forget the sacrifices of our fallen officers and the impact their loss has on their families, friends and colleagues."

HRH The Prince of Wales, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Priti Patel all paid tribute to PS Ratana and other fallen



officers in messages for the service.

People were encouraged to join the service from their homes and share images of a virtual candle. They were also able to write messages and share memories or thoughts on a Tribute Wall to remember and celebrate the lives of their lost loved ones.

Prince Charles, patron of the NPMD, opened the ceremony and said: "We can't

meet as usual but we can all take a moment to honour those who have paid the ultimate price and who have given their lives in the service of others."

He paid special tribute to the seven officers - including West Midlands Police Special Resham Singh Nahal - who have lost their lives since the last NPMD and spoke of Friday's incident in Croydon.

"What happened on Friday is the latest heart-breaking evidence of the risks faced by our officers daily. These are losses we can never replace, sacrifices we can never repay but of which, as a society, we can only strive to be worthy. We owe our police service and its remarkable officers the most profound debt of gratitude for their continued selfless commitment and dedication," he added.

The Home Secretary expressed her gratitude to police officers and staff for their "selfless work", adding that the courageous officers who made the ultimate sacrifice would "never be forgotten". She gave a reading from The Beatitudes.

In his message, the Prime Minister said: "The terrible killing of an officer in Croydon on Friday is a reminder of the risks police officers face every day. They show extraordinary courage by going towards danger rather than away from it to protect the public. The officers we remember today laid down their lives to prevent us from coming to harm and for that we owe them a huge debt."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, gave a blessing and the British Police Symphony Orchestra played a moving rendition of 'I Vow to Thee My Country' as speakers from the four corners of the UK spoke about what NPMD means to them.

Louie Johnston, son of Reserve Constable David Johnston of the Royal Ulster

“These are losses we can never replace, sacrifices we can never repay but of which, as a society, we can only strive to be worthy. We owe our police service and its remarkable officers the most profound debt of gratitude for their continued selfless commitment and dedication.”



Lissie Harper lights a candle as national Federation chair John Apter looks on.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Constabulary George Cross, who died in 1997, aged 30, said NPMD is an occasion to “look past the uniform and to celebrate the character, the memories and the special place that our loved ones will always have in our hearts”.

Jayne and Lowri Davies, the widow and daughter of PC Terry Davies of Gwent Police, who died in 1990, aged 34, recalled attending the inaugural NPMD, not knowing what to expect but found it was source of comfort. Lowri is now a serving officer with Gwent Police and wears her father’s collar number.

Rumbie Mabuto, the widow of DC Joe Mabuto of Thames Valley Police, who died in

2016, aged 42, said the event is something her family looks forward to each year, adding: “We’re grateful for the support we receive and hope everybody will be able to meet again next year.”

And Donna Alcock, widow of PC John Alcock of Grampian Police, who was injured in 2003 and died in 2017, aged 54, said: “When they say police are a family there is no truer statement.”

The service also included a recorded message from Samantha Dixon whose husband, PC James Dixon of Thames Valley Police, died in a road traffic accident on duty three years ago. She was pregnant with their son at the time.

“The Police Memorial day is somewhere I can take our son, who sadly never got to meet his father, and he can be remembered in a proud way rather than with the sadness that is normally attached to it,” she said.

Candles were lit to represent the four nations of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and to symbolise the flame of devotion and commitment exemplified by those honoured by the service.

England was represented by Lissie Harper, widow of PC Andrew Harper of Thames Valley Police, who died on 15 August 2019, aged 28. Lighting a candle for Wales was Rebecca Davies, daughter of PC Terry Davies of Gwent Police, who died on 23 August 1990 aged 34, and for Northern Ireland, Louie Johnston. Scotland’s candle was lit by its Chief Constable, Iain Livingstone QPM.

John Apter, national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, added: “National Police Memorial Day ensures that police officers who gave their all are never forgotten. We must always remember them

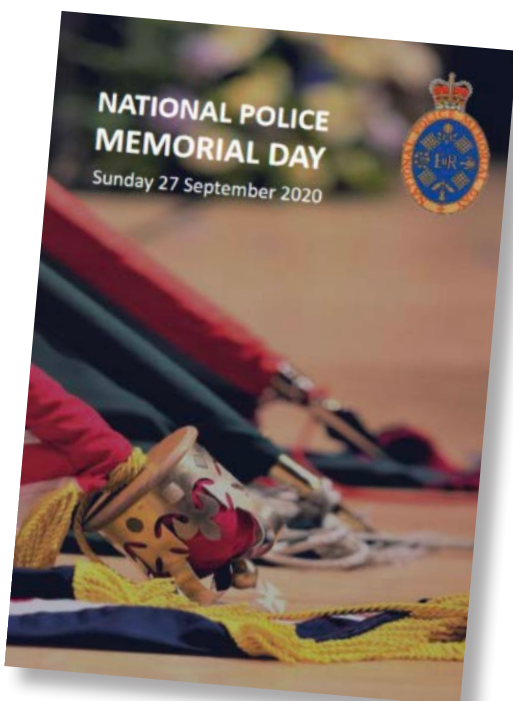
- their commitment and ultimate sacrifice to public service. Every day, police officers selflessly put themselves in harm’s way for the sake of others – I thank them, and I am proud to represent them.”

