

POLICE

February / March 2019



Without legislation changes, police drivers remain at risk

Leading barrister tells Roads Policing Conference that despite Government assurances, officers in pursuits still have little protection



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POLICE February / March – in this issue:

NEWS & COMMENT

5 Editorial

Court of Appeal backs public sector pensions claim

6 View from the chair: John Apter focuses on the real reasons why the Federation is so vital

6-9 Roads Policing Conference

Warm words 'mean nothing' without law change

Chief's vision for 'safest roads in the world'

Repeated exposure to trauma can 'seriously impact' on officers' mental health

10 The Duty Officer: Our newest columnist warns that while Taser may not be perfect, it is a vital piece of kit

11 Discipline reforms move focus on to performance

13 Ministers should 'hang heads in shame' over mental health

14 Making the public pay more for policing is 'blatantly unfair'

15 New research shows confidence in police is increasing

17 The town where 'police don't come out' is a stark reminder

20 PFEW challenges research assumptions on Taser

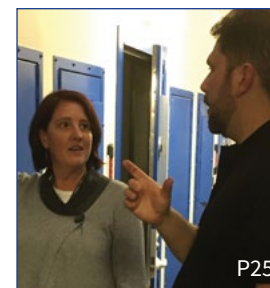
21 Plans to tackle knife crime are 'simply tinkering' with issue

23 Latest explosion in violent crime is 'terrifying picture' for communities

24 Police officers recognised in New Year's Honours

25 Custody visit designed to build bridges with IOPC

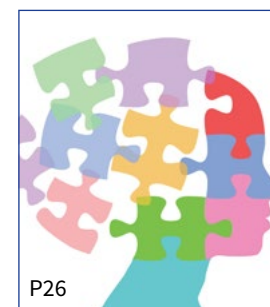
28 Getting members involved through FedCasts



FEATURES

26 Bouncing back: how ADHD nearly wrecked an officer's career and home life

Federation Rep Kaj Bartlett is raising awareness of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) after a lifelong struggle with the condition which almost destroyed her life.



REGULARS

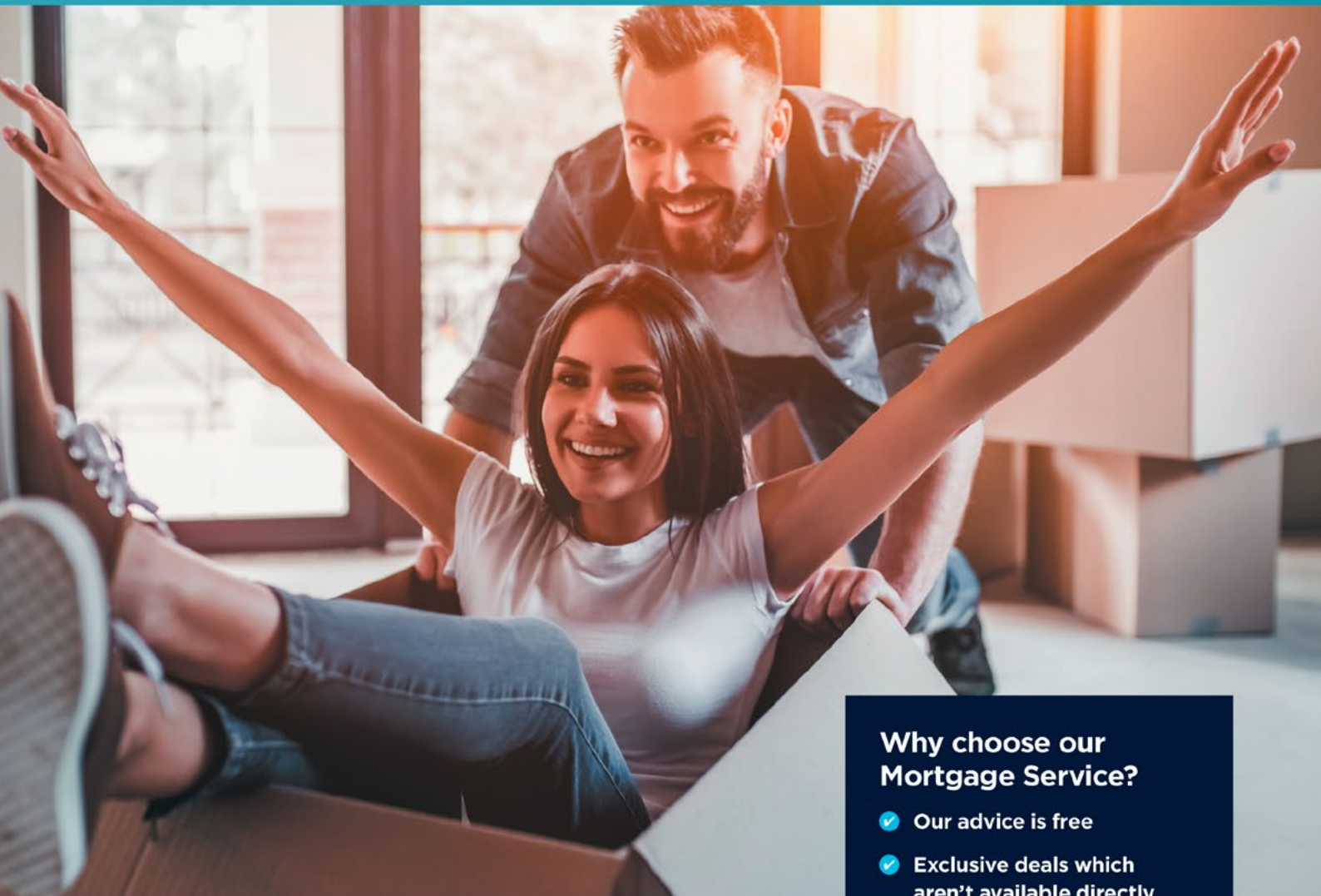
31 Ask the Experts

32 Members' Benefits

35 PC Bobbi Yarns: Police magazine's newest columnist highlights the frustrations of 21st century British policing Nick O'Time

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Editorial
February /
March 2019

Catherine Feast,
Editor

Take time to ask

Since the last edition I have been deeply saddened to read about several officers who have taken their own lives.

I cannot begin to imagine how isolated they must have been feeling, to end their life rather than go on with the pain and hell they were dealing with, and how terribly sad it is for all those involved.

It took me back to when I was a commuter travelling daily into London. On a fairly regular basis there would be delays due to an incident on the line – more often than not a suicide.

I used to sit and listen to the moans from fellow passengers about the delays to their journey and the inconvenience they were then going to be going through; a missed appointment, a late meeting.

How I despised every part of their conversations. Not once did I hear anyone say how terrible it was; how horrific that a human being would rather throw themselves beneath a train in order to die than to carry on living. I thought of those poor family members who would be receiving the awful news and how hard that must be to process. No-one can ever want someone else to think their only option is to die and that there are no other choices.

With the ever-growing reports of mental health affecting society as a whole, it is inevitable that officers are suffering too. Work stress adds to feelings of not being able to cope and as officers it is extra difficult when society looks to you to solve every problem. Mental health will continue to be in the headlines until successful strategies are found to deal with this escalating issue.

But we can all play a part. A bit of human compassion is free. Listening is free. Take time to ask and look out for each other. It might be the lifeline needed.

 Follow the Federation @pfew_hq

Appeal Court ruling on public sector pensions

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) is awaiting further legal advice regarding challenges by judges and firefighters about their pensions schemes, following a Court of Appeal ruling in December that Government changes made to those pensions were discriminatory on the grounds of age.

For judges, the changes were also deemed discriminatory on the basis of race and equal pay, as drives to increase diversity mean many more younger judges are female and/or from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background.

The cases were brought due to changes made to public sector pensions in 2015, which also affect police officers.

PFEW National Secretary Alex Duncan said the judgement was “lengthy and complex” but was a “positive outcome for those engaged in the process”.

“The difficulty is determining what a positive outcome means for our members and those officers engaged with Leigh Day solicitors,” he said. “Furthermore, within the ruling, there’s reference made to other rulings which have been decided upon since we

obtained our initial legal advice some five years ago. There have been previous requests for our legal advice to be shared publicly; however, our view has been that it could be unhelpful to those engaged in the current challenge, and could, at any stage, undermine their position or our own.

“We have closely monitored the developments within the cases lodged by the judges, firefighters and our colleagues represented by Leigh Day, and at every stage we’ve stated that we would review our position dependent on developments.”

As a result of this ruling we will be obtaining further legal advice, not least in light of the Government’s announcement on the pension cost cap (see p14) as well as incorporating a thorough review of the arguments put forward within the Court of Appeal.

It will also include advice from our pensions specialists, allowing us to better understand what this means for members and how best to represent them moving forward.

Firearms review misses target

A long-awaited Home Office review intended to examine whether firearms officers had enough protection to carry out their jobs has failed to hit the mark.

Ordered by then Prime Minister, David Cameron, in December 2015, it barely scratches the surface, with just over 300 words given to the subject. The rest of the document is taken up with confirmation that the police watchdog’s post-incident guidance for firearms (announced in October) is now law, and a link to revised Crown Prosecution Service guidance on prosecutions of police officers.

The report was meant to be a meaningful review to allay firearms officers’ fears over inadequate protection, and the prospect of being treated as suspects just for doing their job. But Police Federation of England and Wales

National Vice-Chair Ché Donald said the review was “shambolic”, describing it as a “sorry and disappointing post-script to a long, flawed and drawn out process”.

“It blithely states that ‘the right and legal protections are in place for officers’ and that ‘in a great majority of incidents officers were dealt with as witnesses rather than suspects,’” said Mr Donald. “I actually think the Home Office just forgot about the review. That’s cold comfort for officers out there doing the job, knowing that if they are forced to pull the trigger their lives will probably be overturned while they are under investigation, often for years.

