



## Pay Award 'Exploits Officers'

**T**he 4.75% pay rise announcement for police officers is "out of touch", Norfolk Police Federation.

Chair Andy Symonds said police had been "exploited" by the lowest pay award in the public sector, and called for the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) to be disbanded.

He said: "Police officers have yet again been exploited by this broken mess of a pay review body. They have awarded police officers the

"We are assaulted at work on a regular basis as well as having to put up with many things that are detrimental to their mental and physical health, that no other worker has to.

"Officers have seen their pay eroded by over 20% since 2010. They see other public sector workers entering into negotiation with Government about their pay, they see others being awarded higher pay awards and better conditions. And police officers I represent here in Nor-

"We seek the right to return to collective bargaining and binding arbitration when it comes to our pay process. We have seen the degradation in police officer pay and conditions for too long.

"Locally and nationally I will continue to fight for this right which should be a basic right for police officers.

"This new Government and Chief officers now need to sit down with us to build a pay review process that all stakeholders can work with

### "This out of touch and broken pay review body must be disbanded"

lowest pay award of 4.75% out of the majority of other pay review bodies representing other public sector workers.

"This completely out of touch and broken pay review body must now be disbanded.

"My anger is aimed at the pay review body who clearly do not care that police officers are unique and that we have zero industrial rights and can be forced to work, have days off and leave cancelled.

folk have to simply stand and watch when they have no such rights. They are being exploited.

"The industrial rights ballot we held in June is now into the bright light when it comes to engaging with this new Government. I accept that this Government has simply implemented the pay review body recommendations having only come to power in the last few weeks. But they must and will be aware that the system is broken and is unfair.

and have confidence in. The current situation is untenable.

"Chief officers now need to stand up and be counted. They recommended a 6% pay award. When they meet the Government they need to tell them that the Federation are correct in that a return to collective bargaining and binding arbitration is the place to return to. This broken and exploitative pay review body ignored the employers. And it has ignored police officers."

# Low Pay And Morale Hit Hard

A huge 83% of Norfolk police officers feel worse off financially now than they did five years ago, and 16% never or almost never have enough money to cover their essentials.

According to the 2023 Police Federation of England and Wales Pay and Morale Report, 91% of respondents have seen living cost increases in the previous month, and 75% of officers are dissatisfied with their pay.

Worryingly, 18% of Norfolk police officers who responded to the survey said they intend to resign from the police service either within the next two years or as soon as they can.

ation, said: "This has been bubbling under for a number of years with pay caps and pay freezes. In the Federation we have seen a sharp increase in having to support and signpost officers to help them deal with their financial situation.

"Many officers – particularly those with five or fewer years of service – are unable to cope with unexpected financial bumps such as repairs to their personal cars, or having to replace broken appliances. Officers wishing to move from rented accommodation to a mortgaged property are unable to do so due to their pay and not having enough of a deposit as they cannot save due to the cost of living and the suppression of their

we need the Government to start making pay awards that are above inflation to make up the money that we've seen taken from pay packets.

"We don't expect this to be done instantly, but over time the pay awards need to reflect this. Otherwise experienced officers will leave to join other professions that are either paid more or have working conditions that don't make them ill, physical or mentally.

"So it's of no surprise to me that 97% of respondents to the survey in Norfolk said they do not feel respected by the Government.

"All officers want is a fair pay rise that takes into account current inflation and goes a signifi-

**"Many officers are unable to cope with unexpected financial bumps such as car repairs or having to replace broken appliances"**

While police officers received a 7% pay rise in 2023, they have still seen an incredible 16% real-terms pay cut over the past 12 years.

Police chiefs have pointed out that the high cost of living in the UK is placing an even bigger strain on officers, as well as hampering recruitment. They have asked the Government for officers to receive a 6% pay rise in 2024.

Officers are also struggling with low morale and lack of support, the survey found, with 97% saying they do not feel respected by the Government, and 60% experiencing low morale.

Meanwhile 71% of respondents from Norfolk Constabulary said that they would not recommend joining the police to others and 71% said they do not feel valued within the service.

Andy Symonds, Chair of Norfolk Police Feder-

ation, said:

"Last year we saw the police pay review body recommend a 7% pay award. But this was simply because inflation had been running at over 10%. It was effectively a pay cut due to inflation and made no inroads into this pay suppression.

