

FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation

August/September 2024



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- see Pages 6 and 7

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WELCOME

Welcome to the August/September 2024 edition of **Federation** - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role - though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

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Two events show police officers' unique place in society



By **Rich Cooke**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

In the space of just a few weeks I have attended two events that, without a shred of doubt, demonstrate police officers' unique place in society and their critical role as they serve and protect their communities.

The first was the national Police Bravery Awards in London. Officers from forces across England and Wales were put forward for the awards with the nominees invited to attend a reception in the garden of 10 Downing Street, hosted by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, just days after she had been appointed following Labour's landslide General Election

In the evening, the nominees and their chosen guests attended the prestigious awards ceremony. I have attended a few of these ceremonies now and yet still I find myself impressed when I hear the stories behind the officers' nominations. Time and time again, those at the awards evening hear how the nominees have run towards danger when others are definitely heading in the other direction. They put their lives on their line to save the lives of strangers, perhaps heading into a burning building or into treacherous waters.

But what always strikes me is how they all say they were just doing their job and that they feel humbled to have been nominated.

The second event, just weeks later, was the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire.

This year the roll of honour read out included the names of four officers who had died in the line of duty in the 12 months since the last service; four officers who did not make it home to their families at the end of their shift.

COPS is an incredible charity which provides a lifeline to those families who have lost a police officer in the line of duty.

The Service of Remembrance is the closing element of a survivors' weekend during which the families of fallen officers can come together, share their stories and offer support, and understanding.

During the service some of these families addressed guests and admitted they were part of a club that no one wants to join, but also one that they were thankful for in terms of the fact that other members could truly empathise with their situation.

Police officers' role puts them in situations where they risk their lives to help others. Their role is challenging, it can be dangerous and there are occasions when they pay the ultimate price when fulfilling their duties, or, quite often, going above and beyond.

Perhaps it was because I had attended these two events in quick succession that I was even more frustrated when the recommendations of the Police Remuneration

Review Body were published, incidentally just a day after the COPS service.

But my frustration was further compounded when, within days, police officers found themselves in the frontline of the response to rioting mobs, intent on causing destruction. Numerous officers have been injured and, at the time of writing this column, more protests are being planned. Again this demonstrates officers' unique role in our communities. I would like to put on record my thanks to our members who have been facing violence as they seek to keep the peace.

Back to the pay award, while it is some small consolation that the Home Secretary has said the Government will accept the recommendations in full, it certainly feels like a huge slap in the face when you consider that on the very same day junior doctors were awarded a 22 per cent pay rise.

I am not for one minute saying doctors don't deserve a pay rise, and I am certainly not qualified to say how much their pay rise should be.

However, it is not lost on me that a group of workers who have staged a number of strikes, causing massive disruption to the NHS and the public relying on the health service for life-saving treatment, have been able to negotiate with the Government and secure a pay award four times our own.

Of course, there is a crucial difference between doctors and the police: we do not have the right to strike or take industrial action of any sort.

This should be respected by the Government, and not exploited.

“ IT IS NOT LOST ON ME THAT A GROUP OF WORKERS WHO HAVE STAGED A NUMBER OF STRIKES, CAUSING MASSIVE DISRUPTION TO THE NHS AND THE PUBLIC RELYING ON THE HEALTH SERVICE FOR LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT, HAVE BEEN ABLE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND SECURE A PAY AWARD FOUR TIMES OUR OWN.

'Police officers continue to be exploited'

Police officers being given 4.75 per cent pay rise the same day as junior doctors are awarded 22 per cent is 'nothing short of humiliating' says the chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Rich Cooke's comments come after it was officially announced that the Government would increase police pay by almost five per cent while boosting junior doctors' income by 22 per cent over the next two years.

The announcement follows 18 months of regular strikes for better pay from junior doctors, which Rich has called 'exploitative given police are banned from striking and not even let in the room to discuss their pay'.

"I recently responded to rumours that police would be rewarded a five per cent pay rise - suggesting that better pay would help us retain experienced and skilled officers. But it cannot be right that police officers, who have suffered years of pay denigration are simply ignored on the same day junior doctors are told they will see their pay increase by more than 20 per cent over the next two years for the obvious reason that they have gone on strike," said Rich.

"I wish good luck to the junior doctors, I don't blame them at all for sticking up for themselves. But it just exposes how weak our bargaining position is and how readily that is exploited by the Government. How can we expect to keep experienced, talented and skilled individuals in the Force when our officers - who, round the clock, put their lives at risk to protect our communities, get no recognition whatsoever in a rigged pay review system?"

Rich continued to say that although a 4.75



per cent pay rise is more than inflation, the Government should be putting in place a long-term strategy to restore the real value of police pay, which has decreased by over a fifth on average since 2000.

"Constables, as a rank, have been hit hardest of all, and, as a consequence, we're experiencing a retention crisis, a catastrophic 'brain drain'. Unfortunately, I think, this announcement will do nothing to ease that," said Rich.

Following a recent poll, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) will launch a campaign for a new mechanism for determining officer pay awards which includes collective bargaining and access to binding arbitration in recognition of the unique restrictions placed on police officers who, for

example, cannot join a trade union or go on strike.

"It's hugely unfair that unlike other professions such as junior doctors - police have no means of negotiating or uniting to demand better pay in such ways," added Rich.

"I remain optimistic that the new Government will see the level of unfairness around police pay and, instead of continuing to exploit it, provide us with a reasonable, fair system to bring our grievances directly to them, across the table.

"Sadly, rather than looking at this pay rise as a reward, I'm looking at it as yet another way of exposing the weaknesses of modern-day policing and our ability to bargain for better pay."

Fed to launch campaign after industrial rights poll

Members voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Police Federation of England and Wales re-establishing collective bargaining rights on behalf of police officers.

This will involve a public campaign and negotiations with the Government, led by national secretary Calum Macleod.

A total of 97.7 per cent of officers who took part in a national poll conducted by the Police Federation voted in favour of such a campaign.

"This gives the Police Federation an emphatic mandate to pursue collective bargaining, the ability to directly negotiate that we as a branch have long been calling for," says Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

In 2014 the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) replaced the Police Negotiating Board and this not only removed the negotiation element of the pay review mechanism, but also the access to arbitration.

"PRRB has also proved to be far from independent. It is made up of

a panel of Government appointees. The Government sets it remit, telling it what pay award it can consider, and also can choose to ignore any recommendations it makes, which it has already done in the past," Rich explains.

"The Police Federation has withdrawn from the PRRB process and now wants to see it replaced with a fair process that respects police officers' unique situation.

"Negotiations between employees and employer are reasonable and sensible. They naturally involve give and take, which can be inconvenient for both sides, but it is fundamentally fairer and gives us the respect we deserve rather than exploiting our relative weakness through the restrictions placed on us."

Rich stressed that it was not just about the actual pay award, it was fundamentally about the process for determining any uplift.

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



Glenn and Becca Brabham outside 10 Downing Street.

Glenn's bravery is recognised at national awards ceremony

West Midlands Police Federation's nominee for the national Police Bravery Awards was among the officers recognised at this year's London awards ceremony.

PC Glenn Brabham was in contention for the Federation's Region 3 Bravery Award after he heroically rescued two elderly women from underneath an unstable car that had accidentally reversed into them last year.

Glenn positioned himself under the vehicle to reassure the women before managing to remove one of them from the precarious situation. The second was then brought to safety with the help of fire and ambulance crews. Both were taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and continue to make good recoveries from their injuries.

The Region 3 category at the awards,

which were held on Thursday 11 July, was won by three officers from the West Mercia force who saved a woman from drowning in her car after it was swept up by floodwater.

Glenn and his wife Becca still thoroughly enjoyed a day of celebration in the capital during which courageous officers from across and England and Wales were recognised for their efforts.

Representing West Midlands Police Federation was chair Rich Cooke, who said: "Once again, it was a pleasure to be representing West Midlands Police Federation at this year's ceremony. It's a real chance to let police officers know how valued they are and that's wonderful to be a part of."

In January this year, Glenn was the recipient of the 2024 PC David Green Shield at the first-ever West Midlands Police Bravery

Awards.

Rich added: "I am very happy that Glenn was able to enjoy his time in the spotlight at a national level. He deserves all the recognition he has received, we are all so proud of him."

The awards ceremony, the 29th of its kind, kicked off in the evening and was introduced by Tiff Lynch, acting national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

"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," said Tiff.

Newly appointed Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, and policing minister, Dame Diana

Johnson DBE, both delivered speeches in praise of the nominees' courage and commitment.

Ms Cooper, attending her 14th bravery awards ceremony, 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."

Ms Cooper also recalled last year's event at which she presented a team of West Midlands officers with the overall national Police Bravery Award following the Babbs Mill tragedy.

She said: "Their overwhelming emotion when they collected the award was of deep distress that those young lives had been lost, despite their efforts.

"That moment captured what is so important about British policing. The most selfless service that those officers showed in the most dangerous of situations, and their determination to do everything they could to try to help, but also their compassion for those who needed their help.

"It's that combination that is so special to British policing. I am so proud of British policing and I am so proud of the work you do."

Later in the evening, Dame Diana addressed the audience with a message of her own: "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 host for the evening was TV presenter Mark Durden-Smith, with Strictly Come Dancing star Kai Widdrington also in attendance.

The annual event is organised by PFEW and is sponsored by Police Mutual.



Home Secretary Yvette Cooper addresses nominees in the Downing Street gardens.

Delight at nomination

Before heading to the Police Bravery Awards, Glenn Brabham said he was just 'delighted' to have been nominated.

He had been named as the Sandwell winner and then clinched the overall title at the inaugural West Midlands Police Bravery Awards in January this year after rescuing two women from underneath a car that had accidentally run them over.

Glenn, 42, expressed his sense of pride at being chosen to represent the Force at the prestigious awards.

"It feels surreal for me that my work will be recognised on a national level," he said. "I'm absolutely over the moon to be nominated."

He continued: "The sense of honour I feel keeps growing more and more, going from local to regional, to national like this. You obviously don't join the job for awards, but I can't help but be proud."

Glenn was not sure if the elderly women were even alive when he was called to the scene of the incident earlier this year. With both unresponsive, he courageously manoeuvred himself underneath the car and remained there for over five minutes, managing to remove one of the women from beneath the unstable vehicle.

The second woman was then brought to safety with the help of fire and ambulance teams who arrived on the scene later.

He recalled: "It was just down to instinct.

My first reaction would be to help anyone in such a dangerous situation, not least the elderly. I thought about my wife's nans, and the fact that the two women would probably be grandmothers themselves."

Glenn added that while an investigation into the incident is ongoing, he has been checking in from afar on their progress. They are both making good recoveries.

He ended: "I still can't fathom it all. It's been a strange one at work, really - there's been banter about me not being happy with enough attention the first and second times around but, of course, I know all my colleagues are so pleased for me.

"These last few months have just made me proud to be a police officer, to be honest."