One of the last images of the service was a reminder of the Book of Remembrance which pays tribute to the almost 5,000 British police officers who have been killed or died on duty or as a result of duty since the first recorded death on duty of an officer in 1680.

PS Ratana is the eighth police officer in the UK to be shot dead in the last 20 years.

The National Police Memorial Day was founded in 2004 by retired Kent police sergeant Joe Holness and is supported by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

Next year’s service is scheduled for Sunday 26 September at Lincoln Cathedral.



Roll of honour

National Federation chair John Apter paid tribute to all officers who have died since last year’s National Police Memorial Day.

PC Chris Miller, Metropolitan Police
Special Constable Resham Singh Nahal, West Midlands Police
PC Matthew Lannie, South Yorkshire Police
PC Nick Dumphreys, Cumbria Constabulary
DC Jonathan Mark Hicken, Dorset Police
PC Roy Buggins, Police Scotland.

He also remembered those who have died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

'I didn't know where to turn to' – breast cancer diagnosis leads Sam to help others



Sam Hughes.

While Sam Hughes was receiving treatment for breast cancer, she spent hours trawling through paperwork and websites trying to decipher what help and support was available to her and what the deductions that had been taken from her wages each month actually entitled her to.

She recalls thinking, "I wish there was some sort of tick list summing everything up for me."

In July, the West Midlands Police Federation magazine included an article on Sam and the wellbeing initiative she is working on with HR to implement a programme of changes to how the Force helps and supports people on long-term sick. This includes designated points of contact, a buddy system, working practices, making the process easier for officers who are off sick and need the support and to assist them in having a voice.

She explains: "The feedback I have had from the article really took me by surprise – I really didn't expect so many people to contact me and ask for advice and support."

"I didn't know where to turn to when I was diagnosed, so I wanted to be able to offer others support and some practical guidance to help make their journey that little bit easier. The last thing you need when you are having treatment and feeling unwell and sick is to have to trawl paperwork."

"At the point of being diagnosed, you are bombarded with leaflets, books, hospital appointments and people wanting to be there with you. I remember it being a tough time seeing my older children struggling away to make sense of it all. To say I was devastated was an understatement."

"I decided to put pen to paper and write a few tips and hopefully some helpful information to try make other's journey a little easier. Always remember you are not alone and it's always good to talk."

HER TIPS COVER:

Chemo

Prior to these days you will have to have blood tests to confirm you are able to have your treatment. Treatment days were a time I spent with friends and family on different sessions. It allowed them to see what was happening I think it helped break down the myths and barriers. We made it a day to chat, eat and spend quality time together.

Take a good book, some treats, warm

“There are various charities that you can access and groups when you are ready and there are a number of charities that will send you gift bags which will have hand creams, tissues, moisturisers, boiled sweets etc.”

socks, blanket, earphones and anything that will help you pass the time. Keep a record of your symptoms and inform the nursing staff, who will be able to provide you with the medication to prevent the symptoms beginning.

After treatment you will feel a little under the weather and fatigued to start with and gradually, over the course of the week, you will find yourself not wanting or able to do a great deal. This is the time to rest and limit the amount of contact you have with people outside your home, as you will have a low immune system. Drink plenty of water – I was told tap water was the best as it will help flush out the treatment.

Radiotherapy

The hospital will supply with a barrier cream. Use it. It will help cool the reddening, help with the itching and keep the area moisturised. After your treatment has been completed you will be advised not to sit out in direct sunshine and protect the area which has had treatment. Always use a high factor sun cream.

Counselling

If you are a member of the Group Insurance Scheme you will be entitled to receive support via Red Arc. They have dedicated staff trained within the fields of various cancers and can offer you support. I cannot recommend them enough.

I was allocated a nurse called Mary Stapleton and she was amazing. She was able to answer the questions I had which I hadn't been able to ask my consultant and helped me understand what happened at each step.

Red Arc are also able to offer counselling and did six sessions over the phone to prevent my immune system being placed at risk.

The Police Federation also has a facility that may be able to offer some support to your nearest and dearest. Sadly, there is little out there for family to obtain help and support. Your family will want to remain strong for you but they too may have many unanswered questions and feel distressed about the situation you all find yourselves in.

Below, is some of Sam's advice on preparing for surgery and chemo which she hopes some will find useful:

Dentist – attend your dentist explain that you will be having treatment. I was able to obtain a fluoride toothpaste and mouthwash. Prevented mouth infections during chemo.

“ If you are a member of the Group Insurance Scheme you will be entitled to receive support via Red Arc. They have dedicated staff trained within the fields of various cancers and can offer you support. I cannot recommend them enough. ”



Sam during her treatment.