"Police officers need this Government to recognise their unique status and the dangers they face, the huge stressors and demands, as well as the fact that their pay has been eroded. We need to recruit and retain the best.

"Therefore, with inflation now reduced,

cant way to recouping the real-terms pay cut that we've suffered since 2010.

"Going forward, we want real change to the pay review process so that it is fair, takes into account our unique status and allows us to negotiate pay on behalf of the officers we represent."

*The survey was based on 385 responses received from Norfolk police officers*



## Overwhelming Vote For Pay Negotiation Rights

Police should have the right to genuine negotiations over pay and conditions, and the current police pay review body should be abolished, Norfolk Police Federation has said.

Chair Andy Symonds was speaking after it was revealed that more than 50,000 officers responded to a poll run by the Police Federation of England and Wales asking them whether they should pursue negotiation with binding arbitration when determining police pay. An astonishing 97.7% of those polled agreed that the PFEW should pursue such rights.

Andy said: "From my conversations with officers here in Norfolk over the past few years, it was crystal clear that they were quite simply fed up of not having any form of rights when it comes to their pay and conditions.



"They've seen their pay eroded, while other public-sector workers are able to enter into negotiation with Government about their pay.

"Officers are not asking for anything that we haven't had before. Back in 2014, police officers had the Police Negotiating Board (PNB), until it was replaced with a pay review body that has its terms of reference set by the Government.

"All we're asking for is a return to a system we had pre-2014. In fact, police officers in Scotland were never forced into having a pay review body to set their pay and conditions and they still have the Police Negotiating Board. The pertinent word in the PNB is 'negotiating.'

"All police officers want is an ability to negotiate our pay and conditions, like every other public sector worker has. Officers don't want the right to strike – they accept that they are not an employee with all the rights and entitlements that come with this. But what they cannot accept is the status quo in which the system is rigged against them."

Andy added: "I will be having meetings with Norfolk's new PCC as well as seeking meetings with Norfolk's nine MPs to reinforce this strong and clear message."



# Celebrating Our Brave Officers

**F**our Norfolk police officers attended a reception at Downing Street followed by a glittering ceremony for the National Police Bravery Awards on 11 July.

Norfolk Police Federation Chair Andy Symonds praised Silver Commander Inspector Ben Hardiman, Sgt Matthew Bloomfield, PC Luchia Blyth and PC Natalie Smith for their “brave, selfless and highly professional” actions when a man doused himself in petrol and threatened to set himself on fire in a busy shopping area back in December 2022.

A man suffering from severe psychosis had jumped from the roof of Northgate Hospital in Great Yarmouth and the first officers at the scene were PC Blyth and PC Smith. They found the man on a fire escape ladder, dousing himself in petrol and holding a lighter.

The officers started speaking to the man, trying to build a rapport. They put themselves in front of the staff at the site, and stayed close to the man, even though the ground around the ladder was soaked in petrol.

The man dangled from the edge of the fire ladder on two occasions, threatening to set himself alight and jump. PC Blyth and PC Smith continued negotiation attempts and eventually the man stepped back onto a steady surface.

The man climbed down the ladder and made direct threats to PC Blyth and PC Smith that he would set himself, and them, alight if they followed him. He then walked away towards the hospital exit.

Sgt Bloomfield and Insp Hardiman arrived at



the scene and a containment was set up around the man. The officers followed the man as he headed out of the hospital grounds and towards a shopping area, which was busy at Christmas.

They attempted to negotiate with the man, but he said he wanted to set himself alight at the shopping centre, and would set the officers on fire if they tried to stop him. Insp Hardiman set up a tactical parameter at a path leading from a cemetery into the shopping centre.

As the parameter was breached, one of the officers grabbed the man’s hand with the lighter in it, and held it out of the way as Insp Hardiman deployed PAVA spray. With the assistance of PC Blyth and PC Smith, he took the man to the ground and secured the lighter. The man’s fuel-soaked clothes were removed.

All four officers became soaked in fuel and were at immediate risk of life-changing harm, but were determined to prevent the man from entering the shopping centre. They detained the man under a Sec 3 Mental Health Act power and

he received the help he needed.

Norfolk Police Federation Chair Andy Symonds said: “My colleagues who’ve been nominated this year for a national bravery award are exactly what police officers are all about. They are brave, selfless, and highly professional.

“These qualities are shown in abundance in this incident. They were dealing with a seriously unwell member of the public who had poured large amounts of petrol over himself, had a lighter and was threatening officers.

