

# FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation

June/July 2022



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# WELCOME

Welcome to the June/July 2022 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:** Steve Hartshorn, national chair, welcomes Home Secretary Priti Patel to the first in-person annual Federation conference since 2018. The event was held in Manchester.

Conference photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.

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# Actions speak louder than words, Home Secretary



By **Rich Cooke**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

The Police Federation's annual conference has long been a highlight of the policing year, providing a great opportunity for delegates from across England and Wales, and beyond, to come together, share experiences and learn about the current issues within the police service.

This year's conference, held in Manchester for the first time in my memory, somehow seemed more important than ever – perhaps because it was the first time it has gone ahead “in person” since 2018.

The 2019 conference was cancelled due to a cyber-attack on Federation systems and the last two years were obviously held virtually due to Covid restrictions.

In all honesty, the virtual events were quite flat, lacking the buzz of a real-life conference so I think we all headed to conference with a degree of excitement.

Delegates showed a renewed appreciation for talking to their colleagues from other forces, learning about best practice, and also discussing where things could be done better.

They made the most of the opportunities to listen to key stakeholders with representatives from the College of Policing, the National Police Chiefs' Council and Oscar Kilo being among those to take part in the various panel sessions.

The conference got off to a flying start, with an entertaining, uplifting and

inspirational input from Kriss Akabusi who likened his own experiences in world-class athletics to police work.

If each and every one of us could capture just a small percentage of his enthusiasm and energy, I think it could have a profound impact on the plummeting morale within policing.

But, of course, it is hard to do that when we are in the midst of a pay crisis brought on by a seemingly endless flow of negative media coverage and the Government's decision to give us a zero per cent pay award last year which, of course, has been compounded by the current cost of living crisis.

It was against this backdrop that I challenged the Home Secretary about officer pay in the question and answer session after her keynote speech. You can read more about this on Page 10.

The Home Secretary's speech to

“ THE CONFERENCE GOT OFF TO A FLYING START, WITH AN ENTERTAINING, UPLIFTING AND INSPIRATIONAL INPUT FROM KRISS AKABUSI WHO LIKENED HIS OWN EXPERIENCES IN WORLD-CLASS ATHLETICS TO POLICE WORK.

IF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US COULD CAPTURE JUST A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF HIS ENTHUSIASM AND ENERGY, I THINK IT COULD HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE PLUMMETING MORALE WITHIN POLICING.

conference, which follows the keynote address from the national Federation chair, has long been the highlight of conference. It has often provided the barometer for relations between the Federation and the Government – just look back on the appearances of the likes of Jack Straw, Theresa May and Sajid Javid to see how accurate those ‘readings’ have been.

Priti Patel for her part has always spoken out very strongly in support of the police. She says she stands with us, she says she appreciates the difficult and challenging roles we undertake. I have seen her take the time to speak to the families of fallen officers, with kindness and compassion and I have no doubt she genuinely understands the sacrifice of officers who give their lives in the line of duty and the life-long price their families pay.

But, there is a sticking point for me. That sticking point is police pay.

I appreciate the decision on our pay is not hers alone. But the decisions taken by the Government of which she is a part are having a huge impact on the police officers she claims to value, respect and support. Police officers have had a 20 per cent real term pay cut in the last 10 years and that is grossly unfair, particularly given the increased pressures and demands they have faced and the way in which they remained on the frontline during the pandemic, putting their own wellbeing at risk, and that of their families, and helping to uphold ever-changing Government Covid regulations.

The Home Secretary, in her speech, called for the Police Federation of England and Wales, to participate in the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) process so that it can have an influence on officer pay. She wanted us to work with her.

But we withdrew from that process due to Government interference in what is meant to be an independent process. The Government has been setting the remit and then rejecting the recommendations if it didn't like what was being put forward.

At the very same time, it seems to rubber stamp recommendations of its own pay review process.

How can that be right?

I do agree that we do need to have a seat at the table if we are to influence change. However, for us to return to the PRRB process I think we need to see some commitment from the Government that it won't interfere in the process, that it won't tie the hands of the independent body and that it will accept its recommendations in full.

So, the Home Secretary has some work to do to convince us that her Government is going to honour the process. Actions speak much louder than words and it really is time for Priti Patel to put her money where her mouth is.



## CONFERENCE SOUNDBITES

*“All that we are asking for, Home Secretary, is for a similar pay process to the one that you and all 650 MPs have. An independent body that makes independent assessment and its recommendations are binding on Government and implemented in full.”*

**Steve Hartshorn, national Police Federation chair**

*“It's imperative that Steve (Hartshorn) and I work together on pay and pensions. I promise you that I will continue to champion your cause in Whitehall.”*

**Home Secretary Priti Patel**

*“It is about time you and your colleagues put your money where your mouth is and did something about the terrible state that our colleagues are finding themselves in.”*

**Rich Cooke, West Midlands Police Federation chair, addressing the Home Secretary**

*“I went to see an accountant and the advice was: leave the police, work for 22 hours a week and claim benefits, and you will be better off.”*

**DC Vicky Knight describes how financial pressures are affecting her and other officers.**

*“You, the British police, I believe you're the very best at what you do.”*

**Olympic gold medallist Kriss Akabusi**

*“We have evidence of police officers waiting outside the supermarket just before midnight before their pay goes into their bank account so they can do a shop.”*

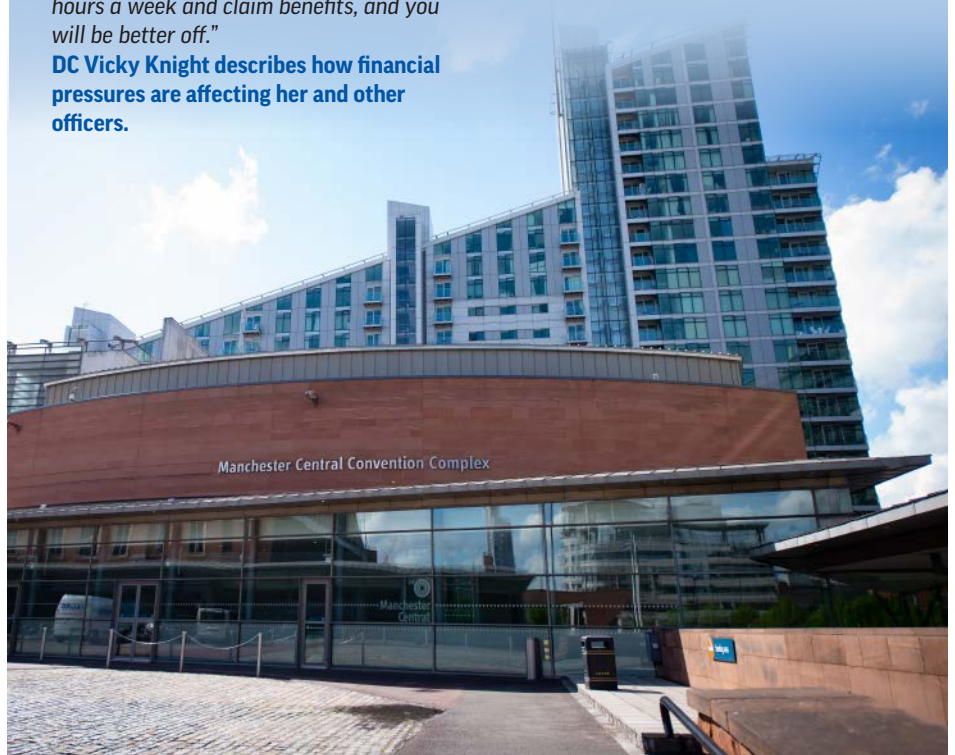
**John Partington, national Federation deputy secretary**

*“Eight or nine years ago, people wouldn't have had the courage to stand up and talk about mental health. What we are seeing is people are more willing to speak out, especially young recruits. We're a long way off but we will get to a point where psychological risk and harm are treated the same as physical risk.”*

**Andy Rhodes QPM, Oscar Kilo – the National Police Wellbeing Service**

*“When we do work together, and when we rely on reasoned arguments, we are pretty formidable.”*

**National secretary Alex Duncan**





# National chair in attack over pay

Newly elected national chair Steve Hartshorn.

## IN HIS FIRST SPEECH TO CONFERENCE, JUST WEEKS AFTER TAKING OVER AS NATIONAL FEDERATION CHAIR, STEVE HARTSHORN CHALLENGES THE HOME SECRETARY OVER OFFICER PAY

**P**olice Federation chair Steve Hartshorn has spoken of his anger and frustration at the pay and morale issues facing his members.

The newly-elected chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales used his keynote speech at the annual conference to draw attention to the plight of officers who are going to food banks to feed their families.

Addressing the audience in Manchester, which included Home Secretary Priti Patel, he discussed the situation faced by experienced officers who can't afford to stay in the service and are thinking about leaving their roles.

Steve asked: "Home Secretary, what has gone wrong? Why are my colleagues one of the only groups of frontline public sector workers being penalised in their pockets?"

"Over the last decade, we have seen a real term pay cut of around 20 per cent. Other costs haven't stood still – gas, electric and fuel costs all continue to rise, and National Insurance contributions increased.

"Yet the very people who put their lives on the line during the pandemic, alongside other

key workers, were told they deserve nothing extra to help with these costs.

"They are told they are brave; they are told they do a unique job. They were thanked for putting themselves and their families in danger as Covid gripped the country, and yet that acknowledgement amounted to nothing.

"It's frustrating to see and hear from colleagues who are struggling to feed their families and going to food banks.

"It angers me to hear good and experienced people talking about leaving the job – not because they want to, but because they can't afford not to.

"This cannot go on. It's time for change."

Steve said the decision by the Federation last year to walk away from the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) wasn't

"taken lightly".

He said that the PRRB was not truly independent and that its "hands were tied by Government".

He said: "It's like setting your own homework and then marking it. And then, those very recommendations are simply that – recommendations that Government can and often ignore.

"All we are asking for, Home Secretary, is for a similar pay process to the one that you and all 650 MPs have. An independent body that makes independent assessment and its recommendations are binding on Government and implemented in full.

"We're not asking for special treatment. We're asking that you remember and recognise our special responsibilities and unique status with the restrictions on our private lives and the lives of our families.

"Government cannot continue to treat the police as the poor relation of the public sector," he added.