“Where’s the evidence to show this has been looked into diligently, as we would expect for such a responsible role? Because it’s certainly not in this review.”



View from the chair

John Apter, National Chair, Police Federation

The real reason we are here...


It's good to see that the recent report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services showed public confidence in the police service is increasing. This is despite the fact that the service has lost almost 22,000 officers since 2010.

Officers do all they can to provide the best possible service, but the public are no fools, and consequences of the cuts are increasingly evident. They deserve better, but to do so we need an immediate and significant, centrally funded investment from the Government. If not crime rates will continue to increase, and it will be the public who suffer.

We will continue to put to decision makers the concerns and issues that our members contend with on a daily basis. At the forefront of this will be our Did You Know? campaign, which ensures that our members have access to clear and concise information about their basic entitlements. It's one thing to expect officers to do more with fewer resources, but it's another to expect them to give up the entitlements which were put in place to ensure that they are sufficiently rested, physically and mentally, before reporting for their next shift.

2019 is the Federation's centenary year, and over the next 12 months I will be highlighting the exceptional work our Federation Reps do on a daily basis. Our local Reps are the backbone of the PFEW, working tirelessly for members – often without fanfare or thanks.

Reaching our 100-year milestone is something many before us predicted would never happen. The PFEW has evolved and adapted over many years, but we must never forget the real reason we are here – to support our members.

 Follow me on Twitter @PFEW_Chair

Warm words 'mean

Home Office reassurances that police officers will not be prosecuted for pursuit drives "mean nothing" in reality, a legal expert has told delegates at this year's Roads Policing Conference.

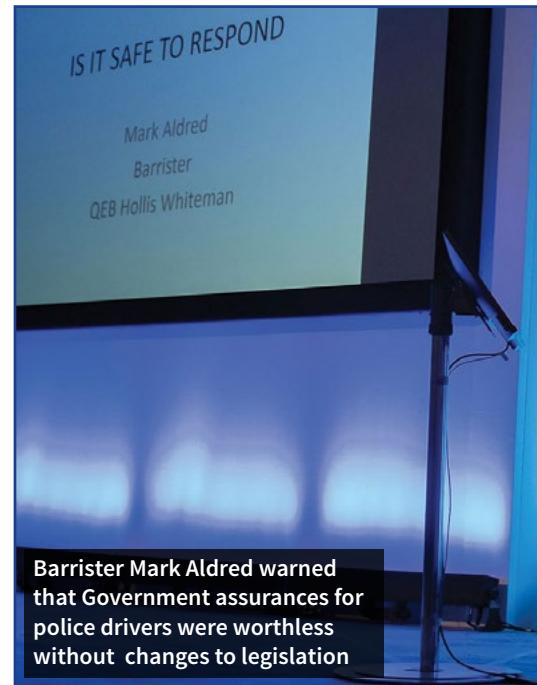
Barrister Mark Aldred, from QEB Hollis Whiteman, touched on his first-hand experience of representing officers who have fallen foul of the law in a lively talk at the event in Hinckley, Leicestershire.

Under existing legislation emergency responders who drive outside of the careful and competent driver legal standard can be jailed for dangerous driving. In addition the police could be subjected to gross misconduct proceedings.

Painfully slow

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has been campaigning for seven years to bring about a change in legislation, and despite support from both the Conservative and Labour parties, progress to bring about positive change has been painfully slow.

Mr Aldred said: "Here we are seven years later and police officers are still going through hell. I'm afraid as long as officers keep driving, the Government



probably doesn't feel the need or the urgency to change the legislation in the way it agrees it needs to be changed."

Delegates were reminded of the Metropolitan Police initiative of tactical contact with moped criminals in London, which was hailed by police commanders and the Home Secretary

Chief's vision for 'safest roads in

Putting police officers back on the roads in significant numbers is essential for saving lives, the country's top roads policing officer has said.

West Mercia Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, the roads policing lead for the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), set out his vision for the UK having the "safest roads in the world" at the Roads Policing Conference.

He told an audience of roads policing officers and stakeholders that five preventable deaths occur on the nation's road network every day. Those figures have reduced from 2,946 in 2007 to 1,793 a decade later, but since 2011 they have started to plateau.

Mr Bangham said: "After many years of decline, you can see for yourselves that all the signs are that this is going to get worse, it is getting worse and if we don't

address the problem, we are going to see all those declines reversed."

Mr Bangham said it was unfortunate that Transport Minister Jesse Norman had been unable to address the conference in person, as the Government needed to heed his warnings if they were serious about reducing road fatalities.

Prioritise roads policing

There are now 20,000 fewer police officers than a decade ago and fewer dedicated roads policing officers. Mr Bangham told delegates that his focus for 2019 will be to work towards the goal of safer roads, safer speeds, safer road users and vehicles, and post-crash response.

He will also be seeking to encourage more forces to prioritise roads policing and to join him in calling for the

nothing' without law change



Sajid Javid. Mr Aldred continued: “The implicit message to the officer is: You can go and get these guys now – the Home Secretary is on board, the Met commanders are on board. However, the reality doesn’t match.”

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) will look at the letter

of the law and conclude that police officers have a case to answer, delegates were told. And this can result in a long and traumatic legal process with the officer’s life on hold and their liberty in the balance.

Assurances mean nothing

Mr Aldred said he has regularly written to prosecutors to quote the official Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) guidance that it “is very unlikely to be appropriate to proceed with a prosecution on public interest grounds” adding that this has never yet resulted in proceedings being stopped: “Until that law is changed, those assurances mean nothing.”

The delays in legal change are being blamed on Brexit.

Police Minister Nick Hurd, who did not attend the Conference, took to Twitter to comment: “I understand and share the frustration about the slow pace of progress on changing the law and processes around police pursuits in order to give trained police drivers more confidence. We are working closely to get the detail right. The will is there, I can assure you.”

the world' means more officers



NPCC Roads Policing Lead Anthony Bangham called for more resources to halt the decline in road safety

investment that is starting to happen, to filter through to roads policing.

The Chief Constable was asked about the length of time of investigations by the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC), with some officers spending years with their lives on hold. Mr Bangham said he shared those concerns, and that lengthy investigations are no good for officers or the public.

He also paid tribute to roads policing officers for the “tough, complex, traumatic and dangerous” job they do. “Sadly it’s often seen as a thankless task – the public want us to do it, the public don’t want us to do it – I don’t think we’ve ever got over that dilemma,” he said.

“There’s less of you doing more; it’s so important that we shine a light on what you do.”

Damaging impact of IOPC delays

Protracted Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) investigations and their impact on police officers’ wellbeing were very much in evidence during a panel session at the conference.

Delegates heard from two serving police officers about an incident in 2014 involving a moped rider. Although at the time they were not pursuing the moped rider he lost control of his vehicle in front of them and crashed into a stationary car. Despite the best efforts of the officers at the scene to give CPR he died of his injuries.

Following the incident, not only did the officers have to deal with comprehending the trauma of the incident, they also had to deal with the uncertainties that being placed under investigation brings.

In this case the IOPC took three years to report its finding, during which time the officers involved were not permitted to carry out the job that they were trained to do, had to cope with the uncertainties of being under investigation, endure the impact on their wellbeing, and put their lives on hold.

At the end of the investigation the IOPC cleared all the officers involved of any wrongdoing.

The Police Federation of England and Wales is actively campaigning to bring about change to IOPC investigations so that they are investigated and reported to timescales that lessen the impact on all – not just police officers, but the family and friends of members of the public who are involved.

The length of time investigations by the IOPC take following incidents involving police drivers was a theme throughout the two-day event.

The IOPC were unable to attend the conference.

Officers' efforts are recognised at Roads Policing Awards



Award winner, Insp Simon Hills (second from left) with representatives from sponsors Irwin Mitchell, and PFEW National Chair John Apter (far right)

Operation Tutelage, a joint operation by Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary, led by Inspector Simon Hills, was named the winner of this year's Outstanding Contribution to Roads Policing.

It uses number-plate recognition technology to detect uninsured vehicles and compare against a database. A letter is then sent to the registered keeper asking them to rectify the situation and has resulted in a staggering 80 per cent drop in uninsured drivers in the two counties.

Inspector Hills, who has been the driving force behind Tutelage, said that by taking a neighbourhood approach, the vast majority of those written to take positive action to rectify their policy or take out a new policy.

"The 20 per cent who don't will go onto our enforcement database. They are typically our burglars, drink drivers and disqualified drivers, and targeting them becomes far more efficient," he said. "This is because instead of trying to enforce against a million vehicles, we're able to narrow this down to 200,000 and potentially narrow it even further."

"I am delighted that other forces are adopting Tutelage and we now have a spread from Scotland to Land's End – and those who follow the same processes that

we have are also seeing that 80 per cent success rate."

The Award highlighted Inspector Hills' phenomenal work in devising and promoting Operation Tutelage over the last 18 months; during that time he has implemented the highly effective operation while maintaining his day-to-day commitments, making a significant impact on road safety.

Also recognised at the Awards was runner-up, PC David Cotterill of Dorset Police, who has an outstanding record for arresting drug-drivers. In 2018 he was personally responsible for 292 such arrests – 42 per cent of Dorset Police's total for the year. This is all the more impressive as the Dorset force is ranked third in the country for drug arrests. David has also taken countless vehicles off the road for no insurance, no driving licence, or being un-roadworthy.

In third place were Sergeants Gerard Farley and Philip Davis of Merseyside Police, and Station Manager Francis Hill of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. After attending a fatal road incident, they created a training video to assist emergency services in responding to future incidents, with a focus on saving lives and ensuring the capture of best evidence.

Repeated 'seriously

Repeated exposure to trauma can have a serious detrimental effect on a police officer's mental health, and roads policing officers are at high risk, delegates at this year's Roads Policing Conference were told.

