

FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation

February/March 2023

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PAY AND MORALE SURVEY RESULTS

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WELCOME

Welcome to the February/March 2023 edition of **Federation** - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

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

Just get in touch and let us know.

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

Published by:
XPR (UK) Ltd

Editor:
Rich Cooke, chair

Design and production:
XPR (UK) Ltd

Contact us:

Guardians House
2111 Coventry Road
Sheldon, Birmingham
B26 3EA

Telephone:
0121 752 4900

Email:
westmidlandspf@polfed.org

www.polfed.org/westmids

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I'm optimistic about what the next 12 months have in store for us



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

The start of a new year is bringing change and inevitably anxiety and disruption to some officers. Is it going to be worth it? Overall, I think it is, but it won't come without some inevitable pain.

I'm optimistic about what the next 12 months have in store for us, the opportunities that will provide colleagues and, in turn, the positive impact on our communities.

We've recently welcomed our new Chief Constable Craig Guildford and look forward to Scott Green joining us as Deputy. Both bring invaluable experience and ideas to help shape the future of policing within the West Midlands.

But be assured, there's no 'blank cheque' from the Federation. We remain committed to ensuring our members are treated fairly and

that any change is governed by a sound rationale to make things better. That will involve us not always agreeing and providing constructive criticism as we already are doing. I have found that honest feedback has been well received by the new Chief.

The Carrick case is a stark reminder that policing is not immune to infiltration by criminals and those who want the unique powers of a constable in order to abuse vulnerable people or as a cover to commit criminality. They are present within us and although the vast majority of us have done nothing but serve the public professionally, for the sake of us all, they must be rooted out.

If you see or hear unacceptable behaviour or things that make you uncomfortable, please challenge it and/or discuss it with a supervisor or a Federation rep. We all have a stake in this, it's heartbreaking to see our good name sullied by the few who've somehow been allowed into the job and stayed in. It must stop and we all have a responsibility to put this right.

It will be a tough year for plenty of other reasons too - colleagues are no strangers to those. But my general optimism comes from a sense that, locally, we will be laying the foundations of a new era where we get back to community leadership, accountability and control of events. One in which rank and file officers are invested and therefore more flexible. Trusted and backed to use their powers proactively to deliver a safer community.

That leads me to the latest pay and morale survey, which revealed that 88 per cent of West Midlands respondents felt morale across the Force was either low or very low.

As branch chair, I can't disguise my disappointment that so many of our members are feeling like this. But it is no surprise. Our pay and pensions have suffered drastically over the past few years and however well organised we become as a force, that is becoming an increasing drain on the wellbeing of colleagues and we'll



MY GENERAL OPTIMISM COMES FROM A SENSE THAT, LOCALLY, WE WILL BE LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NEW ERA WHERE WE GET BACK TO COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTROL OF EVENTS. ONE IN WHICH RANK AND FILE OFFICERS ARE INVESTED AND THEREFORE MORE FLEXIBLE. TRUSTED AND BACKED TO USE THEIR POWERS PROACTIVELY TO DELIVER A SAFER COMMUNITY.

continue to lose experienced colleagues earlier in their careers as they decide enough is enough.

With officers legally barred from industrial action and not even allowed to negotiate our own pay, this is a tremendous challenge. As a Federation, we try to represent and influence on your behalf in the media and behind the scenes with chiefs and MPs but I'm all too aware that's been fruitless for years now on pay.

We need to be more innovative to find ways of capturing and focusing public attention and placing real pressure on the Government. With that in mind, I need your support, suggestions and ideas so please get in touch with your reps if you have any.

According to data from the Office for National Statistics, 51 homicides were committed in the West Midlands Force area between April 2021 and March 2022, compared to 40 in the previous 12 months. Again, this is hardly surprising but something I - and your fellow branch representatives - are working closely with the Force to tackle.

In January and February alone, we saw an abundance of incidents involving dangerous weapons. Not only is this continuing carnage (I make no apology for that word) a national scandal but it should serve to focus the minds of the public on policing. The opening of new custody blocks and a greater willingness to deal strongly with dangerous knife criminals - including juvenile offenders is 100 per cent the right approach and there can be no doubt our arguments have landed and been acted upon.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome the Force's new multi-faith lead Khadija Sulaiman, who took over this year following the retirement of John Butcher BEM. It's important to recognise that Khadija will be there for all of our members, whatever their background or religion - and it's essential that we use her services if and when we feel we need her support. In many ways, her work echoes that of our Federation - by providing a listening ear when our members need it most.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that registration for this year's Police Unity Tour is now open. Along with the much-needed support from Chief Superintendent Andy Beard, I'm organising this year's West Midlands chapter - and it would be brilliant to see as many of you there, riding with me.

Raising money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS) the 180-mile event, will start on Friday 28 July and end on Sunday 30 July, with the final chapter being in Staffordshire, as riders end at the National Memorial Arboretum, to mark this year's service of remembrance. So, what are you waiting for? Dust off your bike, hop on the saddle and sign up now.

Until next time, keep safe.

Fed chair hopes new Deputy Chief Constable will bring 'experience and change'

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has told how he is looking forward to working towards creating a better future for officers with the new Deputy Chief Constable as he congratulates Scott Green on his recent appointment.

Rich says he hopes Mr Green will bring with him not only years of valuable experience but a much-needed shift in focus.

Mr Green, who is currently an Assistant Chief Constable at Greater Manchester Police, is expected to take up his new position in the spring.

"On behalf of the Federation, we look forward to welcoming Mr Green to the West Midlands," said Rich.

"Mr Green and our new Chief, Craig Guildford, have both spoken about delivering a proactive local policing model to improve our service to make our communities safer - which is music to my ears. Everybody knows how passionate I am about seeing the return of local policing - and it looks like those at the top share

that drive.

"I can't stress enough how important I think it is for the Force to look at its current policing model. Our bobbies need the space to be back out within the community, getting to know the locals and delivering the intelligence that is so crucial to preventing serious crime. That, in my opinion, is the only way we will see our streets getting any safer."

Rich previously called the appointment of the new Chief Constable a 'breath of fresh air', as he reveals this is the 'first time in a while' he feels like the Fed's voice is having a tangible influence on shaping the future of the Force.

He ended: "Our campaigns and arguments made over several years locally seem to be finally paying off. Of course, pay, pensions and importantly, the mental health and wellbeing of our officers remain major sources of discontent among colleagues, and that is shared by me, but at a local level we can be proud of the progress we are making."

App aims to help officers improve health and wellbeing

West Midlands Police Federation members can now access a new Health Assured app designed to provide a digital resource to help improve their physical and mental health.

The My Healthy Advantage app offers tools and engaging features which are designed to improve health and wellbeing.

Features include four-week plans to support with quitting smoking, losing weight and coping with pressures.

There's also mini health checks covering topics such as height, weight, sleep, and mental health, as well as a weekly wellness mood tracker.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke said: "The new year is a chance to start afresh and make those small changes that can make a big difference to our health and wellbeing."

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‘We are working to ensure driver training units are compliant with new law’

More than half of forces still need to make changes within their driver training units to comply with new legislation giving police drivers better protection in law.

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers, Police Federation national lead for police pursuits and driver training, says only 19 units are working to the new legal framework, 19 need further changes and 5 will not be granted a licence for training to be delivered until improvements are made.

“We are working closely with these units to ensure they are compliant,” says Tim, who led an eight-year campaign for legislative change.

“For the new legislation to be effective, all

driver training units must work under the legal provisions of the prescribed training licence. We are working hard to ensure that happens.”

Tim has worked closely with Federation branches across England and Wales to ensure officers are aware of their own obligations under the legislation which came into effect at the end of November last year.

He has given presentations at branch meetings explaining the impact of the legal changes and asking Fed reps to encourage members to only drive if they are ‘in ticket’ and to read a frequently asked questions document giving guidance on the new regulations.

Statutory instrument 1112 sets out the prescribed training giving trained police drivers

the protections afforded to them under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

“These regs affect all officers trained to drive police vehicles and they must familiarise themselves with them,” Tim explains.

“I cannot stress highly enough how important it is for them to make sure they are fully aware of the changes and how they affect them.

“Critically, their driving will no longer be assessed by the standards of the careful, competent driver, but will now be judged by those of their careful and competent colleagues who have completed the same level of prescribed training.

“The change in the law, which recognises



police officers' skills and professional training, is welcomed but we must now ensure that all drivers are 'in ticket' with their training.

"My advice to any officer who is not up to date with their police driver training is very simple – don't drive a police vehicle because if you do you could be vulnerable to prosecution."

Tim is pushing for an exemption under the new legislation to give officers better protection when they act instinctively, in cases where they have to do something that has not been specifically trained. Provision is made in the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) but it needs to be covered from a legal angle too.