Steve revealed statistics from a recent

**“ IT ANGERS ME TO HEAR GOOD AND EXPERIENCED PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT LEAVING THE JOB – NOT BECAUSE THEY WANT TO, BUT BECAUSE THEY CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO. THIS CANNOT GO ON. IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE.**

survey of 2,000 members of the public, which showed that three quarters of people believe police deserve a pay rise in line with inflation.

Nearly four out of five people (79 per cent) agreed dangerous jobs, like police work, deserved the pay to reflect the risk and 72 per cent supported the Government giving a pay rise to police at the next opportunity.

"That's not us saying it Home Secretary, these are the views of the public. Your electorate," he said.

Pay was one of four key areas Steve highlighted in his speech, with pensions, presence and pride also raised.

"Pay – we need fair pay and fair terms and conditions of service for all police officers," he said.

"Pensions – it's not unreasonable to have long-term clarity over pensions so that people can plan for their futures with certainty.

"Presence – Government, police leaders and the media must listen to us and hear what we say, because we are the undisputed voice of policing.

"And pride – I want police officers to be able to have pride in what they do and be treated with the respect they deserve."

Steve called for "proper long-term investment in policing" as he made the case for a five-year funding agreement.

"We need to be able to plan properly, rather than rely on yearly handouts, a point that has been made in several different reports over many years," he said

"We need investment in kit and equipment, to ensure that officers have access to the very best that is available when dealing with the public – and that includes ongoing funding for the training and deployment of Taser to keep pace with the uplift."

Steve used his speech to urge the Home Secretary to look at the issue of firearms and greater protection for colleagues "as a matter of priority".

He said: "There's no legal entitlement for officers to possess Pava or Taser under the Firearms Act, off duty, on call or in between shifts when they may be required to complete work at one place and re-parade at another,

without returning to a police station.

"The ability to do this has benefited policing in general across England and Wales for many years and is relied upon at times by protection officers, surveillance officers as well as regional and local officers, and the NCA.

"Historic legal advice had been sufficient until a recent case brought that into doubt. Renewed legal advice does not provide 100 per cent legal protection, which could undermine confidence in policing and risk the liberty of police officers.

"Our resolution is for a change of legislation under the Firearms Act to specify what can be permitted to be carried off duty, on call, and under what circumstances."

## “GOVERNMENT CANNOT CONTINUE TO TREAT THE POLICE AS THE POOR RELATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

The chair also spoke about the frustrations of detectives at the changes to Crown Prosecution Guidance on charging.

"We understand the need for disclosure, yet the need for full trial-ready files is often unnecessary, especially if there is already a guilty plea," he said.

Steve also turned his attention to protracted misconduct investigations and the negative impact they have on officers and their families.

Currently there's no time limit on an investigation before proceedings are taken, he said, and while the 2020 Conduct Regulations introduced a duty on investigators to explain delays if cases go beyond 12 months, there was no consequence for failing to comply.

"We regularly see cases taking years to conclude," he said. "The impact this has on officers and their colleagues cannot be underestimated.

"Our solution is that 12-month explanations should be mandated in all cases that have not been finalised at that point. LQC's (legally

qualified chairs) should be able to scrutinise these explanations and provide direction.

"We accept there may sometimes be circumstances when this might not be possible, but these should be few and far between. And there must be some redress when investigating authorities do not comply with the rules and regulations, they themselves are charged with upholding."

He added: "My colleagues are often the focus of vexatious complaints, and this would go some way to protecting the protectors."

Steve also called for a revision of annual leave for Federated ranks. The Federation believes the current level of annual leave for officers contravenes the Equality Act 2010.

The Federation proposes that officers start on 25 days and reach 30 days after five years' service. They currently start on 22 days and reach 30 days after 20 years.

"It's our view the current situation has a disproportionate impact on the basis of a number of protected characteristics," he said.

"Women often leave the police service early because of caring responsibilities and are more likely to take a career break to bring up a family.

"Our 2021 pay and morale survey showed a difference in the average length of service of white officers – at nearly 13 years. This compared to black and minority ethnic officers, at just under 10 years.

"We understand and support the principle of rewarding loyal and experienced officers who remain in the job over a long period of time, but we don't believe the annual leave provision is the correct mechanism for doing so."

Steve concluded his first speech to conference since his election as chair, by urging the Home Secretary to carry out change for the good of members.

"I make no apology for this being such a long list of asks," he said. "Some come at a cost, but others are free and, while they cannot happen overnight, next week is a great time to start.

"And this is all I ask of you today, Home Secretary, so on behalf of my colleagues across England and Wales it's time for change."

## 'Officers are visiting food banks'

National Federation chair Steve Hartshorn has told how he has personally heard of colleagues having to visit food banks, as he pledged to continue to fight for better pay for members.

Steve, who spoke to the media after his keynote speech to conference, said he is disappointed and distressed to hear that members are struggling to make ends meet.

"I've heard lots of anecdotes about colleagues having to visit food banks or work over-time because they can't make ends meet

and that's disappointing," he said.

In response to a question about the risk of losing valuable officers due to poor pay, he continued: "It worries me that we'll lose them. Something has to change."

Steve's comments come as the Federation continues to campaign for better pay for the officers after it was revealed police pay has fallen by 20 per cent in real terms during the last decade.

"We have to be realistic," said Steve, speaking

at the conference. He added: "Will we get the 20 per cent extra, plus inflation? No. But that won't stop me asking."

Steve shared his concerns shortly after the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, said she was "very conscious of retention" in response to a question about keeping officers in the police service.

She ended by saying the Federation needs to work with chief officers too, changes cannot just come from Government.



# Home Secretary says she is 'proudly pro-police'

## PRITI PATEL FAILS TO PROPERLY ADDRESS POLICE PAY CRISIS IN KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

**S**pecial Constables could be given powers to use Tasers under new plans unveiled by the Home Secretary.

Priti Patel made the announcement in a speech to the annual conference.

She told delegates in Manchester that she was "authorising Special Constables to carry and use Taser".

She added: "Your voices called for these changes, and having waited too long for a Home Secretary to be on your side and listen to your calls for change, I listened and have acted."

The Home Secretary told the conference hall that she was "proudly pro-police".

"Anyone who feels differently should certainly vote for someone else," she said, "The leaders I admire stood up for law and order. Human rights are not just for criminals, but the law-abiding majority.

"And that means standing squarely with you - the police."

Ms Patel announced she was relaxing the five conditions on the use of stop and search powers under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in areas where they anticipate serious violence.

Ms Patel wrote to police forces at the start of the week outlining her proposal, saying: "Since 2019, the police have removed over

50,000 knives and offensive weapons from our streets and in the two years to March 2021, over 150,000 arrests were made following stop and search, preventing thousands of possible fatal injuries.

"I stand wholeheartedly behind the police so that they can build on their work to drive down knife crime by making it easier for officers to use these powers to seize more weapons, arrest more suspects and save more lives."

And she confirmed the plans at conference. "I listened carefully, and you were very clear: stop and search is a vital tool in getting knives off our streets and saving lives," she said.

On pay and pensions, Ms Patel said that despite reform to the police pension scheme following the recommendations of the Independent Public Service Pensions



Commission.

"It is one of the most valuable available in the UK and doesn't just provide a pension, it is also financial cover for families during a police officer's service," she said.

Ms Patel urged the Federation to engage with the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB).

The Federation withdrew from the pay review body last year, describing it as "not fit for purpose".

She said: "It is imperative that Steve (Hartshorn, the Federation chair) and I work together on pay and pensions. I promise you that I will continue to champion your cause in Whitehall."

Ms Patel said the Government's uplift programme to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers was "well on track".

"At the end of the second year of the Police Uplift Programme, we have recruited more than 13,500 additional officers," she said. "Thank you for the example you have set, which has helped make this an attractive career path."

## “ I WANT OUR HIGHLY TRAINED OFFICERS TO HAVE THE CONFIDENCE THEY NEED TO FIGHT CRIME EFFECTIVELY.

She added that the programme was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to increase police diversity improve workforce data, engagement and the sharing of best practice.

Ms Patel spoke about the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, saying many of the measures included were requested by the Federation.

She said she had introduced a new test to assess the standard of officer driving.

"Should an officer be involved in a collision, the courts will now be able to judge their standard of driving against a competent and careful peer with the same prescribed training, rather than with a member of the public," she said.

"I want our highly trained officers to have the confidence they need to fight crime effectively."

Ms Patel said she was "especially proud" that Harper's Law - which introduces mandatory life jail sentences for those who kill an emergency services worker while committing a crime - will come into force from the end of June.

"Lissie Harper campaigned for this very bravely and effectively, with the full-throated support of the Police Federation," Ms Patel said.

She added that there will also be an increase in the maximum penalty for assaults

on police officers and other emergency workers, from 12 months to two years in prison for common assault or battery.

Ms Patel said the act would "better balance the right to protest with the rights of everyone else".

She said: "As ever, you have not hesitated to put yourselves in harm's way, while a selfish minority of protestors have used guerrilla tactics such as blocking motorways and locking on to oil tankers.

"I know whose side I'm on."

Ms Patel said that dealing with dealing with violence against women and girls was a "top priority" for her.

"Dealing with this is a top priority for me, as seen in the Domestic Abuse Act; our new cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy; the complementary Domestic Abuse Plan; the 'Enough' communications campaign that was launched in March, which seeks to bring about real and lasting behaviour change; and the 24 Phone Commitment to ensure no adult rape victim is left without a phone for more than 24 hours during a rape investigation, a policy which stems from the Rape Review.

"This has all been backed up by substantial funding.

"Having police officers and prosecutors with the right skills is critical in progressing and managing cases effectively. This means increasing the number of police officers and prosecutors focused on this area and ensuring they have the right expertise."

Ms Patel also used her speech to call for "better culture and higher standards" in policing.

She said she wanted to support officers to give them the confidence to "blow the whistle when things go wrong, so that we can root out misconduct and corruption".

She said: "I have taken action to improve the public's confidence in policing. This includes boosting police professionalism - with a particular focus on leadership at Sergeant and Inspector levels - and working with policing partners to tackle disparities in policing and the criminal justice system.

"The police need to raise the bar so that women and girls feel confident in reporting crimes."

Concluding her speech, Ms Patel told the conference hall and delegates watching online: "As your champion in Westminster, I will do everything I can to make policing attractive and rewarding. It is certainly not an easy job but it is an immensely important one.

"The public overwhelmingly recognises that our safety, democracy, and civil society depend on you.

"This is something of which you can be proud, and I am very proud of you indeed."