Finger and toe nails – no false nails. Nails can go black but I kept them painted a dark colour which helped visually.

Free prescriptions – you can obtain a form from your GP. You may also be entitled to obtain a Blue Badge.

Macmillan – they can provide you with a grant of up to £300 to cover costs such as the purchasing of new underwear after treatment, fans and transport. They also offer financial advice and whether you may be entitled to make a claim. I found the service they offered invaluable.

Contact the Federation – they can advise you if you are unsure if you are able to make a claim from the Group Insurance Scheme and access other services.

Hair - sadly, it is likely you will lose your hair, and not just on your head. I personally had my eyebrows micro bladed and I have to say it was the best thing I could have done. It may sound vain but it helped me feel

something like the old me that I knew. My hair prior to cancer was long, however, I took control of knowing that at some point I would lose it and decided to have it cut at various lengths in preparation for chemo.

Wigs/hats/scarves – the hospital I attended provided you with a voucher to obtain a free wig. I attended Wills Wigs in Bromsgrove. Their rooms are private with an appointment system in place. The ladies were very kind and caring and made the experience as pleasant as it can be. I have to say I bought a number of different wigs in different colours and lengths. They also sell beanie hats which are brilliant to keep your head warm. You will find your head will get cold. The hats are soft and are extremely comfortable. I think I must have bought most of the shop!

Sam adds: “There are various charities that you can access and groups when you are ready and there are a number of charities that will send you gift bags which will have hand creams, tissues, moisturisers, boiled sweets etc.

“Throughout your journey you will get upset, sad and worried. They are all very normal reactions. You will look into the mirror and see someone you don't really recognise. This is the new you. You have walked through something that anyone would dread. You've attended appointment after appointment, allowed nursing staff to lead you through the unknown and you've come out the other side

“It was at this time I asked for some alternative therapy and I was provided with Reki, massages, and an Indian head massage. It allows you to rest and relax and helps in your continued road to both physical and mental health.”

If you want a copy of Sam's advice sheet, please contact her on Samantha.hughes@polfed.org

- See Page 27 to find out more about Sam's role as a Fed rep.

Grievance processes need to be more timely

The Federation is calling for the Force to ensure that it handles grievance complaints in a more timely manner.

Cliff Tomkinson, West Midlands Police Federation's personnel and equality lead, says he has had a number of concerns about the grievance processes but timeliness is top of the list.

"We are having cases that are dragging on far too long but also during the process the Force is failing to update officers or the Federation and that just causes untold stress for those involved," says Cliff.

Force figures show that in the financial year from April 2018 to March 2019 51 grievances were made within the Force. Of those submissions four are still unresolved. Within the financial year of April 2019 to March 2020 53 grievances were submitted. More concerning is that 16 of those are still unresolved.

But Cliff is also concerned because he believes sometimes grievances are being made by officers because they are left with very little alternative.

He explains: "Officers need to be heard and there is a common misconception that officers want to progress their issues this way. Active engagement from the Force to consider informal resolution or sometimes shifting position on a matter would actually see the issues being resolved without the



Cliff Tomkinson.

matter having to go down the formal grievance process.

"With regards to timeliness, I really do appreciate that some of the issues are down to the pressures that the HR team are under. However, I am also aware of delays in responding to HR requests from individuals subject to the grievance. This, in turn, results in the officer making the grievance feeling undervalued."

Cliff continues: "Grievance cases become even more complicated should the Professional Standards Department (PSD) be involved in any element of the case with the grievance often getting 'stayed' in the process and resulting in even fewer updates on progress. I think in some instances we are also missing things which should really be classed as whistleblowing or should be treated as protected disclosures. Even with conduct matters linked within the process, sometimes an initial assessment of the whole case can allow the grievance or elements of the grievance to be dealt with separately.

"But even if that is not the case, those involved need to have more information about the progress of any investigation."

In the 2018 to 2019 financial year there are still two grievances 'stayed' because of PSD involvement. From the 2019 to 2020 financial year there are four grievances 'stayed' for the same reason.

"The Force needs to really take notice of these grievances and ensure that processes are fairly followed for all and in a timely fashion. It is not appropriate to receive a decision to uphold a grievance after a significantly lengthy delay as this adds even more resentment to the entire issues raised," says Cliff.

The most common issues leading to grievances being lodged include flexible working applications, supervision, disability and other matters of discrimination.

But Cliff has also found that there are far more legal challenge considerations against the Force beyond the grievance procedure being brought to his attention.

He believes the Force could ease the pressure it faces due to these challenges and the grievance procedures by investing in more training for supervisors.

"In order to retain the confidence of our

“In order to retain the confidence of our members, the communities we serve and continue to attract good applicants, the Force must deal with workplace disputes fairly, timely and confidentially.”

members, the communities we serve and continue to attract good applicants, the Force must deal with workplace disputes fairly, timely and confidentially," he explains, "The Force needs to instil confidence in supervisors that they can, and should, confront inappropriate behaviour but can also resolve workplace disputes at the earliest opportunity."