National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) police driving lead DCC Terry Woods welcomed the legislative change: "I believe this is an excellent step forward for police drivers. Standardisation throughout the UK on police driving courses is essential in providing a minimum standard to all officers and making the roads safer for all."

The regulations are enshrined in law through The Road Traffic Act 1988 (Police Driving: Prescribed Training) Regulations 2022.

The FAQ document, produced by the Federation and the NPCC, aims to help officers better understand the new legislation.

"Quite simply, the previous legislation did not recognise the training police response drivers undertake and the tactics they may need to employ when responding to emergencies or pursuing criminals," says Tim.

"This new legislation is a great stride forward but, for the new test to be applied, officers must be driving for police purposes and have undertaken the prescribed training as set out in the regulations.

"Police driving schools have had months to ensure they are compliant with the legislation and have undertaken self-assessment exercises. It is disappointing that currently we have 23 driving units across England and Wales where improvements are necessary.

"But the onus is on the individual officer to make sure they only drive when they are up to date with the prescribed training as defined in the regulations and legislation."

Training must be delivered by an accredited and licensed police driving instructor, in line with the nationally set learning standards.

Tim is keen to stress that there is only one standard and any divergence by any force or senior officer will mean they are denying

“ I BELIEVE THIS IS AN EXCELLENT STEP FORWARD FOR POLICE DRIVERS. STANDARDISATION THROUGHOUT THE UK ON POLICE DRIVING COURSES IS ESSENTIAL IN PROVIDING A MINIMUM STANDARD TO ALL OFFICERS AND MAKING THE ROADS SAFER FOR ALL.



Tim Rogers.

officers the ability to respond on blues and twos.

"The new law demands that an officer's driving, when an incident makes the inquisition necessary, is assessed by a professional, knowledgeable and competent individual," he said.

"Each force must have an appropriate mechanism by which these nationally agreed and enshrined in law standards are assessed. Locally, forces should have a driver training unit and we are working with the NPCC to ensure there is a universal model for this essential assessment body.

"Nationally, and for matters requiring subject matter expert (SME) evidence, there is the NPCC Subject Matter Expert (SME) group.

"Members of this group have received training at the West Midlands Police Federation office, delivered by the Federation and the NPCC, and with continuing professional development (CPD) each year.

"Local groups will be able to give advice on the standards as they are made up from appropriately skilled and knowledgeable individuals.

"But, as agreed by the Federation, the NPCC, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Independent Office for Police Conduct and the Home Office, the SME group are the only ones able to give expert evidence."

Police driving schools are likely to be licensed in a similar way to firearms units, since there is a higher incidence of risk, and the College of Policing will issue new APP.

In the meantime, training is being rolled out to solicitors who are involved in representing officers as some officers may wrongly believe they have received "prescribed training".

“ THESE REGS AFFECT ALL OFFICERS TRAINED TO DRIVE POLICE VEHICLES AND THEY MUST FAMILIARISE THEMSELVES WITH THEM. I CANNOT STRESS HIGHLY ENOUGH HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THEM TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE CHANGES AND HOW THEY AFFECT THEM.

Roads policing lead vows to tackle under-investment

Tackling the chronic long-term underfunding of the policing of the nation's roads is the number one priority for the Federation's new lead for roads policing.

But Brian Booth is the first to admit that he must first get a complete picture of the scale of the under-resourcing of traffic policing.

"The harsh truth is that we don't really know how many officers we have working in roads policing," Brian admitted, "So my first task is to get to grips with that.

"We have a situation where some officers are not just being counted twice in some cases but are actually being put into three different pools. We have armed response vehicle officers, for example, being recorded both as armed response and roads policing, and in some cases search trained officers are finding themselves in all three categories.

"This cannot be right, and will, of course, skew any figures being touted.

"The Federation has roads policing reps in all but five forces now so each of those is being asked to report back on the number of dedicated roads policing officers they have within their own force and I will be contacting those where we don't have a roads rep. Once we have collated this information, we will have a truer picture of where we are and how many officers we have lost in this critical area of policing."

In his own force of West Yorkshire, roads policing officers have been reduced from 350 around 10 years ago to a low of 120 in recent years, though Brian concedes this has now increased to around 150. He believes that overall traffic cop numbers will have fallen by around a half to a third during the austerity years.

Brian hopes that getting accurate nationwide figures will help support the Federation's demands for a massive re-investment in roads policing to halt the growing number of deaths and serious injuries on the roads and bring back a more visible policing presence to the road network.

"Since we have lost this visible presence, we have lost the engagement, we have lost the HGV vehicle checks, we have lost the education on road safety and this has had a massive cost, in terms of roads casualties and disruption to the roads network, but also



Brian Booth, the Federation's new lead for roads policing.

financially – an accident closing a road can have an economic impact of £1 million an hour," he explains.

"But there is also another side to this. We are doing less work with those specialising in the handling of hazardous materials and that can lead to environmental issues impacting on waterways and wildlife. We need to re-connect with these organisations and that is something I have in hand."

Brian was until last year chair of West Yorkshire Police Federation and stood in last year's elections for the national chair position, finally missing out to Steve Hartshorn who took up the post in April last year.

But having stood on a ticket of putting members first and giving them a voice, he remained committed to getting more involved in the running of the national Federation and wanted a key position on the new National Board when this was formed in June last year.

With a background in roads policing, this was the obvious fit for him, but he has also taken on several other roles. Brian, who became roads policing lead in September, is the Federation lead for the National Police Air Service (NPAS) and, under the response umbrella, he will head up the drugs and body-worn video workstreams. He is also part of both the health and safety and wellbeing

committees, taking on the portfolio for financial wellbeing.

"I didn't feel comfortable, standing for the national chair, calling for change and then just slipping back into the sidelines when I wasn't successful," he explains, "You have to get involved and stand up for what you believe in."

Brian first joined Lancashire Police in 1995 and transferred to West Yorkshire in 2001 initially joining a divisional patrol unit and then completed his firearms training before being promoted to sergeant in 2007. But, having become a Fed rep in 2014, he stood back from the firearms work in 2015 as he struggled to complete the refresher training every 10 weeks and moved back to roads policing until taking on the full-time branch chair's role in 2018.

Recognising that things have moved on in the four plus years since he was actively involved in roads policing, Brian has been getting himself fully up to speed since becoming roads policing lead.

He says he will draw heavily on the expertise of Tim Rogers, the Federation's pursuits policing and driver training lead and successful campaigner for legislative change to better protect police drivers, and other roads policing lead reps including Northumbria's Andy Smith, who specialises in collision investigation, Simon Hill of the Met, who has strong links into the Department for Transport and the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety charity, and Neil Clarke from Greater Manchester Police who has extensive knowledge of motorcycle policing, VIPEX escorts and HGVs.

The Federation's roads policing forum meets quarterly and regional lead reps for roads policing are meeting monthly to identify issues, discuss progress and plan ahead.

"There is a lot for us to tackle," says Brian, "But no one, least of all the Government and chief constables, should underestimate the importance of roads policing or the pressures those who police the roads are under. Just consider these figures alone: during 2022 40 people were killed in police pursuits while two were shot dead in police firearms incidents.

"It is a stark reminder that there is a far higher chance of an officer being involved in an Article 2 investigation when a pursuit occurs, over any other area of policing."

Renewed calls for action to tackle knife crime

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke says the ongoing rise in knife crime within the West Midlands further supports his calls for a more localised policing model.

Rich says the situation remains of serious concern, following a week of multiple incidents involving dangerous weapons, one of which resulted in a person being murdered.

His comments come after 20-year-old Bailey Atkinson was stabbed to death earlier this month in Walsall, with another man attacked in Dudley and taken to hospital in a critical condition just 24 hours later.

"It's heart-wrenching to hear about young lives being taken on such a regular basis as a result of knife crime. We might be police officers but we are all human - none of us wants to hear about youngsters, children, being murdered on our doorstep," said Rich.

"For me, the answer is three-pronged. First, a proactive policing model which is embedded in local communities naturally builds trust and leads to the flow of intelligence.

"Second, clear support for officers to use their powers to prevent crime, for example, Section 60 stop, search and arrest, making sure dangerous juvenile offenders in possession of weapons are detained and dealt with swiftly.

"Thirdly, we need the justice system to step up and hand out sentences which prioritise public protection, rather than the perceived needs of offenders.

"I know our officers are working tirelessly under immense pressure to keep our streets as safe as they can. After all, officers tend to join the Force to protect the public - and that is exactly what our officers are trying to do. We need the powers that be to make sure this happens.

"Long-term, we need more bobbies back out among the community. We need to go back to basics and get our cops seen again with space to engage, not just going past in a blaze of blue lights and sirens."