While his wife, Becca, joined him at Downing Street and at the awards ceremony, their two children also made the trip to London in support of their life-saving father too.

Federation chair Rich Cooke said ahead of the awards: "We continue to be extremely proud of Glenn's actions that day. He showed impeccable bravery to risk his own life for the two women.

"Of course, like most police officers who receive these awards, Glenn remains extremely modest and humble. However, he fully deserves to be recognised for his courageous actions.

A once in a lifetime experience

"Going inside Downing Street really was a once in a lifetime experience," says PC Glenn Brabham.

The brave PC was among those invited to an exclusive reception at Number 10 on the morning of the awards, ahead of an awards ceremony during the evening.

Joined by dozens of fellow nominees from across England and Wales and their loved ones, Glenn met the new Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, and policing minister Dame Diana Johnson DBE - both of whom heaped praise on the work police officers do on a daily basis.

"It was strange actually being inside Downing Street but a complete honour," said father-of-two Glenn.

"When will we ever get the chance to go inside Downing Street again? It really was a once in a lifetime experience."

The reception was the first official event hosted by the members of the new Government since the General Election on Thursday 4 July.

Having been asked by the Home Secretary about the incident that led to him receiving a nomination, Glenn admits he downplayed his heroic actions.

"Although it didn't take long for my wife, Becca, who joined me, to step in and give the full details," he explained.

Becca added: "I'm very proud of him, he really deserves to be recognised."

Labour urged to deliver on manifesto pledges

The new Labour Government must hit the ground running in implementing its manifesto pledges on tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, according to the chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Speaking on the day after the General Election, Rich Cooke says it must abandon the current police pay review mechanism in favour of a fair system in which officers' voices are heard to help restore their morale and ensure the public is served by a motivated and effective police service.

"In its manifesto, Labour set out plans to put 13,000 extra neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs on the streets which, of course, we welcome since we are aware of the impact the erosion of neighbourhood policing has had on the service we have been able to provide for our communities," says Rich.

"In pre-election promises, which they must now fulfil, they also vowed to crack down on anti-social behaviour, impose tough new penalties for offenders, introduce a specialist rape unit in every force and get knives off our streets, an issue on which we have campaigned for a long time.

"However, for these plans to be effective, the new Government must first tackle the crisis in officer morale which has been crippling policing in recent years.

"Police officers feel they were not respected by the previous Government and felt undervalued. This was partly caused by the lack of an independent mechanism for determining police pay with the existing Police Remuneration Review Body being far from independent.

"The Federation has withdrawn from that process and now calls on the Government to



Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer.

restore a fairer mechanism, collective bargaining and a means for independent arbitration.

"This is not just about calling for a meaningful pay award for police officers but more critically making sure the way in which officer pay is determined is truly independent and, above all, fair through a process where we



can be involved in negotiations as equals.

"Police occupy a unique position in the constitution of the country and are therefore subject to certain unique restrictions and limitations, including not being able to join a trade union or go on strike.

"To a large degree, we, as police officers, have consented to that, but that is no longer the case and the new Government needs to urgently restore our trust by creating mechanisms that include us fully in decision-making."

In its manifesto, Labour said it would fund its plans for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, which also involved every community and resident having a named officer, by ending tax breaks for private schools and through a Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme.

"We hope that the pre-election pledges are properly funded and want to see long-term and sustained investment in policing, not the boom and bust funding we have seen in recent years," says Rich, who is particularly keen to for plans to crackdown on knife crime come to fruition.

Labour wants to ensure knife carrying triggers rapid intervention and tough consequences with every young person caught in possession of a knife being referred to a Youth Offending Team and receiving a mandatory plan to prevent reoffending. Penalties would include curfews, tagging and custody for the most serious cases.

In the run-up to the election, it vowed to ban ninja swords, lethal zombie-style blades and machetes, and strengthen rules to prevent online sales with executives of online companies flouting the regulations being personally held to account through tough sanctions.

"Knife crime is blighting our communities," says Rich, "Too many young lives are being senselessly lost, devastating their families. We want to see the Government act on this as a matter of urgency."

“ IN PRE-ELECTION PROMISES, WHICH THEY MUST NOW FULFIL, THEY ALSO VOWED TO CRACK DOWN ON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, IMPOSE TOUGH NEW PENALTIES FOR OFFENDERS, INTRODUCE A SPECIALIST RAPE UNIT IN EVERY FORCE AND GET KNIVES OFF OUR STREETS, AN ISSUE ON WHICH WE HAVE CAMPAIGNED FOR A LONG TIME.



Decisive action needed to resolve police retention crisis

West Midlands Police Federation has called on the new Government and police leaders to act decisively to resolve the retention crisis in policing.

Deputy chair Jase Dooley said the voice of police officers had to be heard in pay negotiations.

And he said the Government urgently needed to restore fairness to police pensions by resolving what has become known as the 'pension trap' affecting older, more experienced officers.

A new, more arbitrary misconduct and vetting regime along with constant negative media coverage was also all having a devastating impact on confidence.

And he suggested that there needed to be more openness towards student and young in-service officers about what the role of a police officer was and the restrictions it places on them.

Jase said: "A lot of the problems in policing are to do with issues around retention. You can recruit, recruit, recruit but you've got to have the training infrastructure, the stations and the equipment in place.

"Policing is all about the people who do the job, they're the biggest asset.

"If the colleagues aren't confident, supported, and feel they aren't sufficiently remunerated, including their pension, they aren't going to do their best and they're going to disappear to another job as soon as they can – and they are.

"We need to incentivise long service to

retain skills such as in neighbourhood policing, which the new Government has said it wants to prioritise.

"The old pension used to do this because it ensured officers were well rewarded for 30 years' service. It was well worth staying. Now it's 40 years standard and many aren't even paying in.

"Equally, older colleagues are weighing up taking their pension sooner than they would have and topping up with a job in the private sector rather than staying in, if they can.

"It's a perfect storm. This is widely recognised within policing and we need politicians to start listening to the voice of the service."

Jase called for police to be given pay negotiation rights which, he said, would allow them to talk directly to decision makers, about the reality of policing.

"The only way you can get through these issues is talking to each other," Jase said.

"It's important so we can set our stall out to the government formally through a process that cannot be avoided. Policing is a different role completely to any other emergency service.

"Other emergency service colleagues don't have the level of restrictions on their lives, don't have their rest days cancelled at a whim to attend court, or are told that in nine months' time you can't go on your holiday because there's a court case and it's set for three weeks. But they can join a trade union and go on strike if the feeling is strong enough.

"The previous Government didn't seem to understand that, and it's what we're trying to get across to the new government, but at the moment we still don't have a seat at the table."

This year's [Pay and Morale Survey](#) found that 15 per cent of respondents from West Midlands Police intended to resign from the service.

The main reasons for intending to leave were morale, how the police are treated by the Government and the impact of the job on mental health and wellbeing (with 82 per cent, 78 per cent and 70 per cent respectively).

Jase said that another reason officers who were younger in service were leaving was because they were joining the police without realising the restrictions it would place on their lives.

"This is a unique job and I don't think recruitment departments are telling people what they're actually joining," he explained.

"When the Federation does its input, we try to explain to them that their lives have changed because there are restrictions on their lives, on their social lives, and on their personal lives.

"They need to be mindful of what they do on social media. They need to know they're going to work shifts when they join. They are going to deal with and see horrendous stuff.

"And half the time they're going to be told they can't go home on time because there's an extension of duty and no one else to deal with it."

Jase added: "They need to understand that the police can put them anywhere. At some point, they have to be an investigator, a neighbourhood officer. They have to do the roles as part of their training.

"When they finish their training, it's decided where they're going to go for their final posting and that is determined by what the Force needs. So officers can be posted anywhere in the Force doing any role, and I don't think a lot of people understand this."



Call for ban on online knife sales

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has renewed his call for a ban on the online sale of knives and machetes in a BBC TV interview.

Rich Cooke has told viewers of BBC One's Politics Midlands programme that alongside a ban on online knife and machete sales he wants to make it illegal to give the weapons names such as Rambo, ninja or zombie, among many other marketing ploys.

His calls follow the conviction of two 12-year-old boys for the murder of Shawn Seesahai, 19, with a machete in Wolverhampton in November.

BBC TV viewers were told that there were 5,324 knife crime offences in the West Midlands last year and, with 180 offences per 100,000 of population this was the highest

rate in England and Wales.

Rich, who has been a vocal campaigner on knife crime, emphasised this is only one of a range of measures that needed to be taken.

He said: "One of our suggestions is a ban on online sales of these weapons. If you want to purchase one of these weapons and you have to do it in person, and that would give the control measure of having a hopefully responsible adult person who will see who is getting hold of these weapons."

"We also want to make it illegal to attach descriptors, like ninja, Rambo, and zombie, to the weapons."

Meanwhile, Rich has cautiously welcomed moves by online shop DNA Leisure to stop selling knives or swords after [high-profile media reports linked the website to three murders](#).

Rich said he feared other online retailers would fill the gap left by DNA Leisure as he

“ ONE OF OUR SUGGESTIONS IS A BAN ON ONLINE SALES OF THESE WEAPONS. IF YOU WANT TO PURCHASE ONE OF THESE WEAPONS AND YOU HAVE TO DO IT IN PERSON, AND THAT WOULD GIVE THE CONTROL MEASURE OF HAVING A HOPEFULLY RESPONSIBLE ADULT PERSON WHO WILL SEE WHO IS GETTING HOLD OF THESE WEAPONS.

again called for the Government to ban online sales of combat knives, machetes and other weapons.

"It's good that they have seen the error of their ways and the reality of what was happening," he said. "But until the Government legislates to ban their online sale it will simply be filled with another dealer.

“WE ALL WANT TO SEE AN END TO KNIFE CRIME AND KNIFE VIOLENCE, AND THIS IS A GOOD WAY OF RAISING AWARENESS AND TO START CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

"We still have big dealers and the gap in the market will just be swallowed up by them until Parliament intervenes.

"Only the weight of the law is going to stop them, because you'll either get another company moving in or one of the bigger dealers gets even bigger and makes even more profits out of these tragic cases and human suffering."

A giant bee made from seized knives and guns toured schools in Walsall during the last week of June and the first three weeks in July as part of an anti-violence campaign.

It is hoped it provoked an education talking point as a catalyst for discussions about knife crime and the dangers and consequences of carrying a knife.

Rich said: "We all want to see an end to knife crime and knife violence, and this is a good way of raising awareness and to start conversations with young people."

[Watch Rich on BBC One's Politics Midlands programme.](#)



The anti-violence campaign bee.

Shawn Seesahai a 'catalyst' for tackling knife crime

Shawn Seesahai was murdered by two 12-year-olds and his death must bring about change, says Federation chair.

The shocking case of two 12-year-old boys found guilty of murdering a man with a machete must serve as a 'potent catalyst' for policy-makers to tackle knife crime, according to the chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

Shawn Seesahai, 19, died in November following an unprovoked attack on Stowlawn playing fields in East Park, Wolverhampton. His attackers, who cannot be named for legal reasons, are believed to be the youngest knife killers in the UK, and the youngest to be convicted of murder since James Bulger's killers in 1993.