Cliff advises officers to familiarise themselves with the Force grievance policy.

The Force policy documents detail what should be followed and this is always a good starting point for any individual concerned about their treatment or considering submitting a grievance. The most often referred to policy documents are the Grievance, Dignity at Work and Whistleblowing Policies. All can be readily found on the Force Intranet system via the 'policy portal' link or via the 'MY SERVICE' App.

"With regular and current training, supervisors would be better equipped to handle some of the incidents that end up being subjected to grievances and could prevent issues from escalating and causing so much extra work and anxiety in the first place," says Cliff.

"We are sometimes finding that second line managers are getting involved unnecessarily and the whole thing is just snowballing out of control. An early

intervention by a suitably trained supervisor or HR advisor could stop this; just as taking advice from HR if a supervisor is unsure of any process or requirement."

But he adds: "First and foremost, I really think officers need to give serious thought to whether they can seek to resolve an issue themselves. I would encourage an officer to identify at an early stage what they want in order to obtain a practical and achievable resolution to the problem, if not, and if they feel they need to submit a grievance, I would encourage all Federation members to speak to a Federation representative before submitting any paperwork and talk through the process because it is not for the faint-hearted.

"We can properly guide and advise them but also make sure that we help protect their position should it be necessary to take legal action, an area where there are strict

timescales to adhere to. However, there are no winners at Employment Tribunals. The single lesson to be learnt from tribunal cases is that complaints are better resolved early. By asking an Employment Tribunal to determine a workplace dispute a Force will have failed its workforce. The Force admitting if things have gone wrong goes a long way to rebuilding working relationships within the Force and repairing the personal lives of officers involved.

"Going forward, we are currently using a new system that will allow us to now record grievance matters directly on a members' database. This will allow the Federation to monitor and support members better. Additionally, there is a regular change of workplace Federation representatives, but planning more in-depth and regular training for equality and employment law is top of our list."

“ The Force needs to instil confidence in supervisors that they can, and should, confront inappropriate behaviour but can also resolve workplace disputes at the earliest opportunity. ”





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Will swaps the high life for Special duties

Special Constable Will Mott has decided to swap Sydney and Shanghai for Solihull.

The British Airways cabin crew manager has spent five years flying all over the world managing crews of up to 22 people on some of his longest flights to places like the Far East and Australia.

The other day, he arrested a shoplifter in Shirley.

For a man who is used to interesting journeys, the last few months of his life have taken him down a fascinating path.

Having applied to become a Special Constable because of a life-long love of policing in July last year, he was successful in November and began training in January 2020.

Will thought it would be the ideal way to spend some time on rest days from BA trips around the world.

When the Covid-19 pandemic took a hold, he was furloughed by BA and, instead of spending his time not doing a great deal, he decided to 'step up' and devote his time to clocking up hours on the beat after a fast-tracked training schedule.

"Ever since I was a child, I have loved watching police TV programmes. I always thought it would be really cool to be a police officer and so I decided to go and be one," he said.

"Becoming a Special would enable me to dip my toes in the water. I could see if I enjoyed it and if I could do it.

"When I qualified and actually got out there, it was very nerve-wracking. It was



Special Constable Will Mott.

something that was challenging but exciting at the same time. It was different to seeing the realities of policing without it being through a television screen, that's for sure.

"It was a real eye-opener to see what police go through and what you have to deal with. My respect for the police has not only doubled but probably quadrupled. You certainly have to put up with a lot of 'stuff'.

"I have experienced quite a lot of 'stuff' already and it has really opened my eyes. You can go from a domestic argument to a murder and that shows the varied nature of the job."

Will has enjoyed the support of what he calls an 'incredibly supportive' group of officers on the Shirley Neighbourhood Police Team, Solihull; support that has made him enjoy the job a great deal since he began.

"Whether they are PCs or PCSOs, they have welcomed me with open arms and my sergeant is always on the end of the phone if I need her. They are an amazing team who do not get enough recognition," he explained.

“ You can go from a domestic argument to a murder and that shows the varied nature of the job. ”



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Sam urges members to connect with their Fed reps

When Sam Hughes returned to work following treatment for breast cancer, she decided she wanted to invest some of her time in helping colleagues.

So, in early 2020 she joined the Police Federation as a workplace representative and she hopes she can use her wealth of life experience, as well as professional experience of working in domestic abuse, response, neighbourhood roles and public order situations to understand the issues and demands officers are facing.

She explains: "I enjoy helping people, offering support and using my own personal experiences to provide them with a way forward.

"Times are hard and as a Force we work together, generally, very well. It's the officers and their commitment that keep the wheels moving. I'm one of those officers and am proud to be part of the team."

She continues: "I'd returned after breast cancer in September 2018 and really wanted to get more involved with helping my colleagues. I had experienced some positive and negative responses from having cancer and I wanted to share them."