As a father himself, Rich says his thoughts are with the families of the young people being

injured or worse, killed, as a result of knife crime.

"I have three children, and I would be lying if I said I wasn't concerned about their safety too. Colleagues are finding examples of young people in and around schools and colleges, carrying machetes, zombie knives and other dangerous weapons," he added.

"The lack of punishment and consequences for those involved in knife crime incidents is simply not acceptable. Changes need to be made, and protecting innocent members of the public should be the only priority."

“ I KNOW OUR OFFICERS ARE WORKING TIRELESSLY UNDER IMMENSE PRESSURE TO KEEP OUR STREETS AS SAFE AS THEY CAN. AFTER ALL, OFFICERS TEND TO JOIN THE FORCE TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC - AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT OUR OFFICERS ARE TRYING TO DO. WE NEED THE POWERS THAT BE TO MAKE SURE THIS HAPPENS.

Force's new multi-faith lead makes history

West Midlands Police's new multi-faith lead Khadija Sulaiman has made history after becoming the country's first Muslim to be appointed the role at a police force.

Having joined West Midlands Police at the beginning of this year, Khadija now leads a team of more than 130 multi-faith chaplains, after replacing John Butcher BEM, who retired after supporting the Force for more than 30 years.

"This is the start of a really beautiful journey for me, I know it," said Khadija, a 35-year-old mother-of-three.

"But me to have landed such a role is very uncommon - in fact, when my line manager called me to tell me I'd got the job, he said I was the first ever Muslim to be appointed as a multi-faith lead within a Force. I was very proud.

"I have three daughters and everything I do is to set an example for them. I want them to believe in themselves and know that if there is something they want to achieve, then they can do it. They drive me, every single day."

Khadija is looking forward to working with her new team while supporting officers and staff at West Midlands Police.

"My first goal is to raise the profile of the multi-faith team. I think people associate chaplains with a collar, and as someone who is out to convert others into following a certain religion - but that is completely the opposite of what we are doing. In fact, I want all my team to be able to provide consistent support to everyone, regardless of their background, colour, or religion," she added.

"We offer spiritual, religious, and pastoral care, and it's the pastoral care that I think officers need most. We are here to always support officers and staff, whether their issue is personal or professional. I want officers to know that we are a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on and an advisor if that's what they need - we will be led by them.

"I also think it's important that we work with under-represented groups and colleagues to give them a voice. The role we play in the Force, as a multi-faith chaplaincy team, I think, is essential."

Khadija's interest in chaplaincy began 12 years ago when she found herself volunteering in the local community, specifically supporting women from South Asia.

Soon after, she began volunteering as a chaplain at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital, ahead of developing her career in chaplaincy at Birmingham's Women and Children's Hospital, before going on to support inmates at a local female prison.

"All the skills I've learned working in the NHS and the prison have helped shape me into the chaplain I am today. But the job I'm in now is completely different from anything I've been in before. Of course, it's early days and I'm still finding my feet," continued Khadija, who explained she is slowly starting to get used to the number of acronyms the police use.

"I'm still learning, but honestly, I believe we should always be learning - that's what keeps us motivated and driven.

"I've held my first away day with the team and have started to get to know them. We've identified several gaps that need to be filled and talked about how we will fill them."

Khadija explained how she wants to use her previous experience volunteering to tap into local communities.

"I think chaplaincy can be used as a gateway between the police and communities, and our support can really help get to the heart of the issues members of the public are experiencing," she added.

"I've worked with some extraordinary people in the past. The ladies I supported in the prison service were all lovely, and every day was different - I'd walk past one cell and see a woman standing on her bed singing 'I'm a survivor', and then in the next cell, see a woman attempting to make chicken korma in her kettle. Working in so many different environments will help my role in the police."

“MY FIRST GOAL IS TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE MULTI-FAITH TEAM. I THINK PEOPLE ASSOCIATE CHAPLAINS WITH A COLLAR, AND AS SOMEONE WHO IS OUT TO CONVERT OTHERS INTO FOLLOWING A CERTAIN RELIGION - BUT THAT IS COMPLETELY THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT WE ARE DOING. IN FACT, I WANT ALL MY TEAM TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE CONSISTENT SUPPORT TO EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR BACKGROUND, COLOUR, OR RELIGION.



Khadija Sulaiman.

Police should be able to charge most offences, says Chief

West Midlands Police Federation is backing calls for officers to be allowed to charge suspects in more cases in a bid to reduce workload on members and ensure speedier justice for victims.

The Force's Chief Constable, Craig Guildford, has joined his counterparts at West Yorkshire Police and Greater Manchester Police to urge a complete overhaul of the criminal justice system.

They said: "If something is broken, then we should fix it. If we can't fix it, then we should replace it."

"The ability for the Crown Prosecution System (CPS) to give timely charging advice - namely while the suspect is under arrest and in the cells - is broken; not because of anything the CPS has done, but because they do not have the resources or the people to do what they used to.

"We have tried to fix it together over the last two years but the plasters are not sticking and things are getting worse.

"So for the sake of victims, witnesses and all in the criminal justice system, we need to replace it now by restoring to the police the ability to charge most offences while suspects are in the cells."

Jason Dooley, a full-time West Midlands Police Federation rep, said the branch was in full support of the chief constables' position.

He said the existing system of referring most cases to the CPS led to inevitable delays which was unfair on victims, alleged suspects and investigating officers who were becoming bogged down in mountains of paperwork.

"As things stand, we are repeating ourselves too much and doing a lot of unnecessary work to satisfy the CPS," he said.

"Sometimes officers are spending seven or eight hours putting a file together and are then told something's missing or not quite right and call no further action."

Jason also said some cases had to be referred to the overstretched CPS when an instant decision on charging could be made at the station.

"Any racially-aggravated offences where an officer has been racially abused has to go to the CPS no matter what," he said.

"Even if the abuse is captured on bodycam and there is overwhelming evidence - evidence from a police officer who is classed as a credible witness in court - it has to be sent to the CPS which is crazy because we could make



Chief Constable Craig Guildford.

a decision there and then."

Jason said once a case was handed to the CPS it could take several months before the matter was even considered for an initial court date.

He said officers then had to explain to victims and witnesses that a suspect had been released "under investigation" or "on bail".

"That is simply not fair on the victim or the alleged suspect because neither want it hanging over them for months on end," said Jason.

"And, of course, while it is being looked at by the CPS, the police officer takes on more cases, paperwork piles up, mistakes get made, stress levels rise, productivity goes down and wellbeing starts to suffer."

Jason said some complicated cases clearly needed the supervision of the CPS but suggested custody sergeants were more often than not in a much better position to make decisions on straightforward cases where there was little doubt what the outcome would be.

He said: "We are not saying this would work on every case and I think there probably has to be some training and additional resourcing around it but the Police Federation is 100 per cent behind the Chief on this."

Writing in the Guardian newspaper, Mr

Guildford and his colleagues called for a whole-system review of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) but urged immediate action to tackle the growing crisis.

They said: "We would submit that the answer is simple. The CPS are unable and are likely always to be unable to make charging decisions whilst the suspect is in the cells.

"So the Director of Public Prosecutions just needs to give the right back to the police to make charging decisions there and then in far more cases: domestic abuse, harassment, burglary, robbery, theft, knife crime, violent crime.

"We used to do this, officers want it, victims want it, defence lawyers want it, and we are sure the courts do too but the system keeps saying no.

"We are trying to help free up CPS and partner agency work to do what they should be doing - prosecuting, not administration."

The chief constables said allowing the police to charge more offences would give greater confidence to victims and witnesses, enable files and prosecution cases to be built more quickly and lead to swifter justice.

"We've done it before, and we can easily do it again. In this case, returning to the old ways of doing things represents a good example of a return to common sense policing," they said.



Fed chair determined to see every officer Taser-trained

'We will continue to campaign for every officer to be Taser-trained and not stop until we see those results,' says West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke, as plans are put in place to immediately boost Taser-trained officers by an extra 400 in the next six months.

Rich's comments follow the completion of the West Midlands Police STRA (strategic threat and risk assessment), a document that aims to provide a more evidence-based model to help identify how many Taser-trained officers are needed and where.

Rich, along with the branch's health and safety lead, Deano Walker, has been liaising with Force Taser lead Martin Hurcomb to consult on the STRA with a view to increasing the number of officers with access to training so they can carry the devices.

"As a Federation, our long-term strategic aim is for every frontline officer to be Taser-trained and I pledge that we in no way will recoil from that. We will continue to campaign until the end, until we see that result," said Rich.

"Statistics show that over the last two years, of nearly 3,000 incidents that involved the use of a Taser, there were zero findings of misconduct against those officers and very few complaints.

