

FED NEWS

The magazine of Suffolk Police Federation
SUMMER 2024



SPECIAL ATTENDS BRAVERY AWARDS

see Pages 4 and 5

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Published by Suffolk Police Federation
Portal Avenue
Martlesham Heath
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP5 3QS

Email: suffolk@polfed.org
Tel: 01473 782001
Web: polfed.org/Suffolk

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As I started to write this column, the dust was beginning to settle after the announcement of our pay award.

You will see on Page 6 that we have given the news that we will get a 4.75 per cent pay rise from 1 September a cautious welcome.

It does go some way to getting our pay back to where it should be after years of below inflation increases and we also welcome the fact that the new Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, quickly said the Government would accept the recommendations from the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) in full.

This has not always been the case, some former Home Secretaries have ignored the PRRB recommendations which is just one of the reasons why the Federation is going to campaign for a better, and fairer, police pay review mechanism.

Another is the fact that we don't have access to binding arbitration, something we did under the previous Police Negotiating Board and this will be one of the key provisions we will seek with our campaign, along with collective bargaining.

We really need the new Government to demonstrate with acts, and not just words, to show that it values and respects the unique role police officers carry out in our communities.

Just over a month ago, officers from across England and Wales were at 10 Downing Street for an exclusive reception hosted by the Home Secretary ahead of the Police Bravery Awards evening.

These awards are a highlight of the policing year, with officers' bravery being praised and recognised. Nominee after nominee will say they were just doing their job, but it's a job where running towards danger while others are running in the opposite direction is the norm.

Yvette Cooper was just days into her new appointment when she praised officers' bravery at the awards. I wonder if deep down in her heart, having listened to the outstanding acts of courage, she thinks a 4.75 per cent pay rise is fair?

Whilst writing this article, officers across the country have been policing protests, violent disorder and wanton vandalism.

The police have been, of course, in the frontline of the response to this unrest and the news has been full of images and footage of these officers themselves coming under attack.

This is yet another sign of the critical place police have in society. The police service exists to fight and prevent crime,

POINT OF VIEW...



BY DARREN HARRIS, CHAIR OF SUFFOLK POLICE FEDERATION

to uphold the law, to keep the peace, to protect the vulnerable.

But, in return, they expect to be respected by the Government of the day. And I just don't feel that officers are seeing that respect.

After Labour's resounding success in the General Election, which also brought a number of new MPs in Suffolk, we are writing to all our representatives in Parliament seeking meetings with them.

We want to talk to them about the pressures the police service is under, police officers' low morale and the challenges and risks they face on a daily basis.

We also want to give them an insight into how they could help bring about change by showing genuine support for police officers.

They need to act as our voice in Parliament, for the benefit of the police service and police officers but also for their constituents in Suffolk, the people who elected them.

We will also be interested to hear their views on policing. Do they have an understanding of the realities of modern-day policing? Would they be willing to step into officers' shoes? Would they want their loved ones to sign up to be a police officer given the very real risks they would face and the far from commensurate remuneration they would receive in return.

We are waiting to hear back from MPs and will let you know if we are able to arrange these meetings.

Special Constable
Kyle Scott (right)
with his brother
Ashley outside
Number 10 Downing
Street.

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography



SPECIAL REFLECTS ON 'SURREAL' BRAVERY AWARDS

Kyle Scott says it was a 'big shock' to discover he was the first ever Special Constable to be solely nominated for a national Police Bravery Award.

Suffolk Police Federation member Kyle, who attended the annual awards in London with his brother, Ashley, said the whole day was 'very surreal'.

He was nominated by the Federation after risking his life as he saved an

unresponsive woman from freezing cold waters in March 2023.

"The whole day was very surreal," said Kyle, who narrowly missed out on the Region 4 award to a Lincolnshire officer. The Federation's Region 4 consists of eight branches, including Cambridgeshire,

Norfolk and Northamptonshire.

"This is the first time I've ever been to London on this scale. I'm 26 and - living in sleepy Suffolk - I don't come to cities very often."

Commenting on being the first-ever Special to be solely nominated for the bravery awards, Kyle said: "Until this morning, I didn't know that, so it was a big shock to the system when I heard.

"I'm really privileged to be a member of the Federation, I think all Specials should



who will say, 'It's just part of the job', but it's not just part of the job it's going above and beyond the requirements of the job, and tonight we get the chance to recognise and thank those officers."

