

# CONNECT



NEWS AND VIEWS FROM WEST MERCIA POLICE FEDERATION



## BRAVERY AWARD WIN FOR WEST MERCIA OFFICERS

- SEE PAGES 6 AND 7

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# VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

By **Steve Butler**, chair of West Mercia Police Federation



Welcome to the summer edition of our members' magazine. So much has happened in the three months since this publication was last produced that it is hard to know where to begin.

But, I am going to start with the national Police Bravery Awards held in London in mid-July because, for me, they are the most important event in the policing year. This year's awards were particularly special because our branch nominees won the Region 3 award. Also in Region 3 are the West Midlands, Warwickshire and Staffordshire branches.

So, I want to add my congratulations to PC Thomas Simmonds and Sergeants Lee Baker and Sergeant Shannon Murphy who were worthy winners of the award, and deserve recognition for their bravery in rescuing a woman whose car was submerged in a flooded ford between Pershore and Drakes Broughton.

You can read more about their day in London when, just a week after the General Election, they attended a Downing Street reception hosted by the new Home Secretary Yvette Cooper ahead of the evening awards ceremony on Pages 6 and 7, and we also capture the reaction of the lady they rescued who believes police officers deserve more positive publicity.

I couldn't agree more.

The bravery awards highlight incredible

acts of bravery; acts that are being performed by police officers across England and Wales every day but acts that rarely seem to be given suitable prominence in the media.

Whether tackling someone carrying a knife or gun, running into burning buildings to help save people's lives or, like our nominees, saving a member of the public from drowning, they heroically step in to help strangers, regardless of the fact that in doing so they are putting their own lives on the line.

But ask any one of the nominees and they will tell you they were just doing their job, which is true. But it's a job that often sees all those who carry it out being vilified because a small minority have shown themselves unworthy to be a part of the police service. This does not seem to happen with other professions.

With a new Government in charge, it should be time for re-set. Of course, the first official announcement made was news that police officers are to be given a 4.75 per cent pay rise as of September. While we welcome a pay rise of any kind, I know how disappointed and frustrated so many of you will feel, upon hearing that those in other public-facing roles will receive a higher pay reward.

I hope that the new Prime Minister will now work to improve the relationship between the Government and policing. This may go some way to restore mutual respect, and repair the damage that has been done in recent years.

Frustrated officers have voted in favour of the Police Federation campaigning for industrial rights (see Page 10), and perhaps this will give Sir Keir Starmer and the Home Secretary a sense of the strength of feeling among our members.

We have already written to all our newly-elected MPs to seek meetings with them as a first step towards building an effective working relationship between the Federation, representing those who police our communities, and the Parliamentarians, elected to represent those communities at Westminster. We will keep you posted on how this progresses.

But this magazine is not all about political issues and, among a wide range of stories, there are features on our workplace representatives Sergeant Rob 'Swoosh' Seewoosaha and Stephe Dyer, with Rob talking about a 10.5 mile charity trek across the Malverns in full kit and Stephe giving an insight into the life of a Fed rep.

Please enjoy your magazine and contact your Federation if you need our help or support.



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**Lesley Williams**  
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### North Worcestershire

Calista Crosfield  
Andy Forbes  
Matt Pedrick

### Shropshire

Jennie Hitchings  
Zoe Wigley

### Hereford

David Hussey

### Volunteer

Rob Camp

## FED MEMBER CLINCHES £500 PRIZE

West Mercia Police Federation member PC Dee Stanley has spoken of her surprise at winning £500 of Amazon gift vouchers.

Dee entered the competition after seeing it on a post on the branch's Facebook page.

"It took me two minutes to follow the link, fill in the information and then I forgot about it," she said.

The prize was offered by [Police Insure](#), which provides a specialist insurance service for serving and retired police officers, Specials, staff and their partners.

Dee said: "I got an email from Police Insure to say I was the lucky winner.

"You see these things, I thought I'd enter but you don't usually hear anything, so it was a nice surprise to win."

Dee, who has served with West Mercia Police for 21 years, has also recently

returned from a stay at the branch's holiday property in Newquay.

The property is for Police Federation members and West Mercia Police Federation Group Insurance members only.

It has three bedrooms, each with an ensuite bathroom, a spacious lounge/diner and fully-fitted kitchen, and wifi, as well as a private outdoor space, an allocated parking space, and direct access to Porth Beach and the coastal path.

Federation members are entitled to a 10 per cent discount on booking, while members of the Group Insurance Scheme qualify for a 15 per cent discount. If you are a member of both, you will receive a 25 per cent discount.

Dee said she first became aware of the holiday home, again through the [West Mercia Police Federation Facebook page](#).

"I've stayed there for the last three years for a week each year," she said.

"It's a really lovely place, in a great location at a great price if you have Federation and group insurance.

"It's a great base just outside Newquay for exploring the local areas and different parts of Cornwall.

"There are some beautiful beaches just a short away, and loads of other lovely beaches and places to visit around the area.

"I saw it advertised on the Federation's Facebook page.

"I discounted it for a good few years, but when I looked into it, if you look at the price of similar holiday properties to rent it's a really good deal.

"It's a great benefit and I'd recommend others look into it."





**Deputy Chief Constable Alex Murphy, along with award-winners Sergeant Lee Baker and PC Thomas Simmonds, as well as branch secretary Pete Nightingale and acting national chair Tiff Lynch.**

Three West Mercia Police Federation members who saved a woman from a submerged car have been named regional winners at this year's national Police Bravery Awards.