"Not only does having a Taser make officers up to nine times safer from being assaulted but hearing that there have not been any findings of misconduct against those officers demonstrates the professionalism of our cops. It also shows that any prospective trainees can have absolute confidence in the

quality of the training provided.

"I also want officers to feel confident that they have the backing of the Force and Federation in using Tasers whenever necessary to protect the public appropriately."

With figures showing there was a 30 per cent increase in weapon-enabled crime during 2021/22, and record knife homicide figures out this week, Rich says that the only way to mitigate this additional threat is to put in extra control measures, such as deployable Taser-trained officers.

"This 30 per cent increase means that both members of the public and our officers are at higher risk. As a Federation, we recognise that the political discourse around Tasers and other use of force has had a chilling effect on officers putting themselves forward for a role which is a highly valued one.

"Being Taser-trained will give our officers the necessary protection they need, so they can confidently do their job and protect the public."

Earlier this year, the Federation asked for a review of the number of Taser-trained officers and training capability, expressing concerns about the decline in the number of officers who have completed refresher training, something that must be completed every 12 months.

"Look, Tasers have been with us for the best part of two decades now, they're nothing new - and public surveys prove that using Tasers is widely accepted by the communities we serve," added Rich.

Following persistent campaigning from the Federation, the plan is for the number of

Taser-trained officers to reach nearly 1,500 by April, which is a 400 increase on current figures.

And, for the first time ever, the distribution of Taser officers will take into account which locations face the highest risk of danger, for example, response and neighbourhood teams in areas of high violence.

"Furthermore, we will be encouraging sergeants in key roles such as response to train and retrain so they can provide the frontline leadership role they have told us they want to do," continued Rich, who explained consideration will also be given to student officers nearing the end of their probationary period.

West Midlands officers Leon Mittoo and James Willets received last year's Emergency Services Pride of Britain Award, having been repeatedly stabbed on duty while helping to detain two dangerous offenders.

Both Leon and James were just one-and-a-half years into their probation period when the incident happened back in the summer of 2021.

As well as expressing his congratulations for the courageous duo, Rich has also said that what happened to Leon and James is just one example of the potential risk officers are facing every day.

"There's no job like that of a police officer," added Rich, "We are expected to put ourselves in danger every single day to do our job and protect the public. But the thing is, these spontaneous attacks can happen to any of us. Fortunately, both Leon and James were wearing stab vests but what's scary is, if they hadn't been wearing those, things could've been very different."

The two offenders were carrying backpacks containing multiple dangerous weapons, including a gun, hammer and machete.

Rich continued: "Who knows what those men would've done if they hadn't been dealt with by our officers? But there's no denying it, Leon and James were lucky to get away with minor physical injuries.

"This is just one example that demonstrates the vital need and importance of our frontline officers being Taser-trained.

"We're seeing more and more often that officers are choosing not to act, to protect themselves - and who can blame them? More people carrying armed weapons and violence against officers is increasing yet we're expecting our officers to approach these dangerous people, putting themselves at risk, without their own protection. It just doesn't make sense.

"Those attackers could've harmed a lot more people. Carrying a Taser not only instils that confidence in officers but will, I'm positive, lead to a reduction in crime numbers while ultimately ensuring members of the public and our Force are protected."



**Nine out of 10 West
Midlands officers say
Force morale is low**

Almost nine out of 10 West Midlands Police Federation members believe the Force is struggling with poor morale, according to a new report.

Findings from the Police Federation's latest national pay and morale survey were published today (Wednesday 11 January) and revealed that 88 per cent of West Midlands respondents felt morale across the Force was either low or very low.

The survey also found more than half (55 per cent) reported having low or very low personal morale.

More than a third (37 per cent) said that they found their job very or extremely stressful and more than eight out of ten (82 per cent) have experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months.

86 per cent of West Midlands Police officers were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their overall remuneration including basic pay and allowances

Fourteen per cent of respondents intend to resign in the next two years or as soon as they can and blamed morale (98 per cent), how police officers are treated by the Government (96 per cent) and pay (93 per cent) for their decision to quit.

Pay remains a major concern among West Midlands Police officers with 86 per cent either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with

FACTORS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING MORALE

	West Midlands Police %	England and Wales %
Pay	90	87
Workload and responsibilities	58	64
How the police are treated by the government	96	95
How the police are treated by the public	85	81
Your pension	73	68
Opportunities for development and promotion	40	39

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORKING IN THE POLICE

	2022 %	2021 %
I would not recommend joining the police to others	69	70
I do not feel valued in the police	71	70

their overall remuneration including basic pay and allowances.

Almost all respondents (98 per cent) reported that their cost of living had increased in the last month, with an increase in the price of their food shop being the most cited reason, and 88 per cent said they were worse off financially than they were five years ago.

Nearly two out of ten (18 per cent) said they never or almost never had enough money to cover all their essentials.

The survey also found:

- **96 per cent of respondents do not feel respected by the Government**
- **69 per cent would not recommend joining the police to others**
- **71 per cent do not feel valued within the police service**

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke: "No one in the job will be surprised by the findings of this survey but they should still be a cause of massive concern for the National Police Chiefs' Council and Government, not least because things appear to be getting

worse rather than better.

"Pay and pensions denigration are impacting hugely on my colleagues. We cannot go out on strike, therefore we should absolutely be able to negotiate our own pay through a collective bargaining process, in addition to binding arbitration.

"We're not asking for much. You'll never see police officers on picket lines but, in return, our members deserve fair reward for the stressful, and often very dangerous, work they do.

"They have suffered a huge real-term cut in wages over the last 12 years with yearly real reductions becoming normalised. Constables, who constitute around 80 per cent of the workforce, have suffered a reversal equating to almost a third in the value of their pay.

"This level of drop in standard of living is unprecedented and, combined with a retail prices index (RPI) nearing 20 per cent in 12 months, we are all feeling this erosion of lifestyle acutely, with increasing numbers struggling and having to work excessive, unhealthy over-time to make ends meet and to continue to provide a service to the public.

"That has an inevitable impact on officer morale and wellbeing and the whole thing becomes a vicious circle which adversely affects the service we deliver."

A total of 1,609 West Midlands Police Federation members took part in the survey which represents a response rate of around 21 per cent.

The survey findings will be presented to chief constables, ministers and other stakeholders as part of the Federation's campaign for better pay and conditions and further improvements to the police service.

Read the full report at: <https://www.polfed.org/westmids/media/5027/pay-and-morale-2022-west-midlands-police.pdf>

“PAY AND PENSIONS DENIGRATION ARE IMPACTING HUGELY ON MY COLLEAGUES. WE CANNOT GO OUT ON STRIKE, THEREFORE WE SHOULD ABSOLUTELY BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE OUR OWN PAY THROUGH A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS, IN ADDITION TO BINDING ARBITRATION. WE'RE NOT ASKING FOR MUCH. YOU'LL NEVER SEE POLICE OFFICERS ON PICKET LINES BUT, IN RETURN, OUR MEMBERS DESERVE FAIR REWARD FOR THE STRESSFUL, AND OFTEN VERY DANGEROUS, WORK THEY DO.

Claims boots are damaging officers' feet

New guidance on protective boots issued to public order trained officers is being sought by West Midlands Police amid claims they are damaging officers' feet.

West Midlands Police Federation health and safety lead Deano Walker called for a review of the footwear, which features steel toe-caps, steel soles and built-in rigid metatarsal protectors, when officers complained they were uncomfortable and had caused serious foot pain, blistering and sores.

Deano had urged members who had experienced problems with the boots to contact him so he could present evidence to the Force Uniform & Equipment Group early in December and press for a change of brand but as only 45 officers responded it fell below the threshold needed for further action to be taken.

However, the Force has agreed to return to the manufacturer seeking further guidance on how the boot should be worn in a public order and training scenario.

Deano said: "Emails went to every department across the Force asking officers who are public order trained.

"I got 45 replies. Three were positive from members who said the boots were fine for them but the others all said the same thing, they were causing soreness and discomfort and some contained photos of feet with blisters and I was quite concerned by some of the injuries I saw."

Deano explained: "Due to the small number of replies received it would not justify a request to the Force to replace or even consider replacing the boot.

"There are around 2,000 public order trained officers within WMP, changing the current boot for 42 officers could possibly trigger issues for those officers comfortable in the current boot.

"However, as with all Personal Protective Equipment, the boots should come with proper guidance, advice and training on how they are worn so the Force has agreed to go back to the manufacturer to ask if they have any instructions, guidance and advice on how to use them, such as how to lace them up, whether an insole is needed or whether they should be worn with a cotton or nylon sock.