Addressing the audience, the Home Secretary, who revealed it was the 14th Police Bravery Awards she had attended, said: "The reason I've attended so many Police Bravery Awards is because I think it's so important to respect and recognise the work you do."

"And because the stories are always so inspirational, often so difficult, the incredibly difficult situations you have faced."

"The extreme violence that you will have had to work towards, the dangerous rescues that so many of you have undertaken."

She thanked the officers present, as well as those across the county and the partners, relatives and families of officers whose support 'makes the work they do possible'.

Dame Diana also thanked all officers in the room: "To you and all your colleagues, for what you do to keep the public safe, thank you. I was struck by the impressive people you are. A phrase that stuck out for me is 'forever going into the unknown'."

"Your families must be so proud of you. I am so proud of you. To those here tonight, be proud of what you do. It could not matter more."

The ceremony was hosted by TV presenter Mark Durden-Smith, with Strictly Come Dancing star Kai Widdington also in attendance.

The overall winners on the night were a pair of Met officers, PCs Alannah Mulhall and Joe Gerrard, who were stabbed multiple times while protecting members of the public in Leicester Square in the capital.

The annual event is organised by the Police Federation of England and Wales and is sponsored by Police Mutual.

be, they are there to protect us and look out for us when we need them."

Prior to the ceremony, Kyle attended a reception at Downing Street, hosted by the new Home Secretary Yvette Cooper and policing minister Dame Diana Johnson DBE.

"It was amazing to be invited inside Downing Street and a real honour," said Kyle. "To attend with other officers who have also been nominated is a real privilege. To be honest, it all felt a bit surreal."

He added: "The food was very tasty, I'd definitely give Downing Street a 'good' rating on Trip Advisor - 'would come again'."

Federation secretary Ben Hudson also attended the awards ceremony, along with Deputy Chief Constable Rob Jones.

"We are absolutely delighted that Kyle has been our nominee this year," said Ben. "We have 100 per cent sign-up (to the Federation) by Specials at Suffolk, the Chief Constable is 100 per

cent behind Specials and our PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner) pays for their membership. So if any Force was going to be the first to have a Special solely nominated, it would be us."

Ben said the annual event was his 'favourite day of the year'.

He continued: "This is everything that encapsulates all that is so good about policing. Officers get to go to Downing Street and they get to meet the Home Secretary. They get to be in London and celebrate the best of British policing."

"When everyone else runs away, we run forwards. It's an honour every year to be here - to be humbled by the stories. These officers are the best of us in every single way."

The awards ceremony, which was the 29th of its kind, kicked off with an introduction from Tiff Lynch, acting chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

She said: "Tonight, we will hear extraordinary stories of bravery. Officers

“ TO YOU AND ALL YOUR COLLEAGUES, FOR WHAT YOU DO TO KEEP THE PUBLIC SAFE, THANK YOU. I WAS STRUCK BY THE IMPRESSIVE PEOPLE YOU ARE. A PHRASE THAT STUCK OUT FOR ME IS 'FOREVER GOING INTO THE UNKNOWN'.



This year's national Police Bravery Awards nominees visit Downing Street.

FED WELCOMES PAY RISE WITH CAUTION

Suffolk Police Federation secretary Ben Hudson has given a cautious welcome to the 4.75 per cent increase for officers.

Ben said the increase, alongside last year's seven per cent rise, was a step towards restoring the pay degradation of the past 15 years.

But he also voiced his disappointment that the Police Remuneration Review Body's (PRRB) recommended increase was below that offered to other public sector workers – such as junior doctors, who were awarded a 22 per cent pay rise on the same day.

Ben said: "Our members have suffered from a real-terms fall in their pay over the past 15 years of more than 20 per cent.

"This increase comes on top of last year's seven per cent rise and while it's welcome, it's only a step towards pay restoration and not an immediate fix.

"While we welcome the Government accepting the PRRB recommendations, it's disappointing that the pay award recommendation was below that offered to millions of other public sector workers.

"For instance, junior doctors have been offered a 22 per cent rise over the next two years and good luck to them.

"Maybe it would be different for police

officers if we had similar industrial rights to junior doctors and others in the public sector."

Ben said that the current pay mechanism was broken and a fairer, independent system was needed.

"The current system does not allow for negotiation," Ben said. "It only allows for a pay award to be imposed, which continues to leave us at the whim of the politicians and government of the day.