## 'Sacrifice will be recognised'

Home Secretary Priti Patel says she's determined to recognise the sacrifice of police officers killed in service.

In her conference speech, she described lives lost in the line of duty as "an enormous tragedy".

But she stopped short of fully backing a new campaign for a new posthumous award for emergency services workers who die in the line of duty.

Ms Patel said: "In relation to death in service, there is no doubt that every life lost on duty and in the line of duty is an enormous tragedy.

"And I'm absolutely determined that in future this sacrifice will be recognised."

Police Federation chair Steve Hartshorn used his conference speech as a platform to call for the posthumous award, the Elizabeth Medal.

The Federation is backing a campaign for recognition for emergency personnel who make the ultimate sacrifice in the execution of their duties, including police officers.

It's envisaged the award will be similar to the Elizabeth Cross, which is awarded to the bereaved relatives of members of the British Armed Forces killed in action.

The campaign has been supported by Bryn Hughes, the father of Nicola Hughes who was murdered with her colleague PC Fiona Bone in 2012 during a gun and grenade attack in Greater Manchester.

Steve told the conference in Manchester: "Every year, at National Police Memorial Day and at the COPS weekend, we remember all our colleagues who have been killed or died on duty.

"There is no award that posthumously recognises fallen emergency service workers or the sacrifices they have made.

"No formal state recognition when someone dies doing their job keeping our communities safe and protecting the public. This is why we cannot leave any of our fallen colleagues behind.

"This medal won't repay the debt that we owe as a society to those who have been killed in the line of duty, but it will allow the public to express their thanks, and condolences to those officers and their families every time the medal is seen.

"Home Secretary, I call upon you today with an impassioned plea to stand with us and work towards this honour for all emergency service workers."



West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke at conference.



# Rich challenges Home Secretary

**WEST MIDLANDS POLICE FEDERATION CHAIR RICH COOKE TOLD HOME SECRETARY PRITI PATEL TO “PUT HER MONEY WHERE HER MOUTH IS” WHEN HE CONFRONTED HER OVER PAY AND CONDITIONS AT THE ANNUAL FEDERATION CONFERENCE**

**R**ich was met with cheers and applause from the audience when he stood to address Ms Patel after her speech to delegates on the opening day of the conference in Manchester.

He told her: “Our members have had their pay absolutely slashed, we have had our pensions ripped up over the last few years by your Government.

“It is about time you and your colleagues put your money where your mouth is and did something about the terrible state that our

colleagues are finding themselves in.”

Ms Patel insisted she was committed to improving police pay and conditions and said she wanted to work closely with the Police Federation to resolve the long running row over remuneration.

She urged new national chair Steve Hartshorn to re-engage with the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) to help reach a fresh pay deal.

The Police Federation withdrew from the official police pay review body last year after

branding it not fit for purpose and rejecting its claims to be independent from the Government.

Responding directly to Rich, the Home Secretary said: “I completely hear what you say. This is the issue where we have to start working together.

“The Federation’s voice has not been at the table and that has been the problem. So we absolutely need to restart that.”

The Police Federation withdrew from PRRB amid widespread outrage over the Government decision to freeze pay for officers who earn more than £24,000.

Ms Patel told the conference: “I strongly urge the Police Federation to engage with the PRRB, which has a key role in advising the Government on pay and conditions for police officers.

“I want the voices of your members to be heard in this process, loudly and clearly.”

Steve told her: “It’s really important to get us at the table but we need something to hold us at the table to make sure we’re going to be listened to properly and it holds the Government to account.”

**“IT’S REALLY IMPORTANT TO GET US AT THE TABLE BUT WE NEED SOMETHING TO HOLD US AT THE TABLE TO MAKE SURE WE’RE GOING TO BE LISTENED TO PROPERLY AND IT HOLDS THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT.”**

# Struggling mum confronts Home Secretary

## NORTH WALES DETECTIVE REVEALS REALITIES OF POLICE PAY CRISIS

**A** struggling single mum who has resorted to visiting food banks, asking her pensioner parents for money and now fears she will lose her home due to financial difficulties, stood up and challenged the Home Secretary at this year's annual conference.

DC Vicky Knight, who is a North Wales Police Federation representative, challenged Priti Patel during the keynote session at the two-day event, asking her "Could you live on £1,200 a month? How about £1,400?"

Vicky, who has been in the Force for 23 years, described how she has to borrow money from her 69-year-old mother to help pay for petrol, with her comments sparked by Ms Patel's insistence that she is committed to improving pay and conditions for police officers.

"I work with the most vulnerable members of our community and I love my job, but if the rates of interest go up, and I can't pay for my mortgage and I can't pay for my fuel, I am not going to be able to continue to go to work," Vicky said, in front of a packed auditorium.

"I went to see an accountant, and the advice was: leave the police, work for 22 hours a week, and claim benefits, and you will be better off.

"I tell this story not because I'm here for sympathy, I just want to be heard. I stand here to represent myself and many people in the Force that are like me.

"We are desperately struggling to do the job that we love and to make ends meet at home. So, I need you to be on our team and to help us, to represent us, to get us fair pay."

Responding to Vicky, Ms Patel said: "I think it just really illustrates so strongly and powerfully why we need to actually find solutions to pay issues and actually give you the support that you rightly deserve. We have to move this forward. You have that commitment from me, you absolutely do."



DC Vicky Knight addresses conference.

Speaking after the session, Vicky, who works in the child protection and vulnerable adults department, said: "I was reaching out to the Home Secretary, professional woman to professional woman. But she looked dumbfounded, I don't think she knew what to say.

"I've never struggled this much. The cost of living just seems to be going up, as the wages go down.

"It's embarrassing. I'm a professional woman and I'm begging my mum to let me have some of her pension pot, just to make ends meet."

**“ I’VE NEVER STRUGGLED THIS MUCH. THE COST OF LIVING JUST SEEMS TO BE GOING UP, AS THE WAGES GO DOWN.**

If mortgage rates increase as anticipated, Vicky says she will have no other option than to sell her home.

"When it comes close to pay day, I literally haven't got any money. I have to think about everything, including how much petrol I have and where that will allow me to go.

"How embarrassing, I'm 46-years-old and I might have to ask my parents if I can move back in with them."

She has a growing 13-year-old son, who regularly requires new school clothes and sport kits.

"My son needs feeding, he needs clothes on his back – and it's not cheap, he's a growing

lad," she explained.

"I'm at that point where I literally search for change around the house, so I can pay for petrol. And, by the end of the month, me and my son have to eat whatever we have in the cupboard – literally beans and rice.

"I've been shopping in the supermarket before and one of my friends has actually paid for my shopping because he overheard me telling my son we couldn't afford certain items.

"This is real. This is a real example of what's happening. The system is totally broken, something has gone majorly wrong."

Despite struggling to make ends meet, Vicky says her passion remains for the job, which is why she continues to work in the police.

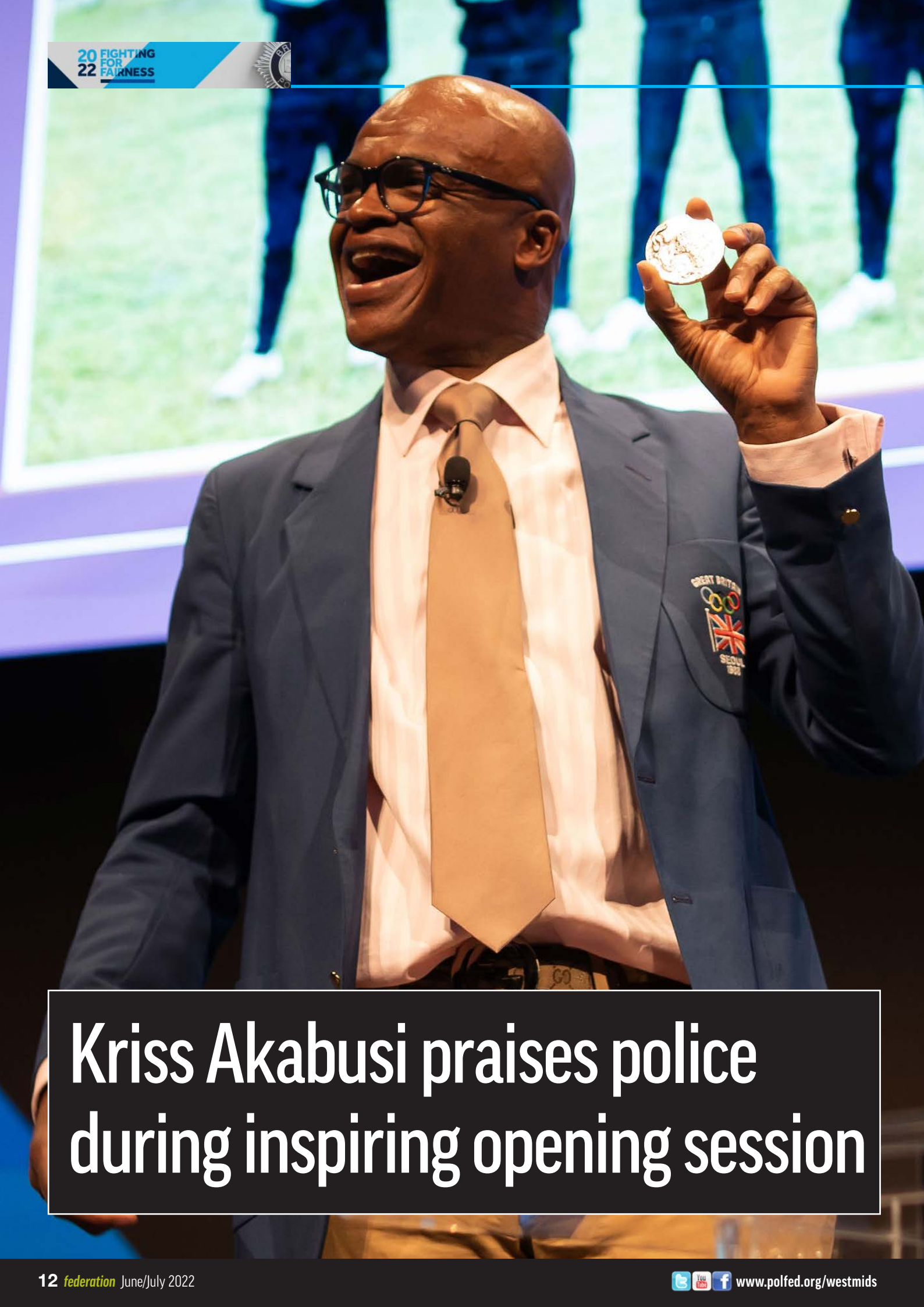
"I love what I do and that's the sad part. It's the people I help on a daily basis, they're the ones that keep me going," she added.