Sergeant Lee Baker, Sergeant Shannon Murphy and PC Thomas Simmonds received the recognition at an event in London on Thursday 11 July.

The award was presented by acting national chair Tiff Lynch.

Lee and Tom accepted the award on behalf of the trio, as Shannon was unable to attend due to prior commitments.

Upon receiving the award, Lee said: "What is happening? This feels so surreal.

"We've been in such illustrious company tonight, the whole thing is really humbling. I'm really thankful that we've won."

Thomas added: "Listening to all other stories tonight, it's incredible just to be considered. To pick up this award is a great feeling."

Secretary of West Mercia Police Federation Pete Nightingale, along with Temporary Chief Constable Alex Murray and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) John Campion also attended the evening.

Pete said: "It was an incredible honour and privilege to attend the event and listen to the heroic actions of officers up and down the country.

"I am delighted that the West Mercia nominees were announced as our regional winners against some very strong competition."

In April 2023, police received a 999 call alerting them to a Mini that had ended up in

a flooded ford between Pershore and Drakes Broughton.

Arriving on the scene, Lee, Shannon and Tom - along with several other colleagues - found the car to be almost completely submerged and about 10 metres downstream due to heavy rainfall causing flash flooding. Thinking on their feet, the officers skilfully formed a human chain and waded in to offer reassurance and maintain her calm demeanour.

Despite the car's electrics being disabled by the water, the officers broke open the driver's side window and pulled her to safety just moments before the vehicle sank.

Annie Nisbet, the woman rescued, has since paid tribute to the officers, referring to them as a 'troop of heroes'.



Pete added: "I am really proud of them and I know Annie will always be extremely grateful for the courageous actions of the officers on that day that saved her life."

The awards, which were the 29th of its kind, kicked off with an introduction from Tiff Lynch.

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

The new Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper and the recently appointed Policing Minister, Dame Diana Johnson DBE were also in attendance. The duo had welcomed all nominations to Downing Street for an exclusive reception that morning ahead of the event.

Addressing the audience, Ms Cooper, who revealed it was the 14th Police Bravery Awards that 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 cops whose support 'makes the work they do possible'.

Later on in the evening, 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

**“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’.**



Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.

**New Home Secretary Yvette Cooper addresses nominees in the garden of No 10 Downing Street.**

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 Widdrington also

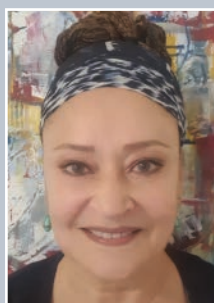
in attendance.

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

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

## WOMAN RESCUED BY COURAGEOUS OFFICERS REACTS TO BRAVERY AWARD WIN

The woman saved from drowning in her submerged car by three West Mercia Police Federation members says she is 'thrilled' for her rescuers after they won at the 2024 national Police Bravery Awards.



**Annie Nisbet.**

Having found out that PC Tom

Simmonds, Sergeant Lee Baker and Sergeant Shannon Murphy had won the Region 3 Award, Annie Nisbet said she was 'absolutely delighted'.

"I was overjoyed to hear they had won," she said. "As I have previously said, I believe there cannot be enough recognition for what they did for me that day. It is marvellous to know their courage has been acknowledged."

The three officers were nominated for

the Award after pulling Annie out of her car as it rapidly sank in floodwater at a ford in Bow Brook, Worcestershire last year. Annie had stopped before the swamped ford and intended to reverse away when her car was swept up by water.

In a race against time, in which Annie revealed she had given up hope of survival, officers arrived and surrounded the car. Tom attempted to smash the rear window of the sinking vehicle, with Lee and Shannon, along with three other officers forming a human chain to retrieve Annie.

At the front of the 'human chain' was Lee, who managed to smash the driver window and rescue Annie through it.

"Lee was so reassuring. I felt safe," Annie continued, adding: "And once Shannon pulled me onto the bank, she was so very kind to me."

After recovering from the traumatic incident, Annie turned her attention to a campaign for the heroic cops to be publicly

recognised.

She explained why she was so keen for this to happen: "I was keen for the officers to be recognised for several reasons.

"Not only were they outrageously brave at the expense of their own lives, but I wanted to bring to light the level of courage and dedication shown by these officers. So often the media coverage of the police is so negative, and people have a very negative view of the police force – and that needs to change.

"There needs to be more positive stories about the police in the news. I'd love the community to hear this story."

Annie has a last message for her rescuers, Tom, Lee and Shannon: "Again, I'd just like to say thank you is just not enough.

"Congratulations on your well-deserved achievements and success. You're an inspiration to the public you serve, to your families – and to me. This accolade is a reflection of your excellence in your field."



# PRAISE FOR POLICE UNITY TOUR CYCLISTS

Police Federation chair Steve Butler has praised West Mercia officers who took part in the Police Unity Tour in memory of fallen colleagues over the weekend.

The tour saw cyclists from forces across England and Wales set off from their home force areas on Friday and take a route covering around 180 miles to reach the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire on Sunday morning.

West Mercia officers joined the West Midlands Chapter of the tour with colleagues from the West Midlands, Warwickshire and Staffordshire forces.

"The Police Unity Tour aims to raise awareness of fallen officers and raises funds for Care of Police Survivors, the charity that provides invaluable support to the families of officers who have died in the line of duty," says Steve.

"Having taken part in the tour before, I know it can be gruelling, but I also feel it is an honour to ride for fallen colleagues and to show their families that their loved one is not forgotten.

"Each rider wears a wristband engraved with the name of a fallen officer and, where possible, this is presented to the officer's family at the end of the ride.