“They put themselves in harm’s way over a prolonged period so that no innocent member of the public was injured. But the reality was in doing so it meant they were placing themselves in direct danger of being seriously harmed.

“However due to these officers’ bravery, skill and professionalism they brought this incident to a safe conclusion.

“My colleagues could have easily ended up in hospital suffering from serious burn injuries. They deserve admiration for their brave actions, and I know they have it from me, all colleagues in Norfolk and the silent majority of the public who supports police officers in the work they do.”

Paul Sanford, Chief Constable of Norfolk Constabulary, said: “These officers acted in the highest traditions of the service to ensure a vulnerable person could be brought to safety. These are the qualities we look for in police officers; they exemplify bravery and professionalism in dealing with such a challenging situation and dealing with someone in a distressing situation, as well as keeping members of the public safe.”

# MEET THE REP

## Ch Insp Paul Wheatley



### **Please tell us a about your policing career.**

I have 24 years' experience in the force, joining in 2000. After completing my probation I was successful in joining the Proactive team in the west of the county, conducting numerous operations around drug enforcement and combatting crime trends.

From there, I spent three years in CID – passing both the detective and sergeant exams and completing the detective accreditation. After spending a short period as a temporary DS, I moved back to uniform as a sergeant in Thetford.

In 2007, I passed my Inspectors exam and became Inspector for Thetford Local Poling Command, then later moved to Dereham LPC.

In 2010 I moved into CCR. I qualified as a Tactical Firearms Commander and commenced the role as Oscar1, dealing with numerous firearms operations and critical incidents.

After three years I joined Breckland as Operational Partnership Team Inspector, then in 2014 became Ch Insp and District Commander for the Breckland District.

I passed my Cadre TFC and managed a variety of pre-planned firearms deployments, including covert operations utilising MAST assets.

In August 2018 I moved back into the Control Room as Ch Insp leading on major change and managing an Emergency Control room through the pandemic. My main skills are around Tactical command of firearm deployments.

I now lead the Project teams in the joint space of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Personally, I have been married 26 years and have two boys aged 24 and 20 – both make me feel old. I believe I have a good work/life balance and enjoy walking, kayaking and just spending time with the family.

### **Why did you become a Police Federation Rep?**

People often forget that Chief Inspectors are Federated ranks, with my experience in the force I wanted to offer support to my peers and fellow officers at all ranks.

### **Why should colleagues consider becoming a Fed Rep?**

It's a great opportunity to support your colleagues and have a voice. For many years we have been done to – with the reduction in officers despite Government spin to the contrary, and pay rises lower than inflation. We need to be able to voice our concerns for all Federated ranks.

### **What do you enjoy about being a Fed Rep?**

I am the new kid (or old man) on the block, so I am in my learning phase. I am enjoying having a better understanding of the Federation and how it can support officers.

### **Why is the role of a Fed Rep so important?**

Officers need to point of contact to discuss issues or concerns in a safe environment, with someone who understands the force and its Regulations.

## Det Sgt Luke Phillips

### **Please tell us a about your policing career.**

I have been with the organisation now since 2009, starting as a PCSO and becoming a regular in 2012.

I have worked in uniform roles in Norwich and Broadland, and then local proactive teams including (SNAT) now known as NPT, and (TAC) now known as SCDT. I seconded to ERSOU for four years on their Counter Terrorism team

with training and knowledge to be able to better represent these members – and now I am able to support all Federation members too.

### **Why should colleagues consider becoming a Fed Rep?**

This is a great opportunity for further development/networking, and allows you to have an insight into issues you wouldn't have even thought

# MEET THE REP

be able to now support those members is rewarding. I hope some of those in the workplace will come to me for Fed advice based on positive professional relationships in previous roles.

**“We all pay into a membership to allow for this type of support, and to be able to now support those members is rewarding”**

and return in 2021 to pursue promotion. I am currently a Detective Sergeant on the Serious and Organise Crime Unit, and will often act as Detective Inspector on this unit.

### **Why did you become a Police Federation Rep?**

I am the Chair of EMPA a staff support network, and found myself becoming a critical friend to several members going through difficult times in the workplace. To now be a Rep provides me

existed. All I would say is, you need to know how to manage a workload well, as those in high pressured day roles may struggle with additional work. However, the Fed team are excellent and relaxed in their approach to what workload you choose to take on in this role.

