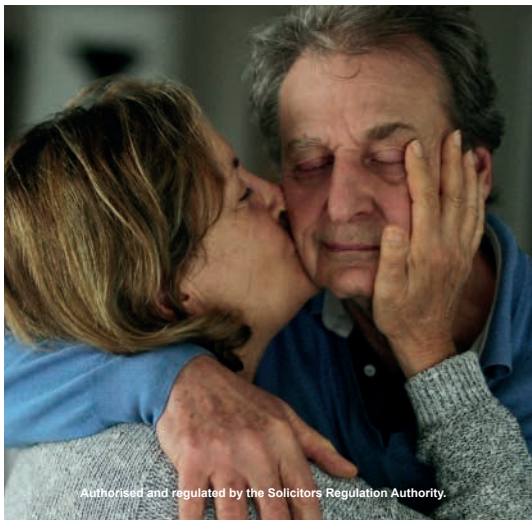




## Fallen officers remembered

See Pages 8 to 10



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You can also contact Jo and Pete by emailing [derbyshire@polfed.org](mailto:derbyshire@polfed.org)

Details for the branch officials and workplace reps can be found on our [Meet the team page](#).

# MEET YOUR NEW FED CHAIR: KEITH CHAMBERS

It has been a few months since Keith Chambers was elected chair of Derbyshire Police Federation and he already seems to have proven popular with the members. We caught up with Keith as he gave us an insight into his home life, reflected on his 24-year career and revealed his ambitions in his new role.

It was 2000 when Keith decided to join the Force. He had been working at Toyota at the time and admits he 'wanted a job that offered more'.

"I'd had a positive experience with the police when I was assaulted in my late teens. I think the officer who supported me at the time made a lasting impression," recalled Keith, 53, a father of three.

"I saw an advert recruiting for Derbyshire Police and I remember thinking, 'I can do that'.

"When I first joined the Force, I was definitely as proactive then as I am now - although I think my colleagues would have said I was more like a 'pain in the backside'."

Reflecting on his career, Keith says policing has changed since he joined. It's more political and complex these days, he says - 'even if some processes are more efficient'.

He added: "Although policing has changed a lot over the years, the ethos behind policing remains the same: getting bad people off the streets and protecting the public."

As chair of the branch, Keith is determined to be visible. Priding himself on being a 'proactive' and 'approachable' person, he hopes that members of all ages and backgrounds feel comfortable speaking to him.

"No conversation is off the table with me," continued Keith, who aspires to be a positive role model for others.

"I want to be honest and transparent with members - but I also want them to feel like they can be honest and transparent with me."

Keith was elected as chair earlier this



Keith and his wife Jenny.

year, and he says he is 'very excited' about working alongside fellow full-time Federation reps, secretary Kirsty Bunn and branch wellbeing lead Helen Galliar.

In fact, during his first shift, Keith says he worked alongside Kirsty 'all those years ago'.

"As a trio, we make a really good team. We challenge each other but equally share the same mission, vision and values," continued Keith, who revealed he was so fed up with hearing himself moan that he decided to put himself forward as chair.

"I want to change people's perception of the Federation. I recognise pay is a huge challenge, and cops are coming to work asking if they can afford to pay their Fed subs, yet they can't afford to buy their own home. I get it - but I want people to understand why it's so vital that they are a Fed member.

"And I think people are ready to see some change. Our members want to know there's support there and that there are people who have their back.

"We've got a great team of reps who each do a fantastic job. In fact, our reps are invaluable. Their passion for policing and the investment they have in our members is undeniable."

Keen to still spend some time in uniform, Keith - a Police Support Unit Officer - says he will continue to cover football matches whenever he gets the opportunity.

"Resource is low - and I will help out on the frontline whenever I can," he added.

"I want people to work and be happy. I want to ensure their working environment is positive. I want to retain the good cops we have and attract more."

Drawing attention to the latest pay and morale survey, Keith said it is more important than ever for officers to participate and have their say.

"Throughout my career, the mental health of officers has always been a concern, but it seems to be the norm rather than the exception, and that's not right," Keith continued.

Reflecting on his own personal experiences, Keith accepts that he is now 'much more aware of his own needs'.

"I now recognise when my body and mind need a break. I feel like I've got a really great understanding of myself, both physically and mentally," he explained.

Keith's wife, Jenny, was diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2020. At the end of last year, she sadly died at the age of 50.

"The pain hasn't gone away. In fact, it

**“No conversation is off the table with me., I want to be honest and transparent with members - but I also want them to feel like they can be honest and transparent with me.**

**“We've got a great team of reps who each do a fantastic job. In fact, our reps are invaluable. Their passion for policing and the investment they have in our members is undeniable.”**

gets harder every day she's not here,” Keith said, adding: “But the last few years have helped build my resilience. I feel like I can tackle anything now - and I know Jenny will be there with me every step of the way.”