"I would like to put on record my thanks to our officers who took part this year. Their efforts mean so much to the families."

All those riding in the tour met at Drayton Manor on Saturday evening before riding in unison into the arboretum on Sunday morning where they were met with applause from the crowd gathered to welcome them.

They were led by the Blue Knights - the world's largest law enforcement motorcycle club - for the last leg of their journey.

The cyclists then joined the families of fallen officers, chief officers, Federation



officials, representatives of other policing organisations and civic dignitaries at the annual Care of Police Survivors (COPS) Service of Remembrance.

Gill Marshall, COPS president, opened the service. A police widow herself, she recalled her daughters were just two and four when her husband, Alan, died and explained that she knew first-hand the value of COPS, which she called a fantastic charity.

Sarah Doyle, whose husband Merseyside PC Neil Doyle died 10 years ago, recalled how the couple had only been

married a short time when he died after being assaulted while off duty. She said she immediately knew life would never be the same again, admitting that part of her heart had died with Neil.

While it had taken her a few years to get involved with COPS, she spoke movingly of how the friendship of other police widows had helped her and urged police survivors to seek the charity's support.

"You will never look back. They help you to rebuild your shattered life," she said.

Friday would have been the couple's 10th wedding anniversary and Sarah had





decided to mark the poignant date by joining the PUT.

Charlotte Kellaway, daughter of DI Ian Kellaway who died of Covid in April 2020 having contracted the virus while on duty, shared her story of grieving for her father also praised the way in which COPS had helped.

After Charlotte's reading, Gill Marshall read the roll of honour featuring the names of officers who had died since last year's COPS service. They were:

**Sergeant Graham Saville** of Nottinghamshire Police who died on 29 August 2023

**Sergeant Paul Frear** of West Midlands Police who died on 22 September 2023

**PC Jack Cummings** of West Yorkshire Police who died on 19 May 2024, and

**Acting Sergeant Reece Buckenham** of Hertfordshire Constabulary who died on 29 June 2024.

The roll of honour also included British Transport Police Property Officer Mark Birch who died on 12 October 2020.

**“ I FEEL IT IS AN HONOUR TO RIDE FOR FALLEN COLLEAGUES AND TO SHOW THEIR FAMILIES THAT THEIR LOVED ONE IS NOT FORGOTTEN.**

A minute's silence followed and then wreaths were laid by for the Office of the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, the High Sheriff's Office, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing, the Blue Knights, the Police Unity Tour, the National Memorial Arboretum and COPS.

The final reading was by Greg Briggs, brother of Merseyside PC Paul Briggs, who died in 2017. He talked about his brother's life of service, first to the Army and then to policing and welcomed the unwavering dedication of COPS to look after police survivors, saying he would be forever grateful to the charity.

Sir Peter Fahy, chair of COPS, closed the service, acknowledging that every year police officers will lose their lives on duty.

“COPS is there to support their families, not just in the immediate aftermath but in the years and years ahead,” said Sir Peter.

The service included music from the West Midlands Police Brass Band and, for the first time, vocal performances by Superintendent Sam Batey, a band member.

After the service, families and other guests made their way to The Beat, an avenue of trees dedicated to individual forces and officers to lay wreaths and single red roses.

# 4.75% PAY UPLIFT 'NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON' SAYS FEDERATION

The announcement of a 4.75 per cent pay uplift for all ranks is 'not a moment too soon' according to West Mercia Police Federation.

Branch secretary Pete Nightingale has welcomed the pay rise, which will take effect from September.

However, he says more needs to be done to achieve the pay levels that officers deserve, with police pay having fallen behind by 17 per cent in real terms since 2010.

Pete continued: “The news this week will be a relief for many of my colleagues who are struggling to pay their monthly bills and put food on the table – however we know that police pay is still way below where it should be.

“The feelings of our officers were shown very clearly in the Federation's recent Pay and Morale survey, which found that 81 per cent of West Mercia officers surveyed are unhappy with their pay and allowances and 84 per cent feel worse off today than five years ago.

“So, we will continue to make the case to the new Government that, whilst this uplift is a good start, there is more to do, including reforming the pay review process.”

The national Federation removed itself from the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) as it does not allow for negotiation, only the imposition of a fixed pay award. And in a recent poll, almost 98 per cent of officers supported the Federation's call for a return to collective bargaining with binding arbitration.

With junior doctors having been offered a 20 per cent rise, following a prolonged period of strikes, this is likely to build pressure on the Labour Government to address the unfairness of police officers who are denied the right to strike by law.

Calum Macleod, National Secretary of the Police Federation, responded: “While we don't believe that one group of public sector workers should be set against another, the pay review body recommendation shows that they do not understand policing and its needs.

“Poor pay and morale means police officers aren't staying in the force and we are losing valuable experience from the service. The Federation is right to sit outside a process which does not recognise the role that police officers perform in society and the risks they take.”

Other announcements include:

- The on-call allowance will be increased from £20 to £25
- The dog handlers' allowance should be updated by 4.75 per cent and the additional rate for officers with more than one dog be raised from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of the rate for the first dog
- The PRRB recommended that the chief officer of police in each force should be given the discretion to set the starting salary for new constables at either pay point 1 or pay point 2 on the constables' pay scale. This recommendation has been accepted, but implementation will be subject to detailed proposals from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) on the circumstances in which this discretion should be used, along with transition arrangements for those constables on pay point 1, to inform amendments to the Police Regulations 2003
- The annual leave entitlements for officers in the federated ranks and recommended the time it takes to reach the maximum entitlement of 30 days should be reduced from 20 to 10 years, with effect from 1 April 2025 and phased in over three years. This recommendation was accepted, subject to the submission of a satisfactory Equality Impact Assessment by the NPCC to the Home Office
- The annual leave entitlement for new entrants will be increased from 22 to 25 days, with implementation taking effect on 1 April 2025
- The Home Office will provide £175 million additional funding in 2024-25 to forces to help with the cost of the pay increase.