"Honestly though, I have looked at job vacancies online and seriously considered going for one of them. I have sleepless nights, worrying about how me and my son will eat. It's a highly emotional time."

Vicky's comments come after it was revealed police officer pay had suffered a 20 per cent real term pay cut in the last decade.

"What can be done going forward? The pay needs to be linked to inflation. Even if we're not better off, we won't be worse off – like we are now," she said.

"At the minute, I feel like we're on the Titanic, you know that bit at the end, when it's sinking and it's just about turned – I feel like the scales have tipped and we're now on a sinking ship."



# Kriss Akabusi praises police during inspiring opening session

## ATHLETICS CHAMPION GETS CONFERENCE OFF TO A LIVELY START WITH UPLIFTING STORY OF HIS LIFE

Former world athletics champion Kriss Akabusi MBE has thanked officers for the “selfless work” they do as he helped open this year’s Police Federation of England and Wales annual national conference.

The British athlete referred to the police as the “glue that holds this community together”, as he addressed the auditorium for the first session of the two-day event in Manchester.

The Olympian and five time gold medallist enticed the audience with a series of inspirational anecdotes from his life.

He told of the time fellow athlete Derek Redmond, who was hit by heartbreak when his hamstring tore while running the 400m race during the 1992 Olympics. Determined not to give up, Derek was supported over the finish line by his father, Jim.

“Think how many times you get people across the finish line,” Kriss said to those attending, “When I think about British policing, I think about how many times do you get people across that finish line.

“Whether it’s road traffic collisions, reports of domestic violence, murders, robberies and

rapes, you are there, getting people over that finish line.”

He continued to say that while every now and again, we open the newspapers and it is full of negative news, imagine if we could be talking about how the police get people across the finish line.

“You the British police, I believe you’re the very best at what you do,” he added.

“But we need to remember, the past is always for reference, not for residence.”

Kriss also spoke of the people who had influenced him over his lifetime, stemming back to when he was in the Army and his talent of running was discovered.

“All of a sudden, I was recognised for doing something right,” explained Kriss, who revealed he had a challenging childhood, which resulted in him getting into mischief at school and coming away with no qualifications.

“I wonder how many times you get recognition for doing something right?” he asked the audience.

“So many times, when I see a police officer I want to say to them ‘good job’. It must be so

tough when you work so hard every day but the only time the police get mentioned is when they do something wrong.”

Kriss reflected on his time as an athlete, mentioning some of the key milestones from his career, which included him re-living the Tokyo World Championships, when the 4 x 400m relay team famously clinched the gold

“**YOU THE BRITISH POLICE, I BELIEVE YOU’RE THE VERY BEST AT WHAT YOU DO. BUT WE NEED TO REMEMBER, THE PAST IS ALWAYS FOR REFERENCE, NOT FOR RESIDENCE.**”

medal after taking a huge risk by shaking up their traditional tactics.

The auditorium came to life as members of the audience enthusiastically watched footage of Kriss, who was the last of the four-man team running the relay, winning gold as he crossed the finish line back in 1991.

“Thank you for your applause, thank you for your laughter,” he said, “Thank you for the selfless work you do.”

He ended by reciting the poem ‘Dream Big’, before concluding his motivational presentation with: “Success is the life you lead, the lessons you learn and the legacy you leave.

“With determination, hard work and the right tools you can do great things.”

“**SO MANY TIMES, WHEN I SEE A POLICE OFFICER I WANT TO SAY TO THEM ‘GOOD JOB’. IT MUST BE SO TOUGH WHEN YOU WORK SO HARD EVERY DAY BUT THE ONLY TIME THE POLICE GET MENTIONED IS WHEN THEY DO SOMETHING WRONG.**”



Kriss Akabusi delivering his highly animated, entertaining and inspirational session.



# Officers are turning to food banks after zero per cent pay rise



Journalist George Pascoe-Watson (left) with Federation secretary Alex Duncan and deputy secretary John Partington.

## CONFERENCE TOLD THAT SOME MEMBERS HAVE BEEN LEFT IN DIRE STRAITS IN COST OF LIVING CRISIS

**P**olice officers are struggling to make ends meet and some are turning to food banks to feed their families, the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

National deputy secretary John Partington told delegates that the cost of living crisis and hikes in National Insurance contributions had left some members in dire straits in the wake of last year's zero per cent pay offer.

And he warned of worsening financial problems for many officers unless they were offered a fair pay deal this time round.

Speaking during a session on pay and pensions on the opening day of the Manchester conference, John said: "It's not just food banks, it's going for pay day loans, it's going to family and friends to get extra money.

"We have evidence of police officers waiting outside the supermarket just before

midnight before their pay goes into their bank account so they can do a shop."

John said the pay rise given to officers earning less than £24,000 a year amounted to very little in real terms.

He told delegates: "If you look at the pay award last year - £250 for the lower paid officers - and then start taking the tax and National Insurance and pension off that you are actually talking about £12 or £13 a month.

"With all the increases in the cost of living and inflation, that is just eroded within a millisecond and it is not going to do anything for them.

"So I think there are big problems ahead. We have relied on food banks for some time now and it is only going to get worse."

National secretary Alex Duncan told the pay and conditions session that police officers

were being forced to quit the service for financial reasons.

He said: "I heard that a member of the Government has suggested one of the solutions for people struggling with the cost of living crisis was to go and find a better paid job.

"It would appear that with seven out of ten police officers are already thinking about leaving, maybe that will be the outcome. But it doesn't sound great for the British public or the police service."

National chair Steve Hartshorn later told the conference he was frustrated to hear that some colleagues could barely afford to feed their families and said the situation must not be allowed to continue.

He said: "Over the last decade, we have seen a real term pay cut of around 20 per cent and other costs haven't stood still - gas, electric and fuel costs all continue to rise, and National Insurance contributions have increased.

"Our members are told they are brave; they are told they do a unique job. They were thanked for putting themselves and their families in danger as Covid gripped the country, and yet that acknowledgement amounted to nothing.

"It's frustrating to see and hear from colleagues who are struggling to feed their families and going to food banks."

**“ I HEARD THAT A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUGGESTED ONE OF THE SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE STRUGGLING WITH THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS WAS TO GO AND FIND A BETTER PAID JOB.**

**IT WOULD APPEAR THAT WITH SEVEN OUT OF TEN POLICE OFFICERS ARE ALREADY THINKING ABOUT LEAVING, MAYBE THAT WILL BE THE OUTCOME. BUT IT DOESN'T SOUND GREAT FOR THE BRITISH PUBLIC OR THE POLICE SERVICE.**

# Call for compassion in the ill-health retirement process

## BREAK-OUT SESSION ON FIRST DAY OF CONFERENCE CALLS FOR A MORE CONSISTENT APPROACH

"There is a person at the end of the policy" agreed the panel as they discussed navigating ill-health retirement at this year's conference.

The session involved National Board member Gemma Fox, South Wales Police Federation secretary Leigh Godfrey, senior solicitor for Taylor Law Mark Lake, and ill-health adviser at the Metropolitan Police Paul Turpin, all highlighting the need for forces to be more compassionate during the ill-health retirement process.

Gemma reminded the auditorium that these "are people, our colleagues" and that the current process "leads to them feeling more undervalued".

"Currently the ill-health retirement process is adversarial, leaving officers feeling even more devalued and more unwell at the end of the process. As a Federation, we need to understand the value of ill-health retirement," she said.

"Forces need to understand there are people at the end of the process, these are real people who are not going through this process by choice, they are going through it because they are unwell or injured."

Gemma said the best thing that could impact the process is an added element of compassion and understanding that police officers need support.

She continued: "Forces need to step back and look at their own processes and really ask themselves, if they were going through that process, how would that make them feel?"

During the session, it was stressed that there is not simply one process that is followed by each branch but instead 43 different ways of approaching ill-health retirement, depending on the force.

Paul elaborated by saying: "We need a more consistent approach across the country."

Echoing Paul's comments, Leigh, who is South Wales Police Federation ill-health retirement liaison officer, said: "The process has become really adversarial and the inconsistency across forces is just phenomenal.



National Board member Gemma Fox outlines the issues officers face.

"What I would ask forces and pension authorities to remember is that there's a person at end of this policy and it's an arduous policy and it really does damage the people going through it."

A video, which opened the session, showed Leigh urging those attending to remember the importance of ill-health retirement. In the eye-opening clip, he said: "We need to help people retire with the dignity and respect they deserve."

He went on to cite a case he is working on, where the officer was left with significant mental health issues.

"This officer was so unwell he couldn't put on police uniform, it made him physically unwell. They allowed him to come into work in plain clothes, but he was surrounded by uniformed officers, so it had a detrimental impact on his mental health.

"He is still too unwell to speak about his experience. Unfortunately, he has had to go through this really distressing process to get that assessment."

The panel members also shined a light on issues surrounding mental health and disability. They discussed how in some cases, the common misperception is that these officers "are underperforming", with those "who love their job" often getting put into "back office" roles rather than their injuries or wellbeing being addressed head on at an early stage.

Mark continued: "The majority of our cases now involve mental health, and the current process isn't going to help them."

The panel also told delegates there should be a greater focus on rehabilitating and supporting officers as soon as possible.

Leigh said: "If we're struggling now, how will we meet demands as the retirement age gets older? There's a person at the end of the policy, so let's start putting these people first."

Gemma agreed: "We need to make sure forces value and put in the right support mechanisms for officers injured on duty. We don't want people to become broken.

"Ultimately, if we don't look after our people, they will need to take ill-health retirement."

### OUR REP'S VIEWS

As part of my role I am now taking on most ill-health retirement (IHR) cases, so I wanted to take the opportunity to expand my knowledge and understanding in this very important area.

I have already supported one member all the way through the process and am now supporting a number of members who are at various stages of the process.

The session was really interesting and informative, I have previously seen inputs from the panel during my IHR training and they are all very knowledgeable in this area.

What really stood out for me are the huge differences across the country with how the process is administered. Here in the West Midlands we have a really good relationship with the Force around this subject. This enables us to ensure that the member's health is the real focus.