Jenny was his biggest champion and also pushed him to do better - and Keith admits he did not realise just how much he had learnt from her.

“Jenny challenged the narrative,” he continued. “She knocked down the barriers and moved walls.”

“She was incredible. During her last few months, I took her to Paris as a surprise for her 50th birthday. And even when she was poorly, she was determined to walk to the top of the Sacré Coeur. That's more than 300 steps, but she did it - and then she walked back down again.”

Keith told how he felt let down by the Force when his wife died - and he is

committed to changing internal processes so nobody else has to share such experiences.

“There were many different experiences I encountered from the moment my wife was diagnosed to when she died. This left me feeling lost and, at times, extremely vulnerable, but most of all, undervalued,” he said.

Happy to share his own personal experiences and life stories, Keith wants members to see his more vulnerable side. He wants members to know he is human too, and his door is always open for a conversation - whatever the subject matter.

“As a branch, we have a great responsibility to work with senior leaders across the organisation to help shape a healthy future. We will always be committed to this, but it does not always mean we will agree though,” he said.

“It is our job to ensure that our members'

views are heard and conveyed upwards appropriately, and we have a chief officer team who are equally committed to enhancing the working relationship between us and the Force. These relationships will undoubtedly benefit our members.”

Keith ended by encouraging members to look after themselves: “Your physical and mental health is more important than the position you hold - it's more important than any crime on your workload.”

“Always ensure you look after you, speak up if you are struggling, know your own body and seek medical help if you aren't feeling well, your family need you fit and well and as always please look after each other.”

**“Throughout my career, the mental health of officers has always been a concern, but it seems to be the norm rather than the exception, and that's not right.”**

**Chair Keith Chambers wants to change perceptions of the Federation.**



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# SURVEY RESULTS WILL HELP FED TO FIGHT FOR BETTER PAY AND CONDITIONS IN DERBYSHIRE

The Federation has launched its annual Pay and Morale Survey to gather 'crucial evidence' to support our fight for fair pay and better working conditions.

Derbyshire officers will have received a link via email that can be used to access the survey and contribute views and experiences on pay, morale, welfare, and wellbeing.

This will help Fed reps to 'evidence the realities of policing' in our negotiations with the Force and with government, said Derbyshire Police Federation chair Keith Chambers.

**“It is important to me that the voices of Derbyshire officers are heard by the key decision-makers. Policing is the best job in the world, but it is also tough, stressful and exhausting – and let’s face it, not as well paid as it should be. The evidence will help the Federation to make the case for positive change.”**

He added: "It is important to me that the voices of Derbyshire officers are heard by the key decision-makers. Policing is the best job in the world, but it is also tough, stressful and exhausting – and let's face it, not as well paid as it should be. The evidence will help the Federation to make the case for positive change."

Keith went on to say that he hopes to improve on the 556 responses received last year, which at the time represented 26 per cent of the force.

The results of the 2023 survey were published six months ago. They found that

89 per cent of respondents felt morale was 'low' or 'very low' in the Force. 14 per cent were planning to leave, and three-quarters felt they were not being fairly remunerated for the hazards of their role. 88 per cent reported that their cost of living had increased in the previous month, and four in five were worse off than five years ago. You can read the full results [here](#).

Three new questions have been added to the latest survey. One references the riots from this summer and asks how officers were impacted physically and mentally. Another explores how social media impacts police officers' roles and asks what aspects of policing should be considered when police pay is being reviewed.

The closing date is Monday 28 October 2024.

If you have any questions or encounter problems accessing the survey, please contact the Federation office.

## CHAIR URGES POLICING MINISTER TO 'FULFIL YOUR PROMISES'

'Is this another empty promise that won't materialise?' asks the chair of Derbyshire Police Federation, as he questions the policing minister's pledge to 'always support' officers.

Keith Chambers has commented after Dame Diana Johnson addressed the audience at this year's Superintendents' Association Conference, in which she ended her speech with, 'we will always support you'.

And while Keith says Dame Diana's supportive comments are welcome, he has called on the policing minister to ensure her words are backed by actions.

"The policing minister - as well as our Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper - have stood up and thrown their support behind policing since the day they were both appointed in their roles. But is it anything more than words?" says Keith.

"Just a few weeks ago, it was announced that police officers would receive a 4.75 per cent pay rise, yet junior doctors will be given almost five times that, at 22 per cent. I'm hardly surprised our members are feeling let down by the system.

"It's about time that these pledges of support materialise into action."