Sam, who is based in the review and allocation team as part of the Public Protection Unit, is currently working with HR on implementing a programme of changes to how the Force helps and supports people on long-term sick. This includes designated points of contact, a buddy system, changes to working practices, making the process easier for officers who are off sick and need the

support and also helping them in having a voice.

The Federation role has been a learning curve for Sam, who says can be difficult not always knowing the answers, but she has a large network of people to consult with.

She says: "To anyone who's thinking 'is being a rep worthwhile?', I've got no complaints. It can be demanding but rewarding also.

"As a workplace representative, you can present a voice, be able to offer support and be able to help make changes. Sadly, the Fed has had a bad name down to the issues with pensions.

"But the Fed reps don't get extra pay for doing the role and they also don't get the thanks they deserve either at times.

"As a workplace rep, I find it hard to understand why, when there's a problem, officers don't connect with their Fed reps sooner... we are there to help."

Sam joined the Force in 2003, having previously been a swimming teacher, mortgage advisor and underwriter and a supervisor at Next.

When her children were 10 and 6 she decided she wanted a 'career to be proud of'.

She explains: "They were growing up and I joined as I believed I could make a

difference. A little corny, but it's true. I felt the life skills I had to offer could be of benefit to the police. Common sense all the way. The job itself is not hard. Being able to talk to people at all levels and being understanding, kind and compassionate doesn't cost anything."

Her first post was in Wednesbury with her then tutor, Cliff Tomkinson, who is now the personnel and equality lead for West Midlands Police Federation.

Speaking about the recent pandemic and her future as a Fed rep, she said: "I personally think the Force has worked hard during these difficult times with Covid. No organisation was prepared for this outbreak and I believe without the dedication of staff and officers the Force would be in a very different state now.

"I want to get more involved with the Federation, do some more training courses and be able to offer more help and advice to the officers within the Force. To bring in the changes to help people off sick, make the process more user-friendly and give that voice officers need. Cancer has changed everything in my life and it has made me realise the good in people."

“To anyone who's thinking 'is being a rep worthwhile?', I've got no complaints. It can be demanding but rewarding also.”

Claire praised for supporting autistic man

A police officer has been praised for going 'above and beyond' by the family of an autistic dad who had been conned out of his pension and savings of more than £75,000.

PC Claire Merrell says she drew on her own experiences of being the mum of an autistic son when she took a statement from the victim.

Claire said: "It brought a tear to my eye. I put myself in his daughter's shoes and just thought if this was my son and he needed help how would he want to be treated? To receive thanks for that is overwhelming."

She added: "I don't think I went over and above. I just dealt with this man compassionately, knowing how difficult this must have been for him."

Her line manager, Inspector Ada Leppard, said Claire's efforts were typical of her approach to policing.

"The feedback for Claire is not a surprise to me as she is a very caring officer who always has the victim at the forefront of her mind. It is so nice to receive feedback from the gentleman's daughter about how Claire dealt with him, and how she had such a positive impact on them after such awful crimes," said Ada.

Claire said that the victim had been groomed by a woman over the last eight years and conned into giving away more



PC Claire Merrell.

than £75,000 in pensions and savings.

"There were also two incidents which involved aggravated burglary and a robbery at gunpoint all imitated by this woman once the victim tried to stop giving her money," said Claire.

Claire, who is on restricted duties after breaking her elbow in a police accident in

December, said she called on her personal experiences with her son, who has dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD and challenging behaviour as well as autism.

She said she took the victim to a quiet room to take his statement.

"I made sure I took things slowly," said Claire, who is based at Bloxwich. "I let him set the pace. I gave him extra breaks to go outside and I made him a cup of tea.

"It was just going at a pace he felt comfortable with and when he got upset, which he did on many occasions, I stopped."

She added: "I used my training from long ago around cognitive witness statement taking to help him recall names, places and smells, as I'm aware their senses are often heightened. It helped him recall significant information, such as the name of a male we believed conspired with this woman during the robbery."

The victim did not want the crimes to go to court, said Claire.

"His daughter and he just wanted closure on the episode and for him to be free from her," she explained.

The victim's daughter has since taken the step of contacting the Force to express the family's thanks.

"She went above and beyond to ensure he felt comfortable and at ease," said the daughter. "She was clear in the advice she gave us going forward, how the police would work to keep us safe and what we could do ourselves.

"She gave him a great deal of reassurance and made something that was so difficult for him much more comfortable. I don't feel these words even begin to paint the picture of how amazing she was. She is a credit to the Force.

"My family and I would like to thank her more than we could ever put into words."

“It was just going at a pace he felt comfortable with and when he got upset, which he did on occasions, I stopped.”

Federation support for Harper's Law campaign

PC Andrew Harper's widow, Lissie, has launched a campaign for 'Harper's Law' to ensure those convicted of killing police officers and other emergency service workers face life in prison.

Lissie, working with the Police Federation of England and Wales, has called for a change to the law in meetings with Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Priti Patel and is urging the public and politicians to get behind her campaign.

Lissie said: "I pledge to my late husband to never stop until I have made the difference that this country clearly needs. I vow to stand strong and firm with so many other honourable people in our country to make the changes that we clearly know to be justified.