Ché Donald, National Vice-Chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), highlighted the widespread nature of the trauma problem, and the urgent need for procedures to be put in place to protect officers.

He shared a snapshot from the PFEW's 2018 Demand, Capacity and Welfare survey (to be published later this month) which shows that, during their policing career:

- 97 per cent of officers who responded came into contact with a serious physical assault
- 99.5 per cent had seen the body of somebody who had met a violent death
- 85 per cent had attended to victims of a serious road accident

Shadow Policing

Labour MP Louise Haigh, the Shadow Minister of State for Policing, called for a change in the law to better protect police officers involved in driving pursuits.

Addressing attendees via video she said she felt the law needed to be urgently clarified. "I know many of you feel under threat for doing your job," said Ms Haigh. "You fear that you may end up in court for pursuing suspects and those posing a risk to the public."

"The police can never and should never be above the law. But I believe the law needs to be urgently clarified because at the moment it risks officers being criminalised for doing your duty, a duty that the public and that we as politicians ask you to do."

She said officers shouldn't be criminalised for doing their jobs and that she was "determined to see a change in the law".

"You shouldn't be compared to an ordinary member of the public with no specialist

exposure to trauma can impact' on mental health



Ché Donald highlighted the widespread effects of trauma

- 66 per cent had witnessed a violent or unnatural death, including a suicide.
Just under 62 per cent of officers who responded had experienced one or more traumatic incident within the last 12 months.

“Roads policing, child sexual exploitation and firearms are all high risk areas in terms of exposure to trauma,” said Mr Donald. “Unlike in the military, police officers do not have periods away from the front lines – you are the front lines.

“There are 18 per cent fewer officers and the policing has gone from a potentially pro-active service to being a reactive service – we have officers going from one job to the next without the time to pause and let their brains process what they are experiencing.”

Fight or flight

Mr Donald said two components of the brain – the amygdala and the hippocampus – are key. The former governs emotions and fight or flight reactions, serving as an alarm bell for the body, while the latter processes experiences and turns them into memories.

He continued: “If we’re not taking breaks and working in a pressure-cooker environment, then we are not giving the amygdala an opportunity to come down from a heightened state of alertness, which can lead to significant problems.” These can include reliving traumatic experiences, mood changes, insomnia and fatigue and – in the worst cases – suicidal feelings.

Mr Donald spoke about a “hard as nails” colleague who had been broken by the sight of man fatally injured by machinery; this unlocked years of trauma, and the officer needed counselling. He hailed work being done by the University of Cambridge to compare groups of officers who have been given trauma coping mechanisms with those who haven’t.

“Roads policing officers pride themselves on ensuring their vehicles are clean, tyre pressures are right and their equipment is ready to go – but do we do that with ourselves?” he asked.

Minister calls for law change

Shadow Policing Minister Louise Haigh addressed the conference via video



driving training or experience. The standard you’re driving to should be held in law as the standard your training has prepared you for – a competent police driver.”

Jesse Norman MP, Minister of State for Transport, was due at the conference to address delegates, but was unable to attend due to Parliamentary pressures. During a short three-minute video he didn’t mention the key issue many attendees were hoping to hear – that progress was being made to bring about change in the legislation – but instead gave an update on three initiatives involving crash reporting, roadside breathalyser testing kits and research into the causes of road collisions.

A representative for Mr Norman reassured delegates that a lot was going on behind the scenes, and that it wasn’t appropriate for the Minister to give an update on the issue as it was a Home Office lead project.

Concern over level of police driver fatigue

Fatigue, stress and the impact on the health and wellbeing of police officers involved in roads policing – is of growing concern.

Dr Paul Jackson, of the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), said that fatigue was very common among roads policing officers and that it needed to be addressed, highlighting work that has taken place within the airline industry over the past 10 years to tackle fatigue among pilots and cabin crew.

Central to the positive changes in employees reporting levels of fatigue – which could impact their ability to safely operate an aircraft – has been the acceptance that fatigue was an issue. At the forefront of the changes has been the acceptance by senior airline managers that there was a need for policies and reporting mechanisms to help address the issue, something that “senior police managers also need to recognise,” added Dr Jackson.

The Duty Officer



It's not perfect, but Taser is vital

Yet again the magic box of 'extra' police officers has been opened. Drone wars before Christmas and, at the time of writing, direct appeals from MPs for extra officers to patrol the Palace of Westminster after one was abused while giving a television interview.

This raised an interesting point. Mr Justice Bean (yes, his real name) said officers were so regularly on the receiving end of the "rather commonplace" expletive f**k that it was unlikely to cause them "harassment, alarm or distress". Should MPs also be expected to be able to stand a certain level of abuse also?

Spread even thinner

The murder of MP Jo Cox was horrific, just as much as the murder of PC Keith Palmer. Yet one – because it is at Westminster – gets money for extra security, while elsewhere officers dealing with horrific incidents don't get anything extra and are spread even thinner.

So far this year the news has been full of knife crime, with BTP's Sgt Valentine stabbed and numerous members of the public killed or injured. I was pleased today to tell my team that I had managed to secure spaces for many of them on Taser courses this year.

I am one of the rare inspectors who carries Taser and leaves the office (I am not sure which is rarer) and often I'm the only Taser officer available. Eighty per cent of my team are in their probation and not allowed Taser; some days in certain areas none of my PCs are out of their probation. Taser is far from perfect and not an alternative to firearms, but its presence on a kit belt can often defuse situations; and as the saying goes, the bigger they are, the harder they fall.

 Follow me on Twitter @TheDutyOfficer1

Misconduct cases 'to be cut by 80%' using new PRI system

Misconduct cases will be cut by 80 per cent using the new Performance Requiring Improvement (PRI) system.

Instead of sanctions – which can mean written warnings, dismissal or the unpopular return of reduction in rank – there will be a raft of other ways to deal with matters. Among the measures on offer will be training, restorative action, mediation, closer supervision and welfare intervention.

PFEW Conduct Lead Phill Matthews said the PRI system was about "throwing it back to supervisors" and "giving them a mechanism of dealing with the issue, without putting officers through an unnecessary and potentially traumatic misconduct process."

DCI Mike Allen, who sits on the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Complaints and Misconduct Working Group, said the current system was "adversarial" and "can make an officer defensive and unwilling to admit their shortcomings."

"Too often, we have lost great officers in the past because of this system. What we want to do is concede that everybody can make a simple mistake – but it doesn't have to be a career-ending mistake," he said. "The police service has to evolve like other professions and work with

its people to retain the best; yes, they can make mistakes, but unless they are corrupt or inept, let's keep them and make them into even better officers."

Instead of involving PSDs at the first moment, line managers and supervisors will have to "step up to the plate and have those difficult conversations", said DCI Allen. "They can't just ask the PSD to investigate an officer because he has forgotten to pay for a 10p packet of Haribos at the tuck shop."

Proper perspective

"The PSD has got to be reserved for the most serious of offences. Don't get me wrong – this is not about being softer on corrupt officers – no-one wants a bad apple on their force. This is about common sense and a proper perspective."

More than 70 per cent of misconduct cases are eventually classified as 'No Case to Answer'.

Mr Matthews added: "We need to create a culture where we put back the pride in policing and recognise that officers don't come to work to do a rubbish job; they want to make a difference and if they make a mistake, we want to be there to support them and guide them to do better next time."

Home Office backs change of culture to 'reflection and learning'

The culture needs to shift from blame and punishment and sanctions to one of reflection and learning." So said Rupert Bailey, the Home Office's Head of Discipline, talking about the regulations that will be "a catalyst for this change".

"The Home Office concedes that police officers lack faith in the current system – it is adversarial and apports blame," he said. "There is overuse of misconduct and under-use of performance procedures; historically volumes are referred for formal proceedings and a third of misconduct meetings result in management advice.

This is not where we need to be."

Although the new regulations won't come into play until later in 2019, the Home Office said it was time "for everybody to start living the new culture now".

"Of course you still want to be able to sack the bad apples, but we need to move forward to this less adversarial and fairer process, and reform the handling of low-level wrongdoing. Low-level mistakes should be handled quickly and locally by line managers with much more emphasis on learning," added Mr Bailey.

Discipline reforms move focus on to performance

Sweeping changes to the police disciplinary system will reintroduce reduction in rank as a possible misconduct sanction, and extend the maximum term of a written and final written warning to up to five years.

After a long-running campaign by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), a new Performance Requiring Improvement (PRI) option – as an alternative to misconduct sanctions – will also come in.

The aim is to cut misconduct processes by 80 per cent, saving the sanction for the most serious cases. Instead the emphasis will be on performance and learning, moving away from the ‘punishment at any cost’ culture.

PFEW Conduct Lead Phill Matthews (pictured right) and Conduct Secretary Barry Fletcher have worked to foster better relationships with both the Home Office and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) to influence the new disciplinary measures, which were unveiled by Rupert Bailey, the Home Office’s Head of Discipline, at a PFEW seminar in November.

Making them a legal requirement was due to happen in April, but the Brexit focus is set to delay the process. “But there is nothing to stop professional standards departments (PSDs) adopting the spirit of the new regulations now, including the new performance measures,” said Mr Matthews.

Less adversarial

“Misconduct and gross misconduct should be reserved for the most serious breaches of conduct – those justifying the new level written warnings have been set at, or dismissal. This view is backed by the Home Office and the Policing Minister and we look forward to seeing PSDs taking a less punitive and less adversarial approach.”

PRI moves a lot of what was previously considered misconduct into



performance. This final phase of reforms after two years of wrangling has resulted in a “much better position for Federation members”, according to Mr Matthews.