In her speech, made to conference attendees on Tuesday 10 September, Dame



Dame Diana Johnson.

Diana said: "I'm appalled that new figures revealed show that assaults on our women and men in uniform are still far too high.

"Even preceding the violent disorder of this summer – assaults on police officers are up, with a quarter of those incidents resulting in injury.

"The Home Secretary was right to call

this a 'stain on our society' and to say that it will not be tolerated.

"So, we recognise your service and your sacrifice.

"Whether it's responding to violent disorder, running towards danger, attending emergencies or investigating serious crimes, we know that the heroic daily work of the police exerts a huge strain on officers and their families.

"That's why we will always support you, as you support your teams to serve our communities."

Latest figures revealed that there were 45,907 offences of assaults on policing officers in the year ending March 2024. A total of 854 Derbyshire officers were assaulted in that same year.

Keith continued: "These figures are appalling. Our officers should not fear that they might be assaulted while simply doing their job.

"Instead, they must feel valued and respected - not just by members of the public but by the Government too.

"We're being told that the Government does 'support us' but Dame Diana, it's time to take action. Show our members that you truly mean what you say and fulfil the promises you keep making."



# ‘HONOURED’ CHAIR ATTENDS FIRST NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY

**B**ranch chair Keith Chambers said it was an ‘honour’ to represent Derbyshire Police Federation at this year’s National Police Memorial Day (NPMD).

Keith, who attended the event for the first time since his appointment as chair, said the day was full of emotion as the policing family came together to pay its respects and remember officers who have died in the line of duty.

He was joined by Derbyshire Police Deputy Chief Constable Simon Blatchly, and they gathered alongside fellow representatives of the Police Federation of England and Wales, police chiefs, senior politicians, religious leaders and families of fallen officers.

The service was held at Glasgow’s Royal

Concert Hall on Sunday.

Keith said: “It was a real honour to be able to represent Derbyshire Police Federation as we remembered and recognised those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

“It was a really moving and powerful occasion, full of emotion, colour, and laughs as well.

“I hope the families of fallen officers can take comfort from the service, and from the love and support of the policing family.

“We will always remember them.”

Now, in its 21st year, NPMD has honoured the lives of more than 5,000 officers who have died while on duty in the past 180 years.

Representing the Police Federation of

England and Wales (PFEW) was acting national chair Tiff Lynch.

She was joined by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, policing minister Dame Diana Johnson and Angela Constance, the Cabinet secretary for justice and home affairs.

The service opened with a processional march, which included flag bearers from a number of forces from across England and Wales. This was followed by music from the Police Scotland and Scottish Federation Pipe Band.

The Reverend Matt Hopley, the National Police Chaplain, opened the service.

The First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney, then welcomed the congregation, saying it was a ‘huge privilege’ for Scotland to be hosting such an event.

A reading was then shared by Khaldoun Kabbani, vice president of the National Associations of Muslim Police and the secretary general of the Scottish Police

**“ I hope the families of fallen officers can take comfort from the service, and from the love and support of the policing family.**



NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY 2024

Muslim Association.

Ms Cooper and Ms Constance also gave a reading. In a snippet from John 15: 12-17, from the Bible, Ms Cooper said: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Ms Constance read a powerful poem titled 'Grief Told Me Its Name', which begins: 'I sat with my grief and it told me its name; It said, "I am love, just turned into pain"'. The verse ended with: "Grief then said, "They are still with you, although their body you can't see; their love never left you. Please believe me."

**“ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.**

Each year, relatives representing Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales light a candle to commemorate police lives lost in each of the four nations.

This year, lighting the candle for Scotland was Margaret Collins, mother, and Helen Cruddis, sister of Police Constable Anthony (Tony) Collins, 43 years, Police Service of Scotland, who died on 29 November 2013 when a police helicopter crashed into the roof of the Clutha bar in Glasgow.

Representing England was Luke Ratana, son of Police Sergeant Mati (Mat) Ratana, 54 years, Metropolitan Police, who died on 25 September 2020 after being fatally shot in Croydon Custody Centre. Luke is a serving police officer in Australia.

For Northern Ireland, Jill Davidson, the wife of Detective Superintendent Philip

*Continued on Page 10*



*Deputy Chief Constable Simon Blatchly and chair of Derbyshire Police Federation Keith Chambers.*



*The procession through the streets of Glasgow.*

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography

NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY 2024

Davidson, 45 years, of Royal Ulster Constabulary GC, who died on 2 June 1994 when an RAF Chinook helicopter crashed on the Mull of Kintyre.

For Wales, Rob Jones, brother, and Chris Milne-Jones, sister of Police Constable Ralph Jones, 34 years, North Wales Police, who died on 13 July 1999 as the result of a road traffic incident while on a training course.