"I hope that by creating a new law - that sees any person who commits a crime that results in the death of an emergency worker being jailed for life - that those who have to go through what I have been through in the future get the justice that they rightly deserve."

Newly-married Thames Valley Police officer Andrew was killed on 15 August last year by Henry Long, Albert Bowers and Jessie Cole. The trio were convicted of manslaughter in July but cleared of murder.

Long has been jailed for 16 years and Bowers and Cole for 13 years. The Attorney General is currently reviewing their sentences to see if they were too lenient.

Lissie said: "As a widow of a police officer - a title which I would give everything to not have - I have witnessed first-hand the lenient and insufficient way in which the justice system deals with criminals who take the lives of our emergency workers.

"I have grown close to our under-appreciated protectors ever more since the death of Andrew. I have been enveloped in love and support from not only the police

and other emergency workers but so many of the general public too who I know fully support my feelings over the verdict and sentences which Andrew's killers have received.

"The people responsible for wreaking utter despair and grief in all of our lives will spend an inadequate amount of time behind bars. These men who showed no remorse, no guilt or sorrow for taking such an innocent and heroic life away will find themselves able to live out the rest of their lives free and able to commit more crimes and continue to put people in danger when they are released in a very small number of years."

She added: "I wish to ensure that anyone who finds themselves in my position, any widows of the future, will not have to experience the same miscarriages of justice.

"Let us finally put in place laws in which we can actually be proud of, let us do something about the injustices of our systems that cause so much heartache and utter outrage from us all."

John Apter, national chair of the Police Federation, has given his backing to Lissie's campaign.

He said: "We fully support Lissie and her campaign to seek a change in the law.



Lissie Harper.

Andrew was brutally killed, leaving his wife, loved ones, colleagues and the nation devastated.

"The killing of a police officer should see those responsible face the rest of their lives in prison. This campaign would be Andrew's legacy and we will continue to support Lissie in her efforts to seek justice and change the law for the greater good."

You can sign Lissie's petition and support her campaign at [change.org](https://www.change.org) – just type in Lissie Harper in the search.

“ I pledge to my late husband to never stop until I have made the difference that this country clearly needs. I vow to stand strong and firm with so many other honourable people in our country to make the changes that we clearly know to be justified. ”

Priti Patel: 'it's vital officers are given absolute protection'



Home Secretary Priti Patel.

The Home Secretary has compared her role as a politician with that of a police officer in an online interview with the Police Federation of England and Wales.

Priti Patel talked exclusively online to the Federation's national chair, John Apter, as part of a new 'The chair asks' feature in Police magazine and responded to his question around her passion for policing.

"It's about the shared values we have," she said, "Policing is in my family and I've seen the most extraordinary and exceptional things around policing. My work is all about putting people first and I see big similarities with policing. I've always had that connectivity with public service and those on the front-line who give their all to serve their communities, so I think it's a natural affinity that we have."

In an informal, wide-ranging interview, Ms Patel also talked about the Police Covenant, stop and search and policing



The Federation's national chair John Apter.

during the pandemic. She also committed to continuing to work closely with the service and to securing harsher sentencing for assaults against officers and other blue light workers.

"Policing is gritty work. I see the commitment and conviction, the lives officers lead, shift patterns, the effect on family life, but I also see the human beings, the kindness," she said.

"The Police Covenant must focus on respect, protection and recognising the extraordinary work our police officers do. It's not just a blue light service, it's a very specialised service. It's a collective of individuals who run towards danger to protect our society. So it's vital that they are given absolute protection; not just kit but their welfare and safety and extending that arm around their family."

When John asked her for her thoughts on what he called 'almost the sport' of videoing police officer assaults, she replied:

"We need to take on this issue with these clips which have so much damaging, selective effect both on public confidence in policing and on police officers themselves. We need to stop being apologetic based on selective clips and information as that undermines transparency. There is a robust system for dealing with complaints, with allegations of misconduct and we have guidance, we have regulations.

"If individuals feel so strongly about certain actions, then go ahead, use those robust systems rather than show off on social media. I think Twitter should look at themselves with regard to the level of abusive and vile content they allow to go up and we will absolutely press them on taking down some of the most appalling and abusing content and also let that be a message to the individuals putting this up there too."

You can read the full interview in POLICE magazine at polfed.org

Widows' pension challenge heads to the High Court

Police pension rules which force widows and widowers to choose between love and financial security have been challenged in the High Court.

For those in the 1987 Police Pension Scheme, in England and Wales, the rules currently state that if a police widow or widower remarries or cohabits they will lose their pension.

However, the rules for those living in Scotland, Northern Ireland and in the military are more generous.

The disparity has now been challenged in the High Court as lawyers acting on behalf of four widows and a widower lodged their claim against the Government, alleging that regulation C9 of the 1987 police pension scheme breaches their human rights.

All five claimants would each lose their police widow's or widower's pension if they remarried or started living with a new partner.