“There were a couple of red lines which we fought hard to resolve; we are now happy with the wording on the duty of co-operation for police witnesses in investigations, and satisfied it builds in sufficient protections for our members,” said Mr Matthews. “We didn’t agree with reduction in rank; it was removed as a sanction years ago and cannot be a level playing field because for constables there is nowhere else to go.”

But reduction in rank will be limited to findings of gross misconduct, in relation to specific responsibilities of senior ranks. This could, for example, mean poor leadership that brought the force and the seniority of rank into dispute.

Under the new regime, the starting points for written and final written warnings will be higher than the current 12-month and 18-month thresholds, and could be extended for up to five years in the most serious cases. Discussions are still continuing, but extended warnings may allow more officers to be retained in service to learn from their mistakes.

Rules at a glance

- Most radical reform of discipline regs since Taylor reforms in 2008
- Extends written and final written warning start point and duration to a maximum of five years
- Brings back reduction in rank as a sanction
- Ushers in a new Performance Requiring Improvement option as an alternative to misconduct
- Laid before Parliament this year.

What is PRI?

- Performance Requiring Improvement (PRI) is the preferred option for lower-level wrongdoing
- Less formal than misconduct proceedings
- Emphasises ‘putting things right’ through actions and constructive outcomes, such as training
- Increased focus on reflection, learning and development
- Will sit under the Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures as regards severity
- Cannot be used to then put officer through misconduct
- It’s a framework tailored by forces, so open to interpretation and possible inconsistency.

Mr Matthews added: “When we started this process, bits of the new draft legislation looked pretty draconian. But we’ve been arguing for a fairer system with less emphasis on blame and punishment and more focus on learning and performance, in line with other professions. That’s what we believe we have achieved.”

The new regulations will also require forces and the IOPC to explain why an investigation is not completed within 12 months; investigators will have to share the investigation report with the officer(s) involved.

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Ministers should ‘hang heads in shame’ over mental health

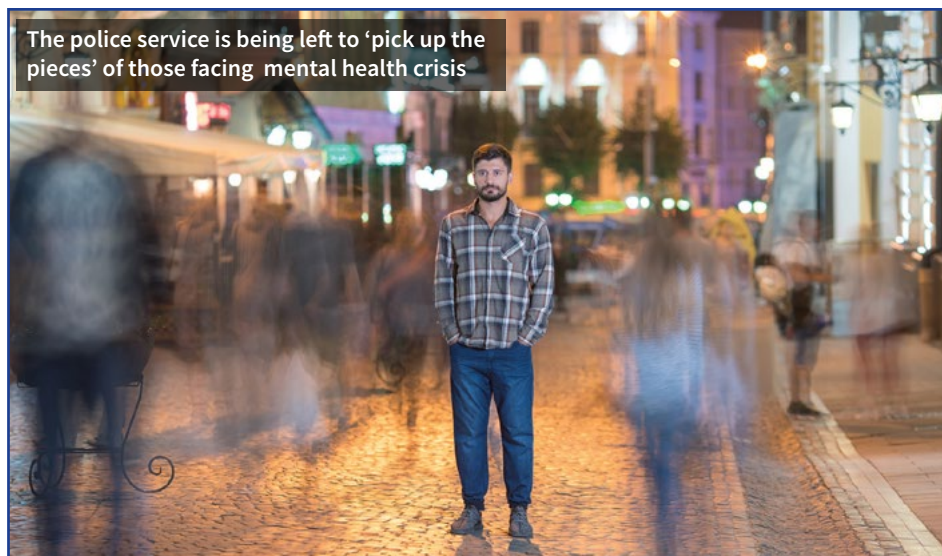
A highly critical police inspectorate report has concluded that the mental health system in this country is broken, and that it's police officers who are left to pick up the pieces.

The assessment, by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), paints a damning picture of the situation facing those experiencing mental-health issues in England and Wales.

It makes it clear that, while the police service is doing the best it can in difficult circumstances, there are concerns over whether the police should be involved in responding to mental health problems at the current level. It also emphasises the need for a radical rethink and a longer-term solution to what it calls “a national crisis” which is placing an “intolerable burden” on officers.

Responding to the report, Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) National Chair John Apter said it was the Government's austerity policies that had led to this dire state. “I hope the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary hang their heads in shame at the situation they have not only created, but were warned about on numerous occasions,” said Mr Apter.

“It is not right for anyone that the police should be responsible for the safety and welfare of people that other professionals are better placed to deal with. We are police officers, not social workers or medical experts.”



The police service is being left to ‘pick up the pieces’ of those facing mental health crisis

Picture © Rearstock / Shutterstock.com

The report assessed how effectively police forces in England and Wales as well as the British Transport Police:

- identify people with mental health problems and when they first contacted the force
- identify and record the number of cases involving people with mental health problems to provide the right support
- make sure expert help is available from other organisations, in particular health professionals.

It has made five recommendations to be implemented by the end of the year, including the formulation of a new nationally accepted definition of mental ill-health, an evaluation of each force's mental health triage

services, and a review of all forces' mental health training programmes.

Overall the report praised officers for their actions and found that they responded to those with mental health problems with care and compassion.

Report author Zoe Billingham said: “We cannot expect the police to pick up the pieces of a broken mental health system. Overstretched and all-too-often overwhelmed police officers can't always respond appropriately, and people in mental health crisis don't always get the help they need.

“All too often, the system is failing people when they most need help. Other services need to stop relying on the 24/7 availability of the police.”

Policing is the service that can't say no

The UK's national policing lead for mental health has said that greater provision is needed to tackle a crisis that the police have increasingly been expected to cope with.

Speaking at the N8 Policing Research Partnerships forum, Dyed Powys Chief Constable Mark Collins said police had become the “24/7 default service” as they continued to plug gaps for other overstretched public bodies.

“There are more resources needed in mental health and I think that's recognised,” he said. “The Government, in the recent budget, has given £2bn extra [as part of a £20bn NHS package]; some will say that's not enough and goes no way to plugging the

gap of what's actually needed for mental health provision.”

This echoes the views of PFEW National Chair, John Apter, who said: “An overwhelming amount of police time is spent dealing with vulnerable people, meaning we are not out there solving crime. The Government needs to make urgent investment in mental health provision and in policing, so that our police can continue to police and the most vulnerable people in our society receive the appropriate response and support.”

The failure of mental health provision was also identified as a significant issue for policing in the Home Affairs Select Committee *Policing for the Future* report in October.

Making the public pay more for policing is ‘blatantly unfair’

News that the Government is planning to plug the funding gap in policing by increasing local taxes has been criticised by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

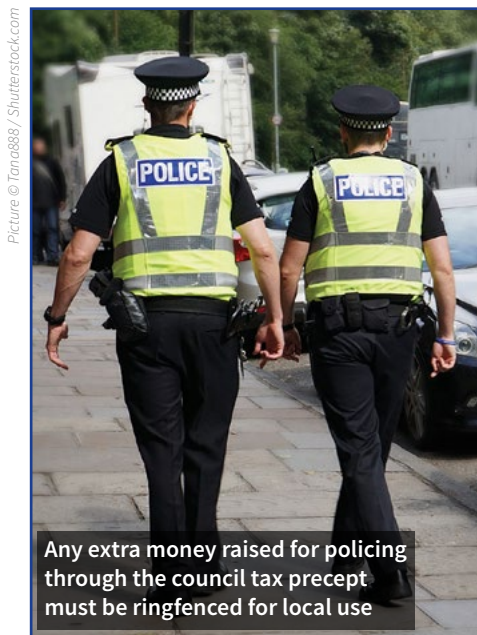
National Chair John Apter said he welcomed the extra cash, but insisted the Government “had to be honest about what it actually means”.

“The truth is that this appears to be a quick fix, a sticking plaster solution that injects extra money in the short term, but one which sees the burden falling unfairly on local council tax payers,” he said.

“They are passing the buck of funding the police by doubling the council tax precept that police and crime commissioners (PCCs) are allowed to charge.”

Strictly ringfenced

Mr Apter insisted that any extra money raised this way should be strictly ringfenced for local policing. “Every penny of this extra council tax precept must go into local policing to help keep communities safe,” he said, and accused



the Government of ignoring the “bigger elephant in the room”.

In December Policing Minister Nick Hurd announced that police funding would benefit from an extra £970m in 2019/20 which includes £153m towards the police pension deficit. It also allows for £509m if every PCC raises their

council tax precept by £24 a year. In addition there is another £161m from central government funding towards the police service.

Mr Apter said it was good that the Government recognised that the pension cap breach was of its own making, and the other funding would give forces some breathing space, but added: “It’s their austerity policies which have seen police budgets slashed by 19 per cent in real terms.

“Policing is in crisis and our members are on their knees, trying to keep up with the rising tide of crime with nearly 22,000 fewer officers. The reality is that this new funding won’t lead to hundreds more officers on the streets: PCCs and chief constables need to be honest about that.

“This is a standstill policing budget – it will plug the gap to a degree but householders are unlikely to experience a tangible improvement in their area. What is needed now is long-term financial investment in the service to pull it back from the brink so that we can start being more proactive again.”

Government delays public pension cost cap decision

The Government has announced it will not take further action to rectify the public pension cost cap breach at this time, due to the ‘uncertain impact’ of December’s Court of Appeal ruling that the ‘transitional protection’ offered to judges and firefighters as part of the reforms amounts to unlawful discrimination.

Alex Duncan, National Secretary of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said the delay in taking remedial action was disappointing. “The cost cap was put into the scheme by the Government to ensure both employers and scheme members were making fair contributions, and members are getting out what is due,” he said. “The Government Actuary Department undertook the valuation and identified that employers had not contributed their fair share. We consider it the right and proper course of action to rectify that imbalance without delay.”