"That must change and we've been given a strong mandate to fight for that change in a recent poll of our members.

"We'll continue to push for a fair system of pay negotiation and arbitration to ensure officers are rewarded fairly for the unique job they do."

Ben concluded by saying he hoped that the pay announcement would help ease issues around recruitment and retention.

This year's [Suffolk Police Federation pay and morale survey](#) found that almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of members were dissatisfied with their remuneration, with 14 per cent saying they never or almost never had enough money for their essentials.

Ben said: "We know from our own research and from talking to members just



Suffolk Police Federation secretary
Ben Hudson.

how much austerity has hurt officers in the pocket.

"Many officers have been struggling to pay their essential bills and it's made some question their future in the service.

"I would hope this increase will go some way towards easing the financial pressures and, in turn, ease the retention crisis and help us attract top-quality candidates."

FEDERATION TO CAMPAIGN FOR INDUSTRIAL RIGHTS

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) carried out a countrywide poll around industrial rights in June.

A total of 97.7 per cent of officers who took part voted for the staff association to launch a campaign which will call for a fair process of collective bargaining and binding arbitration when the Government considers police officer pay.

And Ben Hudson, secretary of Suffolk Police Federation, says it is the failure of the Government to treat officers fairly that has driven such results.

"This gives the Police Federation a firm mandate," says Ben. "Officers are frustrated, they are fed up, and they feel they are just not getting a fair deal on pay.

"They have suffered a 20 per cent cut in their pay in real terms over recent years, but it's not just about the fact they have been given below inflation pay rises. It's more about the fact that the current pay review mechanism is just not independent."

The [PRRB](#) replaced the previous pay award mechanism – the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) – in 2014. Under PNB, officers had access to independent arbitration.

Police officers currently have restrictions placed on them, including bans on joining a trade union or taking industrial action. But, in return for officers accepting these restrictions, successive governments have committed to treating officers fairly on pay.

"It's clear that the Government has - and is - failing to honour this commitment as far as we are concerned. We have stood by and watched other groups of workers resort to industrial action when they have been unhappy with their pay award and then seen them secure a better deal," continued Ben.

"Now our members want to be afforded the same rights as other workers so they too have options."

The Police Federation poll on industrial rights ran from 3 to 21 June this year and attracted 50,103 responses.

The Federation's National Council and National Board will now start to create the campaign for the introduction of a fair and binding pay mechanism.

Ben ended: "While this work is undertaken, we will be seeking meetings with our newly-elected MPs in Suffolk so that we can discuss the results of this survey with them and hopefully gain their support for ensuring that police officers are treated fairly when it comes to their pay.

"Police pay should reflect officers' unique role in our communities, the challenges they encounter and the very real risks they face. When others are running away from danger, it is our members who are running in the opposite direction. They put their lives on the line to protect the public and they deserve a fair deal on pay."

GOVERNMENT URGED TO FULFIL ELECTION PROMISES

The new Government must fulfil its pre-election promises of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour with a re-investment in policing.

That is the view of Suffolk Police Federation chair Daren Harris after Labour's landslide General Election victory.

"As a Federation, we have long called for more funding for policing and for sustained investment so that police leaders can put in place longer-term plans for policing their communities," says Darren.

"We have to see a commitment to long-term investment."

Labour, while campaigning in the run-up to the election, announced plans to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and said its mission was to 'take back our streets', reducing serious violence and rebuilding public confidence in policing by getting officers back on the streets.

The party said it would introduce a new Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, restoring patrols to town centres by recruiting thousands of new police officers, police and community support officers (PCSOs) and Special Constables and putting 13,000 extra neighbourhood police and PCSOs on the beat.

It pledged to introduce new penalties for offenders, get knives off the streets, set up a specialist rape unit in every police force and launch a new network of Young Futures hubs.

Funding for its manifesto pledges would come from ending private schools' tax breaks and a Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme.

"We need to see the new Government put its plans in place and fulfil the



New Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.

promises it made during the General Election campaigning. But it's not just about rebuilding public confidence, the new Government also has to rebuild the relationship between our political leaders and police officers," Darren explained.

"Officers felt they were not respected or valued by the last Government and that damaged their morale which then has a knock-on effect on the service provided to our communities."