"And, if there is any specific additional



Deano Walker.

equipment such as an insole or a certain sock that is preferred by the manufacturer, then I will be going back to the Force to request they are supplied alongside the boot."

Deano stressed it was vital that officers continued to wear the Force-issued footwear despite their unpopularity with some officers.

He said: "I understand that this isn't the answer that some officers were looking for as some have already told me they are considering not doing any more public order duties or further training and are looking to source their own boots.

"But they have to wear these protective boots when on public order duties or training because failure to do so could lead to issues with health and safety, insurance coverage and their legal rights in the event of personal injury."



“AS WITH ALL PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, THE BOOTS SHOULD COME WITH PROPER GUIDANCE, ADVICE AND TRAINING ON HOW THEY ARE WORN SO THE FORCE HAS AGREED TO GO BACK TO THE MANUFACTURER TO ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY INSTRUCTIONS, GUIDANCE AND ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THEM, SUCH AS HOW TO LACE THEM UP, WHETHER AN INSOLE IS NEEDED OR WHETHER THEY SHOULD BE WORN WITH A COTTON OR NYLON SOCK.

Judicial review highlights the importance of independent tribunals in misconduct cases

West Midlands Police Federation has welcomed the findings of a judicial review into a disciplinary panel's decision.

The case centred around a long-serving sergeant who was given a final written warning after the panel found them guilty of misconduct for suggesting during an interview that colleagues had discriminated against a transgender officer and that they had stepped in to challenge their behaviour.

But the Force felt the sergeant had brought "discredit to the police service" and undermined "public confidence". It wanted the officer dismissed without notice and sought a judicial review of the panel's decision at the High Court. The judge, however, backed the original ruling.

West Midlands Police Federation full-time discipline lead Dave Hadley said the case showed how the existing disciplinary system, which was reformed as recently as 2020, provides the necessary balance between protecting the public from people who should not be in the Force and protection for officers accused of misconduct.

Dave said: "This officer had served for 27 years. There was no evidence to suggest they had any inclination or predilection for being dishonest in a professional capacity - far from

it. The panel decided this wasn't a case where the public needed to be protected from a dishonest officer, this was a matter which in their judgement should be dealt with by a final written warning.

"The Force didn't like that so applied for judicial review in a bid to have the officer's final written warning overturned."

Dave said the case highlighted the merits of a specialist, independent tribunal deciding on misconduct matters at a time when the role of Legally Qualified Chairs (LQC) is being openly questioned by chief officers.

He said: "The previous Chief Constable is on the record as saying he had officers working for him that a supermarket would have sacked, he was of the opinion that chiefs should be in full control of all disciplinary outcomes in their Force and sadly that is a view which is shared by many other chiefs."

He added: "It must always be borne in mind that police officers are part of a group of workers not afforded many of the protections of employment legislation, by virtue of the unique employment status we hold: we are independent officers of the Crown, not employees.

"It is incredibly pleasing that after a stressful two years the officer is now able to put this whole episode behind them and

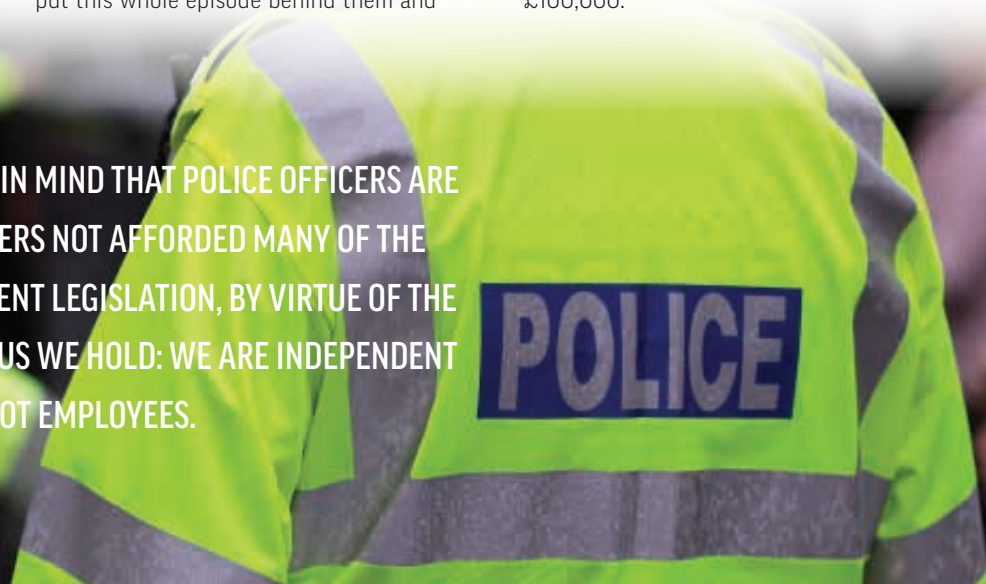


Dave Hadley.

move on."

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, added: "While we are clearly conscious of the impact this case has had on the officer involved, we also need to bear in mind that proceedings such as this can cost the public purse approximately £50,000 to £100,000."

“IT MUST ALWAYS BE BORNE IN MIND THAT POLICE OFFICERS ARE PART OF A GROUP OF WORKERS NOT AFFORDED MANY OF THE PROTECTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION, BY VIRTUE OF THE UNIQUE EMPLOYMENT STATUS WE HOLD: WE ARE INDEPENDENT OFFICERS OF THE CROWN, NOT EMPLOYEES.”



Widows' pensions campaigner steps back after court ruling

Police pensions campaigner Kate Hall is standing down after her tireless eight-year battle to stop police survivors having to choose between companionship and financial security suffered another legal blow.

Kate announced her decision after the Court of Appeal upheld a ruling which prevents surviving partners of police officers in the 1987 pension scheme keeping their pension if they remarry or cohabit with a partner.

Changes to the regulations allowing all survivors to keep their pensions for life came into force in 2006 but campaigners had steadfastly fought for changes to the 1987 regulations.

Critics say the latest ruling means police widows and widowers are still forced to choose between love and money and even the judges recognised "the unfortunate potential effects of Regulation C9 upon the appellants".

But they upheld Mr Justice Fordham's ruling from last May which dismissed the campaigners' demands for a change in regulations to create a UK-wide policy allowing those who remarry or cohabit after the loss of their police officer spouse to retain their pension entitlement in full.

The National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO), which has spearheaded the campaign in recent years alongside Kate, has been advised against taking the case to the Supreme Court but has vowed to continue the fight outside the courts.

In an emotional message to supporters, Kate, whose West Midlands Police dog-handler husband PC Colin Hall died on duty in 1987, said she felt she could not take the campaign any further forward.

Posting an update to supporters, she said: "I am currently feeling very empty as our cause gave my life purpose and I wanted so very much to be celebrating our victory with you rather than writing about our terrible misfortune.

"At its inception ours was an economic campaign – it was about the money. But it rapidly became more about principle and justice and about the service and sacrifice of our loved ones.

"Then you trusted me with so many of your personal stories, some of which have reduced me to tears, and our campaign became about the widespread misery caused by Regulation C9. Some of your stories have also made me smile – as police survivors we have



Kate Hall with then policing minister Mike Penning.

more than our fair share of humour, patience, and resilience.

"Gradually we came together to form a kind of online support network. I hadn't known just how many police survivors were out there in a similar situation to me and it has felt like coming home.

"Thank you all for being part of the team. Believe me when I say you will always have a place in my heart and I'm so grateful for your hard work and support."

Colin Hall served with the West Midlands Police for 21 years. On Sunday 29 November 1987, he was dispatched with colleagues to tackle a disturbance at a block of flats and, having dealt with the incident, he suffered a heart attack and died at the scene at the age of 40. Kate was 24 at the time with a four-year-old daughter.

She began her campaign in June 2014 calling for a UK-wide policy on survivors' pensions which would see those who remarry or cohabit after the loss of their spouse retain their pension entitlement in full regardless of how their spouse died. Her campaign also called for reinstatement of pensions revoked

due to remarriage or cohabitation.

Kate's campaign achieved an amendment to the Police (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 18 January 2016.

The widows, widowers and civil partners of police officers killed in the line of duty and covered by the 1987 Police Pension Regulations now receive their pensions for life if they were in receipt of a special or augmented pension and remained unmarried and were not living with a partner by 1 April 2015.

Reacting to the latest Court of Appeal ruling, NARPO president Richard Critchley said: "This is a bitter blow for our members – the partners of deceased police officers.

"The sorrow of bereavement was made worse by a failure of the courts to recognise the impact these outdated regulations have on their lives, overriding their right to marry under Article 12.

"It is equally devastating for us at NARPO who have supported them as far as we can. This is not the end of the fight, and we will continue this battle outside of the courts."