The Government is seeking permission to appeal the ruling on transitional protections. While this is a separate issue, it’s estimated that the judgement could cost the equivalent of £4bn per annum, and one way to maintain the overall pension

scheme’s value is not to take action to rectify the cost cap.

If the Government wins its appeal, the Treasury has said it will take the originally planned action to rectify the cost cap breach – raising the accrual rate. If the Government loses, employees will be compensated in a way that satisfies the judgement.

Affordable and sustainable

The Coalition Government introduced reforms to public sector pensions, moving most public sector workers, including police officers, on to new pension schemes in 2015. A mechanism for assessing the value of pensions (the ‘cost cap’) was introduced as part of the 2015 reforms to ensure they remained affordable and sustainable. In September of last year, the Government announced that provisional results indicated that the cost cap had been breached and action needed to be taken.

You can read our public pension cost cap FAQs and the legal challenges to transitional protections by judges and firefighters on our website, www.polfed.org.

Confidence in police rises

New findings which show public confidence in the police service is increasing have been welcomed by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

Researchers, on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), interviewed more than 17,000 people for the Public Perceptions of Policing in England and Wales report, published in January.

The report concludes that more than 60 per cent of people are satisfied with their local police – an increase from 53 per cent last year – and that almost three quarters of people feel that police respond effectively to 999 calls.

Treated fairly

Two thirds of those surveyed felt that their local police treat people fairly and with respect. The research also reveals that almost two thirds of people who had had contact with a police officer in the previous year were satisfied with the way were dealt with.

However it does highlight concerns around the visibility of officers, with fewer than one in four being happy with how often they had seen a police officer in the previous three months.

People were also asked for their views on stop and search; 42 per cent believe the tactic is used appropriately, although 29 per cent felt they did not know enough about the subject to be able to answer the question.



Almost two thirds of people who had had contact with a police officer in the previous year were satisfied with the way were dealt with

Responding to the report, PFEW National Chair John Apter said the research was an important insight into how the public view the police service. “The results are reassuring, in that the majority of people still support policing and the difficult job we do.”

The report contains several quotes from those surveyed which mention the effect of the Government's austerity measures, and the respondents' recognition that officers are unable to do all they want to because of the reduction in officers and resources.

“The statistics around the lack of visibility of police officers is not surprising when you consider our

neighbourhood and response teams have been cut back to the bone,” said Mr Apter.

Continued support

“However, it is heartening that the public recognise the issues we are facing and continue to support us despite these challenges.

“Our communities deserve better – and we want to deliver – but in order to do that we need an immediate and significant, centrally-funded investment from the Government; without this my colleagues will struggle to provide the service they joined up to provide.”

Public poll exposes scale of policing crisis

A poll conducted by a national newspaper has exposed the scale of the crisis facing police forces, with almost half of the respondents saying they have never seen a police officer patrolling their neighbourhood at night.

The findings showed overwhelming public support to reverse the savage cuts to policing budgets, and revealed that 81 per cent of the public are more concerned about being a victim of crime than they were five years ago.

Responding to the findings, the Police Federation of England and Wales said it wasn't surprised in the least.

National scandal

National Chair John Apter said the poll “reflects the reality that policing now finds itself in” but asked the Government to end the “national scandal” of allowing policing to deteriorate into a crisis situation.

“How many times do we have to repeat the message before it sinks in? We are

saying it, politicians and police leaders are saying it and now the public are too,” said Mr Apter. “Seeing a police officer patrolling our streets is becoming a rare sight – 40 per cent of people who answered the survey said they had never seen an officer on a routine patrol in their neighbourhood at night time.

“If the Government continues to sit back and do nothing there will be dire consequences; I do not want to find myself in the position of saying ‘we told you so.’”

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The town where ‘police don’t come out’ is a stark reminder

A BBC report which highlighted the harsh reality that budget cuts are having on frontline policing should stand as a “stark reminder to government”, warned Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) National Chair John Apter.

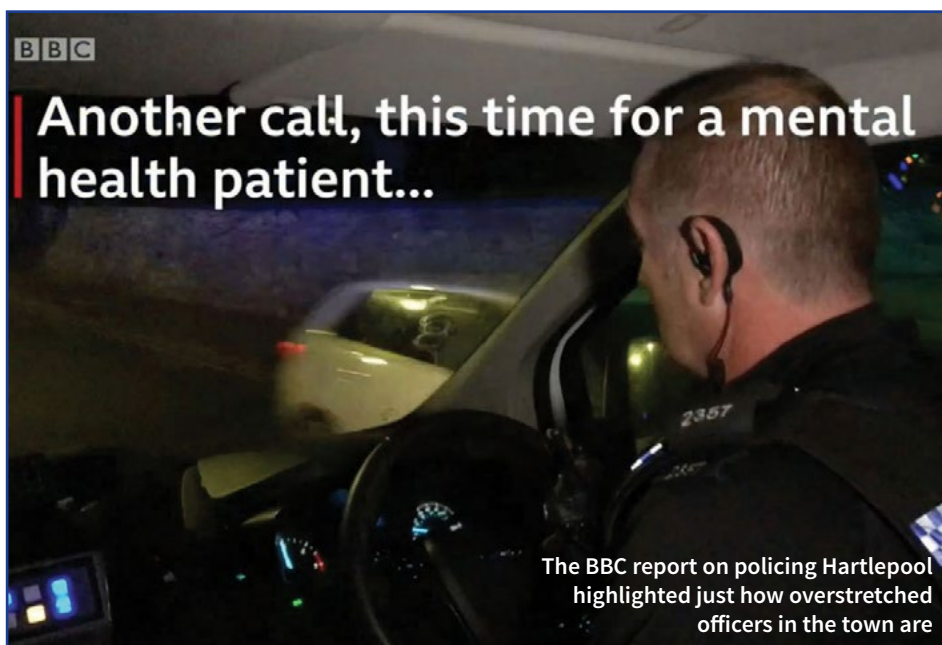
The report revealed that there were barely enough officers to meet the demand on a busy Saturday night in Hartlepool, with two officers having to drive 15 miles to take a prisoner to Middlesbrough custody suite because the Hartlepool suite was not staffed.

But the situation in Hartlepool is not unique, with many towns across the country facing a similar plight.

Regular occurrence

Mr Apter said the struggles officers face in Hartlepool “sadly reflected the state of policing across the whole of England and Wales”. “We simply cannot go on like this; forces not having enough resources to police a town on a busy Saturday night has become commonplace. But just because it is a regular occurrence does not make it acceptable.

“We have warned the Government of the worrying impact cuts are having on the police’s ability to keep the public safe and this is a stark reminder of that.”



Since 2010 the service has lost more than 22,000 officers and seen violent crime soar. “Forces are having to make impossible decisions around what they prioritise and respond to because they simply don’t have the boots on the ground to meet not only the rising demand, but the increased expectation placed on them,” he continued.

“It doesn’t take a genius to realise that

action needs to be taken. Without an urgent cash injection forces will continue to struggle to police their communities effectively, officers will continue to buckle under increasing workloads and the pressures placed on them, and public safety will continue to be jeopardised – all because of a government that does not prioritise policing.”

Watchdog admits investigations take ‘too long’

Data obtained by the BBC in a Freedom of Information request shows that almost half of the UK’s suspended police officers have been off-duty for at least a year.

In its response the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) admitted that it “must do better”.

From the 31 forces that provided information to the BBC, 71 of the 153 officers (46 per cent) who were fully suspended from duty in October 2018 had been suspended since at least November 2017.

‘A protracted hell’

Phill Matthews, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) National Conduct and Performance Lead, said the figures highlighted the waste of time, effort and money currently spent pursuing cases in an untimely fashion, “needlessly putting the officers concerned through a protracted hell”.

“In extreme cases officers have been prevented from retiring and left unable to move on with their lives or a new career. The impact on these officers cannot be underestimated; it has a profound effect – mentally, physically and often financially – not just for themselves but also for their families.

“Lives can spiral downhill, and evidence shows that the longer these investigations continue, the health and wellbeing of the accused officer deteriorates rapidly. In extreme cases, officers have been driven to attempt suicide.”

The PFEW has been calling for investigations to be completed in a timely manner to prevent unimaginable stress and trauma being placed on its members. This would also benefit complainants and their relatives, who face the same issues of not seeing an end to an investigation and with no explanation forthcoming from the IOPC.

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PFEW challenges research assumptions on Taser

Claims made by new research stating that carrying Taser increases police use of force have been challenged by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

The study, undertaken jointly by the University of Cambridge and City of London Police, concluded that the “mere presence of electroshock devices (Taser)” led to “greater overall hostility” in interactions between the police and the public, in what researchers call the ‘weapons effect’.

PFEW Vice-Chair Ché Donald said that while the study provided “a catchy headline” he had serious concerns about the veracity of the results. “This study recorded fewer than 6,000 incidents over a 12-month period; when you consider that other forces deal with several thousand incidents on a daily basis you start to see where issues could arise,” he said.

The study covered June 2016 to June 2017, and found that of 5,981 instances recorded, a Taser was drawn on nine, and fired on just two occasions.

The researchers state that during the study there were six assaults on police officers carrying Taser as opposed to three from the unarmed control group. They claim this supports the so-called weapons

effect, which states that people can escalate their own level of aggression in response to the sight of a weapon.