It became clear that in other forces the process is very adversarial and this benefits neither the member nor the organisation. The panel all pointed out that there needs to be some consistency across the country, firstly in the way the process is administered but also with the decisions of the SMPs. I think this is really crucial. We have to remember that the members who are going through this process are often in really difficult situations and the outcome will have massive implications for them.

The session caused me to reflect on the good relationship we have with the Force around IHR. It prompted me to arrange a meeting with the Force representative for IHR to ensure that we maintain that relationship and do everything we can to make the process as easy as possible for our members.

**Chris James, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation**



# Lack of cultural understanding risks police 'failing communities'



Paul Odle from the race, religion and belief group.



Tiff Lynch, Police Federation National Board member.

Police forces will fail their communities if they do not understand or interact with them, a session on cultural awareness heard.

Tiff Lynch, Police Federation National Board member and conduct and performance committee secretary, introduced a break-out session where a panel involving the chair of the Federation's race, religion and belief group, a chief officer, a representative of the Home Office and a regional director of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) discussed how a lack of cultural awareness impacts on the disciplinary process.

Tiff referred to the Cain report of 2019 which had identified that black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) officers were disproportionately represented in misconduct cases.

She said: "These officers are referred to professional standards more often and more of them face management action as result."

Paul Odle, from the race, religion and belief group, spoke about being a black officer of 31 years in service and admitted: "We were discussing these issues 30 years ago and I'm sick to death of talking about this agenda. If we can't treat protected characteristics correctly within the service, we can't treat the public correctly. We need to get actions so that we are not having these similar conversations ago in another 30 years."

"We can't keep playing the blame game and calling police officers racist," he reasoned. "But we need to get better at understanding our communities. If not, we create problems. I think we need to have that bit of extra training."

T/DCC Tyron Joyce of West Yorkshire Police talked about a plan coming forward from the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing to address the negative experiences of black people and with the intention of creating an anti-racist police service.

DCC Joyce admitted that officers will be cynical of "yet another plan" but said the intention is to challenge the culture of policing. He explained: "If the vast majority of police officers and staff say they would not tolerate racism, how can we explain some of the disparities in the way we act? This plan is not saying police officers and staff are racist but some of our policies and practices appear to be disproportionate."

"If the only time a police officer sees the black community is when they are in crisis, or the only time they see us is in crisis, I understand how prejudice can occur on both sides."

**“ IF THE VAST MAJORITY OF POLICE OFFICERS AND STAFF SAY THEY WOULD NOT TOLERATE RACISM, HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN SOME OF THE DISPARITIES IN THE WAY WE ACT? ”**

The College of Policing is launching a five-year survey of black officers, gathering their feedback anonymously to identify and resolve issues, the conference heard.

Sal Naseem, regional director of the IOPC, added that officers from marginalised groups need to be welcomed into policing and their difference valued. If not, then all the work that has been done in recruitment to make the service better resemble the make-up of England and Wales would be for nothing, he said.

"Data shows the officers from these groups are leaving at higher rates and what happens is they will speak to their families and friends and those negative experiences go back and get replayed and the confidence gaps grows, and it becomes a vicious circle. The only way to move the dial is to look at that word culture and inclusion is key word."

The panel also agreed with a questioner that sergeants needed the training and confidence to deal with complaints like a misjudged word or lack of cultural awareness at that lower level rather than escalating issues, with the emphasis on learning and improving understanding.





National Board member Steve Taylor.

# Officer welfare must be priority during mutual aid deployments

## PANEL CALLS FOR REVIEWS OF CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

Officer welfare should always be at the front and centre of mutual aid operations, the Police Federation conference has heard.

Delegates who attended a panel discussion at the Manchester event were told there was a need for deeper understanding of the issues faced by planning teams behind major operations such as the G7 talks in Cornwall and the COP26 event in Glasgow which between them saw the deployment of more

than 15,000 officers.

The Police Federation has a key role to play supporting officers on mutual aid deployments offering a range of services from providing much-needed refreshments and helping with accommodation to representing members in disputes over over-time, rest days and leave.

Federation National Board member Steve Taylor said the police service had made improvements in the way it dealt with issues

**“ WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT MANY, IF NOT ALL OF OUR MEMBERS, ARE VOLUNTEERS AND THE PUBLIC WON'T SEE THAT. SO, WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE TAKEN CARE OF WHILST THEY TAKE CARE OF US.**

around accommodation, food and welfare at mutual aid operations but said there was lots of room for improvement.

He said: “With these planning operations, being involved from the early stages will allow lessons learned from previous deployments, around accommodation standards, food provision and the wellbeing of our officers, not to be repeated again.

“We need to understand that many, if not all of our members, are volunteers and the public won't see that. So, we need to make sure that our volunteers are taken care of whilst they take care of us.”

Essex Police Chief Constable Ben-Julian Harrington acknowledged the need for a new framework covering mutual aid.

He said: “There needs to be clarity from the get-go for people who will be going on deployments.

“If the officers who are deployed are well taken care of, you will see that morale lift.”

National Federation treasurer Simon Kempton told delegates mutual aid had become so prevalent it was important to get things right for members and also the public.

Owen Weatherill, Assistant Chief Constable of Hertfordshire and National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) strategic lead, told the audience: “We need to show the public a unified front, one that shows we work well together, and this is a testament of the professionalism for everyone that is deployed.”

The panel recommended a review of existing rules and regulations and called for work to be done on areas not fit for purpose.



The uplift session panellists.

# Panel debates whether uplift is just a numbers game

Is the Police Uplift Programme more than a numbers game? This was the question put to a panel of experts on the opening day of conference.

The session began with words from Dave Bamber, National Board member, who said it was “impossible to argue” that the Government’s promise of a 20,000-officer uplift was not welcome, adding “the service needs more staff”.

However, Dave went on to question whether policing was prepared for the influx.

“Having hollowed out the training departments and reduced tutoring to a minimum, were we ready take these officers in? Have they developed into an efficient and effective workforce, or have we just been playing a numbers game where we now have 20,000 more people but not necessarily 20,000 more police officers who are capable of doing the role?” he asked.

The question was picked up by the panel, which comprised of Mark Jones, secretary of North Wales Police Federation, Kurtis Christoforides from Police Now, Jo Noakes representing the College of Policing, Dr Sarah Charman a professor of criminology, and Sarah Davenport speaking for the National Police Chiefs’ Council.

Mark painted a picture of trainees who were stressed and struggling to cope with the pressures of a demanding full-time job, with full-time studying, plus poor pay and cancelled rest days. He said this reality contrasted with the Home Secretary visiting forces and being told “what she wanted to

hear” - that everything was well.

And he compared the uplift programme to the misselling of PPI: “We’re not being honest with people about the trauma they are going to see. We’re not telling them that they are going to have to work night shifts and that they will have to work Christmas. In this drive to get people through the door, we’ve let slip the reality of what policing is.”

The session heard that the current 139,000 police officers in England and Wales includes 31,000 new recruits. This represents an uplift of 13,576 officers once those leaving or retiring are factored in.

Dr Charman, a professor at Portsmouth University, spoke about a four-year study she has carried out into police officer retention. The number of officers resigning had risen by 104 per cent at the end of 2020 compared to 2012, she said.

Reasons for this vary but include poor leadership, excessive workloads and a mismatch between expectations of the job and the reality. There were personal reasons for leaving relating to mental and physical

health and stress, as well as a “sense of organisational injustice – officers feeling a lack of voice, autonomy, lack of progression and also bullying and harassment,” she added.

Kurtis, a director at Police Now, said the recruitment market is changing and the idea of a life-long career was increasingly a thing of the past.

“People want a ‘portfolio career’ these days,” he said, “That goes hand in glove with a more flexible entry and exit into the service.”

He added that people leaving the service might eventually come back bringing other experience to the job.

Radio host Ian Collins, who compered the session, commented that the media had been “absolutely appalling” in some of its coverage of the police, highlighting bad incidents and creating the perception that it represents all of policing.

In light of this, the panel agreed that it was commendable of new recruits to still want to join the service and to step up to serve their community.

“HAVING HOLLOWED OUT THE TRAINING DEPARTMENTS AND REDUCED TUTORING TO A MINIMUM, WERE WE READY TAKE THESE OFFICERS IN? HAVE THEY DEVELOPED INTO AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE, OR HAVE WE JUST BEEN PLAYING A NUMBERS GAME WHERE WE NOW HAVE 20,000 MORE PEOPLE BUT NOT NECESSARILY 20,000 MORE POLICE OFFICERS WHO ARE CAPABLE OF DOING THE ROLE?”

# Confusion and misinformation over police pensions



National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald.

**P**olice pension arrangements have failed to put all officers on the same platform and have caused widespread confusion and misinformation about how they are calculated, the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

Day one of the 2022 conference closed with a panel discussion on what has become one of the most contentious issues for police officers across England and Wales.

Simon Horgan, field officer for Metfriendly, which offers financial services and products to police officers and their families, said individual officers should establish an exit point to help them with their payment calculation.

He told delegates: "Being aware of your exit point is very important as we are dealing with lots of myths around pension calculations.

"Find out your exit points. Some are affected more than others. That is why it is important to know what is a good exit point for you."

National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald said there was a disparity in pension benefits to police officers because of the changes to the pension scheme.

And national secretary Alex Duncan told the conference: "We have raised with the Government issues with the scheme advisory board. We think the Government can fix it in a number of ways."

Speaking at an earlier session on pay and conditions, national deputy secretary John Partington said the police pensions system was not working.

He told delegates: "I think it is important to point out that the Police Federation position on this is very clear: that officers should have stayed on the pensions they joined because people plan financially and plan for the future and when things change it is not great.

"The Government then lost the court cases, as Federation reps know very well, but what they have been slow to do is actually put the

proper mechanisms and legislation in place to enact it.

"They did the first bit of legislation to ensure all serving officers know if they are paying into a pension scheme or paying into the 2015 care scheme but what they have not done is put the mechanisms in place to address the more detailed problems of moving people across pension schemes

"So essentially, the first legislation is a bit of paper, saying as of this day you stop accruing in the scheme and move to this scheme and we'll deal with the harder stuff some time later on.

"All officers should have stayed in the original schemes and I think the Government is in danger of spending a lot of money to fix a problem which it created itself."

## OUR REP'S VIEWS

As I expected, no great surprises as I have tried to keep myself up to date with pension-related matters.

It did, however, really nail home the need for all officers to know their pension options and for those nearing retirement a real need to seek financial advice from someone with professional knowledge of police pensions.