The names of officers who have died in the last 12 months were then read, with a tribute shown on the screen at the front.

This year's Roll of Honour included:

**Sergeant Paul Frear**, West Midlands Police  
**Sergeant Graham Saville**, Nottinghamshire Police

**PC Jack Cummings**, West Yorkshire Police  
**Sergeant Reece Buckenham**, Hertfordshire Constabulary.



Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper signs the book of remembrance.

The congregation stood during The Last Post, while silence was kept as green and blue petals fell in remembrance of lives lost.

Recessional music was played by the Police Scotland and Scottish Police Federation Pipe Band to mark the end of the service.

Ahead of the service, a parade - led by the pipe band - made its way to the Royal Concert Hall from Glasgow's George Square before a Police Scotland flypast took place.

There is an [online tribute wall](#) on which loved ones can post. This will remain active for 30 days following this year's memorial weekend.

For those who are unable to attend, an online service featuring highlights will be posted to the NPMD website.

Next year's National Police Memorial Day will be held on 28 September at Coventry Cathedral.

# PC CARRIES FLAG FOR FORCE AT MEMORIAL DAY



PC Tim Dugard and fellow flag bearers.

**A** Derbyshire Police Federation member said he was both 'honoured and humbled' to represent the Force as its standard bearer at the National Police Memorial Day.

PC Tim Dugard carried the flag for the first time, joining colleagues from across the UK in a parade before the service.

Tim said: "It was really moving to see so many officers in traditional dress uniform and for everyone to come together to pay their respects.

"I was a bit nervous at first but other standard bearers who have done it before put me at ease very quickly."

He added: "I was very proud to represent Derbyshire. I've been in Derbyshire almost 17 years, to be able to carry the flag and have officers from other forces comment on how nice our flag was it was an honour."

Tim said the walk to the start of the parade route was an occasion in itself with people stopping what they were doing to watch and take photos.

"There was a big crowd," he said. "The flag was heavy as well. It took some effort to hold it.

"It's been seven or eight years since I was last on parade but thankfully I soon remembered how to march."

The parade of standard bearers and the Police Scotland and Scottish Federation Pipe Band went from Glasgow's George Square to the city's Royal Concert Hall, where the NPMD service was being held.

Tim said: "It was a really moving moment when we lined up to go into the service itself.

"Seeing everyone in the venue, walking through carrying our flag and parading on to the stage was really moving and then to hear the stories of those who have lost their lives and the tributes paid to them was very humbling."

Tim attended with his wife Jennifer.

"It was really nice to be able to share it with her," he said.

"She said it was a proud moment for her to see me in my dress uniform, and the whole service very emotional.

"It is such an emotional occasion. We are one big police family and I think that shows when we come together.

"It's a wonderful day."

“Seeing everyone in the venue, walking through carrying our flag and parading on to the stage was really moving and then to hear the stories of those who have lost their lives and the tributes paid to them was very humbling.”

# 'TO DO THIS FULL-TIME IS A DREAM COME TRUE' SAYS CAPLO AND WELLBEING FED REP

**W**e caught up with Derbyshire Police Federation's Helen Galliar six months into her position as a full-time representative leading on CAPLO (Complaints and Performance Liaison Officer) and wellbeing.

Helen initially became a part-time workplace representative in 2019, driven by the same empathy required of her in supporting victims of sexual violence.

During her Force career, she also performed important work on the other side of such crime, and it was her role as Sexual and Violent Offender Manager she left behind to take on full-time Federation duties earlier this year.

"I've always been passionate about fairness and wanting things to be fair. The opportunity to support people through difficult circumstances, where they can feel so lost and like everything is set up against them, has always appealed to me," said Helen, who revealed juggling a full-time job and work as a rep gradually became more difficult.

"I think I did lose my way a bit as a rep – I felt like I wasn't giving a full and proper service," she continued, adding: "To be honest, though, since going full-time, I have rediscovered my true fulfilment with the job."

"And, of course, that's not to suggest part-time reps can't make a huge impact because they do. They are still a part of day-to-day policing and I think they come into their own with frontline matters."

"I'm speaking purely on my own personal journey – and to do this full-time is a dream come true for me."

In her time as CAPLO and wellbeing lead so far, Helen has become the face of the Federation in Professional Standards Department (PSD) cases, assisting a number



Helen Galliar.

of members in some of the most stressful and emotionally demanding moments of their careers.

Through the development of an 'open and honest' relationship with the Force's PSD, she has been able to help maintain the integrity of its investigations while highlighting the impact they can have on officers in question.