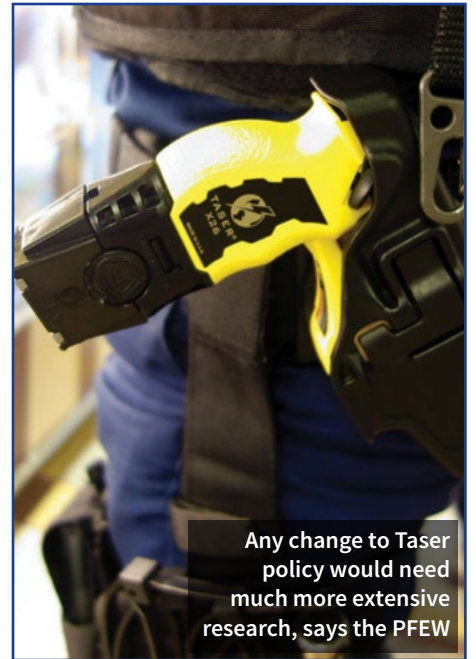
“This is a tiny number on which to base such a massive assumption,” said Mr Donald. “It must also be recognised that officers who carry Taser – specifically because they do have this tactical option – are allocated and attend more incidents with an increased threat of harm or violence. They are naturally involved in more of these types of incident.

Resolved without discharge

“In 85 per cent of incidents involving Taser, the matter is resolved by officers ‘red dotting’ the subject without the need for the weapon to be discharged.”

City of London Police say the force is exploring whether a simple holster change or weapon position move would nullify the weapons effect. They have also updated their training package for officers carrying Tasers in response to this study.

Mr Donald said: “If any shift in policy regarding the concealment of Taser – or indeed firearms – is to be considered, we would expect this to be based on a much larger, more empirical study



Any change to Taser policy would need much more extensive research, says the PFEW

encompassing a more representative set of forces across the country.

“What we know, and what has been evidenced by independent research carried out by IPSOS MORI, is that almost three quarters of people surveyed thought it was acceptable for officers to carry Taser while on patrol.

“Members of the public are reassured that officers have this equipment and it is a visible deterrent for those contemplating violence. Our position remains that all officers who want to, and who pass the relevant qualification criteria, should be able to carry a Taser.”

Officers’ main use of force is protection from drunks

Protecting themselves is the most common reason officers use force, with drunk people being the most common impact factor.

The first full year of Police Use of Force statistics (April 2017 to March 2018) show there were 313,000 recorded incidents in which an officer used force on someone, with restraint tactics such as handcuffing most commonly used (286,000 incidents).

The most frequent reason given by officers for the need to use force was to protect themselves (214,000 occasions), and the most common impact factor was the detainee being drunk.

The Home Office introduced new processes aimed at providing an accurate record of the type and frequency of officers’ use of force in 2017. But the report acknowledges these figures don’t accurately represent the total number of incidents, as not all forces in England and Wales could provide data for the full year.

Simon Kempton, Operational Policing Lead for the Police Federation of England and Wales, said that although the report does not provide a complete picture, it gives a sense of what police officers face on a daily basis.

“The decision to use force of any type is never taken lightly, and all use of force must be lawful, necessary and reasonable in all circumstances,” he said. “However it can be the only option when officers need to protect themselves, or the public, from dangerous or violent people. The data clearly demonstrates that my colleagues only resort to the use of force where necessary, utilising the minimum level required to deal with the situation.”

The figures show that the percentage of incidents dramatically decreases as the level of force increases. For example there were 17,000 incidents where a Taser was drawn, but only 2,000 instances where it was discharged. Firearms were drawn 3,100 times but fired on just 12 occasions.

“It’s vitally important that this data is collected, but it is even more important that it’s analysed so that officers’ training mirrors the situations they are encountering on the street. It also helps to inform the policy surrounding tactics and the provision of protective equipment such as Taser and spit guards, which are central issues for the Federation,” said Mr Kempton.

Plans to tackle knife crime are ‘simply tinkering’ with issue

New plans aimed at tackling the country’s knife-crime epidemic have been described as “simply tinkering around the edges” of a “highly complex” problem by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

The measures announced by the Home Office include:

- the introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders
- increased action against traders who sell knives to children
- more money to help Trading Standards prosecute retailers who repeatedly sell blades to those under ages
- the continuation of the #knifefree campaign.

The new orders can be given to any person aged 12 or over, with the aim of stopping vulnerable young people from becoming involved in knife crime. But PFEW National Chair John Apter said the Home Secretary had, yet again, missed the opportunity to make a significant impact on this problem.

“How the Home Secretary thinks we have the officers available to monitor teenagers’ social media use, or check they are at home at 10pm, when we are struggling to answer 999 calls is beyond me,” he said. “The Government is simply tinkering around the edges of this highly complex and very serious issue. While I cannot fault Mr Javid’s intentions, I do not hold out much hope that these measures will have the dramatic impact I



New Home Office proposals to tackle knife crime won’t be as effective as putting more officers back out on the streets, says the PFEW

Picture © Samuel Wordley/Alamy

am sure he is hoping they will.”

The new orders can be imposed on anyone who officers believe is carrying a knife, is a habitual knife carrier or has previously been convicted of a knife-related offence. The Government say they will fill gaps not already covered by existing orders such as gang injunctions and criminal behaviour orders.

The civil orders also restrict behaviour by placing curfews and geographical restrictions on individuals and limiting their social media use – which it is claimed will prevent the rapid escalation of rival disputes. Breach of an order will be a criminal offence and can lead to a two-year prison sentence.

Mr Apter continued: “This issue needs to be tackled head on and the best way to do that is to invest in policing and increase the number of police officers. Gone are the local teams who would gather intelligence, gone are the liaison officers who worked with communities to help divert those youngsters at risk of being drawn into this world, and gone are the proactive squads which would actively target those who carry knives.

“We need officers out on our streets actively targeting this crime epidemic where it is happening, and helping to stop yet more lives being lost to this preventable evil.”

Crime fight undermined by lenient sentences

Efforts to combat a surge in knife crime are being undermined by inconsistent and lenient court sentences, argues Police Federation of England and Wales National Chair John Apter.

According to a Sky News report figures show that two-thirds of those carrying a knife escape a custodial sentence, and one in five repeat offenders are still avoiding prison – despite the Government introducing a ‘two strikes and you’re out’

policy for those caught with a knife on more than one occasion.

Mr Apter said that “we’ve been soft on those who carry knives and those who inflict injuries with knives” and that “a tougher approach to sentencing” was urgently needed.

“We need to step up our game as a country and demonstrate that carrying a knife is completely unacceptable.

“That’s where the law must step in

and there must be a consequence. There’s got to be a consequence, because without that consequence, this epidemic in knife crime will continue and these kids will keep getting murdered on our streets.”

In the year to September, more than 21,300 knife and offensive weapon offences were dealt with by the criminal justice system in England and Wales, including 4,500 committed by children.

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Latest explosion in violent crime is a ‘terrifying picture’ for communities

Crime figures released last month portray a country in the grip of a terrifying spiral of violence as an embattled police service struggles to cope.

As violent offences increased by 19 per cent overall, with murder and manslaughter crimes at their highest level for 12 years, Police Federation of England and Wales National Chair John Apter said the public had been let down. “Society just isn’t as safe as it once was, and although the police service is doing everything within its power, we are swimming against the tide,” said Mr Apter.

Other statistics also show that:

- murders rose by 14 per cent in the past year (this figure excludes the London and Manchester terror attacks)

- hospital admissions from stabbings soared by 15 per cent
- an eight per cent increase in knife crime offences brought the annual total to 39,818, the highest number since 2011
- robberies increased by 17 per cent
- there was a 24 per cent rise in public order offences
- sex offences rose by 14 per cent.

The police-recorded crime figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for the year ending September 2018 do not include knife crime figures from Greater Manchester Police, which would add more than 3,000 knife incidents to the overall total.

Mr Apter said it was a “terrifying picture” for communities. “We have a Government

whose own Violent Crime Strategy omitted to mention that the number of police officers has plummeted by around 22,000 since 2010, 80 per cent from the frontline. This is not a coincidence; we need more boots on the ground to help combat this epidemic.”

The Home Office also released the latest Police Workforce Statics which showed a slight 0.4 per cent increase in the number of officers, bringing the total across all 43 forces to 122,395.

But Mr Apter said: “This isn’t a cause for celebration. This is a miniscule increase, and the report doesn’t include data about those leaving the service; it does not undo the damage caused by the reduction of the thousands of officers we have lost over the last eight years.”



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Police recognised in New Year's Honours

More rank and file officers than ever before have been recognised in the 2019 New Year's Honours.

Police Federation of England and Wales National Chair John Apter extended his congratulations to the officers for the outstanding contribution they have made to policing and local communities.

"To receive such recognition from Her Majesty the Queen is something each and every officer receiving an honour should be immensely proud of. Police officers are unsung heroes, it's great to see them being celebrated in this way," he said.

Federation representative and Avon and Somerset Police response officer, PC Adrian (Adge) Secker (right), received the British Empire Medal for his outstanding services to policing and the community.



PC Secker has been a police officer for 29 years, joining in 1992 as a response officer in South Bristol. He now works in response in Bath

and is a well-known and respected figure in the community.

Bath has a large deaf community and PC Secker learned British sign language so that he could communicate with everyone in the community he served. He is also the force liaison officer for the deaf community and provides support to the charity Action on Hearing Loss.

Alongside his 'day job' and his work as a Federation Rep, PC Secker is also a governor for a local school for children with behaviour issues, and also leads the Bath Police Cadets.

'Absolutely staggered'

PC Secker, who is due to retire this month, said he was "absolutely staggered and extremely humbled and proud" to receive the honour. "My late dad would have been beaming with pride. I always say I was born in High Wycombe but made in Avon and Somerset Police, and to be awarded such an Honour from Her Majesty is a wonderful and humbling end to my incredible career."

Also among those honoured were two officers from Greater Manchester Police

who received the British Empire Medal for their commitment and dedication following the attacks in Manchester in May 2017.

DCI Teresa Lam said it was a "significant moment in my personal and professional life" and "a huge privilege, and one for which I am truly honoured". She continued: "I will never forget those who have suffered and to whom I remain dedicated to continue to support. I am immensely proud of my family liaison team who also worked tirelessly to provide support to those affected."