ELIZABETH MEDAL



Rich Cooke and Bryn Hughes.

Medal campaigner Bryn Hughes awarded MBE

West Midlands Police Federation has praised the work of Elizabeth Medal campaigner Bryn Hughes after he was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours.

Bryn, whose daughter PC Nicola Hughes was murdered in 2012 alongside fellow Greater Manchester Police PC Fiona Bone in a gun and grenade ambush, is the driving force behind the campaign for a posthumous award for officers killed on duty.

“ I SUPPOSE IT’S TINGED WITH THAT BIT OF SADNESS AS WELL BECAUSE THE ONLY REASON I’VE BEEN NOMINATED AND BEEN GIVEN THE AWARD WAS BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO NICOLA AND THE WORK I’VE DONE SINCE THEN. IT MARKS THE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY SO IT’S QUITE A POIGNANT WAY TO MARK IT TO BE HONEST.

The former prison officer said Nicola would be proud of his MBE which was awarded for his work supporting young people who have lost family members through violent crime.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke said Bryn deserved the recognition.

He said: “We are delighted that Bryn’s work has been honoured in this way. Following Nicola’s tragic death, he set up a charity in her name and sought to help young people whose

lives had been torn apart by violent crime. In addition, his energy and dedication have helped keep the Elizabeth Medal campaign at the forefront of the policing agenda and has won widespread support from all sides.

“He has spoken passionately and from first-hand experience about what a posthumous award would mean for the families of fallen officers and has always done so with great dignity.

“West Midlands Police Federation continues to fully support the Elizabeth Medal campaign and hopes approval for such an award is granted in the not too distant future.”

Bryn said the MBE came as a poignant way to mark the 10th anniversary of his daughter’s murder.

He said: “I suppose it’s tinged with that bit

of sadness as well because the only reason I’ve been nominated and been given the award was because of what happened to Nicola and the work I’ve done since then.

“It marks the 10-year anniversary so it’s quite a poignant way to mark it to be honest.”

Asked what Nicola would think of his award, Bryn said: “I think she would be proud. She would be very proud.”

Supporters of the Elizabeth Medal campaign believe emergency services workers deserve the same recognition as military personnel who are posthumously honoured with the Elizabeth Cross which is presented to relatives of those killed in action.

The Police Federation is calling for top level talks with ministers in a bid to secure approval for the new medal (see overleaf).



Bryn Hughes chats to then Home Secretary Priti Patel at the UK Police Memorial.

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography

Members reminded of their rights to paid leave during teacher strikes



West Midlands Police Federation members are being reminded of their right to 'Time Off for Dependants' (TOFD), a benefit that entitles officers to take paid leave in certain situations amid ongoing public sector strikes.

TOFD could prove to be essential over the coming months, especially for members who are parents or carers and are struggling to find alternative childcare arrangements during the regional and national teacher strikes.

And, while the majority of officers will be able to make other arrangements, members should remember that TOFD is there as an alternative to annual leave.

The branch's deputy equality liaison officer Julie Fleming said: "As a Federation, we can see the disruption and impact continuous industrial strike action is having on our members - which is why we want to make

sure that everyone is aware of their rights, including TOFD.

"Of course, if members can find alternative childcare arrangements during the teacher strikes, then there is no need for them to use TOFD. However, it's important that members know this is available - especially those who are worrying about the financial impact taking time off to look after their children might have.

"If you are struggling to make alternative childcare arrangements, we would first advise you to discuss your individual circumstances with your line manager. If necessary and you feel you require further support, then please know the Federation is here for you - our door is always open for members."

Here is a basic outline of how TOFD could help you:

- **TOFD was put in place to ensure officers could deal with unexpected situations that**

affect those who depend on them

- **TOFD cover a variety of circumstances, including strike days by public services - even if these are known about and understood well in advance**
- **TOFD is classed as duty and therefore entitles officers to paid leave**
- **There is no limit as to how many days an officer can use TOFD, as long as the leave is necessary**
- **Please note, TOFD is not the same as 'carers leave' or 'emergency leave'.**

As well as 1 February up-and-coming teacher strike days that will affect the West Midlands and have so far been announced are:

- **Wednesday, March 1 (West Midlands)**
- **Wednesday, March 15 (National)**
- **Thursday, March 16 (National).**

For more information on TOFD members should [read this document](#).

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers hopes a new posthumous award to honour fallen officers is one step closer after gaining the backing of MPs.

The Federation is supporting the campaign for recognition for police officers and other emergency service workers who make the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The award would be called the Elizabeth Medal and would be similar to the Elizabeth Cross, which is awarded to the bereaved relatives of members of the British armed forces killed in action.

Cross-party MPs held a backbench debate in Parliament, secured by Wendy Chamberlain, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Work and Pensions, and Chief Whip.

Tim, who is a member of the national Police Federation's Parliamentary Working Group, said: "The debate and the support of a number of our parliamentarians for the Elizabeth Medal is most welcome.

"The campaign is really starting to gain traction so to have it acknowledged and debated in Westminster is fantastic.

"It's a crying shame that police officers and emergency workers aren't already recognised for making the ultimate sacrifice and it's time that was changed.

"The whole of policing is behind the Elizabeth Medal and it's now up to our lawmakers to make it happen."

Moving her motion, Ms Chamberlain told MPs: "We have long-standing awards for gallantry, sacrifice and service, for those who have given to our country in all sorts of different ways. It is right that such service deserves recognition, and the recipients and their families are rightly proud.

"But sadly, there are those who have equally served their country and have made sacrifices who are not being recognised as they should.

"No reward or recognition can replace the loss of a loved one, but if we can go some way to make them feel like that loss has been recognised, it is very important."

She spoke of how she joined Lothian and Borders Police in 1999, serving for 12 years as a police officer. Her father was a police officer and won a Royal Humane Society award in

MPs voice support for Elizabeth Medal for fallen officers



Wendy Chamberlain.

1983 for rescuing a man from drowning in a dock. Her husband was also an officer.

The Medals for Heroes campaign was officially launched by the Federation, the Police Superintendents' Association and the Prison Officers' Association in April.

It's also been supported by Bryn Hughes MBE, whose daughter PC Nicola Hughes and her Greater Manchester Police colleague PC Fiona Bone were murdered 10 years ago, and the families of fallen officers across the UK.

"There are many families with ongoing campaigns for justice," Ms Chamberlain added, "That is why I am here with other members, calling on the Government to institute a new award for emergency service workers.

"It is part of the royal prerogative to

determine honours and awards, but the Prime Minister does give advice on such matters, so I would argue that it is entirely within the Government and Prime Minister's purview to put forward the recommendations, endorsed not only by members in this place but professional bodies across the country, for a new award."

PC Ged Walker, a dog handler with Nottinghamshire Police, was also remembered during the debate.

On 7 January 2003, PC Walker was dragged 100 yards and fatally injured by a stolen taxi as he reached into the vehicle in an attempt to remove the keys from the ignition. He died in hospital two days later from serious head injuries. He was survived by his widow and two children.

Darren Henry, Conservative MP for Broxtowe, said: "PC Walker is a shining example of why an award, such as a medal, should exist. He and all other police officers put their lives on the line every day they go to work.

"Officers who have lost their lives protecting their communities must be recognised in such tragic circumstances."

Holly Lynch, Labour MP for Halifax and Shadow Minister for Security, added: "So often officers are out there on their own. There is no such thing as a routine call in policing - the circumstances can change in an instant.

"This medal will be one step towards understanding the contributions they make, the risks that they take, and what we really owe to the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty."

Johnny Mercer, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, concluded the debate with a pledge to support the campaign.

He said: "I will take this forward and hope that this year, with a bit of drive and energy, we can bring the campaign to a conclusion with which we are all happy."

“ NO REWARD OR RECOGNITION CAN REPLACE THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE, BUT IF WE CAN GO SOME WAY TO MAKE THEM FEEL LIKE THAT LOSS HAS BEEN RECOGNISED, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT.



West Midlands MPs express support for Federation at Westminster gathering

Three of the region's MPs were among 51 politicians who attended a gathering at the House of Commons organised by the Police Federation.

Labour's Steve McCabe, who represents Selly Oak, and the Conservative MPs for Dudley North and South, Marco Longhi and Mike Wood respectively, met with national Federation officials and were updated on current campaigns.

Afterwards Mr McCabe said he was keen to meet with West Midlands Police Federation in due course to continue the discussion.

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "We are delighted that so many MPs, including our local representatives, were able to make the reception at Westminster.

"The important thing is that we can build on these connections to bring forward meaningful changes for our members, such as we've done before with the Protect the Protectors campaign for tougher sentencing around officer assaults, and police driver protections that I was personally involved in. And there is much to do.