Federation branch chair Rich Cooke said the 'disturbing' murder must serve as a wake-up call to tackle knife crime.

"My thoughts and those of West Midlands Police Federation are with the family of the victim," Rich said.

"This is extremely disturbing, and if nothing else it must act as the most potent catalyst to would-be policy-makers to devote all necessary resources to get a grip of this epidemic.

"It also highlights the fact that machetes are continuing to get into the hands of naive youngsters, and why these companies trading in such weapons need to be stopped."

Rich hopes the General Election was a chance for the new government to make tackling knife crime a priority.

He said policy-makers and the criminal justice system take knife crime 'far too lightly' as he renewed his call for a ban on the sale of bladed weapons online and the marketing of them to children.

And he said it was 'disgusting' that businesses were profiting from the sale of bladed weapons and the 'devastating human cost' of knife crime.

Rich said: "We've highlighted a number of big online dealers before in relation to some of the murders that have happened in the West Midlands.

"They say a knife isn't a weapon unless a

person makes it one, but the reality is these weapons are marketed towards children and have an uncanny knack of turning up at these types of murders and attempted murders.

"Each murder has a devastating human cost, serious economic costs and fosters generational trauma. For people to make money out of it is disgusting."

Rich said that one way online distributors market the weapons was to sell them as a collector's item.

"You go on the website and you have movie weapons, for instance, like one in the film Predator," he said. "It has become an iconic knife and is sold as a movie collector item. That's another way they market them.

"It's legal to be sold as a 'collector's item' and no doubt there are some people who want it to put it in a display cabinet, but why does it need to be a real knife that can do actual harm if it's a replica?"

Now he is calling on politicians to take action.

He said: "We need an outright ban on these weapons, and a plain packaging requirement which bans the fancy packaging and marketing of the weapons. I don't think MPs understand the issues. Maybe it's me not explaining it properly.

"The use of machetes in the agricultural industry gets mentioned as a reason they can't be banned and I pull my hair out.

"If you need a machete to cut your turnips up or to chop branches off a tree, surely there are ways of doing that without subscribing to advertising for Ninja weapons and Rambo knives and all that.

"It's very flimsy when you set it against the deaths of children and the gang violence we see in cities."

Rich, who has been a vocal campaigner on knife crime, renewed his call for the courts and the criminal justice system to get tough on sentencing.

"We don't need any more excuses," he said. "It's got to be zero tolerance. If you've got a knife there are no get out jail free cards.

"However, the prisons are full. They're loathe to send an adult to prison, so they're even more so when it comes to juveniles.

"Policy-makers take it far too lightly. The criminal justice system takes it far too lightly.

"It feels like the protection of police officers and innocent members of the public is secondary to keeping them out of prison."



More Taser-trained officers needed as assault figures rise

New statistics show that around a third of West Midlands Police officers were assaulted in the last year, prompting a further call for more to be Taser trained.

West Midlands Police Federation deputy chair Jase Dooley has renewed calls for officers to be able to be trained in the use of Taser.

Jase has described figures which show that, on average, just under a third of officers (31 per cent) in the Force were assaulted last year 'worrying'

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show there were 2,475 assaults on police officers in West Midlands Police which currently has around 8,000 officers. Of those 2,475 assaults, 893 resulted in injury.

Jase said: "The numbers are high, which is worrying."

He said there were concerns among some officers, particularly those young in service, that if they 'get hands on' with a suspect 'the complaints procedures will be coming their way'.

Jase explained: "You see it every day, police officers being filmed and put on social media and vilified for just doing their job," he said.

"Officers need to use the powers that are given to us under Section 3 of the Criminal Law Act and Section 117 of PACE, and that is the use of reasonable force in preventing a crime or assisting in the lawful

arrest of offenders.

"So, if someone is coming at you with a knife then you'd use a Taser or, in extreme circumstances, a lethal option because it's life and death, Jase added.

"If someone comes at you with a blunt

“ I WOULD SAY MORE THAN 80 PER CENT OF THE TIME PEOPLE WILL STOP WHAT THEY'RE DOING IF THEY HAVE BEEN RED DOTTED WITH A TASER.

instrument the officer has to assess the use of force in seconds and not mull over it for hours the next morning.

"But if someone spits at you, that's a different level of force. We're having a lot of people spitting at our members and that is classed as assault with an injury.

"If those officers had a Taser it would stop most of this, because it's a huge deterrent.

"It's an identifiable piece of equipment on

the vest that is bright yellow. You can have that distance between the officer and the suspect. The suspect gets a red dot on them – and it has the desired outcome.

"I would say more than 80 per cent of the time people will stop what they're doing if they have been red dotted with a Taser.

"For me, every frontline officer should have Taser."

Jase said the Federation was working closely with Assistant Chief Constable Mike O'Hara on police assaults, and Chief Inspector Jason Nunn, the Force's use of force lead.

"The Force is trying its hardest to alleviate these problems," he said. "It is trying to find out what the issues are. Is it a training issue, an officer issue, a society issue?"

And he reiterated the branch's call for members to backed up by the wider criminal justice system.

"There doesn't appear to be a big punishment anymore for assaulting a police officer," he said.

"If you assault a police officer, there has to be a consequence but, at the moment, there doesn't seem to be.

"The law was changed recently giving a more harsher punishment, but I do not hear of many examples where this crime is dealt with severely.

"You very rarely hear of someone going to prison for assaulting a police officer, which is very frustrating for our members.

"If any officers find themselves victims of assault by suspects, they need to raise this to our workplace reps," he added.

Five-year jail term for man who slashed officer's face

'The judge said it was 'down to luck that there were no fatalities that day' says a probationary officer who was slashed with a kitchen knife across his face.

Just over a year into training PC Tim Smithson was violently assaulted after attending a seemingly innocent domestic incident late last year.

Here, Tim recalls what happened that day, and the impact the attack has had on him and his family.

"It was November last year, and we had been called to a domestic incident," said Tim, 23.

"It all seemed so calm at first. I supported the female involved and my colleague talked to the male. After around four to five minutes, we came together to discuss the next steps.

"The man followed us in, and we asked him to go into the other room so we could decide what we should do."

Tim said that it was at that point that the man - 'out of nowhere' - grabbed a large kitchen knife and started lunging towards the officers.

"Without a doubt, he wanted to hurt us. He was going for us with the knife, as well as punching us," said Tim, "The judge said that it was down to luck that there were no fatalities that day."

Tim received a slash on his left cheek, just below his eye.

"I fell back and could feel a warm liquid on my face, but it wasn't until I stood up that I quickly realised I was bleeding a lot," he remembered.

"It's scary to think what could've happened

if my head had been any lower or the man's arm was higher. I could've lost an eye, I could've been blinded."

Despite their best efforts, the officers - who, admittedly, had been caught completely off-guard - struggled to stop the attack.

"I used my PAVA but that was unsuccessful. My colleague released Taser twice, and it was the second attempt which was successful and eventually stopped the man from attacking us," continued Tim.

"I was lucky that I'd been crewed up with someone with a Taser. I don't know what would have happened if the Taser hadn't been a success."

The man was cuffed and extra support soon arrived to help the officers restrain the offender.

Tim said: "I know I was lucky to walk away with the minor injuries I did, but mentally, what happened still impacts me every single time I head out on duty.

"Don't get me wrong, I still enjoy the job, but it's definitely left me with a level of anxiety and apprehension.

"And it's not just me, it's my family too. They found it very distressing, and they constantly worry about me."

On 24 June the man who assaulted Tim was sentenced to five years and five months in jail, having changed his plea to guilty last minute.

"Considering he had no previous convictions, I was happy with the result, and I hope this sends a strong message that violence against officers will not be tolerated," Tim said.

Tim has shared his experience after figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that there were 2,475 assaults on police officers in West Midlands Police, which currently has around 8,000 officers. Of those 2,475 assaults, 893 resulted in injury.

Tim ended: "Assaults on officers are becoming far too common, and it's not



A shocking injury.

acceptable. Our job is to help people, so why do so many of us continue to be violently assaulted?"

He has also praised the Federation for its support following the attack, revealing branch chair Rich Cooke called him the day after the incident to check in.

Rich said: "Having viewed the body-worn video - which I found difficult to watch, even after 24 years in the job - Tim showed tremendous composure and stoicism in the face of such a vicious, unprovoked attack.

"The physical and mental scars from such incidents can never be erased, but you learn to adapt and come back stronger, as Tim has shown.

"Tim is a credit to the Force. I hope this sentence acts as a deterrent - five years custody should serve as a strong punishment and warning to others who may attack us."

Tim also received continuous support from Federation representative Gemma Griffith, who is also his sergeant and has been on hand to answer any questions Tim has had since being assaulted.

Gemma said: "Tim and his colleague PC Kevin Wood have displayed true bravery and dignity throughout the whole process, from the initial incident whereby they were professional and heroic, through to the court case and sentencing decision.

"Tim is a student officer with limited service who returned to work just a few days after being slashed. He was back out on the streets as if it had never happened, although I recognise the personal impact this must have had on him and can only praise how he has continued to carry out his policing work. He has continued to put members of the public first when he had gone through his own distressing and personal ordeal.

"I am extremely proud to supervise both Tim and Kevin and they are a credit to our team and the organisation."

Kevin has subsequently left the team for a new role.

“ I KNOW I WAS LUCKY TO WALK AWAY WITH THE MINOR INJURIES I DID, BUT MENTALLY, WHAT HAPPENED STILL IMPACTS ME EVERY SINGLE TIME I HEAD OUT ON DUTY.

Did you know...

The West Midlands Police Federation group insurance scheme*

Includes Legal Expenses insurance which combines typical household and motor legal expenses covers, plus additional benefits specific to police officers, and funds legal representation (solicitors and barristers) for non-duty related criminal prosecutions in Magistrates and Crown Court.

Our family legal expenses policy includes:

- Up to £100,000 cover
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For more details and an application to join visit: <https://www.polfed.org/westmids>

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* Limited free offer period effective from 1 August 2024- 30 September 2024. Any applications received outside of these months will not receive the promotional offer. Terms and conditions apply. Full details of the cover including exclusions and limitations can be found in the policy wordings which are available from the Federation.

**The premium includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) and is correct at 01 June 2024.

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**Join before 31st
August 2024
and get your first
two months FREE!***



Not in the Group Insurance Scheme?

Sign up now and get two months free

Federation members who are not members of the Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) are being offered the opportunity to join up NOW and get their first two months free of charge.

The 'amnesty' is being offered throughout August and September*.

Currently, just over 6,550 Federation members subscribe to the West Midlands Police Federation GIS, but that still leaves around 1,400 who are missing out on the comprehensive cover it provides.

"The Group Insurance Scheme is a market-leading product, providing subscribers with the best value protection possible. It is an essential add-on to officers' Federation membership and I would urge any officer who is not subscribing to the scheme to consider the cover provided carefully. For me, it really is a case of asking yourself whether you can afford not to be in it given the protection it offers," says Dawn Murkett, West Midlands Police Federation conduct and performance lead.