Helen draws on her own experience, having found herself at the centre of a PSD case 13 years ago after receiving a complaint.

"It was the worst six months of my career," she said, adding: "It was an

absolutely dreadful time, and I know how it feels. I've been in that position."

In addition to her support for Federation members in long-term processes, Helen, who is also trained in Post-Incident Procedures (PIPs) has been able to commit more time to assisting with isolated, one-time disputes.

Individuals have benefitted from her services with issues relating to shift patterns, annual leave, and moving to another department or working environment.

"I like it when members come to me with a one-off problem and the fact I can help a lot more of them now," she said.

"There's been quite a few people who have come to me, saying they're considering quitting the Force because they have grown tired of their role. But I'm a big believer in people being in the right jobs – keeping hold of officers and getting them doing something they will enjoy more, rather than losing them altogether."

Helen, whose Force career spanned 22 years, added she has assisted members through ill-health retirement and heavily promoted [the Police Treatment Centres](#) – an organisation she believes is an 'unbelievable' wellbeing charity – in her first half-year as a full-time Fed rep.

She is also working hard to support line managers in upskilling their knowledge of wellbeing, while championing the introduction of wellbeing passports and stress management documents. Helen reiterated the importance of consistency across decision-makers in preventing, rather than responding, officer mental health difficulties.

She ended: "I just want to be there and have things in place so our members can be as happy and as healthy as possible."



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## FED MEMBER COMPETES IN TRANSPLANT GAMES

**A** Derbyshire Police Federation member who competed in three sports at the Transplant Games has described the event as 'a celebration of life'.

PC Dan Bird represented the Nottingham Transplant Team at golf, darts, and seven-a-side football.

Dan took part in the games, which were held in Nottingham, after receiving a liver transplant in December after being diagnosed with an illness aged 13.

He said: "It's hard to put into words what the games mean and how I look back on them.

"When you are going through it all you don't realise that other people have also gone through it, but you meet them at the games and it reminds you it's not just you.

"It's a big celebration of life. We are all still alive, living for the moment, and it's such a good atmosphere."

A chance meeting in hospital with another competitor who had the same condition led to Dan taking part in the games, which were held in August.

Dan explained: "He had the same operation as me five or six years ago and took me through it all.

"I'd mentioned that I used to play football, we exchanged numbers and he said

that when I recovered he wanted me in the football team.

"That evening I got the phone call to get to hospital and was rushed to Cambridge and we've stayed in touch ever since."

Dan, who plays golf off a 12 handicap, is a member of the Derbyshire Police Golf Society, and is a previous winner of the national police golf handicap.

He described his round at Wollaton Park Golf Club as 'respectable'.

"In the men's golf, 37 points won it and I came in with 33, so I wasn't miles away," he said.

"I was happy to be out on a golf course more than anything.

"I entered the darts as it's not energetic and if I struggle at golf I could cope with that, but I wouldn't class myself as a darts player at all."

Dan described how he was 'roped into' playing in the football.

"I'd not played for a good 10 years," said Dan, who has been a serving officer for 15 years and works in Derbyshire Police's Uniform Task Force.

"The friend I'd met in hospital was playing so I went to watch.

"However, they were a player short and I got roped into playing.



PC Dan Bird.

"And now, because of that, I'm playing once a month for the Nottinghamshire Transplant Team in the East Midlands Pan Disability League.

"It's got me back into it and I'm really enjoying it."

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: 'IT'S BEEN A FIGHT TO GET HERE' SAYS FED CHAIR

**“Without a doubt, I’m still stereotyped because of my skin colour, and that has meant that I’ve had to fight to get to where I am today.”**

Keith Chambers is hoping that being the first black elected chair of Derbyshire Police Federation will inspire his colleagues - whatever their race or background - to be the best version of themselves possible.

The 53-year-old father-of-three took on the post earlier this year, having first joined the police 24 years ago.



Derbyshire Police Federation chair Keith Chambers.

**“I was 18, and I was badly assaulted in Derbyshire city centre. It was a mixed-race officer who attended the incident, and he shined a really positive light on policing.”**

Here, he reveals how the past two decades have been nothing short of a challenge as he speaks out to mark Black History Month, which takes place annually in October.

“It was actually a mixed-race officer who inspired me to become a police officer,” recalled Keith, whose dad is Jamaican and mum was born in England.

“I was 18, and I was badly assaulted in Derbyshire city centre. It was a mixed-race officer who attended the incident, and he shined a really positive light on policing.”

Keith joined the Force 10 years later, at the age of 29 and feels that he has had to fight to progress his career ever since.

“It would be easy for people to think that I have a massive chip on my shoulder about

efforts, but I’m yet to see or feel the benefits,” he said.