But, if their challenge is successful, it could help thousands of police survivors who are still in receipt of their pension and subsequently benefit those widows, widowers and civil partners who have already lost their pension because they chose to re-marry or co-habit.

The National Association for Retired Police Officers (NARPO) and the Police Federation of England and Wales, both

support the legal action and say the rules force bereaved partners to choose between 'financial security or isolation'.

John Apter, national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: "The 1987 Police Pension Scheme, to which this regulation applies, is still one that many serving police officers fall under. We are united with NARPO and the claimants in their challenge to Government to bring equality across the regions of the UK in the approach to survivor pensions.

"These brave men and women have worked to keep their communities safe and are often the main breadwinners of the families they leave behind. For this inherent unfairness to continue to exist, does a great dishonour to their service and sacrifice."

The legal claim has been prepared by Mark McGhee, from Manchester law firm Lextent Partners Ltd. It alleges the pension regulations are unlawful under the Human Rights Act because they are discriminatory, and breach the right to marriage and the right to family life.

Changes to the police pension scheme in England and Wales over the years mean officers who joined at different times are subject to different regulations.

The 1987 pension scheme has been altered to allow widows, widowers and civil partners of police officers to retain their

pension for life where the officer died as a result of injury on duty if they re-married or co-habited with a new partner after April 2015. But those who re-married or moved in with a partner before April 2015 have lost their pension and are not being allowed to re-claim it.

The Police Pension Regulation changes in 2006 meant new entrants, or serving officers who transferred to the new scheme would get survivors benefits for life, irrespective of whether they re-marry or form a new partnership.

Last year the Government estimated that extending benefits to all police survivors on the 1987 scheme would cost an extra £144 million payable over 30 years. Reinstating pensions already lost would cost a further £54 million payable over a period of 15 years.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "The Government is committed to providing public sector pensions that are fair to both workers and taxpayers. Due to similar provisions in the majority of older schemes, any changes to police pensions would create a pressure for changes across all public service pensions pre-2006."

It is anticipated that the High Court hearing will take place in the summer or autumn of 2021.



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Did you have your say on pay and morale?

The annual Police Federation pay and morale survey has closed – with the findings being revealed later this year.

The results of the survey are used as evidence in the Federation's annual submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) which advises the Government on officer pay.

"This survey is really important as it gives us a reflection of how officers are feeling about their pay, whether they feel their remuneration reflects the roles they undertake and also how they feel about working in the police service," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"The Federation will now collate the results and use them when submitting evidence to PRRB but locally we also use the findings in our discussions with the Force and the senior leadership team."

The more officers who fill out the survey, the more weight it gives to Federation representations on their behalf nationally,

locally and regionally.

Last year's survey revealed:

- **81 per cent of West Midlands respondents were dissatisfied with their overall remuneration, including pay and allowances**
- **75 per cent felt they were worse off financially than they were five years ago**
- **47 per cent reported worrying about the state of their finances every day or almost every day**
- **13 per cent reported never or almost never having enough money to cover all their essentials**
- **95 per cent felt Force morale was low**
- **59 per cent said their morale was low, and**
- **70 per cent said they would not recommend joining the police to others.**



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Care on Demand: 'absolutely invaluable'

A member has praised the Care on Demand service provided for members of the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) saying he found it 'absolutely invaluable' during the pandemic.



Care on Demand gives subscribers to our GIS access to an appointment with a GMC licensed GP 24/7 whether in the UK or on holiday.

And the member contacted the Federation after using the service when they were concerned they had coronavirus.

"I wanted to thank the Fed for the extra Care on Demand service, included with Group Insurance, which has been absolutely invaluable during the Covid-19 situation as both my wife and I have been quite ill and required antibiotics. As a result of the service, we did not need to put ourselves at risk by going to the GP... superb service," he wrote.

The 35-year-old man had called the service with a potential throat infection and was concerned he had coronavirus,

particularly since his wife was pregnant.

The doctor noted that the patient had developed a sore throat with chills and sweats. He was also experiencing photosensitivity in his eyes which he was treating with topical antibiotic drops.

On examination, the doctor saw that his throat looked very red and inflamed but he had no cough or difficulty breathing.

The doctor reassured the patient that it was likely a bacterial throat infection, however, in case it was a Covid presentation and as his wife fell into the high-risk group, he was advised to self-isolate for seven days, sleep in a separate room and use a separate bathroom if possible.

The doctor prescribed a course of penicillin and advised, if his symptoms improved, it was unlikely to be Covid-19 and he could cease isolation.

West Midlands Police Federation has recently extended the existing contract with the Care on Demand service until 1 April 2021.

Through Care on Demand, for any non-emergency case, whether physical or mental, GIS 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 up to 30 minutes) and more than one question can be asked.

Furthermore, the Care on Demand GP can arrange for a private referral to be sent to the patient or a private prescription* to be sent to a pharmacy of a member's choice if they are in the UK.