"This two-month 'amnesty' gives those who are not subscribing to the scheme to get 12 months' cover for the price of 10 months which for a serving officer is a saving of around £60."

Full details of the cover can be found on our GIS pages on the [Federation website](#) but it includes:

- Care on Demand
- Life assurance including terminal illness benefit and Child Death Grant
- Additional life insurance option
- Critical illness cover, with option to take out additional cover for an added monthly cost
- RED ARC
- RAC motor breakdown cover
- Personal accident cover
- Best Doctors
- Legal expenses cover
- Regulation 28 - sickness insurance
- Worldwide family travel insurance
- Mobile phone/gadget insurance.

In a crucial difference to the previous scheme, on renewal earlier this year the GIS incorporated legal expenses cover. This was previously paid for by the Federation with the West Midlands branch being the only one in the country to offer this funding. However, this was unsustainable and the branch negotiated with insurance provider George Burrows legal expenses to be covered by the scheme.

Without legal expenses cover, officers could find themselves having to self-fund any legal representation for an off-duty incident or an allegation that involves an incident while at work but not in connection with their lawful duties.

"Up until 1 April this year we were the only Federation nationally that paid for this specific legal expenses insurance for our members which meant that this was available to all West Midlands Police Federation members," explains Dawn.

"Cover is provided as part of the Group Insurance Scheme. So this means that if an officer doesn't subscribe to the Group Insurance Scheme then they will no longer have access to this legal expenses cover.

"It is really important that members check if they are members of the GIS and subscribe if they want to be covered. We just want them to be aware that the way in which this non-duty related legal expenses cover is provided has changed."

Federation membership gives officers access to legal expenses cover for any allegations encountered in the course of their lawful duties. However, this does not mean it simply covers members for any incident while they are on duty.

If an officer is involved in behaviour that is not part of their policing role, this would not

be classed as part of their lawful duty.

In addition to incorporating the legal expenses cover, the GIS cover has also been improved in terms of the life insurance has been increased to £150,000 for serving officers and £75,000 for partners – increases of £20,000 and £10,000 respectively.

Dawn concludes: "It is important as officers that the best possible protection is sought. By being members of the Federation and the Group Insurance Scheme, then essentially officers can give themselves the very best protection possible.

"In their home lives, police officers are treated very differently to other members of the public, your occupation is held against you. For matters in which a member of the public would not lose their job officers can face that jeopardy and that's why the legal expenses cover is so important."

As in all insurance policies, there may be some exclusions and the legal cover is granted on a case by case basis. Officers are urged to [read the policy booklet](#).

More information about the scheme can be found on our website – application forms can be found in the [scheme documents section](#).

There is also a GIS specialist based at Guardians House, the West Midlands Police Federation office, and they can answer any questions. Simply ring 0121 752 4900.

*You must join by 31 August 2024 to qualify for the two months' free. If you join in September, it will be one month free.

[Find out more.](#)

IMPORTANT NOTES: *The Group Insurance Scheme is offered to new recruits for free for the first 26 weeks of service, which would have been applied on receipt of your application. As the insurers agree this free period at inception of your policy, this limited offer is only applicable to late joiners, which currently - except for this offer - has no free period offer/incentive to join the scheme.*

The late joiner application has a stricter joining criteria due to the life and critical aspect of this policy, in addition products within your package will not be applicable from inception of the policy such as Regulation 28 insurance.

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Parts of new vetting procedure are 'grossly unfair'

The Home Office is running a consultation exercise on planned changes to police vetting procedures. West Midlands Police Federation's conduct and performance lead gives his views.

West Midlands Police Federation's discipline lead has described some aspects of the proposed new vetting regulations as 'grossly unfair' and fears they will undermine the disciplinary system.

Dave Hadley has led the branch's response to a Home Office consultation on the plans, which are part of a wider review into police dismissals.

He highlighted that the proposed regulations in their current form would continue to allow vetting managers in each force to overrule the findings of a misconduct panel and effectively dismiss an officer.

Dave explained: "The issue is that once you have received a misconduct sanction, the regulations trigger a vetting review.

"When considering a misconduct sanction, part of a panel's task is to consider whether the officer should remain within policing, can public confidence be maintained and if the officer is retained.

"In doing so, the misconduct panel have had the benefit of assessing all the material which formed part of the case against the officer and, importantly, hearing the live evidence which was given by witnesses.



Discipline lead Dave Hadley.

"So, where a panel issues a sanction which is something less than dismissal, such as a written warning, they are also effectively saying that, in their view, the officer can safely remain within policing.

"However, the vetting manager carrying out the triggered vetting review is subsequently, free to find differently.

"On the same facts, but without the benefit of hearing live evidence, they might, for example, think the officer has demonstrated a lack of integrity and conclude the officer's vetting clearance should be withdrawn. If that happens then, under the proposed regulations, automatic dismissal is the outcome.

"It leaves officers with an entirely unsatisfactory position, where vetting managers are free to overrule the considered deliberations of a misconduct panel, and that is simply unacceptable.

"What's the point in having a disciplinary

process that says you can remain an officer, if a vetting manager can later say 'no you can't' and effectively sack you anyway?"

Posting about the proposals on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, Dave said: "To allow their properly considered decision of a misconduct panel to be overturned by an administrative paper process is, to my mind, grossly unfair and undermines the police disciplinary system."

Dave also highlighted an issue around the unfairness of having vetting clearance removed owing to 'adverse information'.

This, he said, is defined by the proposed regulations as 'any info relevant to vetting which may impact on the inability of an officer to hold vetting clearance'.

Dave said: "The issue with adverse information is that the officer is often not told what the information which is adverse to them is, whether that is because it is protected data or police intelligence.

"So, officers are left with the Force saying 'we can't tell you the reason for your vetting removal and dismissal, but just trust us'.

"That can't be right. There has to be something that might allow for the veracity of the supposed information to be satisfactorily confirmed, even if the officer can never be given it directly."

Dave said the rest of the proposals were 'straightforward and sensible'.

Suspension

"Police officers should be fit and suitable to serve, so the decision to create an obligation to hold vetting is absolutely right," he said.

"Similarly, the proposed regulations create a power of suspension, something which goes on now in any case, just in the absence of a regulatory provision which can be pointed to as a lawful basis for that suspension, so that is again a sensible addition."

"They've also proposed to add a further route of appeal. There would be a final appeal available to those affected to the Police Appeals Tribunal, which would be welcomed because it provides independence which will assist in building trust and confidence in the process amongst the members."

Dave has submitted his response to the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), which will respond to the Home Office on behalf of all members.

“WHAT'S THE POINT IN HAVING A DISCIPLINARY PROCESS THAT SAYS YOU CAN REMAIN AN OFFICER, IF A VETTING MANAGER CAN LATER SAY 'NO YOU CAN'T' AND EFFECTIVELY SACK YOU ANYWAY?”

Police drivers: risk reduced after Fed campaign but IOPC issues remain

Police drivers are now facing less risk of conduct or criminal proceedings after a successful Federation campaign for a change to legislation, but the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is still exploiting a policy vacuum which means that, despite the efforts of those in driver training, forces simply cannot train for every eventuality officers are expected to deal with.

That is the view of Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation lead on pursuits and driver training, who was commenting after a South Wales PC was cleared of dangerous driving after a four-day crown court trial ending in a jury taking four minutes to reach a verdict.

"The Federation successfully campaigned for a change in legislation to better protect police drivers and the new law came into effect in 2022. But mendacious investigators are now exploiting aspects of this legislation to still try to prosecute officers for acting instinctively to protect the public," Tim explains.

"Through the Federation campaign, I convinced the Government the old test was unworkable, so this was changed. We also told the Government that the police service could not train for every situation and that when officers act instinctively to help the public but do something that isn't on a page of a training manual they may be mendaciously pursued – and we have clearly been proved right.

"Crime and criminality is a constantly evolving science, so to have a training module specific for all scenarios is simply impossible.

"The police driver training portfolio is excellent. It is able to react quickly and bring in new tactics in response to evolving criminal trends, but it takes time and in this time we could be forced to advise officers to do nothing if faced with a situation for which they have not received training to deal with. This is a situation we are being forced into by the ridiculous application of a workable and sensible piece of legislation.

"The provisions within the authorised professional practice (APP) offer some scope for officers to use their initiative but are not good enough, leaving sufficient scope for prosecution, as we predicted.

"Investigators seem to be incapable of taking a pragmatic stance and this flawed approach will ultimately mean the public is put at risk.

"The campaign has meant police drivers are in a much better, and more protected place, since many cases that would have been

routinely charged are now not pursued but it does appear that at times the IOPC is intent on prosecuting officers who follow their training but act instinctively to deal with incidents as they unfold."

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, which was introduced after the Federation campaign Tim led, provided new legislation to ensure that police officers' driving is not judged by the standards of the 'careful and competent' driving public as was the case but rather according to those of their peers and in line with their skills and training.

"Police drivers have brilliant training which is now prescribed in law. It is this prescribed training that is assessed rather than the previous nonsense of judging as a member of the public," says Tim.

"The strict governance around training delivery gives confidence of exacting and consistent standards and allows all 'correctly trained' officers to avail themselves of the new law. We have seen countless cases that would previously have seen prosecutions pursued dealt with in the supportive way that would be expected.

"But, unsurprisingly, driver training does not cover tactics to deal with everything an officer is expected to deal with. Criminals fleeing on a pedal bikes, and those on foot are prime common examples. In the South Wales case, an offender was fleeing from a serious crime on a pedal bike," says Tim.

"Officers sent to deal with these types of incidents are expected to do precisely that – deal. How would the public react to officers who on arrival thought: 'No training for this?' The fear of prosecution would potentially legitimise them standing impotently by.

"But, of course, professional officers use their judgement and act instinctively to help the public by keeping them safe. They should have confidence that if they act reasonably, albeit with no tactic on a page for an investigator to see, they should be supported."

But Tim says officers, when acting in the interests of public safety and doing as they are expected by using their initiative to stop and detect crime, are then charged because the investigator says "no training for that" and they end up in court.

"If they stand impotently by and let the offender escape as to do something would be criticised as was the case here they then create the jeopardy of being charged for malfeasance. They are in a no-win situation which just should not be the case," he adds.

"We do not wish to have to advise all officers to do nothing outside their training but this ridiculous approach by investigators is in danger of making criminality aware of this frailty."

The South Wales officers made several reasonable requests for the offender to stop; a serious offence had been committed, and it was likely that the offender would commit further acts.

Having exhausted all reasonable options to stop the offender, the officer used his vehicle proactively to direct the cyclist into a dead end – a brick wall. The cyclist hit the wall and is arrested, but sustained injury.

The officer was then criticised for causing serious injury by dangerous driving because the driver training specialist called to review the case said the officer was not trained to perform this tactic.