### **What do you enjoy about being a Fed Rep?**

Representation mostly. We all pay into a membership to allow for this type of support, and to

### **Why is the role of a Fed Rep so important?**

It is important to have a Fed Rep with you when you need help and support.

We can have conversations on your behalf or we can be with you when such conversations take place. We won't always have all the knowledge, but we as Fed Reps have the support of our case managers and office staff who do have the knowledge and will be able to assist.

# Help With Addiction

The Police Federation has teamed up with Help 4 Addiction and Rehubs, both of which are police-friendly organisations dedicated to supporting any officers struggling or dealing with addiction.

The services and support provided by Help 4 Addiction and Rehubs are available for all officers in Norfolk.

## Help 4 Addiction

The professionals at Help 4 Addiction provide an independent addiction service throughout the UK. They are committed to ensuring you receive the appropriate support.

The expertise extends to helping individuals overcome various addictions, including addictions to alcohol, drugs, prescription drugs, and gambling.

Help 4 Addiction collaborates with clinics and addiction specialists worldwide, which allows them to deliver a comprehensive service for individuals dealing with addiction. They work to identify tailored addiction treatment – inpatient,

outpatient, or rehabilitation from home.

## Rehubs

Rehubs offers a supportive programme entirely online, making their approach to addiction recovery extremely convenient and accessible to all.

As an online rehab platform, Rehubs provide cost-effective, readily accessible, and validated solutions to aid you in conquering addiction and embracing a sustained recovery, all from the comfort of your own surroundings.

## Contact Details

You can call Help 4 Addiction on 020 3955 7700 or at [www.help4addiction.co.uk](http://www.help4addiction.co.uk). Rehubs is on 0330 058 8227 or [rehubs.com](http://rehubs.com).

Both websites have a free five-minute online consultation.

Rehubs also has an app; your Federation Rep can give you a code for free access and a 10% off police discount for the intensive 28 day online rehab.



Take advantage of this offer by showing your bluelight card or any proof you work for Norfolk Constabulary

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# Reduced fixed-fee divorce for PolFed clients

**As a result of no-fault divorce having come into effect on 6 April 2022, Police Federation members can access expert advice on their divorce for a discounted fixed-fee of just £420 (incl. VAT), plus court fee. This is an exclusive discount rate for all members in addition to a free 45-minute bespoke consultation.**

## How much does a divorce cost?

Police federation members will be able to access tailored advice and guidance on their divorce from our specialists for just £420 (incl. VAT), plus court fee. With no change to the service offered, we want to ensure that officers looking to legally end their marriage with the no-fault divorce legislation can do so at a competitive price.

## What is no-fault divorce?

From 6 April 2022, spouses will no longer have to apportion blame to get divorced. Currently, unless a petitioner has been separated for two years or more (and the respondent consents), a petitioner has to rely on the fault-based facts of unreasonable behaviour or adultery. Having to rely on fault at the start of the process can create unnecessary tension, as our recent survey of divorced couples found that 30% of respondents had to exaggerate during proceedings to get their application through court.

Our family law experts believe the change in legislation will lead to divorces being less contentious, allowing spouses to concentrate on resolving other matters which must be considered, such as child and financial arrangements.

## Do I need a lawyer for a no-fault divorce?

The divorce process can be extremely time consuming and confusing, which is why we always recommend speaking to our experts at the first instance to gain advice on your circumstances. There are many things

that could go wrong if you embark on representing yourself in the divorce, which is why we've reduced our fees to alleviate the burden of attempting to facilitate a no fault divorce yourself.

Our head of family law, Georgina Chase, said:



*We support the introduction of the new no-fault divorce, making the process less acrimonious and encouraging a conciliatory approach. We want to ensure that our clients still have access to expert legal advice in going through such a challenging time of their lives and our concern is that many couples will attempt to 'go it alone' and finalise their no-fault divorce online without obtaining the legal advice that they need in respect of the connected matrimonial finances and child arrangements. Making our fixed-fee divorce service more cost effective will facilitate this.*



Our team of experts are on hand to offer comprehensive legal advice, catered to your family circumstances. At Slater and Gordon we've been advising and supporting serving officers for more than 60 years, providing straightforward guidance to help you move forward with clarity and confidence. If you'd like to arrange a free 45-minute initial consultation with a specialist family lawyer from Slater and Gordon, please [contact us on 0800 175 7710](tel:08001757710) and we'll be happy to help.



Your family law representative  
Georgina Chase

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