**“ WHILST THIS UPLIFT IS A GOOD START, THERE IS MORE TO DO, INCLUDING REFORMING THE PAY REVIEW PROCESS.**

# CHAIR URGES PM TO INVEST IN POLICING

Addressing the crisis in policing and committing to sustained investment in the police service should be key early priorities for the new Labour Government, according to the chair of West Mercia Police Federation.

Sir Keir Starmer secured a landslide victory in the General Election, but Federation chair Steve Butler says the new Prime Minister needs to ensure his party acts quickly to improve relations between the Government and policing.

"Police officers felt the previous Government did not value their role and, having suffered 20 per cent cuts to their pay in real terms, do not feel they are paid fairly for the real and often dangerous challenges they face while carrying out their duties," says Steve.

"These issues were laid bare in our latest pay and morale survey in which West Mercia officers reported the second lowest levels of morale in country, second only to the Met. While some of this could be put down to local issues, 95 per cent reported they did not feel respected by the Government which is quite shocking.

"Clearly, this needs to be addressed as a matter of priority and a good starting point would be for the Prime Minister to announce the abolition of the Police Remuneration Review Body, the organisation responsible for reviewing police pay. It is not independent since the Government sets its remit and can also over-ride any recommendations it makes and therefore we have little faith in its ability to properly assess officer pay and ensure they are paid fairly.

"Police officers deserve an independent pay review body and should have access to binding arbitration."

Labour's election manifesto set out plans for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour including recruiting thousands of new police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables, and putting 13,000 extra neighbourhood police and PCSOs on the beat.

It also pledged to:

- **Introduce tough new penalties for offenders**
- **Adopt a plan to get knives off the streets**
- **Establish a specialist rape unit in every police force**
- **Set up a new network of Young Futures hubs.**

Steve said that while the Federation welcomed measures to boost neighbourhood policing, which was hard hit by budget cuts during the austerity years, its success was dependent on police forces being properly funded in the longer term.

"Officer numbers were slashed during cuts to policing and we have only just got back to having the numbers we had in 2010 due to the three-year Police Uplift Programme which saw 20,000 officers recruited nationwide by the end of March 2023," says Steve.

"But we are still recovering from those years. Our numbers have increased to pre-austerity levels but as our numbers fell the population increased along with demand for our help and the complexity of crime also evolved.

"Officers are still being pushed from pillar to post probably and there is a



*Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.*

pressing need to invest in our estates including vehicles and equipment, plus the inadequate IT stability and systems we have at present.

"The new Government needs to get behind policing, address the pay review process, ensure officers feel valued, speak out in support of police officers to overcome what seems to have become constant negative coverage in the media and then we can all work together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour so that we give our communities the effective policing service they want, and deserve."

[Read the Labour manifesto.](#)

## FEDERATION SET TO LAUNCH INDUSTRIAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

The Police Federation of England and Wales will campaign for collective bargaining and binding arbitration as part of a fairer police pay review process.

It comes after a nationwide poll in which 97.7 per cent of members who responded said they wanted the Federation to pursue industrial rights on their behalf.

"These results give the national Federation a clear mandate to start this campaign," says Steve Butler, chair of West Mercia Police Federation.

"It will now start work, through its National Council and National Board, on developing the campaign while locally we will seek to discuss the poll results with the MPs who represent the constituencies of West Mercia in Parliament.

"Following the General Election, the

newly-appointed health secretary almost immediately pledged to meet with striking junior doctors to negotiate with them over their pay and bring their action to a halt.

"This shows the difference that having some form of industrial rights can have. As police officers, we have no such rights. We have many restrictions placed on us, including not being able to join a union, and we knew that when we joined up. "But we also joined up with an expectation that the Government would respect the inherent weakness that creates for us and would treat us fairly in the pay review process.

"The previous Government reneged on that deal, we have seen police pay fall by 20 per cent in real terms since the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB)

which determines our pay is beset by Government interference and therefore is not independent."

The PRRB replaced the former Police Negotiating Board in 2014. But, where the PNB process included binding arbitration, PRRB does not. Its remit is set by the Government which can limit the pay award it can consider and over-rule PRRB recommendations. Under PRRB, there is no access to independent arbitration.

The Police Federation has made annual submissions to PRRB jointly with the Police Superintendents' Association in the past, but has withdrawn saying it is no longer fit for purpose.

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



# UNIFORMS SURVEY: HAVE YOUR SAY



The chair of West Mercia Police Federation is encouraging members to have their say on issues relating to their uniform.

Steve Butler is asking members to complete the National Police Uniform and Equipment Survey.

The survey is a collaboration between the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and researchers at Lancaster University.

It aims to explore a range of issues from whether the uniform is fit for purpose to whether it's comfortable, from whether it affects your health to how it makes officers feel.

Steve said: "This is the first national survey of how police officers feel about their uniform and I'd encourage as many of our members as possible to take part.

"From speaking to members we know that some do experience issues with their uniform, such as comfort and fit.

"Now is the chance to highlight the issues, to share them with the service, and to shape the decision making in the future.

"The more members who complete the survey the stronger the message will be, so please have your say."