Darren believes if Labour is to meet its pre-election pledges it needs to work with the Police Federation to address the crisis within policing, starting with a new pay review mechanism which would help boost morale and help with officer retention.

"It's time for a re-set," says Darren, "The police service has a unique role in society with police officers putting their lives on the line to serve and protect the public. We need to see tangible signs that the Government recognises this."

'WE WANT TO BUILD EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MPs'

Suffolk Police Federation secretary Ben Hudson says he is looking forward to meeting county MPs following the General Election.

The Federation branch is writing to all the MPs asking if they will attend a meeting to discuss the current challenges the police service is facing.

"As a Federation, we obviously exist to give our members a voice and therefore we would want to talk to MPs about the issues that matter to police officers right now and that covers everything from pay to personal protective equipment and from crime to community safety, plus many things in between," says Ben.

"But we want to have a two-way conversation, and we want to hear our MPs' views on policing, what their constituents were saying while they were out canvassing before the election and where they want to see change.

"Relations between the police service and the previous Government had become badly strained and many officers feel they were not treated fairly, but the time has come for us to move forward, seek to build effective working relationships with our MPs and the Government and, above all, do all we can to ensure that the communities we serve get the best policing services possible."

In addition to being the secretary of the Suffolk Police Federation branch, Ben chairs the Federation's National Detectives' Forum and is leading the #SimplifyDG6 campaign which calls for a change to data protection legislation to save officers thousands of hours' work.

"This is another issue that I would like to talk to our MPs about," says Ben. "We want the Government to simplify the redaction obligations officers face at the pre-charge stage and also want the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#), the College of Policing and the CPS to work with the Federation to ensure members receive nationally agreed face-to-face training on disclosure procedures.

"I fully appreciate this is quite a complicated area, but by speaking to MPs face to face I am sure I can give them a better understanding of the difficulties officers face due to the current legislation and also explain how this could be remedied."

The eight newly-elected Suffolk MPs are: Peter Prinsley, Patrick Spencer, Jack Abbott, Jess Asato, James Cartlidge, Jenny Riddell-Carpenter, Adrian Ramsay and Nick Timothy.

“ IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT REBUILDING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, THE NEW GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS TO REBUILD THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR POLITICAL LEADERS AND POLICE OFFICERS.

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Suffolk Police Federation workplace representative Sid Carr fulfilled an ambition when he followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a roads policing officer.

Sid, who is a PC, knew early in his policing career he wanted to work in the Suffolk roads unit after being influenced by his dad. Now he has been a traffic cop for more than five years, and he has not looked back.

Sid said: "I'm glad I joined the service roughly 10 and a half years ago - I'm still really happy being a police officer.

"My highlight was becoming a roads policing officer. It's something I always wanted to do and follow in the footsteps of my father, Paul Carr.

"He was a roads policing officer in Suffolk as well, so it was nice to take that up five years ago. Both of my parents were police officers in Suffolk and most of their friends were police officers.

"I spent a lot of time with traffic cops, with my dad and his friends and hearing all their stories. I was probably a bit anti-police when I was a teenager, as I suspect many sons of police officers are.

"I joined the military and then I thought I'll follow them and join the police."



MEET YOUR FED REP: SID CARR

Sid spent five years as an aircraft engineer in the Royal Navy based in Yeovil, and said there was some crossover between the roles.

"You've got to think on your feet," he said. "When you're dealing with an incident on a fast road you've got to make dynamic risk assessments the whole time you're there.

"As an engineer, you're making quick-time decisions to solve problems and get

the aircraft back in the air."

Sid was elected as a Fed rep towards the end of 2022. As a roads policing officer, he has naturally gravitated towards that line of representation for the Fed.

And he said reps have a key role in helping and supporting members in difficult times. He explained that the role of reps is

especially essential if members are facing conduct issues.

"I've never needed the Federation but I know people who have," he said. "They're really key in helping members and helping police officers, and it's something I wanted to get involved in.

"I want to help where I can and hopefully try to help protect people, particularly around the roads policing side of things. If they are ever involved in something that's unfortunate, hopefully I can help them out."

He added: "People should be looked after because, unfortunately, the job doesn't always look after people."

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Chief Constable Rachel Kearton.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

'I couldn't be more proud to be in this position', says Chief Constable Rachel Kearton, 'and I'm proud of all the officers in Suffolk'.