Inspector Amanda Williams from Gwent Police was awarded the Queen's Police Medal for her work in mental health support services, both inside and outside the force. Insp Williams said she was shocked to receive the honour: "It is very humbling. While it is lovely to be recognised, I am very grateful to everyone who has supported me up until now and continue to strive for these crucial improvements. I hope that my award will continue to raise awareness and help to de-stigmatise mental health problems."

Congratulations to all those who were recognised in the honours.

Federated ranks who received New Year's Honours:

Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

A/DS Isaac Idun, Metropolitan Police Service

Medallists of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)

PC Andrew Dunmore, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Stewart Henderson, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Liam Jones, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC John Kenealy, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Bernadette Lawrie, Sussex Police
 PC Stephen Marsh, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Mary Mayes, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Richard Moore, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Richard Paines, South Wales Police
 PC Adrian Pearce, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Adrian Secker, Avon and Somerset Constabulary
 DCI Teresa Lam, Greater Manchester Police



Queen's Police Medal (QPM)

PC Caroline Adams, Sussex Police
 PC Tim Andrews, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Sam Balfour, Metropolitan Police Service
 PC Michael Buckley, Greater Manchester Police
 PC Jessica Bullough, British Transport Police
 PC Nick Carlisle, Metropolitan Police Service
 Insp Terence Finn, Greater Manchester Police
 DC Jonathan Hook (left), Avon and Somerset Constabulary
 Sgt Leslie Jackson, Metropolitan Police Service
 Insp Mustafa Muhammed (left), West Midlands Police
 PC Iain Rae, Metropolitan Police Service
 Insp Dale Sexton, Greater Manchester Police
 DC Graham Spencer, Humberside Police
 PC Philip Stone, Metropolitan Police Service
 DS Janine Sullivan West Yorkshire Police
 PC Bartosz Tchorzewski, Metropolitan Police Service
 Insp Amanda Williams, Gwent Police

Custody insight is building bridges

As part of efforts by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) to influence and educate the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC), officers in Leeds welcomed Miranda Biddle, IOPC North East Regional Director, to a Friday night custody shift. West Yorkshire's Sgt Chris Bentley, chair of the PFEW's National Custody Forum, led the visit.

When the 3.30pm shift starts at Stainbeck station, pressures are already evident. Leeds has the fourth largest student population in the country, a major night-time economy and its fair share of societal issues. The station's cell block only has 34 cells but two are out of commission, and many are already full.

Throughout the shift, a procession of suspects are brought in for offences ranging from drink-driving, fraud and theft to the more serious end of the scale: domestic abuse, firearms offences, robbery, murder, rape and child abduction.

Interpreters, a vital tool in today's multi-cultural society, are hard to track down, delaying the interview process and clogging up cells. It's the same story for appropriate adults. Many detainees are belligerent and unco-operative; it's clear that several are under the influence of either alcohol or drugs, and also suffering from mental health issues.

Sgt Bentley said: "No-one believes that police cells are the right place for anyone suffering from a mental health crisis. The numbers have massively reduced but with cuts across NHS and social services budgets, particularly at night and over weekends, we are often the last resort as a place of safety."

Mrs Biddle spent most of her previous career working in prison and probation, as well as psychology and drug services. "The visit has shown how many people booked into custody are suffering from addiction issues and other vulnerabilities," she said. "We recognise that this presents additional challenges for police staff in demanding environments. What makes a difference is officers having good access to training so they can identify and manage these additional challenges. Having access to medical teams on site enables a safer working environment where quickly changing circumstances can be assessed and detainee safety can be strengthened."

Sgt Bentley added: "It can be very stressful for everybody, including officers, dealing with S.136 cases. You have to make unpopular decisions – unpopular with the detainees and also your bosses, because no-one wants someone experiencing a crisis in a police cell."

Two hours in and the 24-hour custody clock is ticking for a murder suspect, already held for nearly 16 hours. The interpreter hasn't arrived but the suspect is due in court tomorrow. Others, like the drink-driver who blew 56mcg at the roadside, will walk because he'll be under the limit by the time he is processed.

There are also 'frequent flyers' – regulars known to the team who come in time and time again. Officers admit the lack of communication between agencies can mean the most vulnerable fall through the net. These are the most likely causes leading to a death or serious injury (DSI) in custody.



As the shift ends at 1.30am, recurring themes persist. The main concern is the volume of detainees suffering from mental health or other vulnerabilities. The availability of investigators to deal with suspects promptly features highly, as does the ability of officers to get a regular break to prevent burnout.

Mrs Biddle reflected: "Given my background, I was interested in how detainees were treated in police custody. I have come away with a great deal of respect for the Stainbeck team. I saw effective team work, good levels of communication, and detainees being cared for with dignity and respect.

"Myself, fellow regional directors and their teams are keen to enhance collaborative working and ensure that we better understand the context of what officers are dealing with day in, day out."

Bouncing back: how ADHD career and home life

Federation Rep Kaj Bartlett is raising awareness of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) after a lifelong struggle with the condition which almost destroyed her life.

Kathryn 'Kaj' Bartlett, an Inspector with Sussex Police, came close to losing her family and career during a particularly difficult time last year – but has since bounced back and is now sharing her story to encourage police forces to learn about ADHD and provide the right support.

Kaj, now an Equality and Diversity Lead for the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), explained she was always a “stereotypical naughty kid” at school, getting into fights and being disruptive in class. “I wasn’t living up to my potential, despite being described as ‘very bright.’ When I said I wanted to join the police my teachers told me to forget it, saying I didn’t have the right temperament – and to be fair they were right.”

The brain of someone with ADHD doesn’t process the ‘reward chemical’ dopamine in the ‘normal’ way. Someone with the condition constantly seeks interactions and activities which secure the dopamine needed. This can lead to increased risk-taking, impulsiveness, violence and even promiscuity. However, people with ADHD can also thrive in environments which fulfil their dopamine need.

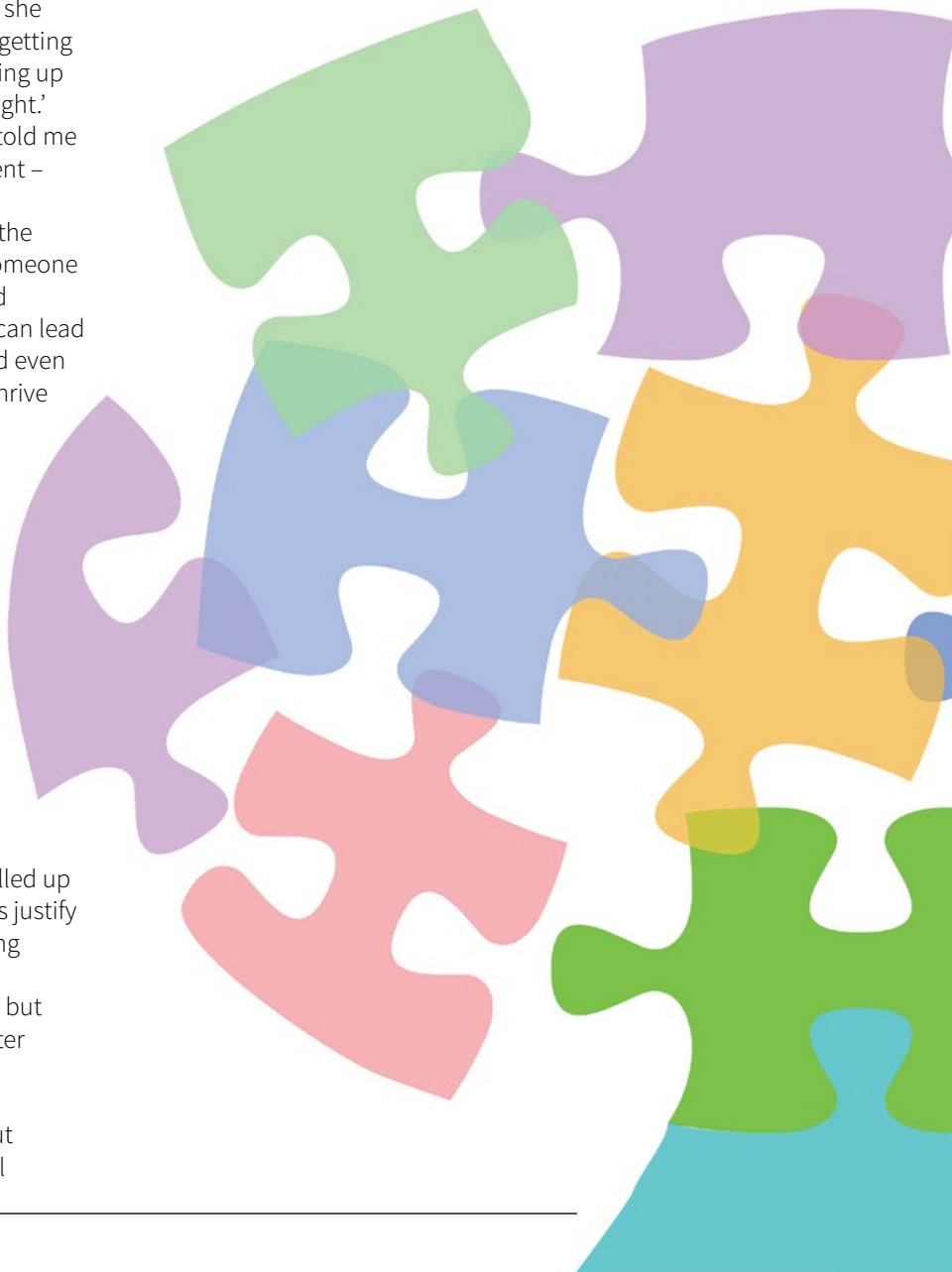
“Operational Policing provides this for me – yet I find it impossible to focus and concentrate on routine tasks, such as report writing and project work,” explained Kaj. “Prior to last year, I had no realisation that I was living with this condition or the significant, overwhelming impact it was having on me.”