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

The West Midlands Police Federation GIS is open to police officers, police staff, retired officers and their partners.

If you are not a member but would like to sign-up either individually or for your partner too, please visit our Group Insurance Scheme page on our website at polfed.org/westmids

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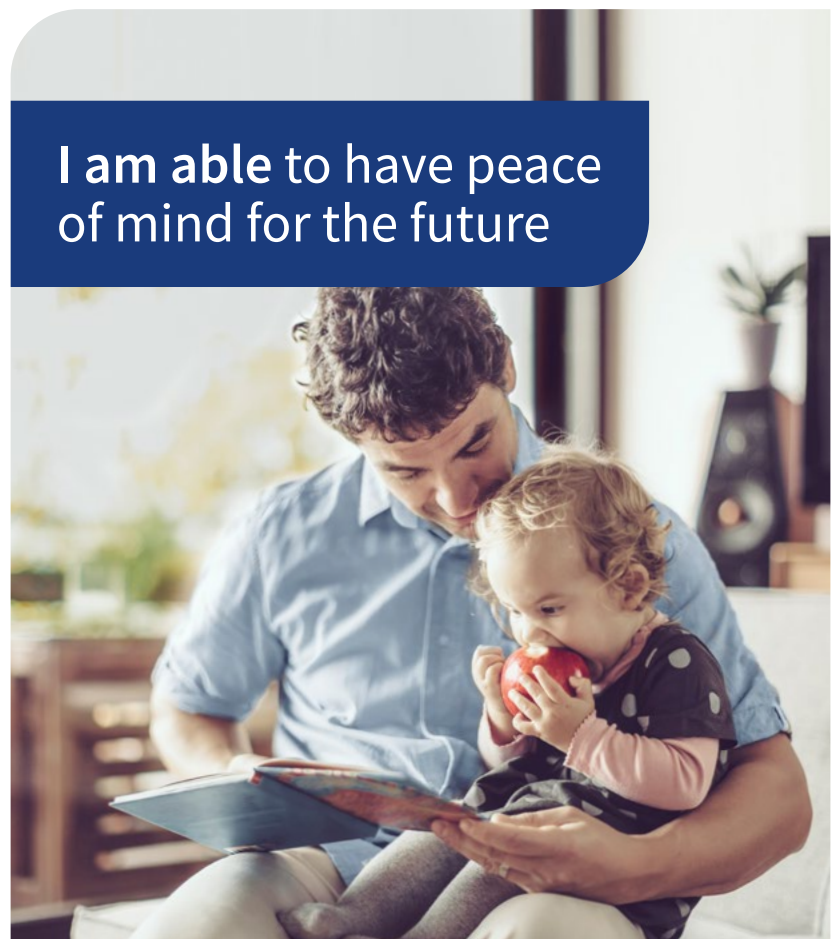


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I am able to have peace of mind for the future

Chase those winter blues away with a seaside break

The days of queuing for ice creams and racing to get a good spot on the beach are becoming a distant memory. Perhaps you avoided the crowds this summer in favour of a quieter, more socially distant getaway.

We still have a number of weeks available, for members, at our seaside properties in Devon and Dartmouth throughout November through to April 2021. For those of you seeking a quieter getaway, perhaps a winter break by the sea may appeal to you.

For as little as £320 per week you can book a week at our holiday homes in Weymouth or Dartmouth. We have availability for Court Cottage, Dartmouth throughout November through to April. And there is availability from January through to March for our townhouse in Weymouth.

You can now take advantage of this quieter season. Wrap up warm, grab your sunglasses for those crisp bright mornings and enjoy a gentle stroll along the award-winning beaches. Feel refreshed as you take in the sea air, and sample some of the great bars and restaurants that Dartmouth and Weymouth both have to offer. Or simply appreciate the change of scenery!

You can browse the quaint gift shops and boutiques in and around Dartmouth and maybe do a spot of Christmas shopping. Fish and chips sat by the harbour in Weymouth is a must and would certainly chase the winter



blues away.

Take a good book and a bottle of wine (or both) for cosy days sat relaxing in our beautiful holiday homes, enjoy the peace and quiet and a bit of escapism.

"My parents had been isolating until Government restrictions were lifted to allow for travel, they'd not seen very much of myself or my daughter and so a holiday together in such lovely surroundings was just what we all needed. We had a fabulous week and the position of house allowed for us to walk each day along the coastal path to experience Weymouth in just the most beautiful way. The house is ideally situated and provides really lovely accommodation. We felt immediately relaxed. Weymouth itself was equally as fantastic, we crabbed along the

harbour, had fish and chips and even partook in a donkey ride on the beach. We loved it so much, we'll look to return next summer. Thank you." **Holly, serving WMP officer.**

It's been another busy holiday season for us this year and we want to reassure members that we have incorporated an enhanced cleaning protocol in response to the current pandemic. You can read our Covid Secure document and how we are keeping our guests safe on our holiday home pages.

For more details on both properties and how to book visit please visit our holiday home pages on our website at wmpben.co.uk/



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