“IT HAS BEEN A GREAT SUCCESS AND WE HAVE A NUMBER OF MPS WILLING TO SUPPORT US IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS MOVING FORWARD. WE WILL NOT STOP HERE, AND WE WILL CONTINUE ENGAGING WITH MPS.

"We will follow up the offer of a meeting with Mr McCabe and hope that all of our county's MPs will be able to support the Federation's campaigns going forward."

Rich Cooke, West Midlands Police Federation branch chair, said he would raise local campaigns with the regional MPs at any future meeting.

"We are currently campaigning for all frontline officers to have access to Taser training and to be able to carry the devices and we are all calling on chief officers to empower colleagues to use stop and search as a means to tackle knife violence," said Rich.

"I would also like to see specific action around pay and would like to get a commitment from all parties to sign up to collective bargaining."

The event was opened by the Police



At the event are (left to right) campaigner Bryn Hughes, Steve McCabe Labour MP for Selly Oak and Tiff Lynch, deputy chair of the Police Federation.

Federation of England and Wales deputy chair Tiff Lynch who is also the staff association's Parliamentary lead.

She told MPs: "We won't leave here today without an ask: for you to spread the word among your colleagues and recognise the unique position police hold, as they continue to hold the thin blue line and service our communities 365 days a year.

"The thin blue line is broken, and without sufficient investment in policing, officers will not be able to keep up with new technology innovations criminals use, will not be able to stretch resources to attend all crimes and, ultimately, will not be to keep our communities safe from the rise in violent crime."

During the event, which was sponsored by Bexley and Sidcup MP Louie French, Federation representatives spoke to MPs including shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper, Tom Pursglove, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions, former Home Secretary Priti Patel and former policing minister Kit Malthouse.

Other guests included members of the House of Lords and police and crime commissioners and discussions focussed on the pressures faced by police officers, the lack of investment in policing and the need for fair pay, conditions and recognition.

In addition to the #MedalsforHeroes campaign for an honorary medal that will be awarded to those who work in the emergency

services killed in the line of duty, other Federation campaigns championed at the event were:

#FairPayForPolice – calling for alternative to the unjust police pay review mechanism that has impacted officers for years and been the source of disputes with successive governments. The Federation is calling for a pay rise to cover the cost of living crisis which ties into the Early Day Motion 547 tabled by Emma Lewell-Buck MP.

#SimplifyDG6 – changes to the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on disclosure has impeded justice and has seen victims of various crimes withdraw from active participation due to officers having to find at least an extra four hours to spend on redacting case material at the pre-charge stage. The Federation is lobbying the Government for amendments to the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018 and the disclosure guidance itself to rectify the damaging and time-consuming problems the current legislation creates.

#TimeLimits – the Federation wants a time limit of 12 months for disciplinary proceedings being brought against officers to be introduced.

Reflecting on the event, Tiff added: "It has been a great success and we have a number of MPs willing to support us in the House of Commons moving forward. We will not stop here, and we will continue engaging with MPs."



‘We need to make the job more attractive’

The chair of West Midlands Police Federation says the Force needs to focus on making the job ‘more attractive’ if the goal is to recruit more officers from a BAME background over the next two years.

Rich Cooke’s comments come after recent figures revealed that the Force is ‘not on target’ to achieving the target set out by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Simon Foster, who wants 1,000 officers from BAME backgrounds to be recruited across the West Midlands by March 2025.

“ IF WE GET OUR BOBBIES BACK ON THE STREETS - AND OFFICERS FROM BAME GROUPS BEING SEEN IN THE COMMUNITY, SURELY THAT WILL ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO APPLY TOO?

In light of the results, which also showed that representation of BAME groups across all roles in the Force has increased from 14.6 per cent to 15.3 per cent, Mr Foster has pledged to work with new Chief Constable Craig Guildford to ‘improve performance’ in increasing diversity across the force.

“While I agree it’s a good thing to set long-term goals like this, I think it’s a wider issue - and a lot more complicated than simply saying we need to recruit more officers from BAME groups,” said Rich.

“I started the job 23 years ago and I’ve seen the Force become so much more diverse over that time. Things aren’t going to change overnight, but we’re certainly becoming more representative of the people we serve - especially in the West Midlands, which has one of the most diverse populations in the country.



Rich Cooke.

“Personally though, I believe, it’s all about making the job a lot more attractive - and that’s for everyone. If we do this, then we are

sure to get more people from all different backgrounds applying for roles.

“I know the Force has started to look at routes into the job - with the non-degree entry recently re-introduced, but I can’t stress enough how much of a barrier things like salary are. It’s a real blocker and I don’t think it encourages people - from all backgrounds, including BAME groups - to join.”

Rich also says that ‘bringing back localised policing’ will help recruit too.

He continued: “Again, it all goes back to local policing. I’ve been shouting hard about getting local bobbies back on our streets and I will continue to do so until we see change. If we get our bobbies back on the streets - and officers from BAME groups being seen in the community, surely that will encourage young people to apply too?”

“Ultimately, if our communities are seeing familiar faces in their area, giving them the opportunity to get to know officers, I think it will have a positive impact on overall recruitment - and will help us achieve the PCC’s target too.”



Police Unity Tour registration now open

Registration for this year's Police Unity Tour (PUT) is now open and West Midlands Police Federation members are being encouraged to sign up.

Branch chair Rich Cooke, together with help from Chief Superintendent Andy Beard, is organising this year's West Midlands chapter, and he hopes to see more members taking part than ever.

The 180-mile cycling event will start on Friday 28 July and end on Sunday 30 July, with the final leg being in Staffordshire, as riders complete the tour at the National Memorial Arboretum where Care of Police Survivors (COPS) will hold its annual memorial service.

"I'm honoured to be organising the West Midlands chapter of this year's Police Unity Tour - with the much-needed help from Andy, of course," said Rich, who will be taking part in the event for the fifth time.

The event sees members of the police family including serving and retired officers and Specials come together to raise vital funds for COPS, a national charity which supports families of officers who died while at work.

"This year, what I really want is to see as many members from our branch as possible riding with me," continued Rich.

"Taking part in the PUT has become one of the highlights of my calendar. The ride brings together forces from across the country, all on one mission - to remember our fallen colleagues. It's a really special occasion and I know it means a lot to the families of those we remember.

"It's quite a special and moving time when the families of our fallen colleagues greet you when you complete the ride."

During the event, each of those participating wears a wristband specifically



Rich Cooke (left) with Steve Butler, then secretary of West Mercia Police Federation.

dedicated to a fallen officer.

This year, the chapter is appealing for a total of 30 riders from across four forces: West Midlands, Staffordshire, West Mercia and

Warwickshire.

Rich added: "I want at least 10 of those riders to be from West Midlands.

"So, what are you waiting for? It's time to get on the saddle and start raising some much-needed funds for a great cause. The support the COPS charity provides really is invaluable, so if you aren't able to take part yourself, please spread the word and support your colleagues."

It costs £150 to sign up for the event, with a commitment to raise a minimum of £400.

[Find out more information or register for this year's event.](#)

“TAKING PART IN THE PUT HAS BECOME ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF MY CALENDAR. THE RIDE BRINGS TOGETHER FORCES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY, ALL ON ONE MISSION - TO REMEMBER OUR FALLEN COLLEAGUES. IT'S A REALLY SPECIAL OCCASION AND I KNOW IT MEANS A LOT TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WE REMEMBER.

A student officer who has received a national award says she 'felt honoured' to be representing West Midlands Police.

Gemma Lee, a former Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), was presented with a National PCSO Award, beating hundreds of others who were also nominated in the Partnership Working category.

The 32-year-old, who started training to become a police officer in August, won the award for her work as a PCSO in Birmingham, which saw her lead on a project called 'Get Connected', a scheme designed to link together groups and organisations within the community.

"Nobody knew who had won until the winner was announced at the ceremony," explained Gemma, who attended the prestigious awards in London last month.

"I was very shocked to hear that I had won, in fact, it took me a moment to actually take it in. I suppose when you're doing a job, you don't realise the impact you're really making.

"It was a real honour to represent West Midlands Police, and to be recognised for my work nationally."

By working with organisations like local councils and youth services, 'Get Connected' was launched to help tackle issues in certain areas, including Bordesley Green, Erdington and South Yardley, from a grassroots level.

"People call these areas 'hard to reach' locations but I say they are 'hard to hear' communities. This project gave us an



'Honoured' student officer lands national award

opportunity to bring together all types of organisations and groups, to help build relationships and create community engagement," added Gemma, a former primary school teacher, who began working as a PCSO back in June 2019, having spent a number of years volunteering, supporting vulnerable people in Birmingham city centre.