"The truth is there is no training and what are officers to do when there is no training. You simply cannot train for every situation that an officer might come across, and you do have to allow them to act instinctively when they are seeking to protect the public," says Tim.

"They must be able to be flexible and adaptive. The vulnerability within the new legislation is the situation when a tactic is improvised to keep the public safe.

"The exemptions within the new law should have caveats, which would mean new tactics are being sanctioned through the National Police Chiefs' Council groups. For example, electric bike tactics are being developed but are currently not part of prescribed training so are not legally covered. The exemption should cover this.

"We will be seeking an amendment to the current legislation to allow for situations where officers have to act instinctively given the situation that unfolds in front of them."

While a jury only took four minutes to clear the South Wales officer of charges of dangerous driving, he has had the stress of the court case and uncertainty hanging over him which should have been avoidable, Tim believes.

"To add insult to injury, he is also still waiting to hear if South Wales Police will be pursuing conduct proceedings against him," he said.

Since the new legislation came into effect, a Subject Matter Experts (SME) group has been established to give evidence to decision-makers based on the new legislated driving standard.

This group is referenced in the Director of Public Prosecutions' guidance and is the legitimate point of reference for assessing driver standards against the new standard.



The Police Unity Tour cyclists arrive at the arboretum.

West Midlands sergeant is honoured at annual COPS service

A West Midlands Police sergeant who died last September was among the fallen officers featured on the roll of honour at the annual Care of Police Survivors (COPS) Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire.

Sergeant Paul Frear 45, was walking to Smethwick Police Station on 21 September when he was involved in a collision with a car. Paul was a regular assessor of new recruits and was on a rest day but supporting the Force as part of its recruitment drive at the time.

Paul led the Low Hill, Bushbury and Fallings Park neighbourhood team having served the Force for 21 years.

"I remember Paul as a lovely and supportive officer with a great sense of humour," says Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, who represented the branch at the service on Sunday 28 July.

"The COPS service is always moving, but it clearly had added poignancy this year since we had lost one of our own in the 12 months since last year's event.

"I was proud to represent the Federation, and its members, at the service which I think is one of the most important dates in the policing year.

"When a police officer dies in the line of duty, it affects the whole Force and the wider policing community. By coming together at these memorial events, we honour the memory of these officers and the service they gave to the Force and their communities. But we also show their families that the policing family does not forget fallen officers and their families.

"COPS is a really important lifeline for those families who are trying to rebuild their lives after the tragic loss of a police officer. Its community of families who have experienced

that same loss can offer immeasurable help and support."

Other officers listed in the roll call, which was read by COPS president Gill Marshall, were:

Sergeant Graham Saville of Nottinghamshire Police who died on 29 August 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, which was followed by a minute's silence, also included British Transport Police Property Officer Mark Birch who died on 12 October 2020.

Gill had earlier welcomed members of the congregation to the service which featured music from the West Midlands Police Brass Band and its vocalist Superintendent Sam Batey.

A police widow herself, Gill recalled her daughters were just two and four when her husband, Alan, died and explained that she knew first-hand the value of COPS.

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 lost his life 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 him.

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 and also praised the way in which COPS had helped.

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.

During the service 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.

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.

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.

Earlier in the day, crowds gathered at the arboretum to welcome the arrival of cyclists from forces across England and Wales who had undertaken a sponsored ride from their home forces to the service.

Setting off on Friday morning, the West Midlands Chapter took a 200-mile route to Drayton Manor near Tamworth, Staffordshire on Saturday where they were greeted by the families of fallen officers.

The chapter is made up of officers from the West Midlands, West Mercia, Warwickshire and Staffordshire Forces with all their respective Federation branches providing



West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke (left) and Derbyshire Police Federation chair Keith Chambers were among the Federation representatives at the service.

sponsorship to cover the riders' costs.

Each ride wore an engraved wristband dedicate to a fallen officer which, where possible, was presented to the officers' family at the end of the ride.

Glasgow will host National Police Memorial Day

Plans are well underway for National Police Memorial Day (NPMD) which this year will be hosted in Scotland.

The annual memorial day service moves around the four nations of the UK and, having been held in Cardiff in 2023, will this year be conducted at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall on Sunday 29 September.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke will represent the branch while Chief Constable Craig Guildford will attend on behalf of the Force.

"The memorial day is one of the most important dates in the policing calendar, giving us an opportunity to remember our fallen colleagues and stand alongside the families they leave behind in an act of remembrance," says Rich.

"While the Federation and forces are represented at the service, they are usually joined by the Home Secretary of the day and representatives of other organisations surrounding the police service."

NPMD was first held at St Paul's Cathedral in London in 2004 and has been held annually ever since. It is held on the



Sunday nearest to St Michael's Day, with St Michael being the patron saint of policing.

It was founded by Joe Holness following the brutal killing of his Kent Police colleague Jon Odell in Margate in December 2000.

Since 2006, His Majesty The King, while the Prince of Wales, has been patron of The Police

Remembrance Trust, which incorporates NPMD.

Buckingham Palace has announced that he will continue as patron, following a review of all Royal patronages since his accession to the throne.

Chair of trustees, David Wilbraham MBE said: "We feel very honoured that His Majesty The King has retained the patronage of The Police Remembrance Trust.

"Police officers and staff across the UK take their commitment as 'servants of the Crown' very seriously as day by day they serve all communities and maintain 'The King's Peace'.

"We have been delighted to welcome His Royal Highness to National Police Memorial Day on many occasions as we not only recognise those who have died on duty across policing history and ensure they are never forgotten but also pledge to those serving today that should the worst happen to them they also will be forever remembered."

There is still time to [register to attend the 2024 NPMD service](#).

Did you know...

The West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance scheme* includes GP Care on Demand?

The GP Care on Demand service provides the subscribing member and their resident family with unlimited access to a GMC licensed practicing GP from the comfort of their home or workplace.

You can conveniently schedule a video consultation or request a telephone call-back consultation from an experienced GP, who'll take the time to support your individual needs. Where appropriate, they can issue an open private specialist referral letter or a private prescription.

Available 24/7, 365 days a year, worldwide — you can even use it when you're on holiday!

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Visit the Federation website for further details:

www.polfed.org/westmids

Or call us on: 0121 752 4900

*Terms and conditions apply. Full details are available from the Federation or George Burrows.

**Correct at 1 July 2024. The premium includes the Federation administration fee and Insurance Premium Tax (IPT).

GP Care on Demand is provided by Teladoc Health, Inc. Teladoc, Inc. is a telemedicine company that uses telephone and video conferencing technology to provide on-demand remote medical care via mobile devices, the internet, video and phone. www.teladoc.com

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GeorgeBurrows



Comprehensive cover with new private healthcare scheme

West Midlands Police Federation members can now sign up for a new private healthcare scheme.

Bluline is designed specifically for police officers, police staff and their families and is managed by police officers - who really understand the challenges you face when illness or injury strikes. Cover can be extended to include your partner and immediate family members for additional peace of mind.

The scheme gives rapid access to a professional diagnosis (faster than the NHS) and high quality medical treatment helping ensure that you get better, and back to work as quickly as possible.

The average time to see a consultant through Bluline is under 10 days, and all claims are handled efficiently and sensitively by Bluline's dedicated administrators.

Key features include:

- **Comprehensive cover**
- **Up to £30,000 medical cover per year**
- **Top quality medical treatment**
- **Access to the UK's top private hospitals**
- **Quick and easy claims.**

Monthly premiums start from as little as £16.25, and there are discounts for student officers, including FREE subscriptions for the first year.



Existing scheme members have provided the following testimonies:

"Bluline provides peace of mind that your family are going to be given medical care or intervention if required. It is fabulous value for money as you cannot put a price on what they have done for my family."

"On every occasion the team were extremely helpful and professional. They made the authorising and organising of consultations, scans, operations and physiotherapy sessions stress-free."

"I am so glad that I am part of Bluline. My NHS waiting time for an initial consultation would have been over 40 weeks. With Bluline, I have had both my consultations and an operation within the space of four weeks, which has been amazing."



Bluline is a not-for-profit organisation so all funds paid into the scheme are used for the benefit of its members.

It is simple to join, with no medical examinations and minimal form filling.

[Find out more and apply online](#) or ring 01905 796 682.

“MONTHLY PREMIUMS START FROM AS LITTLE AS £16.25, AND THERE ARE DISCOUNTS FOR STUDENT OFFICERS, INCLUDING FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE FIRST YEAR.



SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Matt at Buckingham Palace with It Takes Balls To Talk founder, Alex Cotton, as she collected her MBE.

Fighting for officers' mental health 'has become my life'

Our Federation workplace representatives have a key role to play in supporting members, particularly when they are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. One of our reps gives an insight into why he is so keen to help colleagues and learn about how he went from rock bottom to pioneering change within the Force.

When Matthew (Matt) Manwaring's duties as a police officer left him in a battle with serious mental health issues, he could never have foreseen the legacy it would carry more than 20 years later.

Coventry-born and raised, Matt, a sergeant, began his career at West Midlands Police in

1997 and performed roles across response, traffic and custody before going on to form an integral part of a neighbourhood team in his home city.

"I joined the police because I wanted to make a difference in my community. Growing up, I hadn't lived a sheltered life, but I certainly

hadn't been exposed to the difficulty and deprivation I started seeing in Coventry once I got this job. That made me want to help and keep people safe even more," he said.

In 2003, however, his wellbeing took a serious hit due to the culmination of various incidents he witnessed while at work. Reflecting on how he was managed in the immediate aftermath of these incidents, Matt explains that a lack of attention to the possibility of long-term consequences were the precursor to him ultimately becoming mentally unwell.

"They [the incidents] were extremely disturbing for me, and the 'diffusion' processes, as they were then, never captured

any delayed trauma – and I could never have seen it on my own,” he said.

“If I was regularly monitored in the months after, it wouldn’t have taken that trauma away, but I could’ve been helped before it got worse.”

Matt’s first death after police contact incident came five years into his time as an officer when he attempted to intervene in the acute behaviour disorder of a man experiencing a psychotic episode. The man, under the influence of drugs and alcohol, was then taken to hospital but subsequently passed away.

Another prominent event which stayed with Matt, now 49, took place the following night when a man attempted to take his own life by cutting his wrists and fighting police officers trying to get him medical attention. The man survived after being taken to hospital.

Then, in March 2003, another incident left a very lasting mark on him. A man – wanted for recall to prison after breaching licence conditions – tried to evade police by moving around a high-rise flat block. As officers were granted access to his flat via a neighbour, the man climbed onto the top of his balcony wall and, despite Matt’s physical attempts to stop him, sadly died by suicide.

“The next month, I suffered from suicidal ideation and attempted to take my own life. It was a build-up of many things I had seen, and it came to a head after that final incident in March,” he said.

“I am still here today, but it was an incredibly tough time, where I became so overwhelmed and unable to deal with what was going on in my mind.”

Once he had made the difficult recovery from this period, he set about shifting his focus away from the damage of those experiences and instead made changing the landscape of mental health in policing his purpose.