There was caution around acting hastily based upon the decisions taken by colleagues. As with all things pension, it needs to be a 'person based' decision based on an individual's personal situation.

Worryingly, the date of October 2023, which the Government had suggested was the date by which officers would have clarity on their pensions, is now likely to be aspirational and as the current Federation national secretary warned, this whole pension challenge situation could go on for several years yet.

There was a reminder that the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) is still progressing pension challenge claims on behalf of 40,000 cops in the wake of the Leigh Day result. No finalisation date for the PFEW claim was known.

The pension trap was explained to the audience. In addition around 50,000 officers had provided responses to a recent snap survey on this issue. The results will provide evidence to PFEW that will be passed on to the Government in a bid to aid the pension remedy. This will include trying to overturn the actuarial reductions to the 2015 pension for those retiring before 60 years and a call for access to the 2015 pension to be immediate upon retirement without penalty if, as expected, the remedy doesn't allow to a full return to the 1987 or 2006 schemes.

Officers with five years or less service until retirement can book free sessions with [Metfriendly.org.uk/retire](http://Metfriendly.org.uk/retire) for more information to aid their retirement and pension plans. **Rod Rose**

**“ ALL OFFICERS SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN THE ORIGINAL SCHEMES AND I THINK THE GOVERNMENT IS IN DANGER OF SPENDING A LOT OF MONEY TO FIX A PROBLEM WHICH IT CREATED ITSELF. ”**



## Inspiring mum wins Women in Policing Award

An inspirational mother-of-four who juggles working as a police officer with raising her family was presented with the prestigious Outstanding Contribution to Women in Policing Award at this year's Police Federation of England and Wales annual conference.

Jennifer Sharpling, a sergeant in the Metropolitan Police, clinched the title after devoting much of her time to maternity-related issues in the workplace, using her own experiences to become a pioneer in perinatal mental health.

After having her first child in 2016 and

suffering from significant mental health issues, Jennifer found there was not any specific support for police officers and staff with these conditions.

Prompted to take action and make change, Jennifer now leads a national team of officers from across the country, who are working together to write a national policy that will better support staff.

She also works closely with professors on research projects, so the police service can really understand the impact perinatal mental health issues have on police officers and staff.

Maggie Blyth, Deputy Chief Constable of

the Metropolitan Police and national police lead for violence against women and girls, who presented the award, said: "Jennifer has since written several blogs sharing her personal experiences and organised awareness sessions with the NSPCC for National Maternal Mental Health Week.

"She also runs a peer support network and has supported officers, both men and women, while they navigate themselves around the changes of becoming a parent and how that can affect their mental health."

As the national lead for perinatal mental health in policing, which is a workstream under The National Family Support Group, Jennifer also travels to visit forces, giving talks to raise awareness around perinatal mental health and her personal road to recovery.

She runs the national team and is working to ensure that there is support for all men and women in policing when it comes to perinatal mental health. As part of her work with the Family Support Group, Jennifer has set up the BlueMinds social media account, which supports officers and their partners within policing who are experiencing peri and post-natal mental health conditions.

**“ JENNIFER HAS SINCE WRITTEN SEVERAL BLOGS SHARING HER PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND ORGANISED AWARENESS SESSIONS WITH THE NSPCC FOR NATIONAL MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH WEEK.**

Jennifer is also the co-founder of #BleepKind, a peer support group designed to offer a safe space for police officers and staff to share their concerns surrounding the bleep test, which comes annually for officers as part of a fitness assessment.

In her own journey to overcome the bleep test, she found practical ideas, emotional kindness and support in a variety of different places, and so decided that she wanted to create a one-stop shop for people who are looking for training ideas, psychological strategies and support from like-minded individuals.

The Police Federation of England and Wales presents the Outstanding Contribution to Women in Policing Award to recognise a serving or recently retired officer who has gone above and beyond their job, while on duty.

# Conduct system 'could collapse' over indemnity row

## PANEL DISCUSSES MODERNISING HEARINGS AND ASKS IF CHANGE IS NEEDED

The misconduct process "could collapse" due to a legal ruling which means that panellists could be sued for their decisions, the Police Federation conference heard on the Wednesday morning of the two-day event.

In a session entitled "Modernising Hearings", John Bassett of the National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs (NALQC) set out the view of his organisation that the Eckland case established that LQCs (and any other panellist) can be held liable and, so far, the Home Office has refused to indemnify them or provide immunity.

As a result, the NALQC has advised its members not to accept new appointments, which is contributing to a backlog in misconduct cases being resolved.

Mr Bassett said: "The advice we've given to our members is not something we took lightly. We have put forward a perfectly straightforward one-clause bill to the Home Office and they are prevaricating. Meanwhile, claims continue to be made.

"If the situation is not sorted out the present system is going to collapse because LQCs will not be prepared to put their livelihoods, their homes and their families at risk of financial ruin. If that is the situation then almost by default the position will return to what the National Police Chiefs' Council appears to be seeking which is a return to misconduct hearings being presided over by chief officers."

Chief Constable Craig Guildford of Nottinghamshire Police, who joined the session via video link, said efforts to improve the timeliness of misconduct hearings – which is best for complainants, officers and families – was not helped by Covid or the NALQC stance, which he took issue with.

Mr Guildford insisted: "For avoidance of doubt, the officers on those panels are covered by chief constables. The delays caused by some LQCs not sitting are not helping officers or public confidence. I don't know of cases other than Eckland where these [legal issues] are being raised. I think we need to get moving."

But Mr Bassett doubled-down and cast



Phill Matthews, Police Federation National Board.

doubt over whether police forces would be legally able to indemnify their representatives on a panel. He said this was because of doubts about whether Section 88 of the Police Act applied to officers serving on a panel – and if not the reassurances from chiefs would count for nothing.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), which traditionally comes in for criticism at Police Federation gatherings, unusually had a good session. Its director of strategy and impact, Kathie Cashell, talked about the efforts the organisation has made to speed up the timeliness of its investigations.

She said: "We're really proud of the improvements we've made. Our concerns now are less about the investigation timeliness and more about the proceedings that happen after the investigations. The IOPC improvements have not been replicated in those areas."

Ms Cashell added that IOPC caseloads were being negatively impacted by delays from misconduct hearings in forces, and decisions from the Crown Prosecution Service or inquests that typically add another 12 months. There is a need to shine a spotlight on that, she said.

Phill Matthews from the Police Federation National Board and the national conduct and performance lead has spearheaded campaigns to highlight the mental health effects and unfairness on officers, and families, to long delays in completing investigations. He welcomed the involvement of LQCs as a way of "improving public confidence, trust and transparency", and reiterated that the Federation supports their concerns around indemnity.

Phill raised concerns about a return to chief officer led misconduct panels – particularly fast-tracked cases – which run the risk of prioritising dismissals rather than fairness to the officer involved. Phill noted that the Police Foundation had sought a review of LQC role claiming that it had "become harder to dismiss officers".

He added: "The Federation's main thrust is timeliness. The IOPC has improved dramatically but there are still over 300 of their cases that exceed 12 months and are paused waiting for other processes to happen. That's why we need letters to come into PCCs [which 2020 regulations now allow] so we can put the spotlight on where those delays are happening. Professional Standards Departments in a fifth of all cases that go beyond 12 months haven't written the letter as they are meant to and there is absolutely no comeback."

### OUR REP'S VIEWS

Phill Matthews was impassioned and knowledgeable, he spoke with conviction and authority. We do need change, too many cases are being left on hold, or paused, leaving officers stuck in uncertainty for far too long. This can, and does, have a detrimental effect on their mental health and that of their families.

The 12-month law is not being applied across the board, for a number of various reasons from "too busy" to just not doing it. This is unacceptable and needs addressing immediately. The letter and discussion needs to be done, its law and not open to interpretation. There needs to be consequences to failure to adhere, it is law and what usually happens when the law is broken?

John Bassett, chair of the National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs, spoke passionately about the issues concerning indemnity for LQCs, as they would be held accountable for incorrect decisions and would be open to being sued, leaving them financially at risk. This would likely lead to LQCs removing their services and could, in turn, lead to Chief Constables overseeing hearings, potentially removing impartiality.

John stood out as a speaker, who clearly was passionate about his work, but hindered by the bureaucracy.

I will take back to Force the fact the system is in a log jam, mainly due to demand and staffing levels. Also the IOPC is sitting on cases awaiting other things to be done, before progressing or finalising the matter. We must monitor the situation and press when necessary.

Martin Bonser



The panel (left to right): Manjit Atwal QPM from the College of Policing, Zoe Wakefield and Sam Hawkins from the Women's Group and DCC Maggie Blyth.

# Misogyny must be challenged, says Women's Group

The Police Federation is taking steps towards introducing strategies to help tackle misogyny within the service, the 2022 annual conference has heard.

Sam Hawkins, secretary of the Federation's National Women's Group, acknowledged new measures were needed to bring an end to inappropriate and sexist behaviour within policing and said important work on developing new policies was already being undertaken.

She told delegates: "We have been gathering data and information and we have got to be cognisant of the facts that are out there.

"We are waiting for some more up-to-date information from the HMIC but Durham University did a survey for the NPCC in 2019 on diversity and equality and that found 27.8 per cent of female officers reported experiencing derogatory remarks about their gender and 34.5 per cent reported experiencing sexist comments from someone in the force.

"Even today, within the Police Federation, 57 per cent of the delegates are male and 36 per cent are female so we still have this really big imbalance within ourselves as well as in society.

"This is something we are quite passionate about as a women's group and we want any of our colleagues and anyone involved in the National Women's Group to be involved in that so we can get some policies, some toolkits, whatever we need out there.

"We also need to make sure there is a reporting process as well so that people who do want to report or talk to someone about their experiences have more than the PSD or the confidential reporting line and can talk about

those small things. If a female officer is made to feel uncomfortable they should be able to talk to somebody about it.

"Despite the horrific, awful things that have been in the media, we understand that not all of our colleagues are predators and behave in that way but we do need men and women to speak out and just challenge that behaviour.

"It takes an awfully long time to change a culture but if we all play a part in it and all do our bit we can try and affect that change much quicker and make the world a better place and policing a better place for our daughters, granddaughters and any women coming into the organisation in future years."

Misogyny within policing has become a headline issue with the media focusing on the abduction and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving officer and then an Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) report into misogynistic, racist and homophobic messages shared by Metropolitan Police officers based at London's Charing Cross police station.