Keith continued to reveal that he feels he has got to where he is, because of his own hard work and determination.

“My white friends and colleagues have told me how they have been encouraged to go for promotion. Not once have I ever received such encouragement. While people have supported me, I’ve never felt anyone has really championed me,” Keith added.

“I’ve had discussions with other black colleagues, and they feel the same. It’s simple - people who look like me just don’t experience a smooth and effortless promotional process.”

## B: M2024

DIG DEEPER, LOOK CLOSER, THINK BIGGER

Keith, an inspector, explained how, three years ago, he made the decision that he did not want to climb the ranks any higher.

He added: “I feel like my whole career, it’s been a fight to get anywhere. Let’s just say the door always felt shut for me and an inner strength was required to open it.”

Now, Keith is on a mission to not just attract officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds but to encourage the promotion of those staff members, should they be ready to rise up the ranks.

“I’m extremely proud to be the first Black elected chair of Derbyshire Police Federation,” he continued.

“I want to be visible and approachable - to all members. I want to be a role model, not just for members of the BAME community but for all colleagues.

“I’ll be working hard to improve working conditions and procedures, not just those involving race, but the Force as a whole. But ultimately, I want to inspire our members, so they want to be the best police officers they can possible be.”

race and equality, but I don’t. The majority of my friends are white, which I think says a lot - I think.

“It’s how I feel. As an organisation, I don’t think we do enough to challenge perceptions and stereotyping with regard to race. Race still feels like a taboo topic, I want people to feel they can talk about this without any fear, we can all learn from each other.”

Keith drew attention to the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) that was introduced to Derbyshire Police Force back in 2022. The plan is designed to ‘improve policing for black people’.

“I know the plan exists, and I note its

**“As an organisation, I don’t think we do enough to challenge perceptions and stereotyping with regard to race. Race still feels like a taboo topic, I want people to feel they can talk about this without any fear, we can all learn from each other.”**

# ‘MENTAL HEALTH IS AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH’

**T**hat’s the message from Temporary Superintendent Adam Wilkins, organiser of Derbyshire Police’s Men’s Health Forum support network, as he encouraged Federation members to seek support if they need it.

The forum meets in person and online every two months, and Adam said it gives officers a chance to talk about physical and mental health issues.

“Policing is a unique job with unique demands placed on us,” he said. “We regularly face difficult situations in order to keep the public safe, and sometimes it can come at a cost to our mental health, as well as our physical health.”

“The forum is there for everyone – men and women – but we know that men are less likely to talk about their physical or mental health, and we hope it will help to break down barriers.

“The support is there, and I’d encourage officers to seek help if they need it because our mental health is just as important as our physical health.”

The Police Federation of England and Wales held a webinar on World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September, which aimed to open conversations about mental health.

The free webinar was titled Breaking the Silence: Conversations about Mental Health and is [available to watch again by clicking here](#).

Adam said events like the webinar help to reduce the stigma around mental health.

He said: “If we can get members talking about their health and their mental health then hopefully it will help break down barriers.

“People will see they’re not alone, they have options, and there are ways to deal with our emotional and mental health issues.

“If events like PFEW’s World Suicide Prevention Day webinar or groups like the Force’s Men’s Health Forum can help one person then they will have been a success.”

Derbyshire Police Federation members can find out about the bi-monthly Men’s Health Forums and sign up to them on the Force intranet.

**““ The forum is there for everyone – men and women – but we know that men are less likely to talk about their physical or mental health, and we hope it will help to break down barriers.**

# 'I DON'T REGRET DOING IT FOR A SECOND': FED REP DISCUSSES DRIVE TO HELP OTHERS

Looking back on his career to date, Derbyshire Police Federation workplace representative Chris Mills has a sense of satisfaction with what he has achieved.

Chris became a police officer in 2000, spending 18 years at Greater Manchester Police before moving to Derbyshire Constabulary, where he is living out the final big ambition of his profession.

"At the beginning of my time in the Force, I knew I wanted to do three things: Work in covert, work in firearms, and work in a dog unit," he explained.

"I've been part of a plain-clothes attachment on a licensing unit in Manchester's night-time economy, I've spent the vast majority of my career as a firearms officer, and since last year, I've been a handler for a general-purpose police dog, Bruno.

"So, although you can never take your foot off the gas until the day you retire, I have really ticked off everything I set out to do."

**“I want to be that person who doesn't leave things alone until I know the officer is cared for to the absolute maximum.”**

Rather, it's his Federation role that feels a lot more like unfinished business, he says.

In his three years as a workplace rep, Chris has assisted members in various ways but has channelled his truest passion into supporting officers in processes where they are often faced with real adversity and where their very livelihoods can be at risk.