The survey is live now and closes on 12 August.

It has had input from the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Police Superintendents' Association, UNISON and the Home Office.

Zac Mader, the Federation's Welsh co-lead, is leading on the project with fellow National Board member and PFEW wellbeing lead Belinda Goodwin.

Zac called for as many members as possible to complete the survey.

He said: "This is the first opportunity our members have had to tell us and the police service how they feel about their uniform.

"Every day, in every station there's likely to be a conversation about uniform, whether

it's good, bad or indifferent.

"Our survey focuses on issues around uniform and interoperability with equipment and PPE.

"Is the uniform fit for purpose? How does it make people feel wearing it? Does it make you feel proud to be a police officer?"

"This is a great opportunity for our members to have their say on what they think about their uniform and what they want from it, and we'd encourage as many as possible to complete it.

"We'll use the results to give decision makers evidence of what our members want so that meaningful changes are made to the uniform and uniform policies."

Zac said he hoped the work would improve the quality of uniforms, and even save Forces money in the long run.

"It appears to be a postcode lottery at the moment," he said.

"There isn't one route to buying uniform, which means potentially different standards of uniform across the service.

"We want consistency with police uniform, with the highest minimum standards and to get rid of the postcode lottery.

"We want uniform that is environmentally friendly and that has been ethically sourced.

"And we believe that there are future opportunities with procurement of uniform and buying power."

The link to the survey has been sent to members' inboxes. If you have any queries, please contact [impactofuniform@gmail.com](mailto:impactofuniform@gmail.com) or the PFEW research team on [researchanddatacollection@polfed.org](mailto:researchanddatacollection@polfed.org)

## FEDERATION ASSURANCE ON 'PENSIONS TRAP'



Officers caught in the 'pensions trap' – in which they could lose some of their original pension entitlement – have been assured that the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) is considering all options in challenging this apparent unfairness.

A statement from the Federation reads:

*"We know that many members feel very strongly about issues relating to the pensions trap. On behalf of the PFEW, I can say that we hear you loud and clear. The National Board and the National Council are currently exploring all options available to us, and will be in touch with you, our membership, regarding next steps. This includes making provision to share advice we receive in relation to pensions trap.*

*"As it currently stands, two officers who joined on the same day, with different ages are treated differently by the interactions of the legacy scheme and the CARE (2015) pension scheme. It means that the younger officer must choose between working longer to avoid an actuarial reduction on the CARE scheme but also receives an actuarial reduction on their commutation payment. Alternatively, if an officer works to age 55 to avoid the actuarial reduction on the CARE scheme benefits, they will be unable to access their legacy scheme benefits where they would be payable if the officer retired.*

*"This is grossly unfair, and the PFEW is taking advice on all options, including legal routes, as this is a critical issue for members."*



**FROM SPEAKING TO MEMBERS WE KNOW THAT SOME DO EXPERIENCE ISSUES WITH THEIR UNIFORM, SUCH AS COMFORT AND FIT. NOW IS THE CHANCE TO HIGHLIGHT THE ISSUES, TO SHARE THEM WITH THE SERVICE, AND TO SHAPE THE DECISION MAKING IN THE FUTURE.**



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West Mercia Police Federation chair Steve Butler has described assaults on officers as 'disgraceful and deplorable' after it was revealed there were more than 40,000 attacks across the country in the past year.

Steve said 'we need to protect the protectors' as he called for courts to use their full powers when dealing with offenders who assault officers.

The figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that, in the West Mercia region, there were 634 assaults on police officers in the 12 months to 31 March 2023. Of those, 177 resulted in an officer being injured.

Across England and Wales, there was a total of 40,330 attacks on officers, 11,022 of which resulted in an injury to an officer.

Steve said: "It's absolutely disgraceful and deplorable that our members are being attacked in the course of their duties.

"As a Federation, we reject the view that it comes with the job. It can never be acceptable to attack police officers.

"Of course it's only a tiny minority of people, and we're grateful for the support for police officers from the overwhelming majority of the public.

"We need those who attack police officers to feel the full weight of the law.

"The maximum sentence for assaults on

# 'WE NEED TO PROTECT THE PROTECTORS'

blue light workers increased last year from 12 months to two years, and we need that to be implemented by the courts.

"Put simply, we need to protect the protectors."

Steve said the shocking figures also added weight to calls by the Police Federation of England and Wales for the wider roll-out of Taser to all frontline officers should they wish to be equipped with it.

He said: "Taser is an effective means of dealing with many situations that our members have to face.

"Having it as part of their toolkit is a real deterrent, and just drawing it out in the majority of cases brings the violence or the threat of violence to an end.

"Officers should have that protection, and the ability to protect the public too, if they wish to."

**“ TASER IS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF DEALING WITH MANY SITUATIONS THAT OUR MEMBERS HAVE TO FACE. HAVING IT AS PART OF THEIR TOOLKIT IS A REAL DETERRENT, AND JUST DRAWING IT OUT IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES BRINGS THE VIOLENCE OR THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE TO AN END.**



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# 'INCREASE ACCESS TO DOUBLE CREWING'



West Mercia Police Federation has appealed to the Force to increase access to double crewing.

Branch chair Steve Butler and secretary Pete Nightingale highlighted the positive impacts of double crewing on officers' morale, their safety, and their productivity during a recent meeting with senior leaders of the Force.

The Police Federation for England and Wales's (PFEW) Pay and Morale Survey found that only 11 per cent of West Mercia Police respondents had access to double crewing at all times, compared to 27 per cent nationally.