“I didn’t know how at first, but I wanted to make mental health support for police officers more comprehensive, more accessible and, importantly, more focused on the long-term,” he explained.

Years of impassioned work have followed, with his involvement in mental health research and awareness work taking on a variety of capacities. Illustrative of his commitment to

“ I DIDN’T KNOW HOW AT FIRST, BUT I WANTED TO MAKE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR POLICE OFFICERS MORE COMPREHENSIVE, MORE ACCESSIBLE AND, IMPORTANTLY, MORE FOCUSED ON THE LONG-TERM.

finding better services for officers are the positions and titles he has picked up along the way, such as in education and philanthropy.

Central to Matt’s efforts has been the introduction to force protocol of Trauma Risk Management (TRiM). The peer support system, originally formulated for the Royal Marines and used widely across the armed forces, involves specially trained non-medical practitioners keeping in close contact with victims of a traumatic event.

Although already in existence within the police force, Matt, along with Federation member Laura Cuthbertson, rolled out TRiM to a wider base of staff, including frontline operational officers in 2018, having undergone training to become practitioners themselves the previous year.

He continued: “I think TRiM has been transformational in how officers affected by trauma are managed. It is grounded in academic research and uses the principle of ‘active monitoring’, where a watchful eye is kept over individuals at risk, carefully assessing for any delayed reaction. Crucially, it is also voluntary and completely confidential.

“It was huge to get it out there and make it accessible to so many. Support from the Force’s wellbeing managers, Lorraine Horner and Sophie Petrie, has been instrumental in supporting the welfare of officers and staff since its introduction.”

Through the launch of the system, Matt has enabled many colleagues to avoid the feeling of isolation he experienced at his lowest.

He added: “With what I went through, it wasn’t just what was lacking in terms of support, but the way I was made to feel as a professional. The only follow-up procedures I was involved with relating to the incidents were investigations, where I sometimes felt at fault for what happened.

“What police officers need is to feel valued as people and not have to worry there is some secret employee file about your weaknesses and struggles.”

Matt’s function as a mental health triage officer was advanced further in 2018 when he graduated from the Open University with a degree, focusing on counselling and forensic psychology. This attainment came alongside positions he holds as founding trustee and vice-chair of the charity [It Takes Balls To Talk](#) and as guest lecturer of forensic investigation and policing at Coventry University.

“It’s become my life. I’m so proud to do all the work I do, providing people with the support I didn’t have,” he said.

“It’s important that people don’t think things have been on the straight and narrow ever since I was in that very low place. I was always determined to create change for others, but personal mental health journeys are complicated and can take time – and it was only talking about it that made me truly recover.

“Thinking about that period of my life is very hard, but it’s got easier as I’ve opened up and as I’ve become so switched on to everything to do with helping others. As soon as I became a Federation rep, I realised how many other support services there are available to police officers through the Fed.

“Of course, I can heavily recommend the use of TRiM through the Force themselves, but the Fed gives members access to amazing organisations like [Police Care UK](#) and [Care First](#) which might suit some people’s needs better – the latter of which is not limited to issues in work life, but personal life too.”

As he grows into his latest role as a workplace representative, Matt says he never wants to stop in his pursuit of helping the best possible psychological guidance find its way to both colleagues in policing and the general public.

“We’ve come a long, long way in how the immediate aftermath of traumatic events are dealt with, and that drives me forward to keep helping people” he ended.

“There’s so much amazing support out there now, so if you’re struggling with your mental health, please reach out and talk to someone. You’re never on your own.”

Members who feel they need support should contact their local Fed rep or speak to their line manager.

“ WITH WHAT I WENT THROUGH, IT WASN’T JUST WHAT WAS LACKING IN TERMS OF SUPPORT, BUT THE WAY I WAS MADE TO FEEL AS A PROFESSIONAL. THE ONLY FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES I WAS INVOLVED WITH RELATING TO THE INCIDENTS WERE INVESTIGATIONS, WHERE I SOMETIMES FELT AT FAULT FOR WHAT HAPPENED.

GET TO KNOW YOUR REPS

West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative Sue Cheek gives an insight into her role as police dog handler and explains that she took on the rep role to give something back after being helped by Federation secretary Tim Rogers.

‘Being a police dog handler is a dream job’

As a dog handler for the past 24 years, West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative Sue Cheek has worked at some of the highest profile events in the country.

Sue, who is a PC, and her explosive search dog, Trev, have helped to keep the public safe at events such as the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games, and the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.

And she says it's a dream role to work with Trev, and her general purpose police dog Chase.

“I've been very lucky with the work I've done over the years,” she said, “I did the 2012 Olympics. I was down in Weymouth working on the boating side of things. I can remember whole country was uplifted and it was special to be part of it.”

“The same with the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022. It's hard work, long hours but a really positive influence on the city and it's lovely to be part of.”

“I was part of the Queen's funeral. We searched the whole week leading up to the funeral with all the different events that were taking place. We searched Buckingham Palace, The Mall, Parliament, Westminster Abbey.”

“We were there on the day of the funeral itself making sure it was safe and sound beforehand. And for me, I got to do my bit to say goodbye to my boss. To serve as long as I did under the Queen, it was a nice way to say my thanks.”

Sue joined West Midlands Police as a cadet when she was 16 – and she knew even then that she wanted to be a dog handler. She has been a frontline officer for 29 years and a dog handler for the past 24 of those.

“It's what I always wanted to do, be a police dog handler,” she said. “It's always what I'd got myself set on. I feel lucky that I've managed to achieve it and managed to stay in the role as long as I have.”

“I'm also an instructor for our Force, and



Workplace representative Sue Cheek.

was the first female instructor in the West Midlands, which I look on as an achievement.”

Chase and Trev live with Sue and her family and accompany her to work each day.

“I spend more time with my dogs than I spend with my family because I'm with them all the time,” she said.

“It's hard work but the sense of achievement you get when you catch someone or you find something without the dogs you would have missed. It's a real buzz.”

“Without the dog doing what it does and working as a team, we would lose people and property and we wouldn't find key evidence.”

Sue has been combining her frontline policing role with being a Federation representative for the past three years.

She took on the role in order to give back to the Federation after she and her husband received support from branch secretary Tim Rogers for issues they were facing.

Sue said: “My husband, who was a serving officer at the time, and I were involved in two separate fatal accidents at work. It was a really difficult period for us both and it lasted a long time.”

“It had a negative effect on my husband, to the point where he ended up leaving the job through medical retirement due to PTSD because of the accident and the trauma of how it was dealt with. We were really well supported by our Fed rep, Tim Rogers.”

“I wanted an opportunity to give a bit back. I wanted to say thank you for the support. It's about supporting others who might be going through the same thing from someone who has been there.”

Sue said the role of a Fed rep can be demanding but ultimately worthwhile.

“It takes a lot of time, commitment and effort just knowing that people might pick up the phone day or night to speak to you,” she said. “During the evening a message might come in from someone who wants a little bit of guidance or a little bit of support, I'm in my family environment having done my shift already and it could be a lot for my husband but he understands.”

“He knows how important it was when he needed to speak to our Fed rep and how Tim was always at the end of a phone for us. To offer that to people is quite important.”

Sue has also recently got onto the Federation's National Council to represent the West Midlands.

She said: “I feel like I'm making a difference with West Midlands, and the opportunity to go on the [National Council](#) came about and I felt I could make a difference on a bigger scale. I want to show that you can achieve good things.”

“You can be a frontline officer with 29 years' service, have a family, do the extra Fed stuff, and be able to have your voice on the National Council, these things are all achievable.”

Bank Holiday working

Officers can find the answers to common questions about Police Regulations on our website and also in the Federation's Quick Reference Guide. But in the first of a series of articles on regs, we look at what regulations are in place to cover Bank Holidays.

Q. What can I claim for working on a Bank Holiday?

A. This depends on how much notice you are given that you are required to work.

- If you are given eight days or more notice, then payment or TOIL (your choice) at double time for the hours worked
- If you are given seven days or less notice, then payment or TOIL (your choice) at double time for the hours worked plus a day off in lieu.

Travel time of 1 hour (30 minutes each way) is applicable but only up to a total of 6 hours for duty and travel. So, if you work 5.5 hours you can claim half an hour travel, but once you work 6 hours or over you can no longer claim travel.

Q. I had to remain at work at the end of my night shift going into a Bank Holiday what can I claim?

A. If you are required to remain at work past 07:00 after a night shift, going into a Bank

Holiday you are entitled to claim a minimum of four hours' payment or TOIL (your choice) at double time, even if you work less than four hours.

If you are required to remain on duty for more than four hours, you are entitled to claim payment or TOIL (your choice) at double time for the hours worked.

Q. What happens if I am off sick on the Bank Holiday?

A. It has been agreed that if you are booked as sick on the Bank Holiday then the sickness should apply to the whole rostered duty so any TOIL deducted for that day can be given back. This will not happen automatically so it will require the individual to request this via shared services. No certification is required.

Q. I have had TOIL deducted for Bank Holidays where I would normally work more than eight hours why is that?

A. Everyone is given public holiday leave for a Bank Holiday. This over-rides anything else for that day. Meaning if you were due to work you start with public holiday leave and if you were on a rest day you are also shown as public holiday leave and given a rest day in lieu (as you cannot be on a rest day or a normal working day on a Bank Holiday, for everyone it is public holiday leave).

Public holiday leave is the same for all officers and is pro rata. This means that a full-time officer gets the full statutory eight hours public holiday leave for that day. If you were rostered for a shift that was exceeds eight hours then you owe the Force the remaining hours. This is because leave is calculated in hours and not days as this is the

fairest way to do it. The same way that an RDIL is worth eight hours so if you use it for a day that is over eight hours you have to make up the difference.

Those who work shifts longer than eight hours often feel this is unfair, however, it isn't. It is the same as when you book a day's annual leave you have to use more hours. This is because the reason you work longer shifts is because you get more rest days. If you look at the converse, officers who work five x eight-hour shifts with two days off would feel aggrieved if on a public holiday they were getting public holiday leave and getting an eight-hour shift off while someone was getting the same public holiday leave and getting a twelve-hour shift off.

Leave and over-time on a Bank Holiday are totally separate, because the above applies whether you work or not. Although the default is public holiday leave for everyone, the Force must still ensure that it maintains minimum staffing and if it would have been a working day according to your shift pattern you can be required to work. Due to the cost implications in most departments the Force defaults to minimum staffing and eight-hour shifts with no cross over.

However, even if you work in excess of eight hours this does not impact on the hours you owe for the public holiday leave deficit. You would just be paid for any hours you work at double time. So, if the Force did ask everyone to work their normal shifts on a public holiday they would be paid double time for the hours they work. However, they would still owe any hours over the eight given to everyone for public holiday leave to make up the remaining hours of their shift.



Officers feel benefits of welfare van

West Midlands Police Federation gained the Force's support when it put forward plans for a welfare van. The van has since been relocated at Nexus but continues to be put to great use.