Because while there may be contentment with his service to the Police, that doesn't mean it has always been an easy ride – Chris, 45, has been at the centre of a handful of Professional Standards Department (PSD) cases, and has attended two Post-Incident Procedures as a key police witness.

Now, he is on a mission to improve life as much as possible for other cops in the same position.

"I think the people best placed to help in these situations are officers who've been there themselves, because it is a very isolating experience.

"It's fair to say I have been through the ringer – including a gross misconduct charge



Chris' Police Dog Bruno.

that followed a PIP, which ended up hanging over me for five years. For it to go on that long and for me to be cleared at the end, it's pretty clear in my mind there were some basic failings to how I was treated.

"I want to be that person who doesn't leave things alone until I know the officer is cared for to the absolute maximum."

In his Federation duties so far, Chris has sought to equalise his difficult PIP experiences as a witness through his presence at two procedures as a compassionate workplace rep.

He has facilitated legal guidance, got in touch with relatives, provided refreshments, and given invaluable advice – all while helping to maintain the integrity of the investigation.

**“At the beginning of my time in the Force, I knew I wanted to do three things: Work in covert, work in firearms, and work in a dog unit.”**

"One of the PIPs I have done as a rep had firearms officers as witnesses who I had trained myself," he continued.

"I'd like to think, them knowing me as a professional and knowing me as a person, there was a sigh of relief when they saw me walk into the PIP suite.

"That's the sort of influence I want to have – officers see me and know they are going to be looked after."

Before that point, however, Chris wants to see police officers receive formal training to handle these situations better themselves, so regardless of who emerges to be in their corner, they already feel calm and in control.

The same level of care goes for the PSD cases passed onto him once the workload of the Federation's Complaints and Performance Liaison Officer (CAPLO) lead, Helen Gallier, is at capacity.

While this duty can be tough, he says, having to prepare colleagues for worst-case scenarios, the 45-year-old maintains there are many 'little victories' to enjoy.

"An example is when you first see the case on paper, and in writing, it reads as very damning against the officer. Then you sit them down and ask them to tell you about it, and the reality feels different and you think, 'I can help things get to justice here'.

"Being that go-between can make the world of difference. I've seen people I've represented further down the line look in a much better place, mentally, and it's so nice to see them having got through the case and moved on."

Now settled into life with Bruno, a Belgian Malinois-German Shepherd cross who was licensed a police dog in December 2023, and ready to see out the remainder of his police career as the canine's handler, Chris' appetite for his Federation work remains.

He ended with some advice for any Fed members considering following in his footsteps as a representative.

"It [being a rep] becomes very personal. When you're representing people, you feel the successes and the failures greatly and there's no getting away from that.

"But I don't regret doing it for a second. The sense of reward you feel is incredible.

"And I want to continue having that feeling for many years to come."



# FED MEMBER LOOKS BACK ON 'AMAZING' PARALYMPICS TRIP

**A** Federation member who supported French police on a mutual aid assignment at the 2024 Summer Paralympic Games in Paris says it was 'an experience I'll never forget'.

Ryan McGrath was on hand as a general patrol officer during the Games in the French capital, which ran from 28 August to 8 September, after being successful in a ballot open to all Police Support Unit (PSU)-trained officers.

The constable's duties involved assisting with carrying out searches, taking members of the public to custody and patrolling areas of high footfall.

The group of UK officers Ryan travelled with, which included two other Derbyshire cops, enjoyed warm relations with their French counterparts from the moment they arrived in the city, he revealed.

"We received a blue-light escort from the airport to our hotel, which was such a nice welcome. There were two police motorbikes taking us through the whole journey, which lasted a good hour.

"It was also a strange feeling to be on the receiving end of a police escort. It was quite surreal, to be honest," he laughed.

Ryan, 28, went on to discuss the magnitude of the Paralympics, whose attraction of international crowds he witnessed up-close.

As well as mixing with visitors and event-goers from all corners of the world, he also had many positive interactions with law enforcement officers from countries beyond France, including Chile and South Korea.

"It is one of the biggest sporting events in the world and it truly felt that way. It was



PC Ryan McGrath (second from right) in Paris this summer.

really special how police officers from so many different nations joined together and ensured the Games went smoothly," he said.

"Another good part was seeing a different style of policing from a whole separate organisation. Home officers were friendly and were very willing to show us how they operate and tackle local issues."

Among the many memories Ryan says he will cherish from the trip, the most intense was a potential firearms incident at Paris' Gare du Nord, the busiest railway station in Europe.

Although the incident did not end up amounting to anything significant, he recalled it as a moment he was preparing to step up in his assistance if required.