Reflecting on these results, Steve said: "The research shows that when officers have more access to double crewing, their morale increases and it has positive effects on their productivity.

"There is also a reduction in officers being assaulted or injured, which we know is a big issue, with 634 assaults on our officers in the past year.

"At the moment, West Mercia Police are an outlier against Most Similar Groups (MSGs), according to recent data, in that fewer of our officers are double crewing and we have higher levels of assaults."

The issue was raised during a meeting with Rachel Hartland Lane, the Force's Director of Business Services, and Chief Superintendent Beth Bridges of Operations Support, which centred around the results of the Pay and Morale Survey.

Steve said the survey found that frustrations for members were not all about pay, but also at 'not being able to give the public a quality service'.

He said: "Pay and conditions are very much linked to national issues, which

PFEW are challenging to ensure officers are rewarded accordingly.

"Locally, it's dealing with things in bite-size chunks, starting with those areas that could have the greatest impact on a large proportion of our members.

"The areas we put forward to start with were patrol, closely followed with ideas for CID."

Steve said that as well as double crewing, an issue facing patrol officers was that the levels of supervision were not adequate.

He said: "The ratio of sergeants on patrol should be increased, and officers should be able to have regular and consistent contact and support.

"We need an increase so we can prioritise the welfare and support officers need.

"With our demographic shifting to a more inexperienced workforce, it's essential we provide adequate supervision, instruction and training, in-line with the Health and Safety at Work Act."

He said that appropriately staffed interview teams help to reduce demands on officers and sergeants.

This includes not having officers dealing with night-time handovers who then get 'stuck' in custody for most of their shifts.

"More officers are able to deal with the immediate demand and respond to the public," Steve said.

"The interview team then become experts and more productive and efficient in dealing with prisoners.

"It's having the right people in the right place at the right time."

Steve also called for a reduction in bureaucracy, something the Federation is

campaigning on with its #SimplifyDG6 work.

He said efforts to reduce what was in the Manual of Guidance 'created was a backdoor increase to officers with the introduction of booklets, checklists, and assessments'.

"This has now evolved with ever-increasing use of recording APPs, referrals, assessments," he said.

"It's the same with the introduction of IT or equipment where the perspective of the end user has been lacking. The drive should be to implement things that reduce officers' workload."

Steve suggested a review of what patrol officers are being asked to do, saying: "Would we be better to have experts in their fields rather than a jack of all trades who are run ragged trying to keep everyone happy?"

He also said there was a 'massive perception' of a north-south divide as he asked for 'levelling up' across the Force.

"It's not just with career development opportunities, but also relating to our estates and what facilities officers have at stations," he said.

"The optics and difference between our Force HQ and our stations is massive. Ways to balance this with better working environments include canteens, gyms, and parking would be beneficial."

Steve also met John Campion, the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, for the first time since he was re-elected for a third term last month.

Steve said: "It was refreshing to hear some similar observations to ours on the Force's current position and the work to enhance this.

"Many of his observations came from his visits around the Force, with the most recent one to Market Drayton."

Steve said regular catch-ups were planned, adding: "There was also a mutual agreement for greater communication and working relationships between us, which can only be of great benefit to our members."

**“ THE RESEARCH SHOWS THAT WHEN OFFICERS HAVE MORE ACCESS TO DOUBLE CREWING, THEIR MORALE INCREASES AND IT HAS POSITIVE EFFECTS ON THEIR PRODUCTIVITY. ”**

# FED REP ON MISSION TO CREATE FAIRER WORKPLACE

As an officer for over 26 years, Stephanie (Stephe) Dyer says experiences early into her police career are the driving force behind her work as a West Mercia Police Federation workplace representative.

A career detective, Stephe revealed certain events towards the beginning of her time with West Mercia Police's Criminal Investigations Department (CID) left her feeling 'ignored and undervalued'.

Now, she is determined to change this, so other staff in the Force do not have to suffer the same fate she did.

Stephe says her hardship started in 2006, when she was preparing to return to her role as detective constable, following the birth of her first child. It was at this point, she recalls, that she found out plans for her to be moved across to a Safer Neighbourhood Team were already underway.

"I was told the CID didn't have female constables with children," 47-year-old Stephe said. "I had no idea that becoming a mum would have an effect on my career.

"I thought I was a valued officer and it never occurred to me for a second that, with my experience and knowledge, there would be an issue with me coming back to the job I loved," she continued.

"I just couldn't understand it."

Stephe was not prepared to accept this proposal and successfully fought to remain in the role of her dreams.

However, following her second maternity leave four years later, Stephe says she found herself on the receiving end of another unpleasant return to the CID.

"The whole department had been moved to a new station, but left all of my stuff – desk, chair, case files – in boxes where I had once been," she says, adding: "And no one had been in contact with me whilst I was off either.

"This time, the battle was my location from work and flexible working. I was a now a single mother with two children while having to maintain a full-time job, but this didn't seem to matter. As far as I was concerned, nothing had been learnt from the last time."

Despite her disappointment, Stephe was still not to be displaced from her position within the CID, where her policing passion has endured to the current day.

What changed this time around,



**Stephe Dyer.**

however, was that she became something of an unofficial point-of-contact for other officers with disputes over shift patterns, helping them to complete necessary application forms and guiding them on their approaches to decision-makers.

In 2018, her desire to help colleagues took on an official capacity when she became a workplace representative for the Federation.

"It was a no-brainer for me [to become a rep]. I just hate anything unfair or unjust, and although I had been informally helping colleagues for some time, I knew I had more to give," she said.