In an exclusive interview with the Chief Constable, we discover - after a Caribbean gap year - Rachel launched her career in policing 35 years ago. We hear how the 57-year-old mother-of-two has managed to juggle parenting and policing as we gain an insight into what life is like leading more than 1,300 cops in Suffolk.

"Suffolk is one of the smallest forces I've worked for. It's a very close team here and a real sense of community and familiarity," Rachel says. "The idea that we're a policing family can really be felt here.

"Of course, one of the challenges that comes with being a small, tight Force is that people can be afraid to speak up. So, it presents both benefits and challenges for me."

For Rachel, life in the police began in 1989, when she first joined Hampshire Constabulary, as a fresh-faced 22-year-old, straight after university. Prior to studying, Rachel had spent a year volunteering in a children's home in Jamaica - an 'eye-opening 12 months' - that she says equipped her with so many invaluable life skills she has

since used throughout her career.

"A nine-to-five office job wasn't created for me," she admits. "I've never been hugely academic but instead enjoyed the idea of going out, on the streets, protecting the public. I felt a sense of privilege knowing that I was awake during a night shift while the rest of the world slept."

Rachel spent 12 years with Hampshire Police before developing her career at West Yorkshire Constabulary. It was there that she met her husband, a seconded officer from the Met.

In 2004, the pair married, and in 2006, Rachel fell pregnant with her first son.

"I went for promotion while I was seven months pregnant," recalls Rachel, who successfully achieved the role of chief superintendent that same year.

After becoming parents for a second time to another son, Rachel's husband was given the opportunity to take on a role in Turkey. And so, the family spent the next three-and-a-half-years overseas, during which time Rachel decided to take a career break, allowing her to raise their two young children, while also taking a staff officer

role in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

It was in 2015 that their family relocated to Suffolk to be nearer to Rachel's elderly parents. And, with her husband set to retire, it did not take much persuading for Rachel to apply for the Assistant Chief Constable role at their local force.

Three years later, she was Deputy Chief Constable and, in 2022, was promoted to Chief.

"When my husband and I met, we both had very established careers already. He was an inspector, and I was a superintendent. It's never felt like our careers have clashed, though," she says.

"He had an opportunity to take on a role in Turkey, which gave me the chance to focus on parenting while also working for a partner organisation that is very similar to policing in many ways.

"I was able to embrace being a mum and really enjoyed motherhood during that time, and I feel very fortunate to have been able to do that. I call it a 'pause' and an unexpected bonus in my career."

Reflecting on the path she has taken to get to where she is now, Rachel hopes to inspire and encourage others to grab the opportunities life throws at them with both hands.

"It's healthy to change direction," she says, "I've always wanted to embrace any opportunity presented to me and I would encourage all of our officers to do the same."

Speaking as a female officer who joined the police more than 30 years ago, Rachel says that she is pleased to see 'so many more women on the frontline today'.

"I think women are taken a lot more seriously now," she continued, "Our abilities are respected a lot more, which is a good step forward."

Looking to the future, Rachel says officer wellbeing and morale 'needs to be the focus'. She reflects on the latest People Opinion Survey results which highlighted the need for better flexibility within the Force - an area she is hoping to improve.

"I think, for things to improve in policing, we need to challenge the culture," Rachel said.

"People don't fit into one box. They need to feel confident and happy being the person they want to be. It's a whole culture change, and it's not going to be easy."

Rachel wants to reassure Fed members that she is working with senior leaders to better the working environment at Suffolk, by drawing on feedback from officers.

She explained: "I put a five-year plan in place in April last year, and we're working towards delivering it.

"Of course, life changes - so the plan has to be adaptable to an extent.



"However the plan changes though, and however much policing changes, I believe the same values should remain: and those areas are compassion, courage, community and professionalism.

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"Of course, I recognise it can be difficult for our officers to maintain these values when they're not getting effectively rewarded for their efforts due to poor pay."

When asked to name her career highlights, Rachel said: "I have so many memories that I will never forget. The personal interactions and friendships I've made along the way have to be up there.

"Some of the connections I made in the infancy of my career remain just as strong today - and for that, I'm so grateful."

What her future career holds, Rachel says her desire to drive, grow and develop the Force at Suffolk remains.

"I'd like to stay here for the foreseeable future," she continued. "I want to develop new relationships and develop those already established, like the one I have with the Federation."

She praised the work of the Federation, acknowledging the much-needed support provided by the branch for its members.