Opening a panel discussion on day two of the Manchester conference, National Women's Group chair Sue Honeywill said the word misogyny was now used with increasing frequency across the police service and in society.

She told delegates: "With half of the population being female, it is increasingly important that we understand how the issue impacts, not only within policing but in society as a whole.

"And while the word is now in regular use, it is frequently misunderstood with some high-profile politicians having mistakenly said

such behaviour involves behaviour towards males. For the avoidance of doubt, it doesn't.

"In simple terms, misogyny is a behaviour towards women which shows either a dislike, hatred or contempt towards women."

Sue told delegates she accepted discussing misogyny within policing was emotive and often divisive as it challenged both men and women to reflect on past and present behaviours and consider their own unconscious biases.

She said this was not easy and often led to difficult soul-searching which could provoke a defensive response from men if they felt the actions of a minority were being levelled towards them as a whole.

But she added: "We seek to raise the profile of the issues and consider how we can improve understanding and involve culture norms to build an environment where both sexes feel equal and individuals feel empowered and safe to speak up and challenge."

## OUR REP'S VIEWS

Sadly, I have a number of members coming forward and speaking out on this. There is a mountain to climb and the tip of the spear is the fact that the few officers brave enough to report these incidents are punished for doing so.

I thought this session was relevant and thought-provoking with a good range of speakers. However, I was left thinking "Where from here?" because unfortunately there's a huge whistleblowing problem in the police service.

There was a very powerful video at the start of the session which really hit home.

Jess Davies

# Fed chair 'disappointed' with subscription increase decision

The chair of West Midlands Police Federation says he is "disappointed" with the decision to increase the cost of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) subscriptions as he reassures members that the branch will be reviewing how it can best support officers with their financial wellbeing in the future.

In a motion put before annual conference, figures released by the national Police Federation revealed that 221 delegates voted for a rise in subscription costs, with 170 voting against.

Speaking about the outcome, Rich Cooke said: "I spoke against the motion and voted in accordance.

"I'm disappointed with the result, however, it was fully and fairly debated and voted on democratically. There are genuine financial issues that need to be addressed for the long term, but I felt this could have been addressed with more radical options being considered that don't place any extra cost on members. That said, the rise has been kept in line with any pay

increase we receive at a time of rampant inflation.

"We will now have to consider, as a branch, our response and how we can assist members with their financial wellbeing."

On its website, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) said: "With the current cost of living crisis, last year's pay freeze and without knowing if our members will receive an increase in their pay this year or not, now is not the time to increase Police Federation of England and Wales subscriptions.

"PFEW, however, is also facing increased costs. Soaring inflation, upcoming litigation and the financial health of our National Reserves Fund means we need to at least start to have an open and honest conversation on this subject with Federation representatives to make sure that there is a strong, viable Federation fighting for our members for years to come."

The PFEW said the conference gave the perfect opportunity to open the conversation surrounding subscription rates, which have only increased once in the last decade.

The PFEW statement continues: "On such an important issue, PFEW took the view conference delegates should be given the opportunity to hear the rationale for any proposed future increase in subscriptions immediately.

"We care passionately about the views of our members which is why hearing from delegates at conference – their representatives – on this matter was vital. On that basis, it was agreed to bring a motion to conference this year for discussion."

On that basis, it was agreed to bring a motion to conference this year for discussion. This motion looked at future options for an increase in subscriptions on the basis that it would only be introduced once it has been confirmed by the Government that members will receive a pay increase.

As a result of the motion, the conference supported increasing the rate of all types of PFEW subscriptions effective from 1 September 2022, in line with the percentage uplift to police pay for 2022-23.

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**POLICE**  
West Midlands



# Panel urges members to stop the stigma surrounding suicide

The panel for the "Fighting for your lives" session.

## FORMER OFFICER SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE OF PTSD DURING CONFERENCE BREAK-OUT SESSION

'We need to break that taboo and that stigma around suicide needs to go if we want to save lives' is the clear message that came from the Fighting for your Lives session at this year's annual conference.

The hard-hitting, emotional and powerful session shined a light on the reality of officers taking their own lives, with Federation representatives urged to talk more openly about suicide, to make it more visible.

On the panel was former officer Ed Simpson who shared his own experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which resulted in him spiralling and ultimately considering taking his own life.

"I remember driving to work and thinking I wanted to kill myself. That should've been an irrational thought, but it was completely rational," said Ed, who worked for both South and North Yorkshire Police.

"I actually hated myself because I was still alive."

One week later, completely burnt out – both physically and mentally – Ed was diagnosed with shingles, which led to him

visiting the doctor and being officially told he had PTSD, sparked by witnessing trauma after trauma during his career.

Ed spoke of one particular incident whereby he took a family to see their son in the morgue. He described how he will never get over the sound of the mother screaming when she saw her son. Little did he know, but this was the trigger event that would lead to his complex PTSD diagnosis years later.

Having been signed off work for a year, Ed received the devastating news that his salary would be docked to half-pay, leading to him feeling "totally worthless".

"That same day, I fell out of love with policing," said Ed, who returned back to work after 12 months, before medically retiring three years later.

"The journey to get there ruined me. I will never be the same again."

Ed was joined by Oscar Kilo CEO Andy Rhodes QPM, Greater Manchester suicide prevention programme manager at the NHS Adele Owen QPM and facilitator of families against corporate killers at Greater Manchester Hazards Centre Hilda Palmer.

Hilda, who has conducted research on work-related suicide, explained her findings revealed 10 per cent of all suicides have a work-related component.

Adele, a former officer with Greater

Manchester Police, said supervisors and managers need to be given suicide-prevention training.

"The word suicide isn't being used enough, we always fall back on the phrases mental health and wellbeing. We need to break the stigma and we need to start being direct with people," she said.

"The first thing we need to do, we need to talk about it, we haven't been talking about it. We need to fight the taboo and that stigma needs to go if we want to save lives."

Andy, who explained how Oscar Kilo is spending time working with national charity The Samaritans researching specific factors that are driving mental health issues, as well as how force can better support loved ones who are bereaved following a suicide.

"What I want to point out is that eight or nine years ago, people wouldn't have had the courage to stand up and talk about mental health. What we are seeing, people are more willing to speak out, especially young recruits," he continued.

"We're a long way off but we will get to a point where psychological risk and harm are treated the same as physical risk.

"Ultimately though, it's the employer's responsibility – the force's responsibility – to support these people."

Ed agreed, saying: "We need to give people the courage to ask others if they're OK, because that person might be driving to work that morning, wishing they were dead.

"Welfare starts at home, with colleagues and friends."



# Police drivers must ensure their training is up to date



*Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation (left) and Simon Hill from the Metropolitan Police Federation..*

All police drivers must be 'in ticket' with their training if they are to benefit from the new protections they will receive under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, conference was told.

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the national Federation lead on pursuits driving and driver training, has led a long campaign to bring about the change in law introduced through the new legislation.

Under the act, police officers' driving will no longer be assessed by the standards of the careful and competent member of the public but by those of their skilled and training colleagues.

He said: "We've had this catalogue of shame where officers were on the wrong side of the law, embroiled in lengthy criminal and misconduct investigations which have caused untold stress.

"We are in a better position because we campaigned for eight years. It's a major achievement."

**“ WHEN THIS LEGISLATION COMES THROUGH, IF YOUR MEMBERS AREN'T IN DATE – EFFECTIVELY YOU ARE DRIVING AGAINST THE LAW. YOU REALLY NEED TO GET ON TO THEM AND TELL THEM THEY HAVE GOT TO BE TRAINED, AND THEY HAVE GOT TO BE IN DATE – IF THEY ARE NOT, THEY'LL BE COMMITTING A CRIMINAL OFFENCE.**

Tim stressed that it was critically important for officers to demonstrate they were up to date with their training to ensure they benefited from the new protection and was supported by DCC Terry Woods, the National Police Chiefs' Council driving lead, and driver training expert Roger Gardner.

DCC Woods explained: "If they can't, and if some people in your forces have slipped out of date, or forces are behind, I would argue this needs to be put on the top of the list, because it's an area of high frequency and high risk. It is really important."

Mr Gardner added: "When this legislation comes through, if your members aren't in date – effectively you are driving against the law.



*DCC Terry Woods QPM, national lead for police driving.*

You really need to get on to them and tell them they have got to be trained, and they have got to be in date – if they are not, they'll be committing a criminal offence."

Individuals needed to take responsibility to ensure they are 'in ticket' but the responsibility did not end with them, managers, chief officers and forces also had to share this, delegates were told.

Tim also highlighted the way in which officers' driving would be assessed.

"Without appropriate governance, we would have found our campaign for officer driving to be assessed against that of their similarly trained colleagues and it could have led to officers being at more risk of prosecution than less.

"A breach of driving policy could be considered a breach of law, which is why we needed those assessing the drivers through this new legal process to have the professionalism, knowledge and expertise required, so officers have the confidence to use their skills and training in the way intended

without fear of prosecution."

A panel of subject matter experts will now consider cases where police officers' driving comes into question with DCC Woods and Tim being part of the process.

They will ensure that proper disclosure of all the evidence takes place, putting an end to previous failings whereby only selective information and evidence has been put forward. The panel's reports will be available to both prosecution and defence.

This process will be part of the new legislation when it comes into effect.

West Midlands Police Federation has already hosted training days at its offices for a range of stakeholders including the Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), and specialist lawyers.

The break-out session also stressed the importance of standardised training in police driving units across England and Wales.

Driving schools, which could become licensed in the same way as firearms units, are now expected to fill out self-assessments form covering all aspects of their work and spot-checks will be carried out. The College of Policing will also issue new Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

Delegates were urged to ask questions of their driving schools and find out if they had completed their self-assessment forms. They were also encouraged to check their chief officers were prepared for the new law.

During the session, Simon Hill from the Metropolitan Police Federation introduced footage of a police pursuit of a scooter which led to an officer being charged with causing death by dangerous driving, illustrating the jeopardy officers found themselves in under the previous legislation when they were doing the job the public expected of them.

The officer was cleared by a jury but only after what was described as six years of hell for him and his family.

The session ended with questions from delegates and Tim thanking all those who had helped secure the new legislation including Sir Henry Bellingham, the former Norfolk MP who was among the first politicians to get behind the Federation campaign.