The West Midlands Police welfare van was launched two years ago after a long campaign by West Midlands Police Federation.

Since then, it has proved to be an essential resource for officers at major incidents, events and scenes of crime.

The van, which was bought by the Force and fitted out by the local Federation branch, gives officers access to welfare facilities when away from police buildings.

Federation deputy secretary Chris James first came up with plans for the vehicle around three years ago after he conducted a 12-month

survey of crime scenes which revealed between 18 and 24 officers attending the average scene were going without basic facilities.

"There were too many occasions when officers found themselves with no access to a toilet, nowhere to take refreshments or even get a hot drink and nowhere to wash their hands," he explained.

"Anyone who has spent hours standing on a cordon or a static post understands how the lack of refreshments or access to basic toilet facilities could leave officers relying on the generosity of locals or waiting for cover to arrive. That led us to the idea of converting a vehicle into a bespoke welfare van.

“ WE ALWAYS ANTICIPATED THERE WOULD BE A REAL DEMAND FOR IT AND THAT HAS DEFINITELY PROVED TO BE THE CASE WITH MANY OFFICERS NOW HAVING BENEFITED FROM THE WELFARE FACILITIES IT OFFERS.

West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Chris James with the new van.

"We were pleased when the Force came on board and agreed to purchase the basic vehicle, we then paid for it to be converted into a welfare van and it was first deployed in 2022.

"We always anticipated there would be a real demand for it and that has definitely proved to be the case with many officers now having benefited from the welfare facilities it offers.

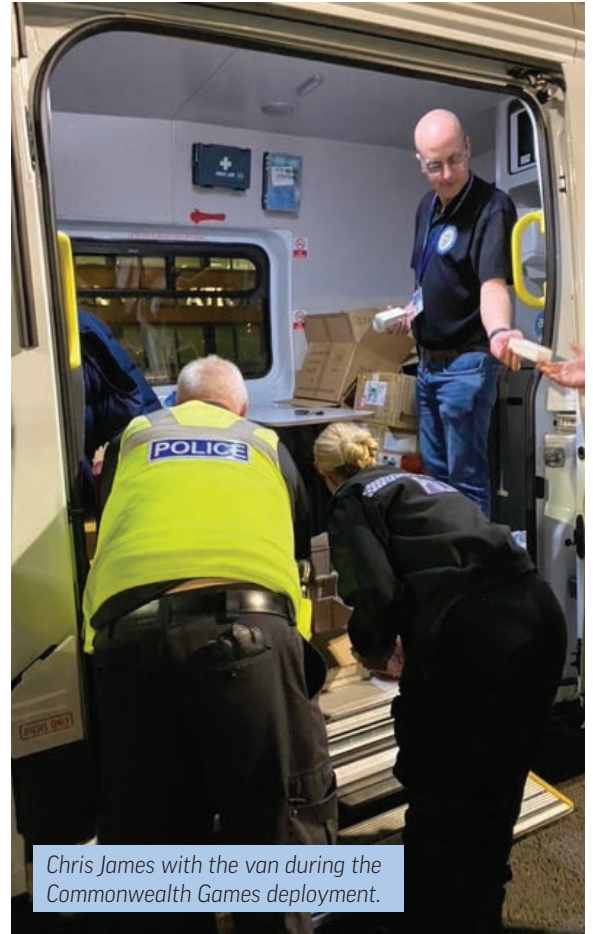
"Kitted out with hot water, kitchen and toilet facilities, a fridge to store refreshments, a seating area and a retractable canopy to provide shelter and shade from the elements, the van provides everything officers need."

Notably the welfare van was deployed when Birmingham hosted the Commonwealth Games in August 2022 and has been called upon for political conferences in the city.

It was also at the scene of the Babbs Mill



Inside the van.



Chris James with the van during the Commonwealth Games deployment.

Lake tragedy in December 2022 and at Villa Park when there was violent disorder in the match between Aston Villa and Legia Warsaw at the end of November last year.

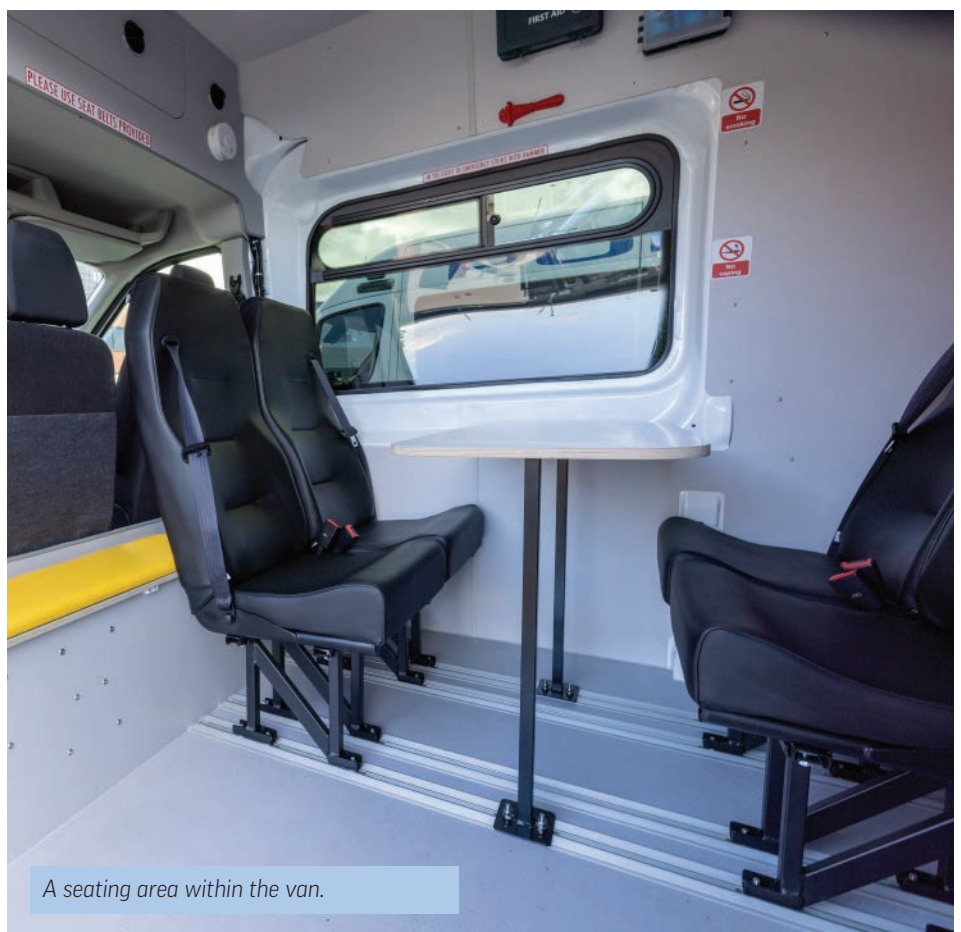
The van will continue to be used at locations where police resources are expected to be needed for more than 24 hours and will provide much-needed facilities where officers are deployed to major incidents or events.

It can be booked in advance or spontaneously deployed and can be driven by any colleague with a standard car licence who has achieved the Force basic driver qualification.

The van is now managed by fleet services and stored at their Nexus base which enables it to be far more accessible to the whole Force. A private contractor attends bi-weekly to wherever the van is located for cleaning and re-stocking items.

How to book the welfare van:

- Complete the online hire vehicle request form on the fleet services intranet site
- For spontaneous deployments, a log will need to be endorsed by inspector or above advising that the welfare van is required. This should be where a scene is expected to last more than 24 hours
- During office hours (Monday – Friday, 8am until 4pm) contact fleet services hire
- Out of hours contact transport operations.



A seating area within the van.

Special Constable's 'incredible' work across two emergency services

Since 2022, members of the Special Constabulary have been able to join the Police Federation. In the first of a series of articles on the Force's Special, we interviewed a member, Wolverhampton's longest serving Special, who in his 'day job' works as a paramedic.

Growing up, Special Constable Kyle Cicconi always knew he wanted to live his life helping people. Born and raised in Wolverhampton, the West Midlands Police Federation member often visualised a future where he was a figure of support and trust to the city's community, and never wanted to limit what path this could follow.

"I've always wanted to spread myself further," said Kyle. "I don't think there is ever a maximum to what you can do for others. When I joined the Special Constabulary in 2020, I knew it was never going to replace anything else – it was going to be extra.

"I also knew the training would be demanding, and it was. There are a lot of the elements of regular officer training but in a condensed package. But it was definitely worth it."

“ I AM NOW THE LONGEST-SERVING SPECIAL IN WOLVERHAMPTON, WHICH FILLS ME WITH PRIDE, I LOOK FORWARD TO MANY MORE YEARS OF SERVICE.

Initially, Kyle kept the same hours he had tirelessly trained in once he began his career out on the streets of Wolverhampton city centre, Low Hill and Wednesfield as a Special. Shortly after, this changed when he switched day jobs from a software developer to a student paramedic.

Before he knew it, a professional life had fallen into place whereby he was working in two emergency services.

"It was a very busy and intense time, but here I am now three-and-a-half years later, very happy with how things have panned out," he continued.

Kyle, who usually volunteers 30 to 40 hours as a Special each month, has thrown himself into a variety of duties that have enabled him to enjoy a successful police career so far. Fast development as an officer has seen him add the grade of inspector to his Special Constable title, a promotion he received last year after impressing senior leaders in both



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The 37-year-old says he has never looked back since putting on the uniform for the first time.

"I find it incredible, to be honest. I go into my shifts with an eagerness to make a difference. My team are incredible, and we work so hard to be visible across the community. It's fascinating to go out and see the true picture before it can be twisted on social media, too.

"I've also found I can switch off from my ambulance role, which definitely helps the work-life balance."

The ability to disconnect from his day job on police duty, he added, is largely facilitated by the distinctions of each role – both may be emergency services, but Kyle revealed he navigates his relationship with the public very differently in each.

"I do find I have to be more careful with how I communicate and what I say as a police officer. People know a paramedic is there to help them but then aren't as sure about police and they can put a guard up. So, you have to handle it in a different way."

He added: "I am now the longest-serving Special in Wolverhampton, which fills me with pride, I look forward to many more years of service. In the future, I'll never stop wanting to better myself for the community around me," he ended.



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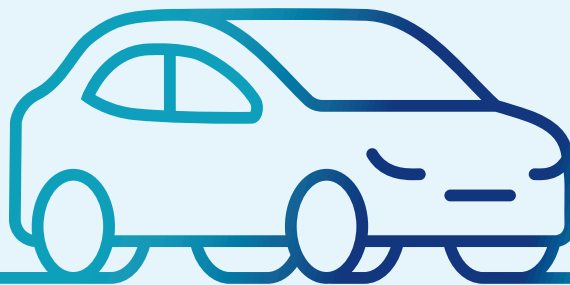


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Retirement seminars: book your place now

Make sure you are well prepared for retirement by attending our ever-popular seminars.