Innovative thinking

Despite her troubled start, which she used to think was due to her upbringing, Kaj did become a police officer and quickly impressed her superiors with her creative, innovative thinking, operational focus and drive. “Though I would sometimes get pulled up for not following guidance and policy, I could always justify it and was often commended for doing the right thing overall,” she said.

Kaj was promoted to inspector within seven years, but things started to fall apart when her teenage daughter began to get into trouble at school and was at risk of exclusion. Her daughter was exhibiting the same behavioural traits as Kaj at the same age, yet without the same adverse background influences. A physical

confrontation with her daughter found Kaj facing an allegation of assault, investigations for gross misconduct and child abuse. By this time, Kaj had formed the belief that she lived with ADHD after concerns were raised about her behaviour in the workplace, and felt unsupported. She



nearly wrecked an officer's

knows her employers were trying their best, but due to a lack of awareness of how ADHD affects an individual, the support given was wholly counter-productive.

There was no action taken in relation to the investigations, yet she was deemed to be a 'danger to the public and colleagues' and was switched from operational policing to a largely administrative role, where she descended into a spiral of depression and poor mental health. "There were days when I thought I might resign due to the lack of understanding from my employers," she said.

Reasonable adjustments

Kaj paid for a comprehensive private psychiatric assessment which diagnosed ADHD; armed with a formal diagnosis and a wealth of researched knowledge about ADHD, she was able to fight her way back to an operational role and secure easy reasonable adjustments which work for her and her force.

"Society and policing has made great strides with gender, race and age discrimination, but not so much with disability and particularly hidden disability, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia," she said. "I went looking for somebody who understood ADHD and policing – there was no-one, so I realised I needed to become that person and to raise that awareness.

"The emergency services offer good careers for people with ADHD who need that ongoing stimulus. They need managers who are understanding and employees who know themselves enough to be able to say 'yes I can do this – I might need extra help doing that.'"

Through Access to Work, Kaj secured coaching on coping mechanisms for her ADHD and says she can prove how chief constables can save themselves a lot of money in lost staff and sick days by a more progressive approach to neurodiversity.



Zac Mader is a PFEW Board member who chairs the Police Association Strategic Leads (PASL) group, which brings together police support groups and the Federation. He welcomes efforts to raise awareness of the effects of ADHD.

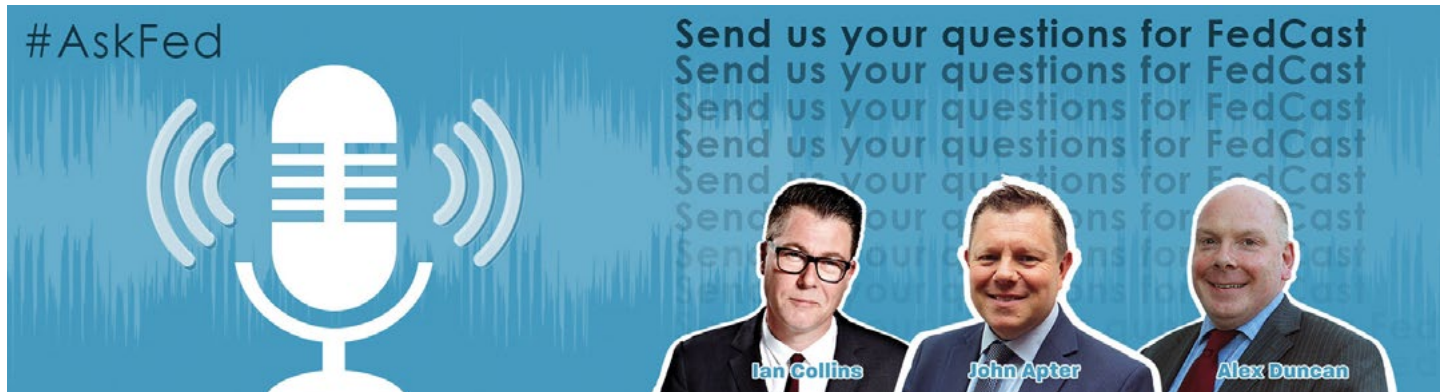
"It is essential we are better able to understand ADHD and how it affects our members, as only then can we provide the support and understanding that is required to make a difference to our colleagues," he said. "I am really grateful to Kaj for her bravery and honesty in sharing her story, and for her part in the ongoing work to ensure that ADHD and other conditions do not hold officers back from achieving their full potential."

John Nelson, Chair of the National Police Autism Association, added: "Officers and staff with ADHD, autism and other neuro-divergent conditions process information differently compared to the majority of the population – they often excel at particular disciplines but can struggle in certain roles and environments.

"The private sector has realised the benefits of matching neuro-diverse staff to roles for which they are suited, and the police service should do likewise; our 'one size fits all' culture is outdated and doesn't tap into the potential of our most valuable resource."

Picture © Michael D Brown / Shutterstock

Getting members involved through FedCasts



Officers can now listen to the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) news and discussions on the go, following the launch of a new series of podcasts.

The 'FedCasts' are designed to help keep members informed about the work the PFEW does on behalf of officers. In the format of a short radio show and

presented by respected broadcaster Ian Collins, the first episode is out now and features National Chair John Apter and National Secretary Alex Duncan talking about pay, pensions, police drivers and other hot topics, as well as answering members' questions.

You can tune in to the first episode by visiting polfed.org or

by searching for Police Federation on your current podcast app or on iTunes or Google Podcast.

The next episode, out later this month, will include insights into the PFEW's work around conduct, performance and wellbeing, as well as advice and guidance for officers in these areas.

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Still married, but with a new partner? How this could affect your divorce

Situations involving divorce and separation are rarely straightforward, especially when it comes to legal matters. In situations involving divorce, one of the main sticking points is how the process will actually be started. Who'll petition for divorce, and what fact will be relied on to prove the marriage has irretrievably broken down?

Adultery as a reason for divorce

One of the most common facts relied on in divorce is adultery. In most cases, adultery is admitted by the other spouse; if the spouse won't admit to adultery, it can be difficult to prove. There may be evidence of the infidelity in the form of messages or social media, the report of private detectives or from one partner catching the other in the act.

A point to note is that the law defines adultery as sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. The law doesn't class same-sex relationships as adultery. Further, you cannot rely on adultery if you've lived with your spouse for six months after you found out about it.

What constitutes adultery?

If a married couple are still together and living in the same house and one is unfaithful to the other, this is typically a clear-cut case of adultery. However, things can seem much more complicated if the couple have separated but are still legally married. We're often asked if living with and being in a sexual relationship with someone else after separating from a spouse can constitute adultery. The simple answer to this question is yes. In the eyes of the law, you're still married to your spouse.

Another important point to note when it comes to adultery after separation is that it doesn't matter if your ex moved in with someone else first or had an affair first; they can still petition you for divorce on the grounds of adultery if you're now in a sexual relationship with another person.

Divorce settlements

People often mistakenly believe that a court will be more likely to award settlements in favour of the person petitioning for divorce on the basis of adultery. This isn't the case, as the court doesn't pass any kind of moral judgement when deciding how to divide the matrimonial pot.

However, some people don't like the idea of being 'blamed' in a divorce petition, so it's important to be aware of the circumstances in which adultery can be cited as a reason for divorce.

If you need specialist advice from a family lawyer, contact Slater and Gordon on 0808 175 7710 – we'll be happy to help.

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As police we love a plan, but no-one seems to have one...

The ongoing debacle around Brexit has got the powers at be in a bit of a tiz here at police towers.

Brexit is not a surprise – we’ve known it’s been coming since 2016. And police in general are good at planning. In fact we love an operational plan, it’s what we do best.

But what seems to have flummoxed even our most experienced resource and planning governors is the extreme levels of #nooneseemstohaveaclue.

The bosses have been feeding back patchy information about ‘What The Plan Is’ and it does seem that no one appears to know the answer.

Unicorn whiskers

High-level strategic meetings are happening with Very Important People, but trying to get a sensible update about ‘What The Plan Is’ has been as fruitful as asking where to buy unicorn whiskers. Neither appears to exist.

There was a strong enough feeling from the public three years ago to ensure there was a 70 per cent plus turn out to vote to leave the EU, but this appears to have turned into apathy on one end of the scale to hysteria at the other end.

I am not hugely political but I do have an interest of course, particularly given that every public sector organisation is mauled

publicly when it appears ‘There Was No Plan’ or that ‘The Plan Went Wrong’ so it is woeful that the Government still appears to have ‘No Clear Plan Whatsoever.’

A recent comment by a chief officer on the back of a strategic meeting about ‘What The Plan Is’ determined that there was much discussion to be had about whether pets will now need a passport.

And there was me thinking it might be more about the impact on the Schengen convention.

Going nowhere

So far I have managed to work out that there may or may not be some restrictions on our leave; that I may or may not be required to work on mutual aid; that there may or may not be hoards of people trying to get in or get out via our ports, both air and sea, and that there may or may not be a lot of traffic, parked up and going nowhere. Same as now then.

Oh and don’t forget that shops will be empty, people will starve, house prices will fall, and there will be widespread disorder. Or maybe there won’t be.

I recall the years of planning that went into the millennium turn, when we moved – seamlessly as it turned out – from 1999 into 2000.

We had of course planned for the collapse of the entire world but as it



PC
Bobbi
Yarns

turns out the clock on the computer flicked round to the new millennium and precisely nothing much happened.

That’s what I am hoping for here too.

If this comes back to haunt me though I will have to eat my own hat. Which after all may be the only food left in any case. That’s my plan.

Nick O’Time

Colin Whittock





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