"I think the Federation is vital for modern-day police officers - not only for the invaluable advice and support provided but to give officers a voice, both locally and nationally," Rachel explains.

Retired PC, Matt Kidd-Stanton.



MENTAL HEALTH: LIFE-SAVING COP SPEAKS OUT

A retired police officer who was severely injured after saving a man's life has spoken about the impact on his physical and mental health.

PC Matt Kidd-Stanton injured the discs in his neck after grabbing the man as he jumped from Orwell Bridge on the A14 near Ipswich five years ago.

And as his physical health suffered so too did his mental health with Matt experiencing a breakdown in 2021.

He spoke about his experiences for Men's Health Week (10 to 16 June 2024) and encouraged officers struggling with their mental health to seek help early.

Matt said: "I didn't realise how acutely mentally unwell I was. The Force referred me to a psychologist and within 20 minutes of being with him he said I'd got complex PTSD, severe depression and anxiety. I'm still working with him.

"It opened up a lot of things for me – it wasn't just the injury.

"I thought that as a police officer I can handle anything. At the time you carry on and don't have time to think about it. But when it came out, it all came out – links back to the bridge, grief deaths and suicides I've dealt with."

“ OFFICERS ARE ONLY HUMAN. THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH THEY CAN TAKE BEFORE THEY BREAK.

Matt said his 'world was turned upside down' on that fateful night in February 2019 when he grabbed the man who was attempting to die by suicide.

"He was on the bridge and just as I got to him he jumped and I grabbed hold of him, took all of his weight, and got him back over the other side," he said. "At the time I thought I'd pulled a muscle and I'd be fine."

However, by May Matt couldn't move his left arm, and said he was suffering the 'worst pain imaginable' in his neck and down into his arms and hands.

He underwent two lots of surgery in 2019 and 2020, but it did not correct the issue.

"It's not been right since," he said. "The hypothesis is one of my nerves was caught in the scar tissue of the first surgery.

"There's nothing else they can do because it's close to my spine. I'm 50 per



Matt receives Stars of Suffolk award.

cent disabled, and on strong pain medication for the rest of my life just so I can carry on."

Matt was named Police Officer of the Year in the Stars of Suffolk in 2019 for his actions that night, and at the event he met his old school friend, Nigel Seaman.

Nigel founded [Combat2Coffee](#), which is based in Ipswich and provides mental health support to army veterans and blue-light workers, and invited Matt to join him for a cuppa.

Matt eventually met him and, from that chat, he is now volunteering for the not-for-profit organisation.

"It's not about coffee," he said. "It's a vehicle for people to be able to talk, to signpost them to where they need to be and who they need to speak to. It's given me a whole new lease of life to be part of something. I feel valued and it gives me a sense of wellbeing.

"I joined the police because I wanted to help people and give back. It's not quite the same scale, but it's still helping people."

Matt added: "My advice to colleagues and officers who might be experiencing

issues with their mental health is to get help. Speak to someone. No one is infallible.

"When I was a serving police officer, you don't realise the trauma you're taking on board. You see things people never see in a lifetime. If you try to deal with it alone, it's only going to end one way and you're going to crash. Officers are only human. There's only so much they can take before they break.

"It's getting that message out there to get that help before they break, because it is no fun."

The Police Federation has launched #AskTwice, a campaign that aims to show the importance of members looking after their own mental health and checking in on each other.

#AskTwice commits to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where people feel valued, heard, and empowered to seek help when needed.

The campaign is also a resource and [brings together assets to offer support and guidance](#) in areas such as bereavement, financial wellbeing, and suicide.

[Find out more about #AskTwice.](#)



Sergeant Jo Miah (right) and Sergeant Rebecca McCarthy (left).

WELFARE KITS SENT TO RESPONSE OFFICERS

Suffolk Police put welfare at the centre of this year's Response Policing Week of Action, which took place in June.

Each of the Force's response PCs, sergeants, inspectors and specials is being sent a welfare kit as a thank-you for the role they do.

Sergeant Jo Miah, Suffolk Police Federation member, came up with the idea last year and it proved so popular that the welfare bags were distributed again this Response Policing Week of Action.

She was helped with the initiative by Sergeant Rebecca McCarthy.

Jo said: "I think the annual Response Policing Week of Action is a really good way to highlight the difficult job that they do.

"Response officers face a lot of stresses and strains. They are usually the first on the scene, which means they see and deal with a lot of things.