The 28-year-old rounded off by looking ahead to how he could use the experience for his development as a police officer.

"I completed my Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship in February and I am always trying to better myself in these early days.

"I'd definitely say it was good training for any PSU work I am involved in in the future. Obviously, it being the Paralympics means it was fairly unique circumstances, but there was still a lot of transferable elements for dealing with any public order environment.

"The opportunity was amazing and something I'll always be grateful for. I will take everything I did in Paris and use it to help me be the best officer I can be for Derbyshire Constabulary," he ended.



# WORK BEING DONE TO IMPROVE OFFICERS' WELLBEING

**E**arlier this year, the latest pay and morale survey revealed that 67 per cent of police officers in Derbyshire admitted to feeling low or very low, which is the lowest rating in the country.

We recently caught up with the Force's wellbeing team to find out how they are taking a more proactive approach - rather than reactive - to help tackle poor morale in Derbyshire.

"There's a very unhealthy culture in policing, which means cops are expected to cope. We want to change that culture," said Kate Smith, the Force's health and wellbeing manager.

"We're working really hard to create a long-term strategy. Our aim is to be proactive rather than reactive, and although we've got a long way to go, the foundations are definitely being put in place to better support officers.

"It's all about identifying the issues early on and putting preventative wellbeing measures in place. We're really looking at what we can do before officers reach that critical point - in an ideal world, we would have intervened before it gets to that stage."

Historically, wellbeing sat under the HR team, up until recently, which saw it move under occupational health, which means

there are clinical professionals on hand to help officers when they need it most.

"We've bought the support in-house, which means we have clinical professionals working on-site here," continued Kate, who explained that they are also training supervisors and managers so they feel confident supporting team members who might be struggling with their wellbeing.

Additionally, the wellbeing team is hoping to tour the stations around Derbyshire, holding health and wellbeing checks, which give officers the chance to discuss any ongoing health concerns they might have.

Plus, on the first Wednesday of every month, both police officers and staff are invited to attend an online 'wellness cafe'.

Head of occupational health and wellbeing Margaret Alcorn explained that the team are constantly using feedback from officers to shape their ongoing strategy.

"As Kate said, it's all about prevention," said Margaret.

"It's a really challenging time for police officers and the expectations put on their shoulders are getting higher and higher. And we mustn't forget that, on average, police officers witness around 400 to 600 traumatic events in their career, which is

huge compared to the average amount civilians see.

"We want to help officers experiencing trauma - whether it's daily or a one-off - and put the correct support in place to prevent it getting any worse."

A 'Well Together Board' has also been launched, which gives key stakeholders from across the Force and Federation the chance to meet each quarter and discuss, collaboratively, key themes and concerns.

Derbyshire Police Federation's wellbeing lead Helen Gallear: "It's brilliant to see that the Force is proactively working hard to address the wellbeing and morale of our members head-on.

"It's no secret that I am extremely passionate about improving wellbeing of officers across Derbyshire, and there's no doubt in my mind that the steps being taken by the Force's wellbeing team is helping to do just that.

"Collaborative working is essential, as we can all do our part - on both a professional and personal level - to support one another.

"I'm particularly pleased to see so much is being done around training senior managers and supervisors. After all, it's not just about helping the people who are struggling with their mental health, but ensuring that vital support is in place on a daily basis within their working environment."

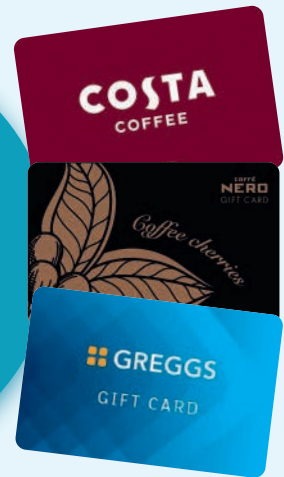
**“ We want to help officers experiencing trauma - whether it's daily or a one-off - and put the correct support in place to prevent it getting any worse.**



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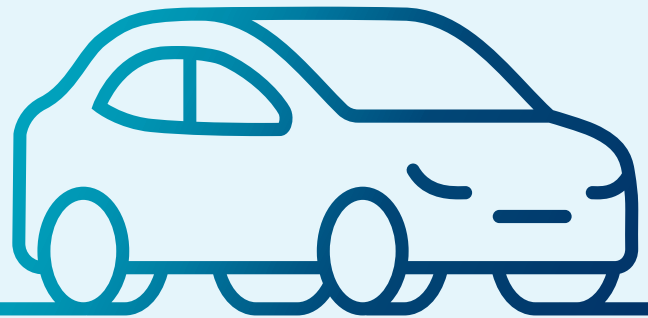
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