Members with three years or less to go until their planned retirement are being urged to attend a seminar hosted by West Midlands Police Federation.

The seminars are held monthly at Guardians House, the Federation's offices in Coventry Road, Sheldon.

The next seminars are being held on:

- 15 August**
- 12 September**
- 17 October**
- 14 November**, and
- 12 December.**

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, is urging officers heading towards their retirement to consider signing up for a seminar as soon as possible.

"We have been holding these seminars for some time and they always prove informative for those who attend," says Tim.

"They cover some of the obvious subjects such as the police pension schemes, taxation and the state pension.

"But, they also help those officers planning a career beyond policing with help on CV

writing, starting a business and identifying transferable skills.

"Other topics include investments and financial planning, asset protection and post-retirement schemes for police officers, such as the West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund."

They're aimed at members who are within three years of finishing their service and will be held in person at the Federation offices.

If you would like to book a place, please [email the Federation office.](#)

Please include 'Retirement seminar' and the date you would like to attend as well as your name, work email address, personal email address, personal phone number, proposed retirement date and any dietary requirements.

Coffee and registration for each date will be between 8.30am and 8.45am. The seminars start at 9am and finish at 4pm. A meal deal lunch will be provided for members.

Parking is available nearby at the Morrisons car park, you just need to let their Customer Services team know your registration number and that you are visiting the Police Federation.



Feedback from past attendees

"I found the day was informative with each speaker outlining just what you needed to know in the simplest of terms on each topic. A 'not to be missed' seminar for those coming up to retirement." **PC Collins**

"A very useful and informative course which has made me give serious thought as to what to do with my pension money and how to protect it." **PC Tonks**

"An excellent forum and opportunity to help prepare for the transition to retirement."

PC McGoldrick

"Thank you, a really useful & informative day, well worth giving up a rest day for!!"

Anonymous

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS



NARPO is a rank-free association of retired police officers, dedicated to improving benefits for its members.

NARPO has Branches across West Midlands:-

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- **SOCIAL EVENTS** – Keep in touch with old friends and colleagues.

Annual membership fee deducted from pension:- £20.64 in 2018.

ARE YOU RETIRING SOON?

Join on-line www.NARPO.org, or for more information, contact the secretary of your preferred Branch:-

**Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall:-
Wolverhampton:-**

www.NARPOWestMidlands.org
www.NARPO-Wolverhampton.co.uk

'Thank you' from Chief Constable

The Chief Constable has thanked officers, staff, and volunteers for their hard work after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) closed three areas of previous concern.

Craig Guildford said HMICFRS had confirmed the Force has made significant improvements in performance and becoming the most improved metropolitan force in England and Wales.

He said: "I thank every officer, staff member and volunteer for making this happen."

The Force has successfully resolved issues around:

- **More effective multi-agency risk assessment conferences**
- **Managing risks posed by registered sex offenders**
- **Managing risks posed by online child abuse offenders.**

It comes less than six months after the Force was moved into 'Engage status' by HMICFRS following an inspection that identified four areas of concern.

The only outstanding issue now is investigations, which will be the subject of some re-inspection activity in September, and

further updates are being issued to set out where the Force is doing well and where it needs to focus.

HMICFRS has also advised that it was very impressed with the improvements the Force has made against four long-standing causes of concern in relation to custody. All four have been removed from enhanced monitoring, a significant development which has resulted from a lot of hard work, the Chief Constable said.

Mr Guildford said: "I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to achieve this success in the quickest time possible. These improvements are a testament to the hard work of our officers and staff, plus some excellent leadership across the Force.

"We are continuing to work hard to address the final cause of concern flagged by HMICFRS around our investigations.

"It is really pleasing to know that inspectors have recognised the progress already made to resolve this and we look forward to this area being formally reviewed in September.

"I am thrilled to reveal that, alongside making these improvements, HMICFRS has also been impressed by the improvements the



Chief Constable Craig Guildford.

Force has made to its custody processes. Four long-standing areas of concern in this area have also been successfully concluded.

"These changes have been made while West Midlands Police has achieved the largest reductions in crime across England and Wales, with there being 35,000 fewer victims or 10.3 per cent less crime compared to the national reduction of 4.2 per cent. West Midlands Police now has less total crime than Greater Manchester Police."

[Read more.](#)



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No such thing as an 'off season'

While it may be the off season for the West Midlands' six professional soccer teams, there's no such thing as the off season for Football Unit Inspector Rich Cox.

As well as preparing for next season's football fixtures, Rich focuses on cricket and policing high-profile domestic and international fixtures at Edgbaston.

They include the men's Test between England and West Indies at the end of July, and Birmingham Bears home games in the T20 Vitality Blast and Birmingham Phoenix Edgbaston fixtures in the Hundred.

Rich, a West Midlands Police Federation member, runs the Force's football unit and its policing of cricket during the summer months.

"There are 10 officers who work for me, and we cover the six clubs in the West Midlands – Aston Villa, Wolves, West Brom, Coventry, Birmingham and Walsall," he said.

"In the close season, as well as the preparation for the next season, I add cricket prep and deployments on top."

Rich's work starts ahead of the season when he meets with David Clarke, the stadium safety officer at Edgbaston, to map out the fixtures and when and where resources will be needed.

"Last year we had the men's Ashes, England v Australia, this year it's England against the West Indies," he said.

"On top of that you've got T20 games, the Hundred and the T20 Finals Day at Edgbaston in September.

"We map out the games. We map out what the club wants and for how long, is it across the whole day, most of the day, resourcing levels and specialisms.



Edgbaston Cricket ground is a busy policing area in the summer.

"Sometimes it's quite a light touch, sometimes it's in-depth, it depends on what's ahead of us.

"For example, at England v Australia last year, on the back of Just Stop Oil, we had an in-depth resourcing model built around protest and protestor removal as well as public order policing."

Rich said there are similarities as well as differences between policing cricket and football matches.

"Some of things we face are similar such as alcohol induced behaviour, hate crime, misogyny, pitch incursions," he said. "Some of them cross over between football and cricket. Issues we don't often get at cricket is that tribal allegiance and fighting between fans."

The officers tend to operate on the

concourse areas underneath and behind the stands on Edgbaston's big cricket occasions.

"On the ground, you will have a serial of officers working in pairs and you will have a Taser pair," said Rich. "You can quite conceivably go the whole day and not see them, or see them just once or twice.

"Their job is not to be proactive within the seated area, that's a stewarding operation, it's more behind the bowl, the bar areas, and the concourse areas where people, unfortunately, sometimes get involved in things they shouldn't do."

And Rich was full of praise for the way [Edgbaston](#) handles spectator behaviour and safety.

"They have a really good approach to stadium safety, stadium reputation, and behaviour," he said. "They take a very proactive approach to people wanting to watch cricket and enjoy cricket, and they don't want people swearing, fighting, or going onto the pitch.

"They're very much like a football club, that if you break the ground safety regulations you will be ejected.

"The club understands that to eject people early is the right move, it sets the tone and removes the problem.

"It's a very good tone to set."

“SOME OF THINGS WE FACE ARE SIMILAR SUCH AS ALCOHOL INDUCED BEHAVIOUR, HATE CRIME, MISOGYNY, PITCH INCURSIONS. SOME OF THEM CROSS OVER BETWEEN FOOTBALL AND CRICKET. ISSUES WE DON'T OFTEN GET AT CRICKET IS THAT TRIBAL ALLEGIANCE AND FIGHTING BETWEEN FANS.

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Legal Services for West Midlands Police

With over 20 years' experience of working with police, Gorvins have been a leading provider of legal services in all matters arising from relationship breakdowns and disputes concerning children. We understand the importance of family and the impact that a family breakdown can have upon all of those closely concerned and that is why our service (with discounted fees) is offered not just to serving and retired police officers and police staff, but also to their partners and immediate family members.

Part of **our commitment** to supporting those whose vital work supports us all includes a prompt **initial consultation - free of charge.**

We also supply our legal advice to you at a discounted rate and are able to offer a **fixed-fee divorce process.**

Our family and divorce law specialists understand the aspects that particularly impact upon the police with reference to pensions in divorce cases and shift patterns in relation to arrangement for children.

Other Legal Services

- Wills, Trusts and Probate
- Corporate/Commercial
- Personal Injury
- Employment Law
- Insolvency
- Dispute Resolution and Civil Litigation
- Commercial Property

Drive away with a great deal

Federation members can access a wide range of deals and discounts through our Member Service partners. In this feature, we highlight some of the vehicle offers available.

Whether you are looking to buy a new car, get a new lease vehicle, arrange a hire car or renew your motor insurance, then please take a look at the deals we have available to members through our Member Service Partners.

If you are about to buy a new set of wheels, then we have discounts at Citroen, Hyundai, Jeep and Nissan to name just a few and both Motorsource Group and Motorfinity offer deals on a wide range of cars.

[Look at our vehicle purchase offers.](#)

But if you prefer to lease a car then equally we have a range of options available. For example, Affinity Leasing Ltd is a privately owned limited company independent of vehicle manufacturers and finance providers.

It is able to broker vehicle finance deals on behalf of customers as an independent intermediary. Finance is provided subject to customers' credit history and brand-new vehicles are sourced direct from the manufacturer.

If your finance agreement is due to end within the next 12 months and you intend to

replace or return your current vehicle, now is the time to start the process of looking into a replacement.

New deals are regularly added to the Affinity Leasing website. View the latest [special offers](#).

Motorfinity offers deals on all the latest makes and models, and offers a price match promise. [See Motorfinity's latest offers](#).

And Motor Source Group also provides lease hire options. [Find out more](#).

If you are simply looking for short-term vehicle hire for a holiday then we have partnered with both [Holiday Autos](#) and [Rhino Car Hire](#) to offer good deals for our members.

Visit our [leasing, contract hire and renting page](#) to see the full range of Member Service partners and what they have on offer and we have a separate section for [vehicle hire for leisure](#).

For vehicle insurance, we have three different Member Service partners:

- [Motorfinity GAP Insurance](#) - GAP stands for Guaranteed Asset Protection and GAP insurance covers the 'gap' between what

you actually paid for your vehicle, and what it's worth at the time your vehicle is written-off. The idea is that, for a one-off payment, the GAP insurance company guarantees that in the event your car is written off you won't be out of pocket.

- [Police Insure](#) (part of the Howden Group) - Police Insure provides specially discounted car, motorcycle and home insurance for all serving and retired police officers, police staff, members of the Special Constabulary and police support volunteers as well as their partners and families.
- [Police Mutual](#) - The company has been able to put in place a wide range of initiatives, services and support to make a positive difference to the lives of serving and retired police officers and staff. It offers a 10 per cent discount for car insurance taken out online.

The Federation has also teamed up with [Sutton Auto Finish](#) which offers 20 per cent discount on vehicle repairs. Sutton Auto Finish provides a specialist mobile body repair service, repairing cosmetic damage to the highest standard and serves Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, Lichfield and Tamworth its SMART repair service.

Don't forget we also offer other discounts through our Member Service partners. [Find out more](#).





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