"They have a sheer variety of work to deal with and have to know a bit about everything.

"This is a little something to show we care about them and something to acknowledge the hard work they do."

The bags had the phrase 'putting welfare at the centre of Response Policing Week' in them and then a list of the items inside, including sweets, pen, lip balm, fun-size treat, sanitiser, breakfast bar and brew.

A letter from each item has been highlighted to spell the word 'welfare'.

The bags also contained welfare-related information on things such as the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service.

"We had 680 of them going out to response officers this year," said Jo. "It's just a little something to show our appreciation."

The Response Policing Week of Action is held nationally and is spearheaded by the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) (NPCC).

It aims to celebrate the professionalism and courage of response officers and is also an opportunity to recognise the challenges they face and consider the future and development of a key role within policing.

ALMOST TWO IN FIVE SUFFOLK OFFICERS ASSAULTED LAST YEAR

Latest figures have revealed that almost two in five police officers were assaulted last year.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed there were 538 assaults on frontline officers in Suffolk in the year to 31 March 2023, with 103 of those attacks resulting in injury.

And with around 1,425 officers in Suffolk Police, it's the equivalent of 38 per cent of officers in the Force being assaulted during that 12-month period.

Nationally, the ONS figures show that in England and Wales there was a total of 40,330 attacks on officers in the year to 31 March, with 11,022 resulting in an injury to an officer.

Secretary Ben Hudson of Suffolk Police Federation said: "I am appalled by the number of attacks on our members. The level of violence aimed at them is unbelievable.

"They are being assaulted just for going to work and protecting the public, and it is absolutely unacceptable."

Ben encouraged members to report all assaults on them.

He said: "There is a concern that not all assaults are being reported because some officers see it as being part of the job.

"Violence against police officers should never be part of the job. No one should be attacked for going to work.

"We need all assaults to be reported so that the Force has an accurate picture of what our members are facing."

When an officer is assaulted or injured on duty, we as branch can look to assist them through the George Burrows package in respect of potential personal accident claims, overnight hospital claims, loss of unsociable hours and recovery of court awarded compensation. [Find out more.](#)

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FILLING OUT ACCIDENT REPORTS IS 'A MUST'



Suffolk Police Federation health and safety lead Helen Self.

Suffolk Police Federation members are being encouraged to follow up on-duty accidents and near misses by completing post-incident forms.

Helen Self, Suffolk Police Federation health and safety lead, says it's important incidents are logged in order for lessons to be learned.

"Accidents do happen, but it's about learning from things and trying to avoid them actually happening or from happening again in the future," she said.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) defines a near miss as 'an event or situation that could have resulted in injury, illness, damage or loss but did not do so due to chance, corrective action or timely intervention'.

“ ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN, BUT IT'S ABOUT LEARNING FROM THINGS AND TRYING TO AVOID THEM ACTUALLY HAPPENING OR FROM HAPPENING AGAIN IN THE FUTURE.

Helen said there was a worry that incidents, particularly near misses, were going unreported.

"If accidents or near misses don't get reported then the Force and the Federation aren't going to know something has happened," she said.

"The organisation needs to know something has happened to try to make sure it doesn't happen again, and the Federation should know or it can't support officers through anything.

"If we know what's going on, then we can put some support in place for the officer and we can challenge the organisation in relation to what went wrong."

PFEW's near miss policy states there are legal reasons under the Health and Safety at Work Act to report a near miss.

It also outlines the moral reasons, including 'to assist in preventing their

colleagues from coming to harm in the workplace', and financial reasons such as replacing damaged equipment, the payment of legal costs, and fines.

Helen said: "Near misses often don't get reported.

"People don't think about reporting it or they go off duty and then it slips their mind.

"But it's important. Those near misses indicate that something may have gone wrong and needs to be looked at. If they don't report it, how do we support and deal with that?"

"If something is not reported or it's not done accurately, then someone could end up in an accident or a near miss.

"If there's a failure to do something and as a result someone has a near miss, it's something we need to know about.

"It's about learning for us and the organisation and making sure it never happens again or that it never actually happens," Helen added.

More information is available by emailing [Helen Self, Suffolk Police Federation's health and safety lead](mailto:Helen.Self.Suffolk.Police.Federation@pfe.org.uk).

Further information is also available by downloading [PFEW's near miss policy](#).