"We also wanted to break down the barriers between these areas and the police, helping to reduce the fear people have of the Force."

Now a student officer, Gemma says she is able to draw on her experiences as a PCSO, to develop her career in policing.

"Of course, what I'm doing now is very different to being a primary school teacher - I've definitely been on a real journey. I'm learning something new every day and using

Gemma Lee is congratulated by West Midlands ACC Matt Ward.

my previous role as a PCSO and as a volunteer to shape the police officer I become," she continued.

"The 'Get Connected' project gave me an opportunity to improve things for those communities and I hope I can continue to help others as I go forward. For now, though, I'm just focussing on getting through each assessment."

Gemma said that helping communities, especially younger generations is 'hugely important' to her.

"It's something I feel very passionately about," she added.

"Ultimately, youth services are being cut, which means there's just not enough for them to do, which will lead to them causing trouble. Look, we've all been a teenager at some point, it's a hard time to navigate and they need an outlet for their energy.

"I believe that projects like 'Get Connected' encourage early intervention for young people and as we all know, intervention leads to prevention, which is key."



Fed makes fresh calls for covenant to prioritise officers' mental health

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has made fresh calls for the Police Covenant to prioritise the mental health of officers and their families, urging the focus to be on ensuring consistent policies are followed across all forces nationwide.

It has been revealed that the PFEW has put forward four main 'asks' to the Covenant Delivery Group, which will then be fed back to the Covenant Oversight Group.

The calls from the Federation come just months before the covenant is set to be reviewed, with national wellbeing secretary Belinda Goodwin saying that 'questions will be asked' if changes are not being seen to be made.

Belinda says: "I do believe, when it comes to the mental health of our officers, our voices are finally starting to be heard - and that is thanks to the Police Covenant, as this document finally holds those in power to account. The Home Secretary will have a lot of questions to answer if results are not being seen."



Belinda Goodwin.

The Police Covenant was published and enshrined in law as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, and is the Government's pledge to recognise the bravery, commitment and sacrifice of those who work, or have worked, in policing.

Belinda continued: "Nobody should be at

detriment just because they are a police officer. Ideally, the covenant will ensure everyone who works with the force leaves with the same mental and physical health as when they began their role.

"Of course, the covenant is mainly there for future officers. This will help to shape the future of policing."

The recent 'asks' made by the Federation included:

- **Additional financial support for officers impacted mentally and physically (through the likes of the Police Treatment Centres)**
- **A review of the demand across the police service, and whether officers were being used correctly**
- **The response to trauma**
- **A look at the criminal injuries compensation process.**

Belinda added: "If we don't start to change the wellbeing support available for cops, then we will continue to lose officers. One more life taken because of the job, is one too many.

"Police officers are around 400 to 600 times more likely to experience trauma than

the ordinary civilian. The trauma our officers are exposed to is unbelievable and they're not being dealt with individually - it's as if there is a 'one size fits all' way to deal with wellbeing and mental health within the force and that's not acceptable."

The Fed is calling for a better system to be put in place, which would flag the amount of trauma each officer is exposed to, by way of indicating to line managers which individuals might require extra support.

"It's all about being proactive, not reactive. It shouldn't be accepted that recurring trauma is underneath the uniform and that cannot be forgotten," added Belinda, who also raised concerns that funding for the Police Treatment Centres is at risk due to the cost of living crisis.

Belinda continued: "One of the other main concerns we have is that occupational health standards differ from force to force.

"Every force gets their own occupational health budget, which means - especially now because of the cost of living crisis - that standards of support available to officers are not consistent throughout the country. While some get very good support, others get below standard - and this just is not acceptable."

On the back of their calls, Belinda explained how a chief medical officer has now been employed to oversee the consistency of occupational health across every force.

"The same goes for Operation Hampshire, which ensures each force is following a set of national standards when officers are assaulted," continued Belinda.

"Nobody - not even officers - should go to work and expect to be assaulted. And if an officer is assaulted, the process to receive compensation should - we believe - be made much easier for them.

"Consistency is so important because at the moment, we're finding it's just a postcode lottery - and that is not fair. Everyone puts on the same uniform and does the same job, it should not matter where they live.

"The great thing is, putting consistent policing and procedures in place is being worked on."

Belinda also spoke about the importance of ensuring the families of officers are supported too.

"It sounds cliché but as officers, we run towards danger - and that's part of the job. What we don't want to do, is take that danger home with us. The trauma our officers are experiencing isn't just impacting them, it's impacting their families too," she added.

“WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE NOW IS MORE CHIEF OFFICERS SPEAKING ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES, BY WAY OF ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. AS AN ORGANISATION, WE'RE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BUT WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

"It's imperative that families receive support too. After all, without our families, we wouldn't be able to do our job.

"And this should be the case from day one. As soon as officers join the Force, they should be made aware of the support available to them and their families."

Belinda said a positive is that more people are 'speaking up' about mental health, with the topic becoming far less of a stigma.

"What I'd like to see now is more chief officers speaking about their mental health experiences, by way of encouraging others to do the same. As an organisation, we're moving in the right direction but we have a long way to go," she said.

"We've raised our concerns and we will not be taking our fingers off the pulse anytime soon. The issues we have raised need to be addressed."



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Fundraising officers vow to keep murdered PCs' memory alive

Three West Midlands Police Federation members took part in the New York Marathon in memory of Nicola Hughes, 10 years after the GMP officer was tragically killed while on duty.

Inspector Collin Baker and Firearms Supervisor Andy Mandefield were joined by more than 30 fellow officers who all ran the 26.2 mile route around the Big Apple for the Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund in November.

The pair have since spoken about their experience, as well as highlighted the

importance of keeping Nicola's memory alive, as well as remembering Fiona Bone, who was also killed while attending a routine burglary in Manchester.

"Whenever I run for charity, I run for the Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund. I wear the charity's t-shirt with pride," said Collin, who took part in this year's event with his wife, Anna, who is a nurse in the NHS.

The fund was launched by Bryn Hughes, Nicola's father, and aims to provide learning opportunities and pre-employment skill

support through grants to children who have a family member who has died as a result of violent crime.

"I didn't just run for Nicola, I ran for Bryn. We've become good mates over time - and as runners, we've become a little community. We're like a family, I know that sounds cheesy but it's true," added 47-year-old Collin.

"Looking back at the day when Nicola and Fiona were killed, well, that could've been any of us. I think it resonates throughout every officer, across every force."

Collin, who is a keen runner has spent the past seven years taking part in endless events, including multiple marathons and an ultra-marathon, helping to raise more than £3,000 for the charity.

“LOOKING BACK AT THE DAY WHEN NICOLA AND FIONA WERE KILLED, WELL, THAT COULD'VE BEEN ANY OF US. I THINK IT RESONATES THROUGHOUT EVERY OFFICER, ACROSS EVERY FORCE.

"There are other ways to run for the charity, you don't have to run a marathon. 'Run to Remember' is an annual fundraiser that Bryn organises, which involves people running one or two miles each day, for 100 days. People are more than welcome to contact me if they'd like to get involved in 2023."

Fellow runner Andy ran the route with his wife, Louise Wooff, who is also an officer in the Force.

"I've previously run ultra-marathons and Iron Man challenges but always wanted to do the New York Marathon, so when I heard the charity was taking a team over it just made sense to join them - especially as this particular cause is so close to our hearts," said 40-year-old Andy, who together with Louise, has helped raise more than £1,500 for the fund.

"The day was just brilliant, a real once-in-a-lifetime experience, especially the blue light escort that our team got to the starting line."

Andy and Louise, a detective sergeant,



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have been married for eight years, after initially meeting while working in the same response team 14 years ago.

"On the day of the New York Marathon, it was strangely warm. We decided to run as a pair, and just enjoy it and take in the environment. We kept each other going," added Andy.

"We were able to see New York together and finish the route together, that was awesome."

Andy, who explained how he and Louise welcomed their daughter around the time that Nicola and Fiona were murdered, said: "Becoming a father made me not only see what happened from an officer's point of view but as a parent too. I can't even begin to imagine what Bryn went through and continues to go through.

"For Bryn, as well as Nicola and Fiona's other loved ones, it is so important to keep their memory alive. We can never forget the ultimate sacrifice both officers made that day."

More than 30 officers from forces across the country took part in this year's New York Marathon for the Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund, raising a grand total of more than £24,000 for the charity.



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- FREE will writing service
- Family events.

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- Grants
- Small gifts (sickness vouchers)
- Convalescence
- Discounted holidays at fund's holiday properties
- Exclusive rewards scheme offering a range of discounts
- FREE will writing service
- Family events.

For full details of membership benefits visit the [Benevolent Fund website](http://www.wmpben.co.uk).

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