Over the past six years, Stephe has assisted countless police staff with issues surrounding flexible working applications, cancelled rest days and leave, as well as other welfare issues. She has also demonstrated her commitment to officer welfare by supporting colleagues with early retirement with injuries and on mental health grounds.

"One of the biggest reminders we get that police officers are human is when the impact of trauma is felt. We can be witness to some extremely distressing incidents and material and sometimes it can be very hard to process – we are not machines," she explained.

"In terms of what I do with leave and shift-related issues, I am continuing my efforts to make the Force realise flexible working is a good thing – it should not only

be sanctioned but encouraged for work-life balance. For me, the default position of the force to applications is still 'no', whereas it should start out as 'yes' and then only switch if or when a request is unreasonable."

Since becoming a workplace rep, the mother-of-two has also taken on the additional role of West Mercia Police Federation Detective Lead, representing West Mercia Police's CID Officers at the Federation's National Detectives' Forum alongside leads from all 42 other forces within England and Wales.

The Forum discuss all matters regarding detectives at regional and national level, allowing Stephe to further her career-long allegiance to the rank.

In her Force role, she also supports the learning of young detective constables as an Investigative Skills Trainer as well as manager of Serious and Complex Interviewing and Specialist Witness courses.

Regardless of the role she is performing at any given time – Force or Federation, general welfare or specialist detective – remembering the person behind the uniform is at the heart of everything she does.

"It has to be that way," she said.

"If those at the top are not treating officers who are on the frontline, for instance, with kindness, consideration and compassion, then they become demoralised and end up doing the same to colleagues around them and potentially projecting this attitude onto victims of crime because they think, 'what's the point?'"

"Then it becomes a vicious circle, which is no good for anyone."

Stephe ended by looking towards the future of staff culture within the Police Force and made clear her dedication to the members of West Mercia Police Federation.

She said: "There is, of course, a place for processes, policies and numbers, but the focus still needs to be lessened on them and turned more towards people. I do think improvements have been made, but there is a lot of work still to do.

"Policing is a significant part of my life – for me it is still and always has been a vocation and not just a job. I know how it feels to be treated in a way that threatens that – I will keep fighting so other officers don't have to go through the same thing, with the hope that one day, I won't be needed any more."



Firearms Officer Chris Fowler and Police Sergeant Rob 'Swoosh' Seewoosaha trek over the Malvern Hills.



# FED REP TREKS 10 MILES IN FULL PROTECTIVE KIT

A West Mercia Police Federation representative has trekked over the Malvern Hills wearing full protective uniform to help raise funds for the Emergency Services Aid Charity.

Police Sergeant Rob 'Swoosh' Seewoosaha and colleague Firearms Officer Chris Fowler embarked on the 10.5 mile challenge in June (24) in their free time, raising nearly £6,000 for a good cause.

The pair of cops were fundraising ahead of a trip in September, during which they will transport - in their own time - disused ambulances and fire engines to The Gambia, in Africa.

"Trekking over the Malvern Hills was horrible. We set off at 4am, the temperature was low, and we were in full kit - that included steel-toe boots, undergarments, padding, stab vest, arm guards and shoulder guards - plus we carried two litres of water with us and a rucksack," recalled Rob.

"We also had our shield with us and were wearing gloves and a snood.

"Chris was in agony - the weight of his firearms vest was constantly pulling down on his shoulders. But both he and I battled through the pain, to achieve our goal."

It took around seven-and-a-half hours for the pair to complete the challenge, with their colleague, Police Constable Daniel Brookes, supporting them along the way.

"It was horrific, a really tough challenge - to say I was sweating buckets would be an understatement. But Dan stayed with me throughout, and that really helped," continued Rob.

The money raised from the challenge will help contribute towards their journey to Africa, which will involve handing over disused ambulances and fire engines to local people.

The journey will take around two-and-half weeks to complete, with them - along

with a team of others, most of which have an emergency service background - drive through Spain, over the Mediterranean and down the west side of Africa.

"As soon as I saw there was an opportunity to be involved with the charity, I jumped at the chance," said Rob.

"It is such a worthwhile cause and personally, will be a huge accomplishment for me. This is a chance for me to see the world and to be with new people - and go on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure."

Rob said that as he nears 50, he wants to push himself, both physically and mentally.

"I wanted to do something different," said Rob, adding: "I love my job - don't get me wrong - it's hard, but I love it. This, however, gives me a different focus and allows me to give something back."

The pair are due to set off to Africa on 12 September. The entire trip and their fundraising efforts are done in their free time.

You can support the duo by donating to their [JustGiving page](#).

**“IT IS SUCH A WORTHWHILE CAUSE AND PERSONALLY, WILL BE A HUGE ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR ME.”**



# Life after amputation

**Between 2016 to 2021, an average of 84 cyclists were seriously injured per week in reported road traffic accidents.**

Road traffic accidents can happen anywhere and can involve you even if you are only a pedestrian. Severe injuries caused by road traffic accidents can include spine injuries, severe fractures, and event amputation.

If an injury on the roads has been caused by someone else's negligence, the injured person, or even the family, may be entitled to compensation. The person affected could be a driver, passenger, cyclist or pedestrian and the nature of the injury can be minor, serious, or fatal.

A Metropolitan police officer, Paul Day, was involved in a road traffic collision in 2016 whilst riding his motorbike to work.

Paul was cycling to work one morning and stopped at a red light. Moments later, he was hit from behind at 60mph and thrown six metres across the road, and fell, with his bike landing on top of him. This resulted in an open fracture which led to 13 surgeries over five years. 12 unsuccessful operations in an effort to save his leg and a successful 13th; the amputation of his leg.