**“ A BREACH OF DRIVING POLICY COULD BE CONSIDERED A BREACH OF LAW, WHICH IS WHY WE NEEDED THOSE ASSESSING THE DRIVERS THROUGH THIS NEW LEGAL PROCESS TO HAVE THE PROFESSIONALISM, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE REQUIRED, SO OFFICERS HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO USE THEIR SKILLS AND TRAINING IN THE WAY INTENDED WITHOUT FEAR OF PROSECUTION.**



National Board member Ian Saunders.

## UPP – Revisit of 2 Key Issues

designed to manage disability-related absences

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# POLICE Federation



# A tsunami of discrimination claims

## BREAK-OUT SESSION CONSIDERS THE IMPACT OF COVID PANDEMIC ON CLAIMS

Barriers faced by disabled police officers disappeared overnight at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic but are returning and creating a "tsunami of new claims", the Police Federation annual conference has heard.

National Board member Ian Saunders said the number of Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) claims fell away dramatically during the pandemic but were now rising heavily and heading towards pre-Covid levels.

"We are seeing a return of what we used to see before in relation to UPP claims," he told delegates at a break-out session on disability discrimination.

"But the basic point is UPP is not, and has never been, a primary mechanism for supporting police officers.

"It is a performance-related mechanism which is very much unsuited to managing an officer with a disability.

"During the pandemic we saw the number of claims that came in and the number of cases that came in went right down.

"About 50 per cent of the employment budget that goes out of Leatherhead - about £3 million a year - is on disability-related claims and much of that went away during the Covid pandemic.

"Hence the tsunami of claims. It's more than a blip that's coming now after a period of quiet, there's a lot coming through the door."

Ian said cases of disability discrimination did not come in isolation but were at the centre of a mechanical functioning adopted by line managers.

He told the workshop: "Line managers unlawfully discriminate against colleagues with disability absence on their record by using UPP.

"Even though unlawful, line managers are serving written improvement notices and

asking colleagues to report to work against or without medical advice. UPP is not designed to manage disability related absences."

The Police Federation's in-house solicitor Eleanor Porter said line managers should always refer to the Equality Act while dealing with disabled officers.

She said: "The discretion to initiate UPP must be appreciated as most regulations that follow are mandatory. However, there is nothing to stop the line manager from using their discretionary powers.

"What is really required, for an informed decision to be taken in a case of long-term absence through disability, is a process that requires medical evidence as to whether there is any prospect of the officer returning to work, in what capacity and consultation with the officer about the options, including alternative work, medical discharge and termination."

# Disclosure guidance has created a 'crisis in policing'



Ben Hudson from the Federation's National Detectives' Forum.

The Police Federation conference was told of a growing crisis in policing that is pushing officers to breaking point and delaying justice for victims.

Ben Hudson, secretary of the Federation's National Detectives' Forum, led the final session at the Manchester gathering to highlight the impact of DG6 – the guidance on charging that came into effect in January last year.

It has added obligations to the officer in charge of an investigation and front-loaded the disclosure process amounting to a "hidden tax on policing", Ben said.

He played clips of investigating officers who spelled out the real impacts of the changes, both to their workloads and the ability to deliver a timely service to victims.

Isabelle Jenkins, speaking to camera, said rape allegations previously took an average of six to nine months from the start of an investigation to the point of charge. Since the advent of DG6 that has now doubled.

She added: "My most recent rape investigation has taken me 12 months to secure a charge. I have two colleagues who are

at the 18 months point. This isn't our investigations that are taking this long, it is the consistent changes and action plans from the CPS. I've had victims whose mental health has taken a decline because they just want answers. It's bad enough what they've been through as a rape victim, let alone waiting a year to find out if they are going to get any justice."

PC Georgie Dodd said her workload had increased because of disclosure, and morale was very low. Louise Goddard from Wiltshire Police spoke on camera about how a colleague of 22 years quit due to "having had enough" of the workload, and Louise also wonders how long she can continue.

PC Josh Ives added: "I feel like our hands are completely tied behind our back by the changes."

Ben drew attention to the findings of the Federation's 2021 detectives' survey which found that 96 per cent of detectives who responded felt the changes had increased the number of hours spent on pre-charge file preparation. In addition, 87 per cent said the changes had increased their stress, and 86 per cent felt the changes had decreased the efficiency of the criminal justice system.

Ben, who is also secretary of Suffolk Police Federation, added: "Perhaps the most alarming statistic was that 45 per cent – almost half, indicated the number of victims who had withdrawn from active participation with their investigation had increased due to the changes."

Under the previous system, if officers submitted 100 cases to the CPS, around 75 would result in a charge and require the completion of a full file. Since DG6, all 100 now require a file, even though 25 will not result in a charge.

Ben pointed out that this represented a 33 per cent increase in workload and effort to no avail. New redaction requirements involve, on average, an additional four hours per case he added.

The Federation's concerns were put directly to Max Hill QC, Director of Public Prosecutions, who insisted "I do get it," before adding: "DG6

came into force on 31 December 2020 not because I chose that date but when the Attorney General decided after a long conversation that there had to be a step change."

Mr Hill admitted that the CPS had too often got it wrong when it came to disclosure and cases were coming unstuck in court. He also conceded that the system is "front loaded" currently. However, he argued that police and the CPS were working much more effectively now as "one team" even if staff on both sides were more tired or carrying more cases than before.

He added: "I can assure you we are not attempting to apply any higher standard than what the law requires. We are simply saying 'these are the challenges we are going to face as one team when this goes to court' so as one team let's see if we can meet those challenges. If we get it right first time, we won't find our cases are torpedoed when it comes to court."

Also on the panel was Nick Ephgrave, assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. His take on DG6 was there was now "increased rigour" around the application of disclosure law, along with an exponential increase in the volume of data.

He said: "I say to my people you've got to start thinking of disclosure from the minute you read the crime report. If you do that some of this workload will get spread across the time period – it's not the solution, but it's the other side of the coin of investigation."

The panel agreed that an impending review of the impact of the guidelines by the Attorney General's Office offered the possibility of positive changes to reduce the burden on officers and speed up justice.

During the session, Ben also highlighted the pressures officers were facing due to redaction requirements under the Data Protection Act.

He said: "We would urge the Government to address this immediately. An amendment to the act to allow the CPS and the police service to be treated as one entity would make a huge difference and save considerable time.

"An expert review of nine files found that the new redaction requirements involve, on average, an additional four hours per case. And this will be considerably higher for more complex investigations."

“ I FEEL LIKE OUR HANDS ARE TIED BEHIND OUR BACK BY THE CHANGES.



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As experts in this area, we understand the specific pressures and concerns that you may be facing. We have a wealth of knowledge dealing with a variety of police matters to include pensions as part of financial proceedings, and the impact of shift patterns on child arrangement disputes.

Where necessary, we work closely with other specialists, such as pension, tax and financial advisors, to deliver the very best results for you. We can also help with mediation and collaborative law options.

As a member of the West Midlands Police Federation our leading experts in police divorce, finances and children matters can offer:

- A free initial consultation
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### Our experts

To speak to a specialist member of our team, please call Lucy, Mark or Clare for an initial chat:



**Lucy Todd**

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**Mark Hands**

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## Legal Services for West Midlands Police

With over 20 years' experience of working with police, Gorvins have been a leading provider of legal services in all matters arising from relationship breakdowns and disputes concerning children. We understand the importance of family and the impact that a family breakdown can have upon all of those closely concerned and that is why our service (with discounted fees) is offered not just to serving and retired police officers and police staff, but also to their partners and immediate family members.

Part of **our commitment** to supporting those whose vital work supports us all includes a prompt **initial consultation - free of charge**.

We also supply our legal advice to you at a discounted rate and are able to offer a **fixed-fee divorce process**.

Our family & divorce law specialists understand the aspects that particularly impact upon the police with reference to pensions in divorce cases and shift patterns in relation to arrangement for children.

### Other Legal Services

- Wills, Trusts and Probate
- Corporate/Commercial
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# 'We are formidable when we work together'

## NATIONAL SECRETARY PRAISES FEDERATION COLLEAGUES AS HE PREPARES FOR RETIREMENT

**P**olice Federation stalwart Alex Duncan has attended his last annual conference as national secretary ahead of his imminent retirement.

Alex, who became a Fed rep in 1999 and has been national secretary since 2018, said serving the organisation had been a "real honour" and praised the work of colleagues across the 43 forces in England and Wales.

He told delegates at the 2022 annual conference: "I am lucky. I know a lot of people who spend most of their working lives counting the moments until they retire and I have never been like that.

"Somebody asked me how many days I had left and genuinely don't know which is probably a good sign because there's not many of them left.

"Policing has been great for me and I have done a wide variety of different things and the Federation to me is the best of policing because it is people from within the service looking after their colleagues."

Alex acknowledged there had been some tough times as well as great successes over the years and urged the Federation to show strength through unity in the coming years.

He said: "I have been here for good times and bad. We have had some fairly spectacular moments along the way and some that are best forgotten.

"We are most effective when we work together and I guess where we are sometimes not so great at talking to each other and trusting each other.

"We have different views but when we start talking to each other we start to understand. But I still see a disconnect between some of the branches and the centre, or Leatherhead as it tends to be less affectionately called, and yet it is much better to talk and work together.

"When we do work together, and when we rely on reasoned arguments, we are pretty formidable."

Reflecting on his 23-year involvement with the Police Federation, Alex said: "It's been great, it's been an absolute joy and a real honour.

"But it has to come to an end and at least we're back meeting in-person so I get to say goodbye."



National secretary Alex Duncan.



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Alex joined Avon and Somerset Police in 1990 and before becoming a Federation rep had roles in response, community policing and the District Crime Unit.

He said his decision to become a Federation rep was based on a commitment to promoting and safeguarding the rights and working conditions of rank and file officers.

He held various posts including deputy branch secretary and conduct lead and was Avon and Somerset branch board secretary from 2007 to 2014.

Alex then became a National Board member and held the position of chair of the conduct and performance sub-committee for more than two years.

Before becoming national secretary in 2018, he was chair of the legislation sub-committee and head of civil claims, responsible for the hundreds of claims submitted by members every year, including employment tribunals and discrimination cases.

Deputy national secretary John Partington paid tribute to Alex and said his negotiating skills and attention to detail set him apart from others.

John said: "One area where he is formidable and passionate is in negotiating for members.

"People often see him as the grumpy man walking around the room but when he is in those negotiations - whether that's pensions, regulations or pay - he is always across all the details, more so than a lot of other people in the room.

"He is passionate and the reason for that is he wants to get the best for police officers."



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