Tracey Benson, head of serious injury South, worked on Paul's claim, ensuring he received interim payments to support his recovery and rehabilitation whilst the claim was ongoing. Over the course of Paul's claim, he received interim payments amounting to more than £300,000.

The driver was identified at the scene, prosecuted, and their insurers admitted liability. By admitting liability, the case was settled before going to court and a multi-million-pound settlement was negotiated by Tracey based on Paul's injuries, loss of earnings and pension, future cost of prosthetics, accommodation needs and care.

Since his amputation, Paul has returned to some of his hobbies such as flying, mountain biking and rock climbing. Paul later said, 'Hindsight is wonderful thing' and if he had known the amputation, and life after, would work out the way it did, he would have opted for that in the first place.

The road traffic accident claims process can be complex. If you or a loved one has been involved in a road traffic accident, it is always best to contact our expert team so we can discuss your case in more detail and carefully assess the best way in which we can help you.

Whether you were a cyclist like Paul, driver, passenger, pedestrian, or simply a bystander, our experienced and passionate teams are here to provide the legal support you need. We have handled thousands of road traffic accident claims, so no matter the nature of your accident, we have the expertise and experience to help you. For more information, visit [slatergordon.co.uk/personal-injury-claim/road-traffic-accidents](http://slatergordon.co.uk/personal-injury-claim/road-traffic-accidents)

*"This was a complex high value case, and it is essential to obtain expert evidence from the best, and most suitable medico-legal experts to be able to fight for the appropriate compensation for future prosthetics, care, and accommodation. These are the heads of damages usually most vehemently disputed, and I believe our evidence resulted in the excellent result achieved."*

**Tracey Benson**

Head of Serious Injury - South



# CHIEF CONSTABLES TO CHAIR MISCONDUCT HEARINGS

The conduct lead for West Mercia Police Federation has criticised recent changes to the police disciplinary system which give Chief Constables greater powers to sack officers found guilty of police misconduct.

Amendments made to the Police Conduct Regulations came into force earlier this year now mean police chiefs, or their delegate, will chair standard misconduct hearings, rather than the Legally Qualified Chairs (LQC).

Speaking out against the change in regulations, branch conduct lead Lesley Williams says that she feels the amendments will damage the transparency, openness and fairness of the process which was why LQC's were previously introduced.

"I am openly against the decision to change these regulations," said Lesley, adding: "The changes came as a result of calls from Sir Mark Rowley (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis) to have the ability to 'hire and fire'.

"While this has been granted, Chiefs can now also delegate to another senior officer, an individual who has been a senior officer in the last five years or a member of police staff of equivalent grade.

"In my opinion, what really was the point of granting the request if it can be delegated straight out? It was already delegated to the LQC.

"Chief Constables and their delegates are not legally qualified or experienced in the regulations as LQCs. This is no longer an independent process."

The new measures have been introduced across England and Wales, with

the panel now comprising the Chief of the police force concerned and two lay members.

Provision is made for a legally qualified person to be appointed in order to provide advice to the panel of persons conducting or the person chairing the hearing.

"The chair must have regard to the advice provided. Isn't this the LQC process we had where the legally qualified 'advisor' chaired the proceedings?" Lesley argued.

"I don't think this decision has been made with fairness for officers in mind. It's a very quick reaction to the awful cases that we saw in the Met.

"Quite rightly those individuals had no place in policing and processes should be reviewed and improved to put as many safeguards in place to ensure it is not repeated. But these changes to the regulations are not the answer.

"Who chairs the proceedings is the last step in a much longer investigation timeframe. What needs to be looked at is the length of those investigations before they get to a hearing and the case-to-answer test."

The Police and Crime Commissions (PCC) for West Mercia will also have greater responsibility for scrutinising the decisions made by hearing panels.

This means that, following May's elections, [PCC John Campion](#) will be tasked with holding those making dismissal decisions to account.

In some cases, the Chief will need to provide justification for certain decisions to the PCC.

Changes to the regulation come shortly

**“ I WANT TO REMIND MEMBERS THAT THE FEDERATION IS HERE FOR THEM. THE MOMENT THEY ARE TOLD THEY ARE UNDER INVESTIGATION, I AM URGING THEM TO CONTACT THE FEDERATION IMMEDIATELY.**

after the government set out further changes to the police disciplinary system, which means that any officer charged with an indictable offence will be automatically suspended from duty until an outcome is reached.

This was alongside legislation that will make it easier to dismiss officers who fail to hold vetting, as well as anyone found guilty of gross misconduct.

"What this does reinforce, is that the moment a member is under investigation, they must contact the Federation for support or advice," ended Lesley.

"So once again, I want to remind members that the Federation is here for them. The moment they are told they are under investigation, I am urging them to contact the Federation immediately."

If you would like to speak to Lesley then email her at: [lwilliams@wmpf.polfed.org](mailto:lwilliams@wmpf.polfed.org)





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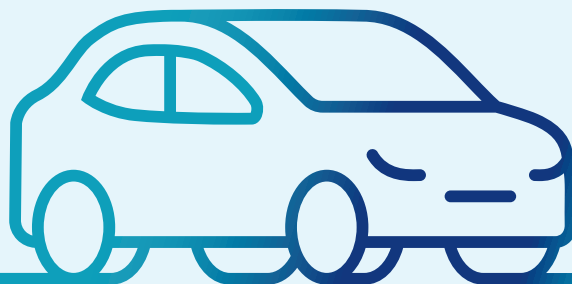
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